



PROJECT THE HOME OF HUMANITIES

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THE HOME OF HUMANITIES

Project of a Cultural Park in Essonne

Professor Philippe HOUDY
President of the University of Evry-Val d'Essonne

PROMOTING A PEACE CULTURE

PROVIDING ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURES

DEVELOPING CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

A FORUM FOR REFLEXION ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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CULTURAL LEISURE TIME
CULTURAL CONVERGENCE
RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

The Home of Humanities will comprise three main elements: the **Home** buildings themselves; a **park** and leisure area with woodland, gardens and landscapes reflecting different parts of the world; and thirdly a **children's play area**.

Seen from the sky, the Home of Humanities will have the shape of a peace dove.

The buildings will be environmentally sustainable.

The Home as a Forum for the Interpretation of Knowledge

The Basic Concept

Exhibitions based on abstract theoretical concepts as manifested in the following fields: *Forms of Spirituality, Arts, Science, Literature*, together with *The Plumbed Depths of Humankind*.

Reading “levels”

- ☒ **For the general public**, display panels covering historical summaries, key ideas, and important figures will be placed at adult eye level.
- ☒ **For primary school children**, there will be panels, positioned at a lower level, displaying historical summaries, everyday objects and trades and professions.
- ☒ **For infants**, displays at ground level will include touch screens and interactive games.

In the centre of each display area there will be computers with interactive textual, audio, and video animations.

A mini library is planned for each *Space*. These will be equipped with tables, chairs, and floor cushions together with a number of books covering the relevant subjects and suitable for both adults and for children at secondary, primary and infant school levels.

All display panels will be produced under the supervision of academic staff of the *PRES (Pôle de*

Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur – Higher Education Research Centre, a member of the group *Universud*) and by specialists in the relevant fields nominated by the Academic Council of the Knowledge Centre.

Monitors will be on duty in each of the centers of interest. They will be supported by *PRES* staff and their research students as part of their study programme. The monitors will focus their assistance particularly on school age visitors and senior citizens.

Small-scale workshops and laboratories will operate in the three workshop areas known collectively as *La Ruche (The Hive)*. These will be supervised by *PRES* staff and other volunteers and will cover chemistry, physics, creative writing and reading, painting and sculpture.

Works of art and other objects related to each of the subject areas will be bought or borrowed from specialist museums.

The Museum

The History of Civilisations – *The Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) Space*

Great civilizations through the ages – Lascaux; Sumeria, Egypt, and the Indus Valley; Greece and Rome; the Arab-Islamic world; Europe and North America; Asia; Africa; Australasia and Oceania.

Metaphysical Ideal Concepts – *The Leonardo da Vinci Space*

The Arts - The Pablo Picasso Area

The focus here will be on research into cultural interdependence. Ten disciplines will be represented by ten great artists.

The André Le Nôtre Room: architecture and furniture; garden design; fashion

The Charlie Chaplin Room: dance; sport; photography; cinema including cartoons; circus acts.

The Auguste Rodin Room: painting (sight); sculpture (touch); music (hearing);

gastronomy (taste); perfumery (smell). This room will be equipped with a giant interactive touch screen.

Science, Scientific Method, Inventions and Discoveries - The Sigmund Freud Area

The pathway from theoretical scientific concepts to practical applications will be explained. Ten disciplines will be represented by ten great scientists.

The Max Weber Room: The Social Sciences: psychology, sociology, political science, law and economics

The Albert Epstein Room: The Natural Sciences – physics, chemistry, biology and medicine, IT and mathematics.

Literature – The Leo Tolstoy Area

Transcultural literary phenomena will be presented. Ten disciplines will be represented by ten great writers.

The René Descartes Room: philosophy, history, writing and translation.

The William Shakespeare Room: drama, poetry, narratives and fables

The Robert Louis Stevenson Room: the novel, including epic and adventure novels, science fiction, thrillers, and comic book novels.

Spirituality – The Mahatma Gandhi Area

The home of Humanities will provide a forum where a Peace Culture can be developed through reflection on the ideals, the greatest achievements of, but also the darkest depths plumbed by, the different cultures and civilizations of peoples throughout world history .

The Abbé Pierre Room: the great spiritual movements of the world will be studied, including

♣ Judaism

♣ Buddhism

♣ Christianity

♣ Confucianism

⤴ Taoism

⤴ Shintoism

⤴ Hinduism

⤴ 'Free thinking'

⤴ Islam

⤴ Other religions

Their fundamental texts and major figures will be presented, their common values studied, and semantic equivalences established.

