

Town Planning Project

Valuing the Periphery and Winning Back the Centre

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Introduction

The subject of this report is the urban planning project which was, and which continues to be, behind the urban transformation of Barcelona, something which is noticeable to everybody.

It certainly is not a project which is laid out in one specific document, nor which is conceived at the beginning of the process, neither is it a project which has one, or several, exclusive authors, even though there are no doubt people who could be recognised as having played a particularly significant role in drawing up the project.

We could say that the urban planning project for Barcelona during the democratic period has taken form from a series of ideas and partial projects with the participation of various actors and with different contextual references and specific goals throughout the period. This report will deal with the various initiatives and documents which make up this sequence of projects.

In particular it will deal with those projects which contain a degree of planning of the work and which therefore contain reflections of a certain breadth on the space which the city occupies. However, it should not be overlooked that the projects and instruments which are most immediately directed at private or public urban behaviour –projects involving construction, remodelling, renovation, or maintenance work– also contain reflections which contribute to the overall urban planning project of the city.

In the development of the urban planning project, and naturally in the actual transformation which has taken place, there have been certain temporary stages of special importance which have served to mark the pace of change. The year 1976, the year in which the General Metropolitan Plan – PGM – was approved, should be considered as the starting point of the process. 1979 was the year when the first democratic City Council, entered office. If it is important to note that in 1980 there was an important change in the City Council urban planning team, with the substitution of Joan Anton Solans by Oriol Bohigas as the Services and Urban Planning secretary and also the incorporation of Joseph A. Acebillo into the team, it remains clear that the date which stands out as a reference point is 1979, the date which marks the beginning of the process of democratic municipal management. The Olympic nomination which was received in 1986 is another key date in the sequence, although it should be understood that in terms of the project, the Olympic Games had been an objective on the horizon since several years previously –in 1982 the first draft of the Olympic proposal was drawn up, the Cuyàs report. Finally, 1992 is a date which does not need any further explanations and, as we shall see, as this date is passed significant changes are introduced into the development of the project.

As is clear from what has been said up to now, the first instrument in the project which we should refer to is the General Metropolitan Plan (PGM), which is the starting point and a reference point which will be maintained throughout the whole process, although its importance will change as a result of actions becoming more distanced from it in time.

In what follows, three sets of projects are considered which are developed from 1979, as the unfolding and remodelling of the city's urban order. First of all the Town Planning Projects in the urban sector, which begin to take shape from the first moments of the democratic City Council and which bring with them the idea of proximity, of the recognition of the different identities of the urban make up. After this the attention of the project moves on to consider Urban Projects of the city which leads to the proposal of new references to this urban reality. At the same time, the existence of a metropolitan

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administration with metropolitan responsibilities allows various the Metropolitan Urban Projects to be taken on board. These projects, taken as a whole, constitute a complex and highly enriching deployment of the urban order proposed by the PGM, through which a new synthesis is produced. Its interrelated aspects express the coherent, evolutionary overall project which constitutes at all times the urban planning of the city.

However, we can say that 1992 marks a qualitative change in the process. In 1992 it can be said that all the projects which have the characteristic mentioned above have been formed and partially carried out, and that the pending projects are going through the natural process of organisation and remodelling.

The period after 1992 is still too close to fully capture its significance. What we can point out is the variation in the operative circumstances and perceive some changes in the way the project is focused, which, without renouncing the goals of the previous period, takes on different attitudes with regards to two classic urban proposals: housing and industry.

On another level we could find those projects which were brought about through concrete actions, often more fragmented – especially at first – but which have proved to be a manifestation of general ideas of the project and which have also been the broadest expression of how to carry out urban planning in Barcelona, to the point where they have eclipsed the significance at the project level of the planning.

In the urban project which is found behind the practical projects we can identify two different but complimentary streams: those whose subject is public space, which range from the small squares and streets to the general systems of the city and the region, where what we can call public works are developed, and those which are concerned with the development and building of plots of land and which provide the volume of the urban make up, where the work of private operators is of prime importance.

The importance and the example set by the urban action taken by the Barcelona City Council in the configuration and the treatment of the different forms of public space, make this theme worthy of a separate dossier. Another report in the series will bring together and contain the different sets of components of this part of the project, which starts off with the first small squares in Gràcia and finishes with the projects for the Besòs and Llobregat deltas, and will include the urban parks and the new ring-roads and bypasses.

However, in this report we consider some reflections on the urban project which guides the development of the urban make up, and which is manifested first and foremost through the different forms in which the Administration acts. This administration works with construction contractors, both private and public, without prejudicing individual direct actions, often integrated into wider processes of public action, such as for example those actions which were motivated by the Olympic Games, and which will also be dealt with in a separate report.

Once these points concerned with the organisation of the urban project have been made, some reference to the objectives of the project should be made.

The most ideological documents concerning this theme are, on the one hand, the General Metropolitan Plan itself, and on the other hand, the texts which Oriol Bohigas provided during his term as Urban services secretary, and in particular the introductory text to the publication *Plans i projectes per a Barcelona 1981-1982* (Plans and Projects for Barcelona 1981-1982) and the book *Reconstrucció de Barcelona* (The Reconstruction of Barcelona). These are two polarised and complementary positions. The first, from the logic of planning which lacks confidence in the projects which the PGM will develop, and the second from the logic of the action which is

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possible, necessary and which formally does not accept the overriding need for a general framework of order.

The urban plan for Barcelona has been built on this dialectic, through a process of successive dynamic equilibriums. If this has been possible, it is no doubt due to the shared objectives which the two ideologies have.

To bring value to – or monumentalise – the outskirts and recuperate the centre is, without doubt, one of the expressions which best sums up the range of objectives which there have been in the urban plan for Barcelona.

We could argue that there exist basically two types of pathology in the city. On the one hand, the situation of degradation, in the sense of the loss of quality that the fabric of the city has suffered in certain central areas, and on the other hand the situation of the outskirts which, due to any degree of deficiencies, have not managed to become fully part of the city. In the Barcelona of the end of the seventies, both pathologies were definitely intense and abundant.

The projects which are developed with the democratic city councils, with more fragmented views and sometimes in dialectic relation to the general planning, are nonetheless fully coherent with the goal of recuperating the centre and monumentalising the outskirts.

If the most obvious and noticeable projects in this sense would come from the action projects, and particularly from public work – squares, parks, and the remodelling of various spaces – the projects which involve urban order have also been clearly directed in accordance with this goal.

It is clear that within the PERI we find alternately one or other intention depending on whether it deals with the Raval inner city area or Vallbona on the outskirts, for example. In the city projects, the objective of distributing the potential for improvements in the areas which are qualitatively on the outskirts, is laid out. Inevitably, the metropolitan projects are principally orientated towards ordering the topological – as well as the qualitative – outskirts, such as a large part of the coast and of the Collserola range of hills had been up until then.

The urban remodelling plans after 1992 also participate fully in this objective. It is no coincidence that two districts qualified as outskirts – Sant Andreu and Sant Martí – are the main focus of urban projects in this period.

In fact, all the logic from which the actions of the public powers towards the city are derived, coincides in the goal of bringing value to the outskirts and recuperating the centre. The economic logic is to obtain a correct efficiency of the pre-existing urban workhouse. The social logic which aims to avoid the formation of enclaves and social segregation which contributes, both in the inner city and in the outskirts, to the cohesion of the population. And finally, a logic of sustainability through which the full recuperation of the city avoids the temptation of peripheral expansion which consumes large amounts of energy and devours the land.

As is indicated in the introductory text to the bibliography, the literature on urban projects and actions which the Barcelona City Council and, in its moment, the metropolitan administration, have published on a regular basis, make interesting information about many of the projects which are mentioned in the text available almost immediately.

The general urban framework: The 1976 General Metropolitan Plan (PGM) as a valid instrument for urban change

The city's urban project since 1979 has been based, to a large extent, on the historical circumstances surrounding the General Metropolitan Plan (PGM). This plan, taking in Barcelona and 26 surrounding municipalities, was finally passed in July 1976 and still in force today.

The plan deals with the urban environment, that is, it was designed in accordance with the regulations laid down by legislation on land use and town planning. It must be remembered that when the plan was being drawn up the first Spanish land law was still in force – that of 1956 – which was revised and replaced by a new structure in 1975 to which the plan's final version had to adapt.

The scope covered by the PGM has its origin in the previous 1953 urban plan, which was the first urban proposal that attempted the city's rational ordering in a space that significantly exceeded the limits of the Barcelona Municipality. However, it must be stated that this extension of limits was not the result of any rigorous study of relationships between different areas, but rather a last-moment improvised proposal due to a visit to the plan's headquarters by the director general of national town planning. At the time, all decisions on town planning were ultimately responsibility of this director.

The fact is that, in spite of its origin, its boundaries have lasted until today through PGM's prolonged existence. In addition, between 1974 and 1988, a metropolitan administration with town planning powers existed; the *Corporació Metropolitana de Barcelona* (Barcelona Metropolitan Corporation –CMB). The metropolitan actions have shown the possibility of the different areas working together, which by having sufficient space improve the understanding of urban problems, although these areas are by no means optimal having not been defined with sufficient scientific rigour.

