



ETSAB
Visiting
Studio

2018
—2019

**Alberto
Campo
Baeza**

Alberto Campo Baeza ETSAB Visiting Studio 2018 — 2019

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— Forewords

The previous ETSAB Direction founded the Visiting Studio to be developed as one of the fifth-year Design Studio Workshops of the current Degree Programme. This interesting proposal has aroused great interest between the students, while increasing internationally the ETSAB visibility through the agreement that the School signed with the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. Both reasons are enough to continue that initiative.

The last academic year 2018-2019, the Workshop was led by Alberto Campo Baeza, Full Professor of Design Studio at the ETSAM, who was assisted by professors Toni Barceló and Anna Ramos. The study focused on urban equipment in the town of Viladecans.

This ongoing 2019-2020 course, we have the presence of Josep Lluís Mateo, Full Professor of Design Studio at the ETH of Zurich, who is assisted by professors Queralt Garriga and Judith Taberna. Their works take place in the town of Gavà.

This experience offers to contrast our lines of work with other methodologies followed in other Architecture Schools thanks to the agreement between the AMB and the ETSAB. It is an undoubted effort, whose result is reflected in the present publication.

FÉLIX SOLAGUREN-BEASCOA

Dr. Architect, Director
Barcelona School of Architecture, ETSAB
October 2019

Once again, the ETSAB, in collaboration with the AMB, promotes Visiting Studio, a workshop that stems from the close cooperation between the UPC and the Barcelona Metropolitan Area with the aim of adding new visions, from different places, to the studies in Architecture.

These new methodological visions and resources will enable to expand learning tools, as it usually happens in Schools of Architecture in other countries.

This workshop will be taught by a visiting lecturer, a professor from a European university. It is addressed to senior students, future architects about to start their professional career.

The topic proposed is based on a real commission, a project that is being drafted by one of the teams of architects from either the Public Space or the Urban Planning departments. The AMB provides knowledge of the site and its territorial context, the definition of the programme, and the professional experience forged through many years of work in the construction of public space and metropolitan facilities.

Students, tutored by an internationally reputed architect, contribute with different open-minded reflections and academic solutions to the topic raised.

Thus, from this workshop, aimed at sharing knowledge, many stimulating and enriching multidirectional exchanges arise. In the review sessions, thanks to the different profiles of professional practice, students receive new inputs in the process of planning and designing the city, whereas AMB architects are inspired by multiple ways of seeing and understanding public space, as the element capable of structuring and providing cohesion to the metropolitan territory.

RAMON M. TORRA I XICOY

Architect, General Manager
Barcelona Metropolitan Area
October 2019

As a starting point, the AMB proposed a specific programme that was being carried out by the design team of the AMB Public Space department led by the architect Carlos Llinàs. It was a demanding and complex programme to be developed on a large area: a sports facility and a cultural one organised through the public space. The site included a catalogued country house, Can Ginestar, and the park of the same name built in 2009, designed and managed by the AMB. The block under review, the last remaining wooded area within the urban fabric of Viladecans, connects the city with Garraf mountain range.

The visiting professor, Alberto Campo Baeza, didn't question either the programme or the site, but rather, with enthusiasm and patience, and from clearly defined criteria, he raised knowledge as the workshop progressed. The methodology was clear and concise and focused on the key questions that an architect should address when facing a project. A sequence of considerations that summarise the big issues of architecture in a simple and human way.

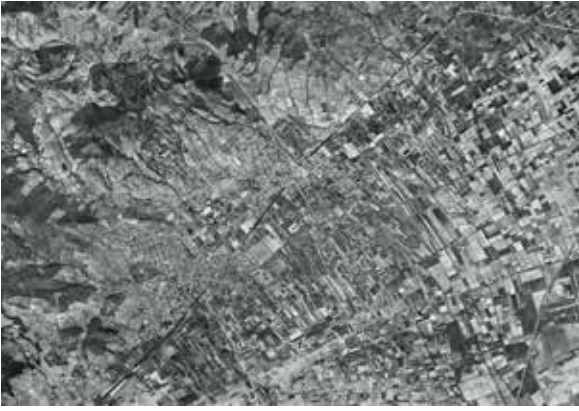
By the hand of this great professor, the final works came up very profitable and satisfactory. The designs illustrated the variety of possible solutions, each one revealing interesting aspects. The reflection in the academic arena—exempt from economical, legal, municipal and neighbouring pressures—brought a new perspective that, being free of restrictions, turned out to be inspiring. However, all the designs had a common denominator: the awareness of the responsibility of the architects when designing and constructing the city.