The Dark Depths of Humankind – *The Martin Luther King Space*

Humankind's Darkest Hours. - For adults only, but with a special presentation for children.

The Aimé Césaire Room: genocide, war, slavery, the gulag, arms of mass destruction, political assassinations and the persecution of women.

The Elie Wiesel Room: the Shoah

The Anne Frank Room: explaining the Plumed Depths to children

Looking to the future – *The Nelson Mandela Space*

The Rights of Man, Respect for Diversity and Sustainable Development

The Pagoda – *The Lao-Tseu Space*

This octagonal pavilion situated at the very heart of the Centre is to be a place of private meditation and inner peace.

The Exhibition Space will be for temporary exhibitions.

Exhibitions by artists, scientists, writers and analysts with an interdisciplinary theme, such as Glow Worms, the Milky Way, etc.

The Hive

Exhibition Gallery

Workshops and laboratories

- Art (painting, sculpture, digital art etc.)
- Science (mini-laboratories)
- Literature (reading-writing workshops)

These will be run by *PRES* staff and other volunteers

Offices

Performance Area - *The Molière Space*

A one hundred seat auditorium available for concerts and shows and for children's workshops.

Cyber Cafeteria - *The Magellan Space*

Light refreshments will be available and computer terminals will be placed at the disposition of consumers. The adjacent Exhibition Gallery will display work by local artists from the Departments of Essonne and Ile-de-France.

Green Spaces for rest and relaxation.

Free entry.

The Central Garden

To be left to the creative imagination of young landscape artists.

Themed Gardens

- ♣ An English Garden – *The John Lenon Garden*
- ♣ A Japanese Garden – *The Yasujiro Ozu Garden*
- ♣ A Chinese Garden – *The Kong Fu Zi Confucian Garden*
- ♣ A French Garden – *The Le Nôtre Garden*
- ♣ Others, to be determined..

Woodland – to serve as an interface between reposeful spaces and play areas.

To be planted with local tree species.

Play Space – A grassy area with trees to include

- ✦ Children's games areas
- ✦ Ball games areas
- ✦ Picnic areas

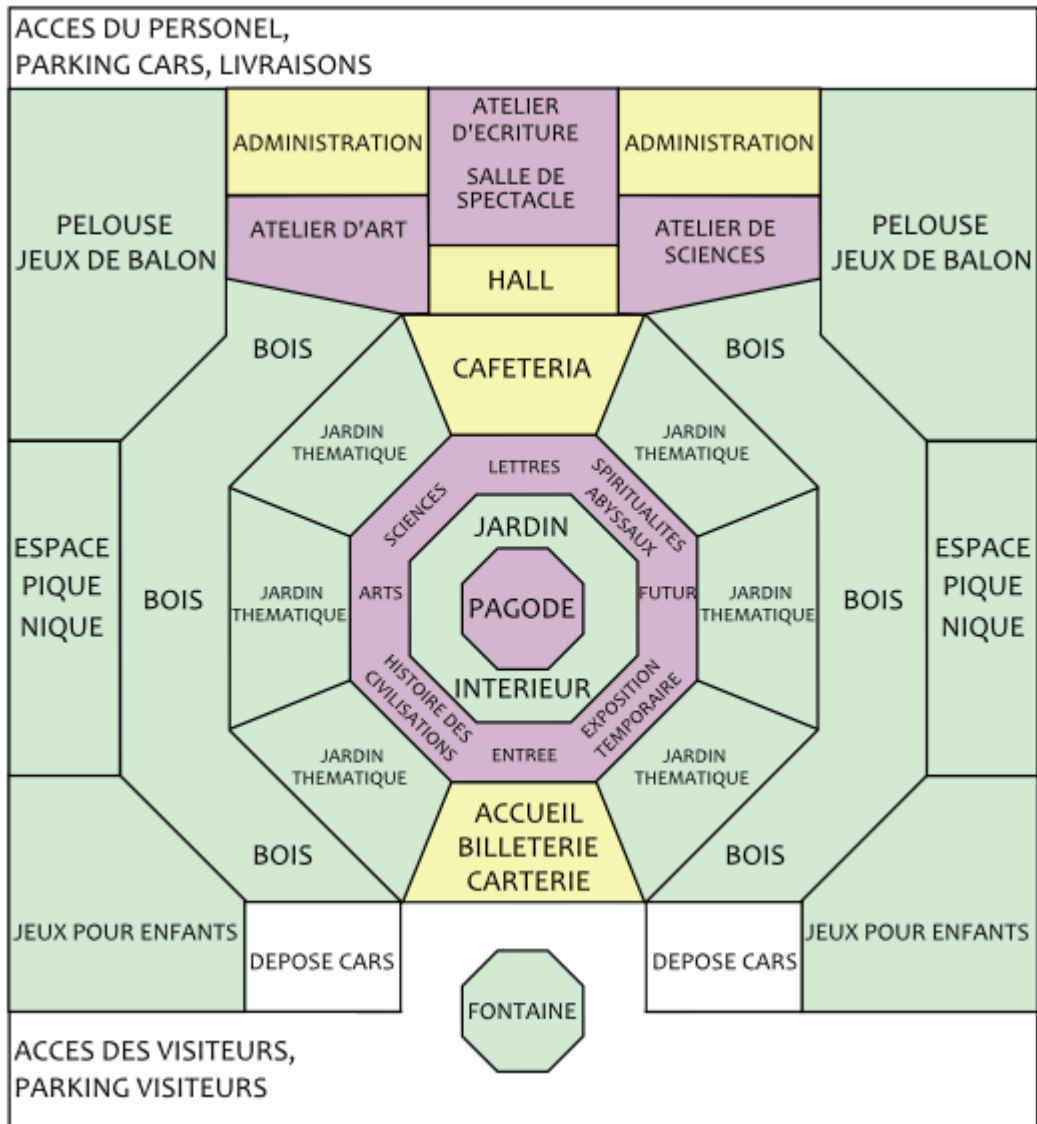
Sponsored art exhibitions could be held here.