It should be remembered that the area debate was seriously considered in the process of reflection on urban matters shared by the revision of the 1953 Plan and was to be taken on board from 1964. This revision, leading to various progressive experts to join the Plan from outside the Administration, gave rise in 1966 to the document entitled *Pla director de l'Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona* (Master Plan of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona). This document contained a proposal for the territorial ordering of a much wider area taking in the counties of Maresme, Vallès Oriental, Vallès Occidental, Barcelonès, Baix Llobregat, Alt Penedès and Garraf.

This document, given the name *Pla director* (Master Plan) - a typology not considered in the urban legislation of the time, and which was then incorporated into the 1975 law on land use – also used for the first time the term *Metropolità*. Once the various Administrations had got over their initial disquiet, a formula for the work to be done was agreed upon. (These administrations included the *Comissió d'Urbanisme* [Town Planning Commission], the *Serveis Comuns* [Common Services] de Barcelona, and other municipalities, in which the Barcelona City and Provisional Councils and the State Administration were included, covering a total of 27 municipalities). It should not be forgotten the initial objective was to draw up a new plan for town planning for this area – with all this implies in terms of its scope.

In fact, the objective – explicitly stated in the documents of the Master Plan – was to produce a general urban plan for the entire area considered. However, it was clear a task of such scope could not be taken on in one stage, and it was agreed to divide the urban development of the Master Plan into the following sub-plans; the revision of the 1953 Plan, strictly covering the

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27 municipalities; the area plan termed “*immediate action*” made up of the rest of the counties of Maresme, Vallès Oriental and Occidental, and Baix Llobregat; and the “*differed action*” area plan made up of the counties of L’Alt Penedès and El Garraf to be developed at a later date. The elaboration of an infrastructure plan was also proposed that would take in the whole area considered.

From the work of these several fronts, various interesting products appeared, although the only one that was to reach its objective of setting up a binding urban plan was the PGM, that was initially approved in 1974 and finally passed in 1976.

It should be added that in 1974, shortly after finalising the new plan’s exhibition period to the general public, the Barcelona Metropolitan Corporation was created, considerably widening the powers of the Urban Commission and Common Services (Common Services existed since 1953, the year of the previous plan’s approval). This strengthened the profile of the local administration in the metropolitan area. This is all true, without ignoring its lack of democratic accountability – typical of the time – and its geographical confinements that were to last while the 1953 limits were not reconsidered.

The role that the PGM was to later have in the democratic urban management of Barcelona City was partly due to its context but also to the study that was made of this plan. It should be remembered that certain events occurring between 1974 and 1975, along with the role of certain people, helped the establishment of this document as a basic reference point for urban management.

Although it was the beginning of 1970’s, the drawing-up of the Plan (as happened with the Master Plan) was not developed by state bureaucrats addicted to political power, but rather by those, who at the time were called “infiltrated experts”, with the help of professionals from outside the government. The result was consequently rather different from official town planning until then as it included a strong corrective element in the stages of town planning and building that were common at the time. It should be recognised that the powers-that-be did place their confidence in experts and allowed them to work with a fair amount of independence. Also important was the decision to initially approve the plan in 1974 under the Barcelona mayorship of Enric Massó.

The process between 1974 and 1976, with two public reports, was especially interesting and was essential for the future of the Plan, in addition to representing a valuable relevance point for the general planning revisions that occurred later in many Catalan municipalities. Just as happened then, and still occurs quite regularly today with any plan over a certain size that is presented publicly, the PGM received strong criticism both from popular sectors and from land and property owners. Only some professional sectors truly aware of urban problems valued the plan in a positive light.

After a few months, the situation began to become clear and the plan received the backing of progressive sectors, a fact that was demonstrated by the dismissal by Mayor Viola of work head, Albert Serratosà; who at the time was director of the Metropolitan Corporation’s Town Planning Services. In spite of this dismissal, and without ignoring the various commitments and adjustments required by property rights that the plan had to introduce, it can be said that the plan that was passed in 1976 kept a good deal of the initial objective and proposals. The reasons for this ability to resist the strong attacks that the plan suffered, undoubtedly lie in the level of maturity that “social collective” had attained allowing an implicit intelligence to deal with serious

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issues – and this indeed was serious; this was especially demonstrated in the political transition that Spain underwent in those years.

In fact, this collective intelligence is what explains that the rest of the team in charge of drawing the plan, led by Joan Antoni Solans, were not affected. And that the persons that took over from Serratosa, Xavier Subias and Antoni Carceller, beyond their own sense of discipline, were competent experts with a clear understanding of the historic moment. Lastly, the State itself, through the official body “*Órgano Desconcentrado*” that had to give the final approval to the plan, and was presided over by the then Civil Governor, Salvador Sánchez Terán, amended some of the less acceptable concessions that had to be made in the interest of property.

There are also some biographical circumstances that helped the acceptance of the General Metropolitan Plan by the first democratic City Council. Firstly, the importance of the fact that Antoni Solans was named head of Town Planning Services – a position with significant room for action within this municipal organisational model – of the transitional city council presided over by Mayor Socias. Solans continued managing this body throughout the first democratic City Council’s first year. In addition, it should also be noted that Serratosa formed part of the council as a local councillor, and that Pasqual Maragall, the then first deputy mayor, had participated in the plan’s last stage, specifically in drawing up the economic and financial plan.

However, due to the peculiarities of the plan’s redaction, the PGM was, to a great extent, a technocratic proposal – in the good sense that the word had in the era – and in its actions and desires expressing a clear mistrust in political power. Specifically, it should be noted that the PGM imposed on the area a new town planning order, and to this end proposed a clear organisation of public space or systems. This was reflected especially in the road network that was given a notable presence in the plan and that affected numerous plots of land and quite a few buildings. As far as the impact of roads within urban areas is concerned, it should be said that the PGM maintained the impact of the previous plans, which was coherent with the objective of reducing built-up density and improving the existing urban structure.

In addition, the PGM proposed a considerable quantity of land to be set aside for green zones and public facilities which entailed the removal of numerous pieces of land from the property market.

As far as land for private initiatives is concerned – the zones –, the plan decidedly worked towards contention. Firstly, in relation to the spread of the urban sprawl into still rural areas, and secondly through the substantial reduction in permitted building heights in urban areas to avoid problem of building congestion.

It should also be added that the regulations documents – plans and regulations – were significantly more precise than general plans usually were. The Plan clearly determinedly expressed the setting of the city onto its land and provided the regulations in order to carry this out.

Without forgetting quantitative factors such as land standards for green areas and public facilities, the plan expressed a clear will in a physical sense through the lines it drew.

The new city councils were conscious of the value of the general planning project that they had inherited and did not all fall into the trap of revising it. The existence of the Metropolitan Corporation presided over by the Major of Barcelona, decidedly helped in the first stages. This was in spite of the mistrust of some local councils towards this institution. Thus, a general agreement was reached by the municipalities encompassed in the scope of the PGM because they saw it a more than useful tool for the urban project of democracy.

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Nevertheless, the plan had to be studied intelligently, as although its basic principles could be respected, this did not mean freedom did not exist to find more appropriate alternatives depending on the specific moment and space. Naturally, without this affecting the general level of cohesion (in space or in time) of the PGM.

The nature of the Metropolitan General Plan as an instrument for town planning established by urban legislation, along with the precision of the PGM's own decisions meant that its development in partial urban projects often has required the PGM to be modified on numerous occasions since its inception.

This high number of modifications that has been necessary could have led to the belief, for some years now, in the obsolescence of the PGM, but a totally different interpretation is surely more accurate. On the one hand, it can be said that the plan was a good quality global project as it has undergone numerous modifications without its essence being affected. Furthermore, it has been noted that beyond the often unnecessary conflicts between the Generalitat de Catalunya (Autonomous Government of Catalonia) and the local councils, leading to modifications in the PGM, the general management of the project, carried out on two institutional levels, enjoys a clear positive balance: it has given rise to a large number of proposals with specific logical plans without questioning the fundamental basis of town planning in this area.

This capacity to be modified is surely one of the keys to its prolonged existence. These modifications can be understood as deformations of the plan's general structure that, just as occurs with the structures of buildings, absorbs loads caused by its use and so avoids collapse. In the explanation of Barcelona's town planning project's sequence since 1979 it has been necessary, as a starting point to recognise PGM as the basic reference point of project.

Town Planning projects in the urban sector: the PERI

The general town planning contained in the General Metropolitan Plan, evidently did not, in spite of its precise nature, exhaust the city's urban project, but rather the opposite happened. The PGM was a starting point for projects that were being developed, adjusted and also modified. Firstly, let us consider those projects that were based on a close-up vision of space, and that therefore would cover limited areas – the sector – but allow considerations of aspects which are perceptible on a global scale. Among these type of special projects the special plans for interior reforms – the PERI¹ – are especially worthy of note.

The interest of Barcelona City Council in town planning projects of the sector was based on the concern of the new democratic councils shown for the city in the first years of their existence. The period in which the PERI enjoyed their most important role with municipal policy – especially in the process of drawing-up projects and the public debate – was between 1980 and 1986. This municipal democratisation is consistent with a concern to improve the existing city for different reasons: the recuperation of a city council that represented the interest of citizens, leads, in first place to an increase the level of self-respect of the citizens as a group. This makes this group more sensitive to the needs of improving the urban environment. Secondly, different people who took part in the campaigning neighbourhood groups during the last years of the Francoist councils, joined the democratic city council as councillors or experts. Finally, it should not be forgotten that at this moment in time, cultural winds of change within European urbanism were

¹ Instrument included in town planning legislation to order, in a precise way, the specific scope or urban areas, in a similar manner to the partial plans in urbanisable land.