NOEMÍ MARTÍNEZ GARCÍA

Architect, Head of Projects and Urban Design Section
Barcelona Metropolitan Area
October 2019

2

— Programme



1992



2016



1992



2016

About the Construction of Public Space

by Alberto Campo Baeza and Toni Barceló

The exercise of the course is focused on the intervention of a public space in Viladecans, locality included in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. The suggested theme is the construction of a public space, with the inclusion of a Library (6200 m²) and a Sport Center (6000 m²), on a site where it has already been partially worked with an exemplary park, the Park of Can Ginestar. In the site there is currently a *masía*, Can Ginestar, that must be incorporated in the execution.

The aim of the course consists in the development of a united intervention in the whole site with the established programs. The first of them, the Library, initially will take place in the plot E-2 of the Estate B and the second one, the Sport Center, in the plot E-1 of the Estate A. The park of the Estate C is existent and of newly creation. Once the arrangement of the set is established in a scale that allows to define the whole parts of the programme, it will be developed in depth one of the two programmes.

ORDER. Determining the overall order of the project

The architect is someone who fundamentally orders the space. Orders the territory. Orders the city. Orders the buildings. Orders the house.

It is about ordering a territory: Viladecans. As it already exists a planning, it is about generating on the site that is given to us, through the cultural building and the sports building and the park, an ensemble able to work as a reference to all that area.

Well-connected, well-circulated, well-ordered.

TOPOGRAPHY. Recognise the territory, the topography

The architecture is settled. Gravity is unavoidable. The horizontal plane must be put on an existent topography. It is appropriate agree upon those plans.

To face in any architectural actuation, it is essential the understanding in a precise method the topography of the area on which will take place the action. It is not the same to perform over a plane plot than do it on one like ours in which the difference of height between the highest point and the lowest is twelve meters. (43,85 / 38,15 / 30,38 / 31,09)

FUNCTION. Study the function what is being proposed in depth

Utilitas. The function is at the origin of all architecture. The construction of the public space must be previous to the construction of each building. The planning.

Two public buildings are ordered, a cultural and a sport center, with very specific and defined programs. We must establish a hierarchy in those spaces, according to its qualities and dimensions.

REFERENCE. Make it become a local reference

Every area needs physical references. Buildings capable of being recognized in the distance. The territory scale. The emerging elements.

Any city needs of references to don't get lost. If one imagined a city with a continuous cornice line and aligned facades, could be lost. Reference elements of physical examination of the territory are indispensable in an operation such as we are doing. Emerging elements.

CONNECTION. Connect perfectly with the rest of the roads of Viladecans

Perfect connexion with the surrounding roads. The general entrance. Something as simple as determine the entrance in a set of buildings requires of a defined lecture. The correspondent spatial mechanisms will be employed.

CIRCULATION. Solve the circulation between the three parts of the set

Fluid internal circulation of the whole. The clarity of the route. The internal relationship of the buildings themselves must be clear. And also the relationship between them, the Cultural Complex, the Sports and the Park.

TRACES. Focus on the traces of the set. Hierarchy of the spaces

The composition of the three pieces must be done with criteria of unity. The traces must be consistent in the three performances. The performance must be coherent. Something resembling to the Arte Cisoria: know how to cut by the precise lines.

LIMITS. Resolve accurately the limits of the site

It is not a matter of complying with the regulations regarding setbacks, maximum heights, etc. It is about considering that we are working in a set and that it is proper, necessary, to establish the limits of our performance. The edges. It must be everything, all thought and settled.

IDEA. An idea capable of solving the problem in a unified way

As a diagnosis. It is a concrete solution capable of solving the problem in a global, unitary way. Distilling all the ingredients after studying and drawing. There are no unique, inconclusive ideas. To talk about the Constructed Idea is to talk about an idea capable of being materialized.

REGULATION. Fulfill it or interpret it

The regulation changes, the works remain. The regulation, which is respect to the pre-existing, must be met. Or interpret. Never deny. The architect is not a capricious artist who arrives like an elephant in a pottery shop.

CONSTRUCTION. Simplicity. Rationality. Presence. Resistance

Definition in the plans of the execution project. The joints. The materials. *Firmitas*.

An architect must know how to build, and build thoroughly. Far from being an artist who makes some first sketches that later others bring into being.

ECONOMY. A feasible and controlled architecture. Knowledge of the market

Like regulations and gravity, the economy must be present from the first moment in the mind of the architect. The architect is not a misunderstood victim of a society that does not allow him to dream. It is a wisdom to grant more with less.

STRUCTURE. Establish the order of the space. Contemplate and solve the resistant structure of buildings. The skeleton as tough and as ordering

Structure a space, which is what we intend, is to establish the order of that space. And if, as in our case, it is a public space, further reason to attempt to get it right. The animal skeleton, and in a particular way the human body, is a good example not only as a load bearing structure, but as a solid organization of the set we project above all.