Reception

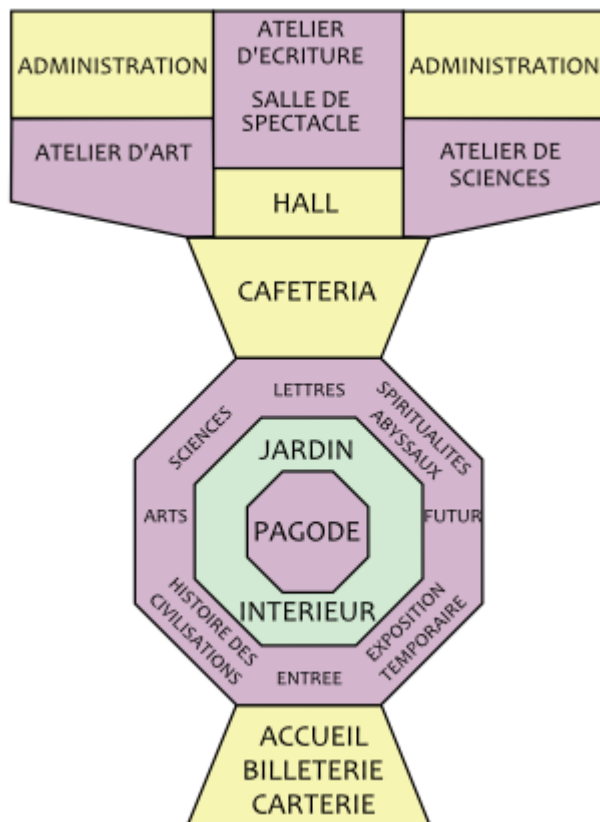
A Welcome and Information Desk, Ticket Sales, leaflets, maps etc.

Map of the Home of Humanities

Culture Park



Culture Park Buildings



All buildings have one storey.

Reception	700 m ²
Museum	1600 m ²
Pagoda	400 m ²
Cafeteria	700 m ²
Workshops	1000 m ²
Performance area	1200 m ²
Administration	1200 m ²
Total surface area of buildings	6800 m²

Gardens of the World	5200 m ²
Central garden	100 m ²
6 Themed Garden	4200 m ²
Total surface area of open air spaces	9500 m²

Parking Areas

Total surface

Staff Car Park, Coach Park, Delivery Area	2000 m ²
Visitor Parking	3600 m ²
Coach Drop-off Point	3000 m ²
Total surface Parking Areas	8600 m²

Location

CENTRAL ESSONNE - SOUTHERN ILE DE FRANCE

With a total surface area of 4 hectares, the Home of the Humanities could be accommodated in a larger leisure and activities park.