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leading to the defence and recuperation of home values of the European City – remember the Brussels Charter, the proposals of the Krier brothers, Berlin's IBA, etc.

In this context, the municipal concern for the existing city at the beginning of eighties took two parallel paths: actions within available space – public space and purchased sites – and the formulation of plans for interior reform.

The specific town planning and improvement actions in the urban fabric with the creation of new squares, parks and public facilities represented an expression of the urbanistic objectives of the new city council and a demonstration of the efficiency the democracy itself represented. This range of small and medium actions to improve the urban fabric often served as an argument for the discrediting of a supposed plan with obsolete figures and standards, against a true urbanism of actions. In spite of the fact that the PGM was not classifiable as a plan of this type, it was affected somewhat by this campaign to discredit the planning, in the sense that sometimes it was blamed as an obstacle to be overcome. However, a wider perspective clearly demonstrates that without the framework of a general plan, it would have been difficult to carry out many of the actions that took place.

The PERI also participated somewhat in arriving at this position. Firstly, and to a certain degree, by adopting a revisionist attitude. The PERI were instruments that translated the inevitable uniformist decisions of the large scale General Plan to the specific conditions of the sector. This objective took on a complex dimension that gave the PERI an importance that went beyond that of a simple instrument for urban planning:

- Firstly, the PERI was often a medium for the affirmation of the uniqueness of the neighbourhood over the general regulations of the PGM.
- It was also a vehicle that channelled the demands of neighbours, especially for green areas, public facilities and the conservation of spaces and important buildings not considered by the PGM.
- In some cases, it was also an instrument of opposition to specific impacts – basically the road network – proposed or conserved by the PGM.

These factors – quite frequent in many cases – gave the PERI a defensive role in the most immediate spatial values and in short-term objectives against the breadth of scope and long-term vision of the PGM.

For this reason, the PERI developed in many places not originally foreseen by the PGM: coming sometimes from the demands of neighbourhood associations, that felt that a neighbourhood without a PERI would be forgotten and at a disadvantage against a plan seen as too general.

According to this logic, the PERI were also an instrument for real urbanism compared to the bureaucratic urbanism of figures, standards and impacts. Thus, immediate results were often expected – this confidence in the PERI as a rapid solution to all the problems in the urban environment – was undoubtedly the origin of many disappointments that in fact were really the loss of innocence. Citizens finally realised that there are often no easy, quick solutions to the reform of urban areas and that these solutions almost always carry with them a high cost, and resources are always scarce. Thus, over time, the PERI that have been redefined and readjusted have regained their more aseptic instrumental image.

The fact that the PERI were often written in the style of 1980's planning is not unconnected to the phenomenon of the meanings given at the time to the PERI. This style was especially reflected in the graphical design of the proposals. The proposals were intentionally

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designed to put forward an ideal urban situation, leading to citizens' objectives that were often merely intuitive. This clearly made them feel closer and in touch with the general public.

In any case, it should be noted the positive nature of the provision of images, often with distant aspirations or reminders of pending actions. However, they have always been means of exhibition of the specific planning objectives in that place, both to value and carry them out, or to change them.

The materialisation of the planned PERI proposals has been varied. The conditions of place, the viability of the project, and the resources employed in each case have influenced the degree of execution that can be seen today.

The proposals of the PERI represent a development of the town planning projects of the PGM. It is easy to see the difference between the PGM's project surveying and surveying when the PERI were involved. The enrichment of town planning and the improvement in the viability of these proposals represents an undeniable advance in the city's urban project. Some proposals have been carried out, some will be carried out, and others will have to be reconsidered. It should not be forgotten that the city's urban project is a living project while the city exists, and the materialisation of these proposals, especially those that affect the urban fabric, frequently require time and successive project attempts.

As can be deduced from the above, in this chapter we refer to a specific type of PERI: those dealing with significant sectors or neighbourhoods of the city, whose initiative generally corresponds to the beginning of the 1980's. Other PERI's, those of a generally limited scope that had a purely instrumental reach are not considered. Others not included include those, which have been more common recently, having the objective to remodel large areas in a clear state of obsolescence. These will be dealt with later.

Main PERI's

PERI	DOCUMENTS		
	(1) Plans and projects	(2) Plans up to 92	(3) The second renewal
<i>Ciutat Vella</i>			
- Raval*	??	??	
- Sector Oriental	??	??	
- Barceloneta	??	??	
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Plans for the Passeig de Zona Franca	??	??	

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Traditional Neighbourhoods

- Gràcia		
1st more ambitious version	??	
2nd version of action units		??
- Sants-Hostafrancs	??	??
- El Vapor Vell		??
- Poble Sec		??
- Sant Andreu (studies not approved)		??
- Horta		??
- Prosperitat		??

Plans for the Carmel	??	??
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Self-construction Neighbourhoods

- Torre Baró	??	
- Vallbona		??
- Roquetes		??
- Can Caralleu		??
- Sant Genes		??

Latest Neighbourhood Plans

- Porta		??
- La Clota		??
- Trinitat Vella		??

*With the example of the Liceo Project in the Seminary, expressing the form of architectural intervention in the city's urban fabric.

Sources: (1) ÀREA D'URBANISME (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA), *Plans i projectes per a Barcelona: 1981-1982*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1983, 297 pp., (2) SERVEIS DE PLANEJAMENT URBANÍSTIC (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA), *Urbanisme a Barcelona. Plans cap al 92*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1987, 194 pp., (3) AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA, *Barcelona. La segona renovació*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1996, 222 pp.

The urban projects of the city: the search for global reference points

The urban sector projects had a leading role in the first stage of democratic urban planning, in as much as they were assimilated and accepted instruments for the PGM's proposals. In addition, the projects and actions in public space – squares, parks, the re-urbanisation of some streets, etc. – in the period were the most obvious signs of the will for tangible action that the new city council enjoyed was between 1980 and 1982.

As from 1982, with the formalisation of the first ideas of the Olympic project, a new order of actions was considered. The scale of the city as a global context reappeared in which new actions for the city's transformation were conceived. Thus, without ignoring the effect of positive "metastasis"² of regeneration of the urban fabric with emphasis placed on "small scale" operations for urban improvement spread around the city, and without also ignoring the objectives for town planning expressed in the "intermediate stage"³ of the PERI, as from 1982 various projects appeared that could be termed as strategic. This is because a certain strategic vision for the global transformation of the city is inherent in them.

It is the "great projects for the city" that complement the piece-meal action of the "plans for the great city"⁴. Of special note is the Olympic project, the proposal of areas of new centrality and the road-network plan.

The urban project of the Olympic games⁵ is the first that took shape from ideas that, in synthesis, wished to take advantage of the capacity of urban transformation and improvement implying an event of this type in order to:

- Open the city to the sea
- Distribute spatially the improvement and re-equip its sporting facilities
- Promote communication infrastructures, especially the road-network.

It is clear that these objectives expressed the will that the city as a whole should take a great leap forward.

The opening of the city to the sea, with its standard bearer of the new *moll de la Fusta*, in project at the time, required a full scale operation on the eastern seaward side. Here, the city still conserved an undeniable potential for urban renewal.

In this sense, the location of the future Olympic Village along the coast, on the axis of Marina Street had a clear strategic intention for the city, because it opened a potential axis of communication with a renewed coastal space. Only an objective of this scope could justify the risk of this decision in a transformation operation that would have a permanent impact.

It should be remembered that, although in the municipality of Barcelona there are no many available pieces of land with sufficient capacity to site 3,500 homes, the metropolitan vocation of the Games, reflected in the distribution of sports installations in various municipalities, helped to find a location for the village that would not compromise the already existing structures and would not affect the general infrastructure – trains, ring-roads, and sewers. However, it is

² As per Oriol Bohigas in ÀREA D'URBANISME (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA), *Plans i projectes per a Barcelona, 1981-1982*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1983, 297 pp. [Under leadership of Oriol Bohigas].

³ As per Joan Busquets en SERVEIS DE PLANEJAMENT URBANÍSTIC (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA), *Urbanisme a Barcelona. Plans cap al 92*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1987, 194 pp., [Under leadership of Joan Busquets].

⁴ As per Busquets in SERVEIS DE PLANEJAMENT URBANÍSTIC, *Urbanisme a Barcelona...*

⁵ SERVEIS DE PLANEJAMENT URBANÍSTIC, *Urbanisme a Barcelona...*

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clear that in this case the strategic value as a factor of general transformation would have been seriously affected.

In addition to the Village, the space of the Games was distributed within the Barcelona municipality in three further Olympic areas. In these three cases, although their scope was uneven and without the dimensions of the Olympic Village, their location was proposed taking into account the regenerative effects that could occur in each area in a significant part of the city.

In Montjuïc, the objective was to complete the urbanisation of the mountain; the most important urban park of the city. These new installations would strengthen its functional role in the city and the celebration of the Olympic Games would reinforce its meaning in the citizens' collective imagination. In this case, it was quite clear that any spatial planning of the Olympic Games must include Montjuïc.