PRE-EXISTANCE. Interacting with preexistence makes everything more complex and interesting

In our case the existence of a *masía*, Can Ginestar, can provide support for the proposed intervention that, logically, needs to enclose it.

BEAUTY. Something else. Serious is not boring

Dreaming is not falling asleep. The sleep of reason produces monsters. *Venustas* In the end, it is the search for Beauty the *raison d'être* of architecture. Not for the architect's own satisfaction but for bringing happiness to the people who inhabit that architecture. The architect is not a mere builder. It is something more, far more.

Beauty, according to Alberti, was "the harmony of the parts in relation to the whole", how right he was!

HISTORY. The knowledge of History. Discover the powder

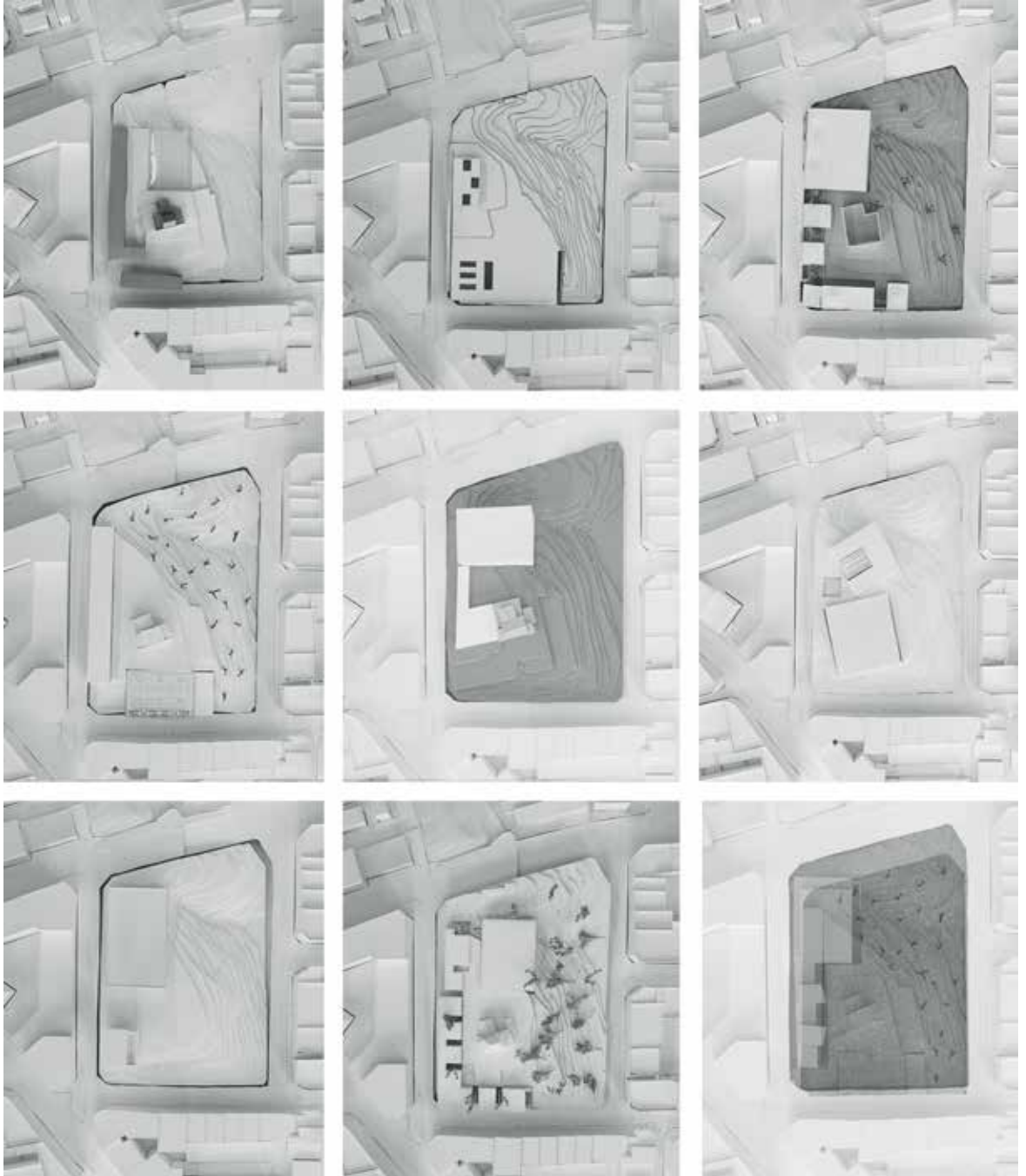
Study History, old and recent, so as not to invent what is already invented. Study some close examples. The experience of the AMB.



