

Unité d'Habitation

The **Unité d'Habitation** is the name of a modernist residential housing design developed by Le Corbusier. In 1947, Europe was still feeling the effects of the Second World War, when Le Corbusier was commissioned to design a multi-family residential housing project for the people of Marseille that were moved after the bombings on France. Completed in 1952, the Unité d'Habitation was the first of a new housing project series that focused on collective living for all the inhabitants in a “vertical garden city”.

With nearly 1,600 residents divided among eighteen floors, the design requires an innovative approach toward spatial organization to accommodate the living spaces, as well as the public, shared spaces. Interestingly enough, the majority of the communal aspects are placed on the roof. The roof becomes a garden terrace that has a running track, a club, a kindergarten, a gym and a shallow pool for children. The Unité d'Habitation is essentially a “city within a city”, which is spatially, as well as functionally, optimized for the residents.

The Unité d'Habitation is constructed from **reinforced roughcast concrete**, which was the least costly in post-war Europe. Structurally, it is a simple rectilinear ferro-concrete grid, into which precast individual apartment units are slotted, like “bottles into a wine rack” as the architect put it.



grid: *griglia*

precast: *prefabbricato*

reinforced roughcast concrete: *cemento armato grezzo*

shallow: *poco profondo*

to share: *condividere*

slotted: *inserito*

1 Answer the following questions.

1. What is Le Corbusier's *Unité d'habitation*?
2. Why was le Corbusier commissioned to design a multi-family residential housing project in 1947?
3. What did the Unité d'Habitation focus on?
4. How many residents lived in the complex?
5. Why is the roof an important part of the building?
6. What building material was used for its construction?
7. What is the structure of the building?