If in Montjuïc the proposal led to the formation of citizens space in the mountain, in the Vall d'Hebron the idea was to turn around the process of formation of a urban fabric which was more or less peripheral of the city that was taking over the area. On the one hand, the actions would re-equip the area, while the strategic situation in relation to the road-needs forecast of the Ronda de Dalt ring-road and also the Horta tunnel would allow the services that the new sports installations would provide to be more easily within reach.

Thus, the town planning in this area was characterised by a vanguardist model that proposed new regulations and even tested new materials for the treatment of urban space. The inclusion of new public facilities such as the re-construction of the pavilion República del Grup d'Artistes i Tècnics Catalans pel Progrés de l'Arquitectura Contemporània (GATCPAC) and the provision of various well-placed sculptures in these new urban spaces was a clear example of the integration in the periphery by means of actions that can be understood as included in the concept of *monumentalisation*.

Less important for reasons easily understood, the development of the area of Diagonal – that with a good criteria attempted to incorporate numerous existing sports installations in this area into the programme of the Games – brought forth town planning norms to a confused space in the meeting points of the municipalities of Barcelona, Esplugues and L'Hospitalet. It should also be added that the construction of the Juan Carlos I hotel reinforced the presence of this area in the western gate of the city.

The model of these four Olympic areas, that attempted to take advantage of the beneficial effects of the reforms due to the Games in four unique zones of the city, that were to a lesser or greater extent, to become diffusion nuclei of the city's improvement, generated another project in the same line: the areas of new centrality.⁶

This project, prepared before Barcelona's nomination for the Olympic Games in 1986, set out ten areas of the city as proposals of new centrality in the sense of spaces in which it was considered opportune to favour a certain concentration of service-sector uses and public facilities in order to create new reference points in the geography in the central areas of the city. It is clear that none of these areas wished to compete with the principal, historic centre of Barcelona; Ciutat Vella and Eixample. Instead, they formed a necessary complement that would have an articulating and focalising role of the urban fabric, beyond the possibilities of the old municipalities due to their compact historical nature. In one sense, the areas of the new centrality were not alternative

⁶ ÀREA DE URBANISMO Y OBRAS PÚBLICAS Y ÁREA DE RELACIONES CIUDADANAS (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA), *Àrees de nova centralitat. New downtowns in Barcelona*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1991, 71 pág., [bajo la coordinación de Joan Busquets]; SERVICIOS DE PLANEAMIENTO URBANÍSTICO, *Urbanisme a Barcelona...*

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proposals to the centres of Sant Andreu, Horta, Sarrià, etc., whose importance had been reinforced as a result of the decentralisation of the municipal Administration's districts, but that rather the areas of the new centrality (ANC) provided conditions of location of central uses. The only alternative to these were the Eixample and outskirts locations.

The consideration of the Olympic areas as part of this project, made possible by these areas' diverse nature, was in addition, a way of maintaining the sense of the Olympic project, that for calendar reasons should have been started before 1986, if Barcelona had not been nominated to organise the Games.

Is it also important to note that the concept of these areas of new centrality can be considered as an evolution of the idea of directional centres that the PGM proposed, according to the 1970 Italian model, but with more importance in terms of implantation and impact on the centrality's structure, it attempted at the same time to redistribute the central uses of the metropolitan area. In Barcelona specifically, the PGM considered a directional centre in the Renfe-Meridiana sector taking advantage of the abandoned railway land; and a second centre, Provençana-Litoral, that was later to receive the name of Diagonal Mar sector (including with it the movement of the great MACOSA industry). These two areas were also included in the ANC proposal.

A total of ten areas were proposed in the project. Two of them were Olympic areas: Vall d'Hebron and Vila Olímpica (the other two, Montjuïc and Diagonal, due to their exclusive content in public facilities were only added as numbers eleven and twelve). A further two, were the previously mentioned directional centres of the PGM. Two more were special road connection spaces along the axis of Gran Via: around Glòries and Cerdà squares. Another two were found close to the two central stations, one already existing and the other to be open in the future, of the city's basic railway layout: Tarragona and Sagrera streets. Another area took advantage of the renewal of spaces on the natural extension axis of the service sector – Diagonal – and finally, Port Vell was also an area of new centrality that represented the clear will to integrate it into the city's leisure activity and into the service sector in general.

A common factor of these areas was that they all enjoyed spatial conditions that allowed them to take in new types of buildings for the service sector and public facilities, either because sufficient empty space was available or because the use of the space had become obsolete allowing urban renewal. In the majority of cases, the railway and public transport infrastructure, both already existing or considered for the future, gave these areas a clear view that they were to have a more relevant function in the city as a whole. Nevertheless, it should also be said that these areas had a diverse content and a variety of different owners and that therefore, the operations and timing of the development could be quite variable.

Another aspect that should be noted is that the use proposed for these areas within the ANC project was not, in any case, discordant with the uses and building regulations that the PGM permitted. Thus, it can be said that this project was implicit in the PGM, as it could be developed from this base through area by area actions. This is true, but it does not reduce the importance of the project of new centrality areas. What this project has given is the construction of ideas of distribution for the new centres throughout the whole city that undoubtedly increased the meaning of any of these actions. But this is not all. It is also important to recognise the ANC project for its notable pedagogical value, in terms of the space of the city as an option for the implantation of activities. It is clear that the concept of ANC and the project itself have been etched onto the consciousness of both operators and citizens. This has been a very useful tool for the understanding of Barcelona's urban structure.

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An area of new centrality that deserves special mention due to its specific nature is Port Vell. It has enjoyed spectacular success among citizens, with a critical attitude for sectors and professionals qualified in urbanism and also from many socially-relevant persons.

This criticism have sometimes been demagogical and unrealistic – “the buildings do not let us see the sea” –, but in other cases the criticism has been more conceptual and serious – “a port is by its essence an empty space; full spaces are the city and this should be surrounded by emptiness, with its important role; the introduction of certain uses trivialises such a singular space; the buildings of the dock affect the image of Barcelona’s sea front”. To an extent, it is difficult to not agree with such criticisms and, therefore they should be accepted. However, in a global evaluation of these actions, it should not be forgotten that everything that the Port Vell operation has represented. It was carried out by a body that was not the City Council, and was a factor for improvement and revitalisation of all its surrounding area where in addition urban spaces of extraordinary interest had taken shape.

Another area in which Barcelona made great effort to provide a planned reference point beyond that established by the PGM was in the road network. It should be added, in this case, that it was a necessary job as, among the decisions that the City Council took in the first years of Democracy the decision to suppress various impacts due to reservations of land for main roads. We mention the road from Drassanes to Raval, the Cambó avenue at the eastern sector of Ciutat Vella, or the via O in Gràcia and the continuation of the first ring-road in Horta, Sant Andreu and Sant Martí, that was implicitly denied by the demolition of half a viaduct of the final stretch that was built at the time and by the connection with the rest by the Rovira tunnel.

In order to debate the criteria for a new road-network proposal, the Barcelona City Council and the Metropolitan Corporation organised in 1984 a seminary,⁷ with the notable participation of experts, specialists and politicians involved. Its conclusions reinforced the thesis of the interdependence between; the road network and the built-up urban fabric, the role of the road-network as an integrating factor in the urban space, and the value of arterial elements as distributors that strengthened the secondary network rather than access roads.

In this seminary, the work of the Barcelona Road-Network Plan⁸ were presented. This made road and urban actions in the city a global reference point. This plan had the function of an internal reference point because, although it moderated it and gave greater urbanity to the PGM road network proposal by introducing in it various changes, no modification to the PGM was included to increase its level to an official proposal. It should be understood that the framework of the PGM with more reservations of land, gave room for the plan’s road-network proposals. The adaptation of road networks to the urban fabric, one of its principles, would be carried out, as urban actions were made in the corresponding sectors, the general plan would be adapted. This technique, that was later to be applied in other cases – the Coastal plan, Collserola, etc. –, allowed the bringing together of the necessary stability of the framework for general planning with a fruitful process of successive approaches that are, in substance, the urban projects.

⁷ *Les vies de Barcelona. Materials del seminari de maig de 1984*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona i Corporació Metropolitana de Barcelona, 1984, 57 pp., [Under the leadership of Joan Busquets y José L. Gómez Ordóñez].

⁸ *Les vies de Barcelona...*

The metropolitan urban projects

As has been shown, in 1974 the Barcelona Metropolitan Corporation (CMB) was created with powers of urban action within the scope of PGM. This institution was abolished in 1987 by the Catalan Parliament with the approval of the Town Planning Laws.

During its years of existence, the CMB extrapolated at a metropolitan level the ideas and urban criteria of the new democratic councils. Especially interesting contributions came from the Barcelona City Council, but there were also ones from smaller town councils.

It should be remembered that the government bodies of the CMB were made up of representatives from the municipalities (generally direct representatives or provincial deputies). It should also be noted that it was the mayor of Barcelona who presided over the six years of this institution's existence.

It is important to note the interesting aspect of the nature and role of this body. The CMB had the role of town planning commission in everything connected to the approval of partial and special plans of the municipalities. The powers it in terms of planning obliged a type of self-control in urban proposals, as in fact it was the municipalities of the metropolitan area that together considered the pertinence or not of plans presented by each one of them.