3

— Works

Participants: Gabriel Angelico, Mikel Berra Sandín, Alberto Bodo di Albaretto, Costanza Botti, Paula Capellà Amorós, Ignacio Escarpenter García, Elvira Fernández Mateos, Katia Hidalgo Navarro, Patricia Palou Sueiras, Marta Roig Echegaray, Emma Sarkisova, Nicolas Silva Lobos, Nadja Widmer, Dyro Masaru Yamashita Narahashi, Andrea Arribas Delgado, Cristina Batalla Vilacis, Marc Castaño Seguí, Marina Esguerra Laudo, Claudia García del Val, Berta Jové Batallé, Emma Just Freixes, Aina Marquès López, Olga Martín Pérez, Laura Pérez Ramon, Laia Rafel Filella, and Núria Tarrés Roselló



Squaring the Circle

Mikel Berra Sandín

The project, which comprises fitting a library and a sports center in a small lot while enhancing connections between the surrounding natural spaces, represents an overwhelming set of challenges, similar to squaring the circle. Hence, this will be the strategy to follow, squaring the circle, in order to conceive the project —making the most of the qualities of each geometric shape.

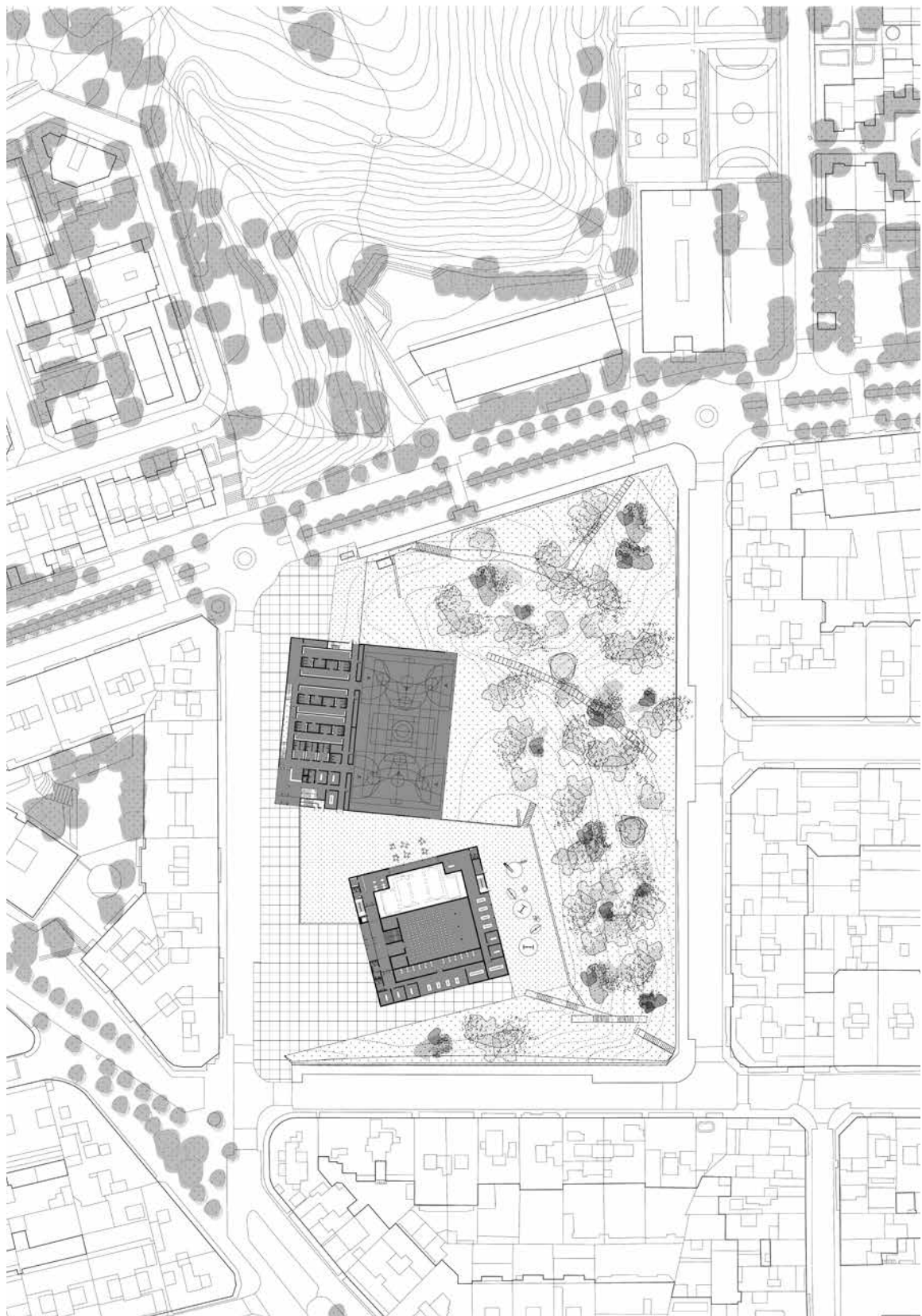
The circle allows to connect several points in a continuous way, creating a clear circulation. In this case, the area in which we act has several barriers to circulation, and such circles will allow to bridge those gaps. Two circles are traced: a centrifugal one, connecting the Can Ginestar park in our site to the mountain, the city center and the riverpark, and a centripetal one around the existing farm, giving better access to Can Ginestar park.

