



Marking of a point that will be the center of the synchrotron ring



First dirt excavation on April 22, 2003

Press release (April 24, 2003)

Construction begins on the SOLEIL site

After obtaining a construction permit on November 2002, SOLEIL prepares to start work on the site. It is a respite period useful for the archaeologists who have worked so hard to recover several Gallo-Roman historical artifacts on the site. But now the bulldozers move in, and this autumn it will be the drills, which will terrace the site and then begin laying the foundations for the synchrotron itself.

Since November 2002, two prefabricated buildings have been completed to house SOLEIL teams on the Orme des Merisiers site. In October 2003, a new building will welcome the public in a special information area.

This April 22 on the site, the initial preparation phase of the site will begin and last until September 2003. It will include leveling of the terrain, construction of a rainwater retention basin, installation of drainage, water, and electricity networks, and preparation of the area and traffic routes. After these preparatory works, the site will be ready for construction, which should begin this summer with civil engineering works.

The completion of the buildings is scheduled for the first third of 2005.

REMINDER

Located on the Saclay Plateau in Essonne, SOLEIL is the second 3rd-generation synchrotron constructed in France; the first, the Grenoble ESRF, is a European synchrotron. SOLEIL is a public company whose two shareholders are the CNRS and the CEA, and in which the Ile-de-France region and the General Council of Essonne are quite deeply invested. The construction of such a facility requires both large sites and highly precise mechanics. It involves the acceleration of packets of electrons so that they produce an exceptionally bright light ray that covers a very wide range of wavelengths, from infrared to X-rays, including ultraviolet light. The characteristics of this light (intensity, focus, stability, polarization, etc.) permit the observation of matter at the atomic level and makes experiments possible that were inconceivable before, in fundamental as well as applied and industrial research. At SOLEIL, there are various fields mobilized by science and industry today: biology, chemistry, material sciences, environment, physics, Earth sciences, and cultural heritage and archaeology. The criteria defined for SOLEIL (operating energy, number of waves, large spectral range from infrared to X-ray, brilliance, continuous injection for stability of micron beam, etc.) place it at the highest level of international competition.

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