Undoubtedly, throughout its existence, norms of behaviour in the municipalities, above and beyond the talent of some mayors, managed to consolidate the sense of belonging to a unique urban reality. In spite of the break-up of the CMB and its fragmentation into specialist bodies, it has allowed the maintenance of a metropolitan nexus through the creation of a voluntary association of municipalities.

It should be pointed out that the annual availability of an investment fund from the general budget of the Spanish State, also contributed to this maintenance of formulas for metropolitan co-operation. These quantities have been received based on the consideration that the area's municipalities as whole constituted a metropolitan reality in terms of population and intensity comparable with what in Madrid is a single municipality. It was therefore necessary to find a way to even out these contributions from the state per inhabitant in terms of inter-regional compensation. However, once the CMB was dissolved, these funds ended up in each municipality and it is now the municipalities that voluntarily contribute towards the association of municipalities. In addition to acting as a regulating body for municipal urban planning, the CMB also carried out its own urban action. The principal reference point of the action was naturally the PGM that took in its scope of action exactly.

The planned position of the CMB in the area was to consider the scope of the real city. Without ignoring its true extension, which should probably be estimated as larger, it was a more urbanistically-consistent area than that of each municipality. This scope required and permitted other ways of focussing. Nevertheless, municipal realities should not be forgotten, – these had been logically strengthened by democratic representation in the local councils.

The two fronts of the PGM's urban development projects – sector and city or municipality projects – (discussed above for Barcelona), have also been featured to a different extent in the metropolitan area's municipalities. The PERI's, with similar meanings to those noted for Barcelona, have been present in all the municipalities: the city's projects have also been present in diverse forms in the most important municipalities.

The CMB had to develop its urban activities with special consideration for municipal initiatives, a fact that was seen most in municipalities with the lowest level of technical capacity.

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In this context the CMB focused the planned contribution in three principal ways:

- The creation of metropolitan parks,⁹
- The construction of road nexus,¹⁰
- Area projects.¹¹

The creation of metropolitan parks corresponds rather well to an extension of the policy to create new parks in the metropolitan sphere – Escorxador, Espanya Industrial, la Creueta del Coll, etc. –, that the Barcelona City Council introduced during its early years. It can be said that the first park-building programme started by the CMB in 1982 – Torreblanca, Besòs, Can Solei, Torrerroja, etc. – the reference point of the still-to-be-finished actions of the Barcelona City Council took a very prominent role. The metropolitan park programme lasted throughout CMB's existence, with parks including les Planes, Can Mercader, Central de Sant Vicens, del Molinet, litoral del Besòs, etc., and has continued into the present with AMB Federation of Municipalities creating Les Aigües, Can Massot, el Turonet, la Muntanyeta, Parc Nou, etc.

The park-building programme of the metropolitan institutions (initially termed metropolitan parks due to the ignorance of which was its operating body) set out literally to monumentalise the periphery. Clearly, the periphery in the metropolitan area was especially extensive – in the sense of these urban areas that have never reached the level of quality that the word periphery implies. In this sense, the action of the CMB towards parks was not so much based on dealing with parks of a certain size, but rather of concentrating principally on the distribution of parks on an urban scale in a space of the metropolitan area beyond the limits of Barcelona with the clear intention to extend the “monumentalisation” to the whole periphery of the metropolitan area.

The creation of road nexus was centred on building inter-municipal road mechanisms, fundamental for the improvement in a metropolitan road network that until 1976 had been developed in a very piecemeal manner. It should be pointed out that this was a assignment typical of a metropolitan administration, as they were mechanisms that clearly exceeded the reach of municipal actions, but that at the same time, did not form part of network controlled by higher-level authorities. The construction of some bridges, such as over the River Besòs between Sant Adrià and Badalona, the river Ripoll between Ripollet and Cerdanyola or over the ravine Els Gorgs in the Parc Tecnològic del Vallès (Vallès Technological Park), obviously responds to the need to connect road networks. However, it does not ignore the potential of bridges to be transformed into monuments as potent and unique formal reference points.

As far as planned projects are concerned, mention should be given to two especially significant proposals: the Coastal Plan and Special Plan for Collserola.

Those parts of the metropolitan area with a clear geographical definition are re-projected within the framework of the General Plan – studied with the flexibility that a large area

⁹ DIRECCIÓ DE SERVEIS D'URBANISME (CORPORACIÓ METROPOLITANA DE BARCELONA), *Projectar la ciutat metropolitana: obres, plans i projectes 1981-1986*, Barcelona, Corporació Metropolitana de Barcelona, 1987, 255 pp., [co-ordinated by Juli Esteban].

¹⁰ DIRECCIÓ DE SERVEIS D'URBANISME (CMB), *Projectar la ciutat...*

¹¹ DIRECCIÓ DE SERVEIS D'URBANISME (CMB), *Projectar la ciutat...; CORPORACIÓ METROPOLITANA DE BARCELONA, Pla de costes. Proposta d'ordenació de la zona costanera metropolitana de Barcelona*, Barcelona, Corporació Metropolitana de Barcelona, 1987, 227 pp., [co-ordinated by Lluís Cantalops]; PATRONAT METROPOLITÀ DEL PARC DE COLLSEOLA, *Parc de Collserola. Pla especial d'ordenació i protecció del medi natural: realitzacions 1983-1989*, Barcelona, Mancomunidad de Municipios del Área Metropolitana de Barcelona, 1990, 163 pp., [under the leadership of Miquel Sodupe].

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allows—: the 40 Km of coast and the 6,500 Ha of the Collserola massif designated as forest park by the PGM.

These projects were followed by others such as the planning of rural space or the integrated planning of space and infrastructure that was tested for the valley plain and Delta del Llobregat. The disappearance of the CMB led these latter studies to have a weaker formalisation and impact. However, a notable lucidity can be seen in some matters that have still not been totally resolved some ten years later.

The Coastal Plan

As has already been said, the coast within the limits of the PGM is some 40Km long. Aside from the different land uses and conditions, its proximity to the sea gave this strip an undeniable uniqueness and a clear potential for improvement.

The drawing-up of the Coastal Plan¹² was began in 1983, at the same time as:

- The city had been rediscovered as a leisure space with a growing demand for different possibilities of city and metropolitan leisure.
- The Northern Stretch of coast enjoyed clean water as evidenced by the eastside sewers.
- The possibilities for the regular regeneration of beaches by means of marine sands was becoming better known and its probable unsustainability was not suspected.
- The initial project of the Olympic Games (Cuyàs Report 1982) proposed significant interventions along the coastal strip, especially, the Olympic Village, as an operation for the recuperation of coastal space by means of a significant operation of residential re-modelling.

In this context, the Coastal Plan was, firstly, an instrument of knowledge and dissemination of the metropolitan coast's potential.

It should be said that initially the Plan was considered with significantly more managerial scope. In a moment of strong dynamism for action by the CMB, the possibility was considered that the coastal strip should be a territorial unit of metropolitan management. It was soon seen that this was impossible. In addition to the extension of scope, obliging a separation of actions, this took in urban spaces that were too significant for some of the municipalities. Thus, the respective consortiums gave up direct management over these spaces in favour of a hypothetical single municipal management.

Considered in strict planning terms there were also signs that the largest councils having more weight with their criteria. The clearest example was the planning of the Olympic Village. It was drawn up parallel to the Coastal Plan, but by another team and finally adopted urban criteria that were clearly different to the characteristics of the proposed fabric. However, coherence with some basic obvious criteria was kept (urban ring-road, Marina axis, etc). It is clear that all of this represented a significant reduction in the initial objectives of the Plan, but it cannot be said that it was a failed attempt.

Firstly, it should be pointed out what can be defined as its epistemological role as it helped the discovery of metropolitan coastal land and expressed in valued images its possibilities for change.

In relation to the most immediate urban functioning, it should be stated that the Coastal Plan:

¹² CORPORACIÓ METROPOLITANA DE BARCELONA, *Pla de costes. Proposta...*

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- It constructed the group discourse upon which the specific transformation proposals of various key points along the marine front such as, Barrau in Montgat and Unió Vidriera, Campsa and Cros in Badalona.
- It explained the areas and contents of the various possible operations in a process of the urban recuperation of the coast.

Thus, I believe that after the Coastal Plan a different concept was developed of the reality and potential for the metropolitan coastal strip, that undoubtedly influenced positively in the on-going process of the transformation of this space.

The Collserola Project

The zones which belong to the Collserola range of hills and which are classified in the general plan as forested parkland occupy approximately 6,500 ha. It can be said that the totality of the zones included in the Collserola geographical area constitutes about 20% of the area included in the PGM.

It is clear that the two factors size and morphology demanded a specialised treatment for the area, which is also extremely important in the traditional leisure activities of the municipal regions which surround it.

A stage prior to this project was a process for strengthening the identity of this area, which peaked in 1982 when a series of Collserola workshops and conferences were held. This process was necessary in order to become familiar with the scale of the range of hills which is neither that of Montseny – which is also metropolitan forested parkland and which had a special plan back in 1972 – nor that of Montjuïc, which is Barcelona's large urban park.