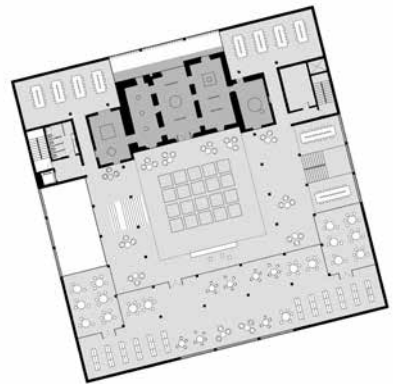
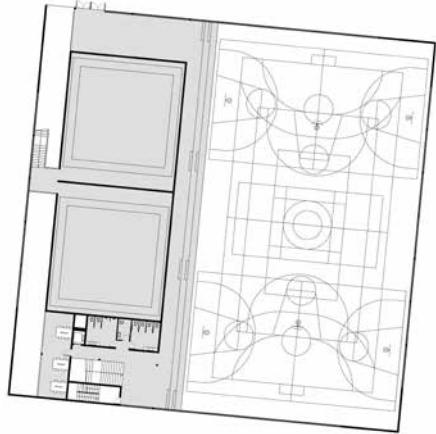
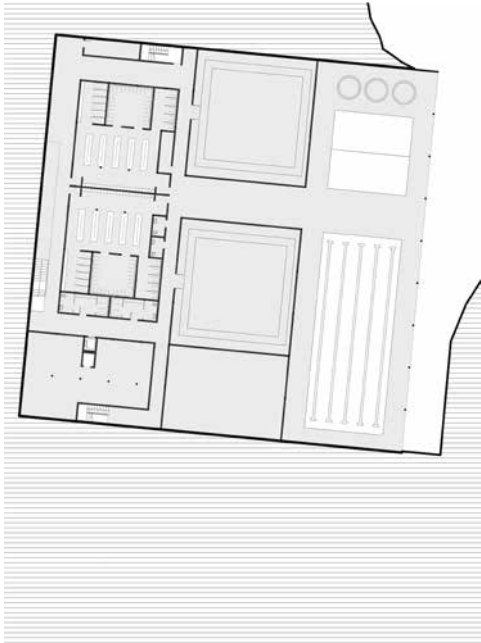
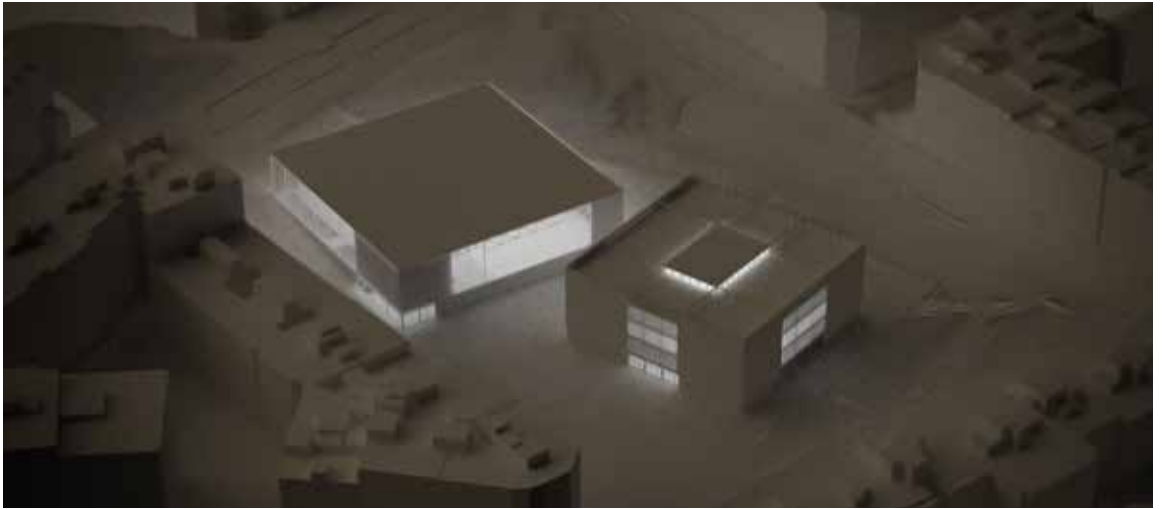
Nonetheless, when it comes to conceiving the buildings, the project materializes itself as two box-shaped volumes, set back from the street and slightly rotated to promote the circulation between park and street. The library, on the southern end of the lot, embeds the preexisting farm creating an atrium between the old and the new building. To its north, the sports center profits from the slope of the terrain so as to open up the sports court and the swimming pool to the landscape.

