

The *Cités Blanches* and Workers' Gardens

The *cités Blanches* (“white housing estates”), thus named due to the colour of their original render, were built between 1913 and 1916, and were comprised of 50 buildings making up a total of 200 homes; they marked a development in the quality of the workers' housing, namely a break with the rows characteristic of the “old estates”. These “new estates” were designed as standalone houses with space between them, with each house accommodating four homes with a garden each. The ground floor consisted of a communal room with a kitchen, a bedroom, and a toilet, and there were two or three bedrooms on the first floor, depending on whether the house had a surface area of 53,4 m² or 63 m². Every year, the residents would have apples delivered, a press was passed round from house to house, and cider was stored in barrels in the cellar. The garden, which had a fruit tree in it, allowed them to keep poultry or rabbits. Nearby, the “*La plaine*” cooperative workers' allotments, which were provided by the factory, made another contribution to people's daily supplies. Through to the end of the 1950s, drinking water was only available from collective pumps at the end of the street, and laundry was done at the washhouse.

Legend

Plans and cross-sections of the workers' houses being designed for the “new estates” in 1912. Note the central shaft, which allowed for the ventilation of the toilets in four homes. Archives départementales du Calvados, F 6262.

Legend

The *cités Blanches*, built in 1913, Jacques Gauthier collection.

Legend

Alain in front of the *cités Blanches* washhouse in 1961, Sylvie Quenderf collection – Un fleuve pour la liberté, la Dives.