Tailoring the project to address the scale of Collserola was not achieved immediately. The metropolitan government was especially concerned with the image of intense large-scale urban transformation which was to be carried out in order to prepare the city for the Olympic Games – for which Barcelona was still only a candidate – and it was understood that Collserola had to be converted into a park using similar methods. This is where the suggestion which was made at one point, that Ricardo Bofill's team should be in charge of designing the project for Collserola came from.

Once the nature of the problem was understood, the management of Collserola grew progressively out of hand, as compromises were looked for between the differing degrees of interest in it from a naturalist standpoint, for the conservation and the improvement of the traditional landscape, and for the conditioning of a network of routes and places to be used more intensely by the citizens.

I believe that the Plan for Collserola¹³ provides a vision which complemented that of the PGM. While in the latter, Collserola was the central void which was respected from the urban environment, in the Collserola Special Plan (PEC), it was the new observatory from which to evaluate the fabric and the new structures which were implanted in the urban areas which surrounded it. In this way a document which provides different visions of the categories of forested areas, urban belt, and the various general elements (the Horta tunnel, the cornice route, etc.) which motivated some of the alternatives to the ideas of the PGM, is produced.

¹³ PATRONAT METROPOLITÀ DEL PARC DE COLLSEROLA, *Parc de Collserola. Pla Especial...*

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In the case of the Collserola Special Plan (PEC) a form of coexistence between decisions which did not coincide, was set out. Some of the proposals of the PEC – such as the unifying of general forest classifications – stimulated the introduction of changes into the PGM. Others coexisted, such as those aspects related to the routes mentioned above; the aspects of the PGM which referred to routes remained in effect while those in the PEC were considered suggestions for the future, although they were backed up by the ideas in the Special Plan.

I believe that it was a good criterion, supported by the Urban Planning General Management, not to carry out any modifications to the PGM which were not specifically required for the immediate work at hand. And also to accept the different proposals which formed part of what could be the Park Declaration, which expressed a willingness to be, but did not create any different long-term general urban links.

In relation to the Coasts Plan, we wish to emphasise that in Collserola it was possible to define an area for unitary management and the creation of a metropolitan entity which was specifically responsible for carrying this out; the *Patronat Metropolità de Collserola* (Metropolitan Patronage of Collserola). The reasons which meant it was possible to carry it out were related to its size, its peripheral position compared to the areas at the centre of the municipal areas which make it up, and also to its morphological distinctness. These two different ways to act when considering two different territorial projects which concern the same area, demonstrate the need for an understanding of the context of each project and of the significance of them both for the municipal areas which the CMB requires in order to act in an urban setting.

The Restoration and Improvement of Urban Buildings

One defining characteristic of the urban spaces in our cities is that the land is divided into two complimentary and mutually exclusive categories: the network of public spaces, and the plots of land which are divided up by these. The former represent the spaces through and along which we can move, and via which we can access the buildings. They are also where the buildings receive light and ventilation from, and from where we can see the façades and shapes of the buildings. This is to say, that they are where we perceive the architecture of the city from. The spaces which these public areas divided up and define, are basically the plots of land that the buildings occupy. In contrast to the public spaces, these plots of land make up the filling of the urban space, and they are characterised by private use, although some buildings are in fact public.

The degree of consolidation of the urban design made up of the network of public spaces and the plots of land which they divide, changes according to the different areas of the city. In some parts of the city it can be said that the distinction is completely consolidated, in the Eixample for example. In other parts it is somewhat less consolidated, to the extent that the PERIs express the aim of changing some to the configuration – as would be the case of the Ciutat Vella and to a lesser degree other PERIs which have been mentioned. Finally there are areas which, due to the possibility of a considerable degree of remodelling, should not be considered as consolidated, as is the case of the areas dealt with in the following section.

In the non-consolidated urban areas in which substantial changes to the order of the area are expected, the characteristics of the overall renovation of the area – although normally carried out sequentially – are determined by new projects.

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In the other parts of the city, which without doubt are the majority, the proposals for renovation are divided between those which are aimed at public spaces and those which are aimed at the plots which are built up.

The remodelling of many of the public spaces which already exist in the city, along with the creation of new spaces which resulted from the urban planning, have been a central theme in the urban transformation of Barcelona.¹⁴

This chapter concentrates on the actions which were designed to restore and improve the greatest number of the built up parts of the city, actions which should be seen as forming part of the urban plan for Barcelona – as far as it supports the maintenance of the characteristic features of the buildings and image of Barcelona – but which does not correspond with what we would normally consider to be part of a conventional urban planning project – for example the PERI project – which would normally go no further than the graphic representation of the desired urban order.

It should be added that, in spite of the attention which it has been possible to pay to the sum of the city's buildings in these years of considerable urban transformation, the situation of the buildings is not that which corresponds to the quality which has been reached in the public spaces. The legislation on urban letting and tenants which was in force up to 1995 is responsible, to large extent, for this situation. This is particularly true in a city like Barcelona where the percentage of dwellings which are let, more than 30%, is much higher than the average for other Spanish cities.

By definition, the project for the process of restoration and improving the urban buildings is concerned most directly with spaces, the majority of which are under private ownership. In these spaces any action must be carried out, in principal, with the collaboration of the owners.

In general we can distinguish three types of actions which represent different means and degrees of involvement of the owners:

- Campaigns and programmes to encourage the private owner to act, where the techniques employed are based on persuasion.
- Rules and regulation which the private owner is obliged to follow.
- Direct action by the Administration, substituting the action of the private owner.

The campaigns have tried to combine the creation of a climate of participation with the provision of economic incentives for the actions of private owners. The exemplary campaign of this type has been "Barcelona posa't guapa" (Barcelona, look smart), which has been underway since 1986 and which has been responsible for the creation of the Agency for the Urban Landscape.

As is clear from the title, the campaign is directed specifically at improving the existing image of the city. The argument was based on the concept of urban landscape, that is to say, it was centred on the qualitative value of the images which the city provides us with.

¹⁴ ÀREA D'URBANISME (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA), *Plans i projectes ...*; ÀREA D'URBANISME I OBRES PÚBLIQUES (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA) and FUNDACIÓ JOAN MIRÓ, *Barcelona, espais i escultures 1982-1986*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona (Materials de disseny urbà, 11), 1987, p. 167, [coordination by Lluís Hortet and Miquel Adrià, with Josep A. Acebillo as director of Projectes Urbans]; REGIDORIA DE PROGRAMACIÓ I PRESSUPOSTOS (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA), *Imatges del procés de transformació urbana. Barcelona 1987-1992*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1992, p. 35, [coordination by Artur Ferrer i Escriche]; AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA, *Barcelona, espai públic. Homenatge a Josep Maria Serra Martí*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1993, p. 207, [coordination by Rafael de Cáceres and Montserrat Ferrer].

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Most of the iconographic capacity of the city resides in its buildings, or to be more precise in their outer appearance. So, with the incentive of one year's saving on the real estate tax on the building, the restoration of façades and outer walls was primarily promoted, along with some other improvements in varied aspects of the urban landscape such as gardens, fences and walls, signs, etc.

The response to this campaign has been considerable, to the point where it has become an example which it is impossible to avoid when we talk of citizen involvement, or collaboration between the public and private sectors. The overall restoration of the façades of more than 3,700 buildings is clearly noticeable around the city.

It is true that this campaign was directed at the most superficial aspects of the buildings in the city, however it should be borne in mind that the outer appearance of the buildings is none other than a public manifestation of the private domain of the city, and that it is not a matter of insignificant importance. We must also emphasise that in such cases the most important thing is to establish a dynamic of improvement. When the owners of a building improve the exterior, it will probably be accompanied by a heightened attention to the maintenance and improvement of other aspects, because the building has perceptibly moved up in the estimation of the owner and the users. On the other hand, the public announcement of every improvement has no doubt been an important factor in the improvement of the nearby buildings, and in this way there is a certain multiplying effect to the campaign.

The development of the programme "Barcelona posa't guapa" has without doubt created a very interesting model which the Agency for the Urban Landscape has continued to extend to cover other components of buildings in later campaigns: antennas, solar energy panels, etc.

Other campaigns have been aimed specifically at recovering the necessary conditions for the profitable use of buildings, through benefits to private owners for the restoration of buildings.

The restoration of pre-existing buildings is an idea which took on new life in the early years of the 1980s. The excessive waste caused by the premature demolition of buildings, together with the prolonged economic recession and a re-evaluation of the collective memory of the city, backed the ideology of conserving the city's buildings and putting them to good use.

We would like to remind you that the first legislative action taken by the Spanish state in an attempt to encourage the restoration of the buildings in the city was in 1983, and that since then, this activity has been the object of successive legislation in the years 1987, 1991 and 1993. It is likewise worth remembering that the Metropolitan Corporation approved in 1985 the metropolitan restoration regulations, which adapt the urban norms set out in the PGM to the specific terms of restoration.

Within the framework of the benefits laid out in the successive decrees, the restoration of buildings in all parts of the city has taken place, although this has been in a proportion which is insufficient to bring the overall condition of the buildings in the city up to date. On the other hand, in some projects for the overall restoration of private buildings, the possibility of the public funds being dedicated to stimulating the section of the market which the restored building will hope to attract, has been mooted. In any case it must not be forgotten that the restoration of buildings in the consolidated areas of the city provides support for the continuation of the districts of the city and that this is always in the general interest.