Regarding materiality, both buildings want to be ethereal, playing with translucency, in order to reduce their visual presence. Therefore, the library has a white masonry facade, mimicking the materiality of the preexisting farm in a contemporary language, and using lattices in some areas. In the sports center instead, polycarbonate is the main material, allowing dim light inside. In addition, both buildings are set upon a concrete plinth, unifying the proposal.

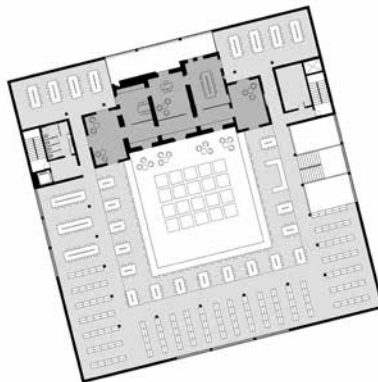
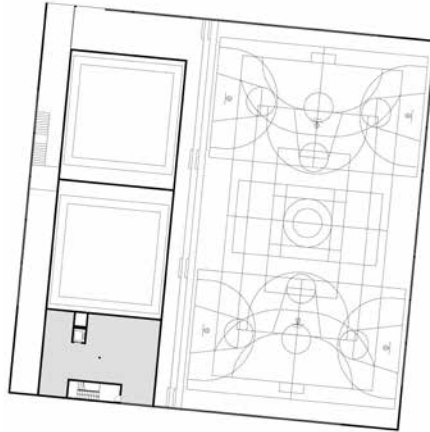
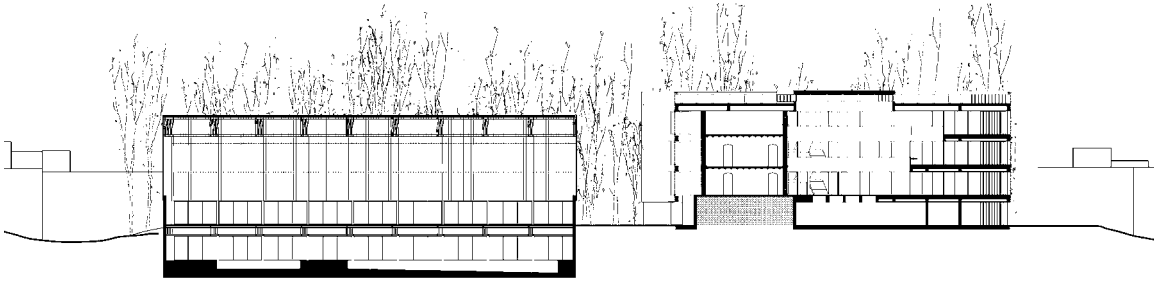
Therefore, both buildings become two light boxes in the park, creating a reference for the city and enhancing connections between the surrounding urban and natural spaces.