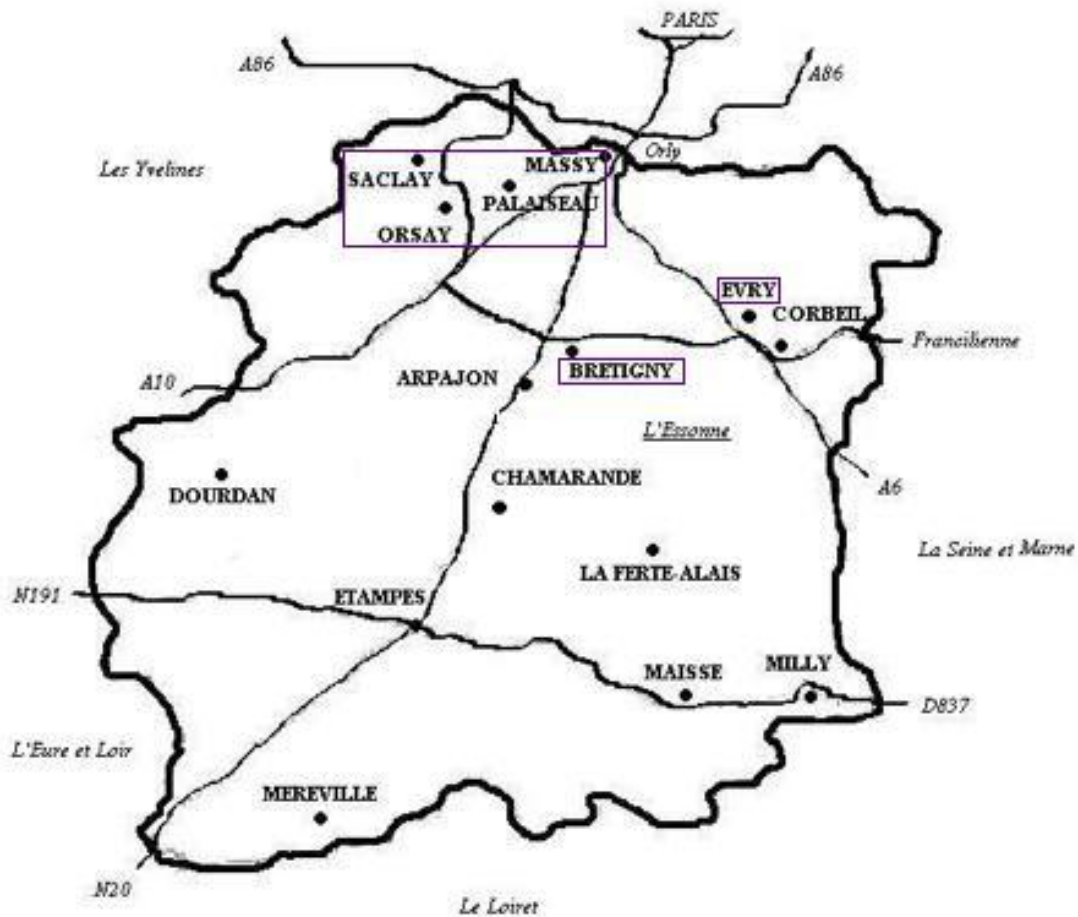
TOTAL SURFACE AREA FOR THE WHOLE PROJECT: 39600 m²

Three potential sites have been identified:

Palaiseau, Orsay, Saclay (*POS*)

Brétigny (site of the former *European Volunteer Centre*)

Evry in Central Essonne



Advantages of these three sites

Proximity to Paris

30 Km south of Paris

40 minutes by RER lines B, C or D from the centre of Paris

Places of interest in Essonne

20 Km from Dourdan and Etampes

20 Km from the Château de Chamarande

40 km from the Parc de Méréville

Proximity to major tourist centres

35 km from Vaux le Vicomte at Melun

45 km from Versailles and Fontainebleau

70 km from Chartres

➤ **Accessibility**

- By public transport - RER lines B, C or D
- By car – the N20 main road, the *Francilienne*, A6 and A10 Motorways
- By air – Orly Airport is 20 km away

Project Organisation

Administrative Council: Responsible for overall policy

One representative from each partner institution

The Board of Directors

Academic and Cultural Board: Responsible for major initiatives (display panels, temporary exhibitions, etc.)