In Ciutat Vella the restoration carried out by private owners has reached a substantial proportion. In 1986 the Àrea de Rehabilitació Integrada –ARI– (Area for Integrated Restoration) was approved in Ciutat Vella, which made it possible to obtain loans for restoration work carried

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out within the limits of the area, at rates of interest considerably lower than those on offer in the free market at that time.

Since 1988 there has been private restoration work carried out which since 1990 has been made easier by the creation of the Office for the Restoration of Ciutat Vella. However, it should be pointed out that 80% of the investment in private restoration has been carried out on the basis of agreements between the Spanish State, the Generalitat and the City Council which were signed in 1994 and based on the judicial conditions of the 1993 decree. In these agreements, the setting up of preferential restoration sectors where the grants and benefits provided for restoration were to be centred, was laid out. These sectors have varied every two years, in such a way that in 6 years the whole of the area of Ciutat Vella which was included should be covered.

Private restoration work between 1988 and 1997 inclusive, has accounted for a total private inversion of more than 14,000 million pesetas and benefits in the form of grants of 3,150 million, and they have reached the figure of 14,800 restored commercial premises and dwellings, a figure which represents more than 20% of the private buildings in the district.

In relation to the norms and regulations, it should first be pointed out that the PGM itself has some specific effects on the conservation and improvement of the buildings in the city. The main objective of the PGM in the consolidated areas of the city, was to control the density of the population and with this goal in mind, it reduced the possibilities for the construction of buildings in the city which had been permitted up to then. In those areas of the city where the layout of the roads determines the organisation, which is the majority of the city, the possibility for the construction of buildings was reduced by several floors.

This had several different effects over time. In the first period, due to unsatisfactory control of the suspension of licenses, applications for licenses in accordance with the previous regulations increased massively between 1974 and 1976 while the general plan was being processed. These licenses became effective over the next few years, which delayed the effect of relieving the population density in the city, and caused a shortfall in the number of applications for new licenses in the following years.

Secondly, all those buildings which find themselves in the situation of having a volume which does not correspond to that set out in the PGM, have the possibility to remain in this situation for a long time, since replacing them would lead to a loss of part of the floor-space which can be built on. It could be said that most of the fabric of Barcelona is fairly compact – with only a few empty plots – and that the buildings in the city have a strong tendency to remain as they are.

Within this fabric the Eixample has a special place. The City Council commissioned a study from the Laboratori d'Urbanisme (Urban Planning Laboratory) which constituted the material that went into an exhibition which was seen at the end of 1983 in the Casa Elizalde, and which marked the beginning of a special consideration for this area of the city.¹⁵

The Eixample is an area with a very regular structure which clearly defines the structure of the public spaces –abundant roads and sparse green areas –where the use of a PERI did not make much sense as the means of remodelling the area. However, it was clear that the Eixample

¹⁵ ÀREA D'URBANISME (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA), *Estudi de l'Eixample*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1983, p. 28, [under the coordination of Joan Busquets, Laboratori d'Urbanisme de Barcelona. Catalogue of the exhibition in the Casa Elizalde, December 1983 to February 1984]; AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA, *La rehabilitació de l'Eixample 1987-1991*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1993, p. 159, [under the direction of Amador Ferrer. The collection of the exhibition in Casa Elizalde, June – July 1991].

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required a much more specific treatment than that which was possible within the framework of the PGM.

The solution was the Ordenança per a la rehabilitació de l'Eixample (The Rehabilitation of the Eixample By-law) which was passed in 1986. This by-law has defined the area of the Conjunt Especial de l'Eixample (Eixample Special Area) and within it, another smaller area which is called the Sector de Conservació (Conservation Sector).

One of the objectives of the By-law is the clearing of the area through restricting the occupation of the interior patios of the blocks by new buildings, as a first step towards liberating these spaces for community or public use. It is certainly true that for the Eixample to survive as a residential area in the face of strong competition from the rest of the metropolitan area, requires an improvement in conditions, and particularly an increase in the green areas. Projects for the liberation of the patios as a viable option for the improvement of the area were already outlined in the PGM, this was complimented by the By-law – which contained a more ambitious later outline in 1994 – and by the actions of Proeixample, a management body set up to promote and encourage improvements in this area of the city.

Another basic aim of the By-law is the protection of the Eixample as an example of the architecture of the city. It does this through the introduction of regulations which are adapted to the façades of new buildings, and through heavy restrictions on demolition within the conservation sector, and also through the creation of a consultative body, the Comissió de Manteniment i Millora de l'Eixample (Eixample Improvement and Maintenance Commission), which has as its remit to know and report on any developments which affect the space that comprises the Eixample. This commission is, due to its composition, a meeting point for the civil society involved in architecture and real estate, and the City Council, and it is therefore a mechanism which is in a position to improve the architecture of the city.

In fact architecture is what ultimately gives shape to the volumes which are governed by urban planning, so the quality of the city depends not just on the urban planning but also to a large extent on architecture as well. However, in the same way as the public Administration has full responsibility for the urban planning, so architecture –except in public buildings – is mostly the responsibility of private operators; developers, architects and users are together the people who are responsible for the architecture which defines the urban volumes contained within the public spaces.

But we must not forget that architecture is a substantial component of the city project and so the City Council should – as indeed it has – set about the objective of improving the architectural quality of the urban buildings.

In the first place, this is done through the preservation of valuable architectural heritage. To this end the general regulations for the protection of the artistic-historic heritage of the city of Barcelona were drawn up and approved. They contain lists of buildings which are subjected to varying degrees of protection. These regulations also include the Eixample as an area to protect, and include, in its entirety, the specific By-law for its protection and improvement which was mentioned previously.

Secondly, it is done through the establishment of form regulations for buildings, as is also set out in the By-law for the restoration and improvement of the Eixample which is an important example of this type of document. This is a complex form of action, in which the decisions are always open to argument. That is why the Commission is a necessary complement for any regulations of this type, because it can adapt the application of the criteria, such as why it is an area of cultural importance, to the concurrent sensibilities.

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And finally, there is a type of action which it is difficult to regulate and which must be used with prudence, that must be mentioned. That is to convince the important real estate developers to work with good architects. This type of action, which has also provided noticeable results in Barcelona, would not be possible without a fourth type of action which is the improvement of the quality of the architecture in the public domain.

The buildings which are commissioned by the public administration – whether they are buildings for installations of some kind or housing – also form part of the urban make up of the city and they often have a considerable degree of uniqueness. It is clear that the architecture of public buildings has to set an example, and that public architecture – particularly that which is commissioned by the City Council but also by other administrations – has throughout these years maintained a level of quality which is quite high.

If we can take the quality of a public buildings – whether institutional or for installations – for granted, given their symbolic value, we must point out that in the field of public housing, the quality has also been quite high. It can certainly be claimed that it has been of average quality in spite of the limitations which have been placed on it by budget restrictions which are greater than the restrictions placed on private housing.

For these reasons the direct physical intervention of the City Council and other administrations in urban building has had an important effect on the restoration and improvement of the fabric of the city, especially due to its value as a reference point for private operators who are more numerous and diverse.

When it comes to new housing projects commissioned by public administrations, we must mention the 1,700 dwellings built in Ciutat Vella – where we should also consider 420 dwellings completely restored by public projects. Within these actions, due to their size, the land previously occupied by La Maquinista and that of the Icària avenue stand out, both of them located in Barceloneta. Outside Ciutat Vella, the promotion of housing to be let to young people near the Ronda de Dalt ring-road must be mentioned.

It should be pointed out that most of the public housing has been made available in order to substitute the old large housing estates – Baró de Viver, Eduard Aunós, Vivendes del Governador, etc. The rest of the actions which complement or form part of the established fabric of the city, certainly have not managed to cause important quantitative repercussions in the overall area of the city, mainly due to the shortage of land available. Nonetheless, the goal of architectural quality in these projects should be emphasised.

Recycling Urban Space: Urban transformation Projects after 1992

The year 1992 is a key reference point in the sequence of the urban project for Barcelona. It can certainly be said on the one hand that the urban goals for the city have continued to be the same, but on the other hand it is easy to see that the celebration of the Olympic Games in the city represents a clear change in the stage the process is at. This change came about smoothly, given that after the date mentioned many public and private works were completed which had been conceived and started beforehand, in particular those which were related to the project of new central areas: Teatre Nacional (National Theatre of Catalonia), L'Illa (a shopping centre), el Port Vell (the Old Port), etc., and which can be understood as part of the urban transformation of the city which has 1992 as its point of reference.

In parallel with the conclusion of these processes – some of which are still in progress – the urban project for Barcelona started to incorporate new aims and to adapt its progress to the new circumstances which, as we moved away from the magic date of the Games, became more noticeable.

What has been called The Second Renovation of the City was being drawn up, or as others saw it the Third, with the supposition that you could identify in the previous period two stages; that before the Games became the perspective for the project, and the period in which the project was orientated towards the date of the Games.