Keywords: Geometry, Circulation, Interstitium, Permeability, Connection

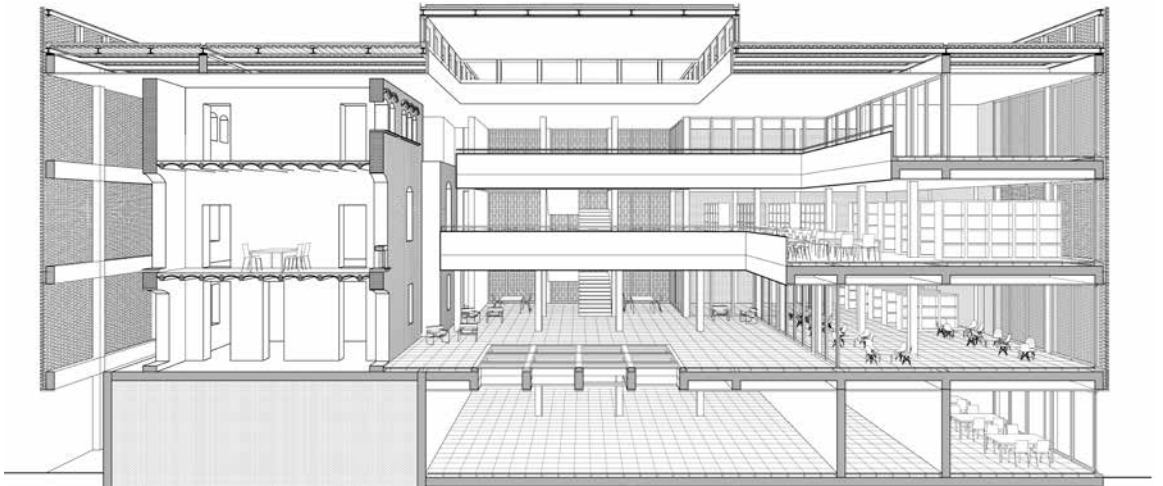




- Basement and first floor -

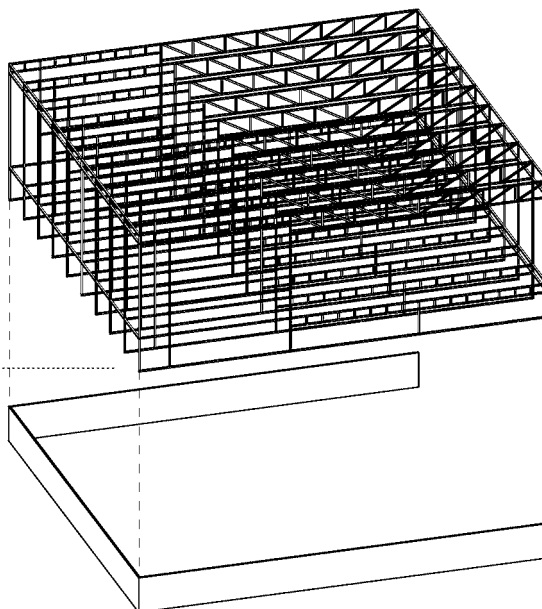


- Longitudinal section and second floor -

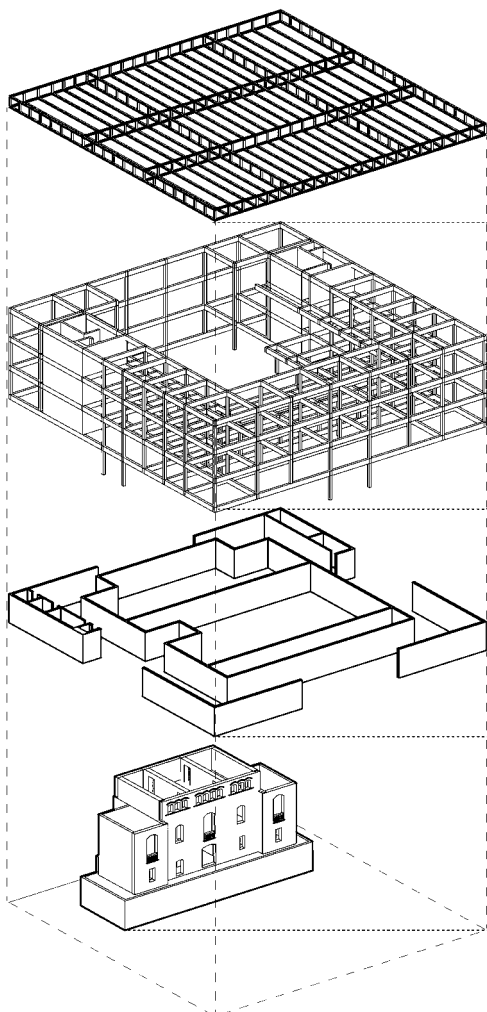


- Cross section and Structural Scheme -

Estructura de cerchas de acero



Muro pantalla bajo cota de tierra



Cubierta ligera de estructura metálica

Estructura de pilares y jácenas de hormigón

Muros de hormigón armado en planta baja

Muro de contención alrededor de la masía

Horizontal and Vertical

Elvira Fernández Mateos

The project takes place in Viladecans, a city in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. On the slope of Serra del Garraf, that in a very particular way sneaks inside the city's density. Between the leafy pines and vegetation, the Can Ginestar *masía* emerges, dating from the 15th century and despite lacking architectural value, it has achieved some historical and iconic values, as it is one of the main reasons why its surroundings have remained unbuilt during the years. That is the reason why I intend to keep the *masía*, to restore it and to place there a social activity: the bar of Can Ginestar park. This park, treated with delicacy, presents some paths that allows us to enter it and to walk through it side to side. Only by drawing some shy but functional limits we can achieve these paths. But if we talk about its perimeter, this has not been always treated or projected.