Recognised experts in the arts, sciences, literature, history, and religion

The Board of Directors

Board of Directors: Responsible for the implementation of decisions of the Administrative Council and the Academic and Cultural Board

One senior librarian or museum curator

One independent mediator

Professor Houdey (Special Councillor)

Staffing:

Centre Staff: 12 permanent posts

External contributors: 30 per day from universities, colleges, secondary and primary schools etc

Volunteers – 30 per day from voluntary organisations

- Running costs = €1.2K per annum

Partnerships will be set up with:

Local Communities

Relevant government ministries

The University of Evry-Val-d'Essonne

Contribution to the development of cultural tourism in Essonne

School parties, senior citizens' groups such as the University of the Third Age etc. from Essonne, Ile de France, Paris and elsewhere could easily come to the Knowledge Centre, travelling by coach or by RER, for a visit of one or several days.

Examples:

School Parties

Morning: visit the Knowledge Centre

Lunchtime: picnic outdoors in summer, indoors in winter

Afternoon: Farm visits, animal husbandry etc

Senior Citizens

Morning: visit places of interest in Southern Essonne: the Châteaux of Marais, Courson, Dourdan, Courances, or Chamarande, Méréville Park, the city of Etampes etc.

Midday: Lunch

Afternoon: visit the Knowledge Centre

The Home of the Humanities would operate on the basis of group reservations on weekdays – three slots for schools in the morning, three slots for senior citizens in the afternoon – with Open Home at weekends for families and the general public.

Projected visitor numbers

Assuming the Centre is open for 40 weeks, comprising 200 week days and 80 weekend days per year.

Week days - Seven groups of 25 children plus seven groups of 25 senior citizens per day = 70,000 visitors per annum

Week-ends – seven groups of 50 per day = 28,000 visitors per annum

Total visitor numbers: 98,000 per annum.

Development Schedule

Initiation phase of the project: September 2011 – September 2013

Setting up of partnership contracts

Detailed elaboration of the Knowledge Centre's overall policy

Implementation phase: September 2013 – September 2015

Completion of final plans of the Park buildings

Issuing of invitations to tender

➤ **Laying of Foundation Stone: September 2015**

Project Completion Phase: September 2015- September 2017

Laying the foundations

Building construction and creation of Green Spaces

Production of display panels and museum exhibits

- Display panels to be produced by experts appointed by the Academic Council
- Home of Humanities on site documentation could be produced by *EESA (Ecole Européenne Supérieure d'Animation)*, and the *Ecole Georges Méliès* at Orly, which is a partner institution of the University of Evry-Val-d'Essonne.
- Book trade documentation on Home of Humanities could be produced by a partner publishing house as a publishers' series

Inauguration: September 2017

Suggestions:

- *The Essonne* Home of Humanities could serve as a model for other Knowledge Centres elsewhere in the world
- A network of Home of Humanities could be set up to facilitate the formation of a world wide culture of values common to the whole of humankind.

Philippe Houdy - Curriculum Vitae



Professor Philippe Houdy has been President of the University of Evry-Val-d'Essonne since 13 December 2011. He joined the University's teaching staff in 1992, and has held the posts of *Director of Research in Nanometrics*, *Director of the Doctoral Programme in Materials*, *Director of the School of Post-graduate Studies*, *Chair of the Information Technology Resources Panel*, and *Dean of the Faculty of Science*.

He holds a post-graduate degree in material science from the University of Paris VII and a doctorate from the University of Paris VI. His doctoral thesis, awarded in 1982, was on *The Growth, Specification and Properties of Materials for Solar Cells*. He previously worked for Philips as a research director leading a team investigating *Nonometric Multilayers*, and was subsequently awarded a *Certification in Research Supervision* in 1989.

Alongside his work in the field of nano-science, Professor Houdy has since 2003 built up the field of the *History of Knowledge* through his courses on *Ideal Concepts* covering the Arts, Science, Literature, and World Religions, and through his research into the *The Dark Depths of Humankind*, covering the Shoah, the Goulag, Slavery, Genocide, etc.

In 2008, in collaboration with other researchers, he wrote *Les nanosciences (The Nonosciences)*, published in several volumes by Belin. Together with Catherine Bréchnac (Director of the CNRS) and Marcel Lahmani he was awarded the 2008 Roberval Prize for the volume *Les Nanosciences: nanomatériaux, nanochimie (Nano-science – nano-materials and nano-chemistry)* and in 2011 he received the Roberval Trophy for the work as a whole.

With the General Council of the Department of Essonne he launched the Home of Humanities Project whose aim is to give the general public access to interactive experiences focussed on the Arts, Science, Literature and Religion.

Professor Phillippe Houdy, who was born on 11 January 1957, is also a Municipal Councillor for the town of Arpajon.

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