The main changes in the context were the disappearance of a temporal reference for the work, and the acquired public debt brought about by the previous actions, accompanied by restrictions in the drawing up of the budgets of the different administrations due to the programme for common European monetary policy. On another level, the increase in the international prestige of the city which the recognition of its management capacity represented must also be mentioned as a change, along with its recognition as a place of opportunity for international investors and also as a place with privileged conditions for the quality of life.

Using the advantages of the new position of the city meant, in the first instance, giving the necessary attention to the main communication infrastructures with Europe and the rest of the world: the airport, the port and the planned TGV, and this had to be done in a context which did not favour public spending.

On the other hand, and in so far as this report is concerned, it should also be considered that in the years after 1992 the city was becoming more aware of the evolution of other circumstances brought about by its more immediate territorial situation.

First of all the fact that land for the extension of the city had run out. In these years we see the appearance of the initiative to urbanise the Diagonal Mar sector, the last piece of land still to be developed and in fact almost the only one which the PGM had considered as urbanisable land – that is to say, of urban extension – within the municipal limits of Barcelona. Secondly, the loss of population which has clearly been happening since 1985 – which also affects other municipal areas around Barcelona and which has an explanation, fundamentally, in the non-existence of space to expand – makes the competition for urban land between the alternatives of siting housing or activities, equally noticeable.

It is surely for all of these reasons that after 1992, some criteria which had been in the background during the previous period, become powerful in the continuous reformulation of the urban project for the city.

Firstly the City Council understands that it is particularly convenient in these circumstances to make use of the private developers as a means of transformation. Despite the recession of

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1993, private developers maintain an important presence in the city, encouraged by the image of improved quality of the city. It must be borne in mind that some of these operators – Travelstead, Kepro, etc. – went bankrupt but they were substituted for others in the projects which were underway.

Less explicit is the aim of recycling urban land, in contradiction of the trend to urbanise new land in the metropolitan context, however, we can say that this aim is among the principal projects of this period.

The encouragement of housing, and especially housing at affordable prices gains ground as an objective which is incorporated more definitely. The city should be first and foremost an inhabited space, without prejudicing the mixture of uses which is characteristic of the make up of the city.

The most important projects from this period are geographically in the Northeast of the city, mainly in the districts of Sant Martí and Sant Andreu. This is the part of the city where the potential for transformation was greatest, where there were old projects pending – the opening up of the Diagonal is a particularly clear example – where new transforming factors were expected – the TGV station –and the Olympic Village and the new coastal front began to actively express themselves, as a demonstration of the change that was possible.

In this area, five main projects are formulated which, in spite of the fact that all share the mentioned characteristics, have different characteristics. Because of their importance for the future of the city they deserve individual consideration.

Diagonal-Poblenou¹⁶

This is a transformation project which was already anticipated in the PGM in 1976. In fact it should be remembered that the continuation of the Diagonal has been present in all the urban plans for Barcelona since Cerdà. The opening of this 12 km long road in a straight line all the way to the sea and the remodelling of the obsolete areas which were affected by its route are the aims of this project which started to be drawn up in 1988, even though it had a logic which was different from other contemporary projects which were targeted at the happenings of 1992.

It is a public initiative project, but it includes the participation of – through their own free will or through coercion – the owners of the land and private developers through the use of the management tools which the urban legislation makes available. It is therefore a long process which has inevitably needed a period for maturation, and which during the year 1998 achieved the 100-year old objective of opening the route of the Diagonal to the sea. This fact will without doubt be a dynamic factor in the process of remodelling the surrounding plots which have been split into several different units in order to make the conclusion of the project easier.

¹⁶ AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA, *Barcelona. La segona renovació*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1996, p. 222, [under the direction of Ricard Fayos].

¹⁶ AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA, *Barcelona. La segona renovació...*

Sant Andreu-La Sagrera¹⁷

This project was not proposed in the general Plan, since the plan with its perspective of the time maintained intact all the urban industrial areas. However this project had been suggested within the proposal of new central areas, although in that proposal it was on a much smaller scale.

Two new circumstances gave rise to the important changes to the ideas contained in the new central areas: the moving of several large industries – in particular La Maquinista which occupied 25 ha of land – and the military barracks to outside Barcelona, and the plans to site the TGV station at La Sagrera.

The project had an interesting forerunner in the proposal made by Norman Foster (1993), commissioned by a private developer. This proposal, which was rather fantastic and not very viable, lay out the creation of an artificial river from Trinitat to Glòries. However it should be pointed out that it was the idea of the river which favoured the proposal of a park along its banks which is the key element in the plan which has now been proposed for the area.

Apart from the park, the project sets out an important inter-modal transport centre with the TGV station, and it configures the road system for the area which resolves the access problems and defines the basic structure of the 240 ha sector.

Similarly the project foresees a process of urban renovation of considerable size, spread between several sectors. Those sectors which correspond to large properties are already the object of urban development by private developers. Those which correspond to more fragmented properties, and partial occupation will need a period of maturation and in some cases the intervention of public operators will be necessary in order to get the projects moving.

Front Marítim¹⁸

This can be considered as the continuation of the renovation of the sea front which was started with the Olympic Village. However, as opposed to this development, that previous one had been proposed in the PGM. The probable abandonment of the land by Catalana de Gas allowed, even back then, the suggestion that the land should be integrated into the urban area.

The project consists of the restructuring of the urban sea front, through a new area consisting mainly of housing. The land was public to a large extent, and the planning project was carried out by the City Council via a competition for ideas on which would be the most suitable configuration for the arrival of the Cerdà grid to the sea front. A reinterpretation of the blocks in the Eixample won through, following along the lines of three blocks near the Olympic Village, in a project initially named Eixample Marítim.

Once the plan had been established the different plots were sold off through auction to private developers who are implement the urban plan and construct the buildings.

¹⁷ AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA, *Barcelona. La segona renovació...*

Diagonal Mar

In this case we are dealing with a project which was private from the outset. The land belonged to a large industrial company – MACOSA – and the IMPU and it was bought at a reasonably high price during the euphoria of 1992 by a developer who wanted – in agreement with the proposal in the PGM – to construct a services centre.

The recession in the office market and no doubt the price paid for the land caused the project to fail, and the land was acquired by a second developer – Hines – which, following different criteria, wanted to develop a housing project.

In this case the City Council has been open to the logic of the developers – even though this logic has proved to be quite changeable in a short period of time – along the lines of facilitating interesting investments for the renovation of the city and of the sea front in particular. Similarly, in this case a type of urban layout has been accepted which breaks considerably with the style of the configuration of the rest of the easterly sea front. It is a disputed and disputable plan, but it should be pointed out that an end piece to the layout of the city such as this is, allows an experience of this type, which can provide us with different and hitherto inexperienced ways to relate public spaces and buildings, and anyway it will be interesting to try.

The Diagonal Mar project, along with that of Sant Andreu-La Sagrera (Sector Maquinista), foresees the locating of a large-scale shopping centre. These shopping centres were the important parts of the programmes drawn up by the private developers for these areas. These two projects formed part of the list of new central areas. In the same way several more “areas” – Glòries, Diagonal-Sarrià, Olympic Village, etc. – have incorporated new shopping centres which have opened their doors during this period. It must be made clear that within the philosophy of urban development of the city of Barcelona which has been being developed since 1976, these commercial centres which are integrated into the urban fabric are valued very positively as undeniable factors of centrality in various place around the city. At the same time, isolated commercial centres on the outskirts of the city are loathed as inevitably destructive of the commercial make up of the urban areas.

Industrial sectors

Finally we should just mention a project which has not yet been completely formalised, which aims to renovate the industrial sectors which are integrated in the urban fabric of Barcelona.

These areas, and especially those in Poblenou, have suffered a process of loss of activity and at the moment they are being maintained under the hope of an increase in the price of the land so that they can switch to an urban use with a higher demand; housing. As is easy to understand, this situation does not help the natural renovation of the area, which on the other hand is limited due to the archaic definition which the PGM contains of industrial use.

The configuration of the industrial sectors of Poblenou via the Cerdà network of roads makes the partial evolution of the area by blocks or by plots of a certain extension easy.

The aim of the project which is being studied is to facilitate the gradual transformation of industrial zones towards a mixed composition, in which economic activities continue to occupy most of the space but without excluding a certain proportion of housing.

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The key is in finding the exact point that favours acts of renovation without the new dynamic leading to the displacement of the activities of the weakest inhabitants.

This process of urban renovation could be especially interesting and different from the other projects which have been commented on. The fact that no final formed image exists beyond the network of roads, gives the process an openness which can favour a truly typological renovation, and generate an innovative and complex urban fabric which is therefore quite removed from those of conventional urban planning projects.

Overall, we see projects with varying origins, different organisational logics, and different temporal horizons, but which form part of the objectives which the city has pursued since 1992.

There has been a high level of private participation in the processes of transformation, which in total make up more than 500 ha of recycling of land in the city, and represents approximately 8% of the total urban area of the municipal area. Likewise, these projects foresee the construction of more than 16,000 new dwellings – without counting those that are included in the reorientation of the current industrial sectors – of which at least 25% must be dwellings at an affordable price, as is laid out in the specifications of the corresponding urban plans.

These are goals which, apart from the ever present desire to bring value to the outskirts and improve the centre, will add, the desire to obtain from the space which Barcelona occupies all the benefit – social, economic and cultural – which corresponds to its position within the metropolitan territory.

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