The project takes the shape of a podium, solving with edification the most problematic limit of the park and giving it some openings to activate it. On it, a plane at the *masía* level is being exposed as a plain platform, establishing a horizon as order in the site. Over this plane, two volumes emerge: the library and the sports hall, and a plaza between them appears, also closed by the *masía*, creating a new space of relationship in the park.

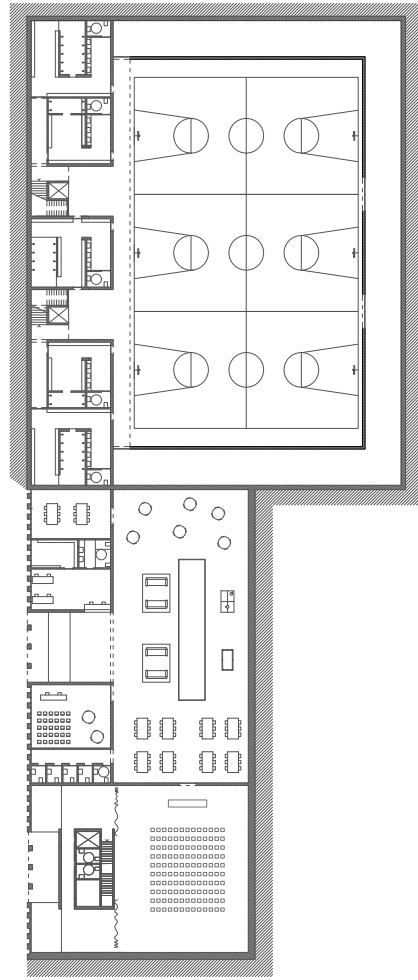
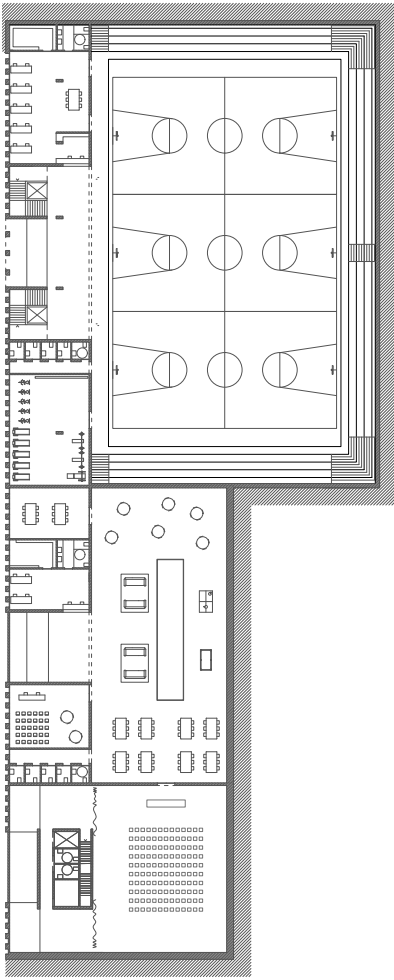
The sports centre grows the minimum height in order to provide a kind but compressed access, while the rest is excavated so a direct relationship with the forest is kept, underlining between the floor plan and the roof plan, the vegetation. The library, however, obtains the opposite position. It appears from the platform, occupying the minimum space in plan in order to be higher than the nearby buildings and also to be able to see the sea. This is a gesture recovered from the *masía* in the moment it was built, taking advantage of its high position and taking the role of an icon of territorial reference. Therefore, from the highest floor of the tower, the architecture can reach the precise site in which, whoever with its sight, would be able to reach and possess the sea and the mountain, in the same place, under a threshold.

To conclude, the project solves the limits of the park, creating a relationship plan as horizon which arrange the place, and from where emerges a new reference point for the city of Viladecans.

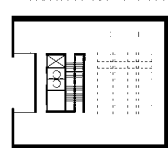
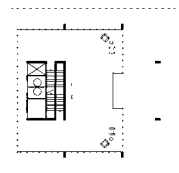
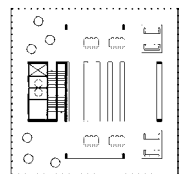
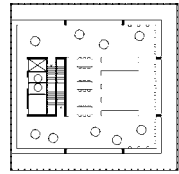
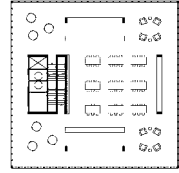
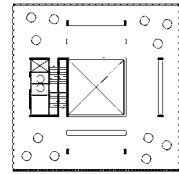
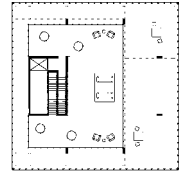
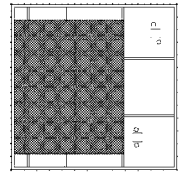
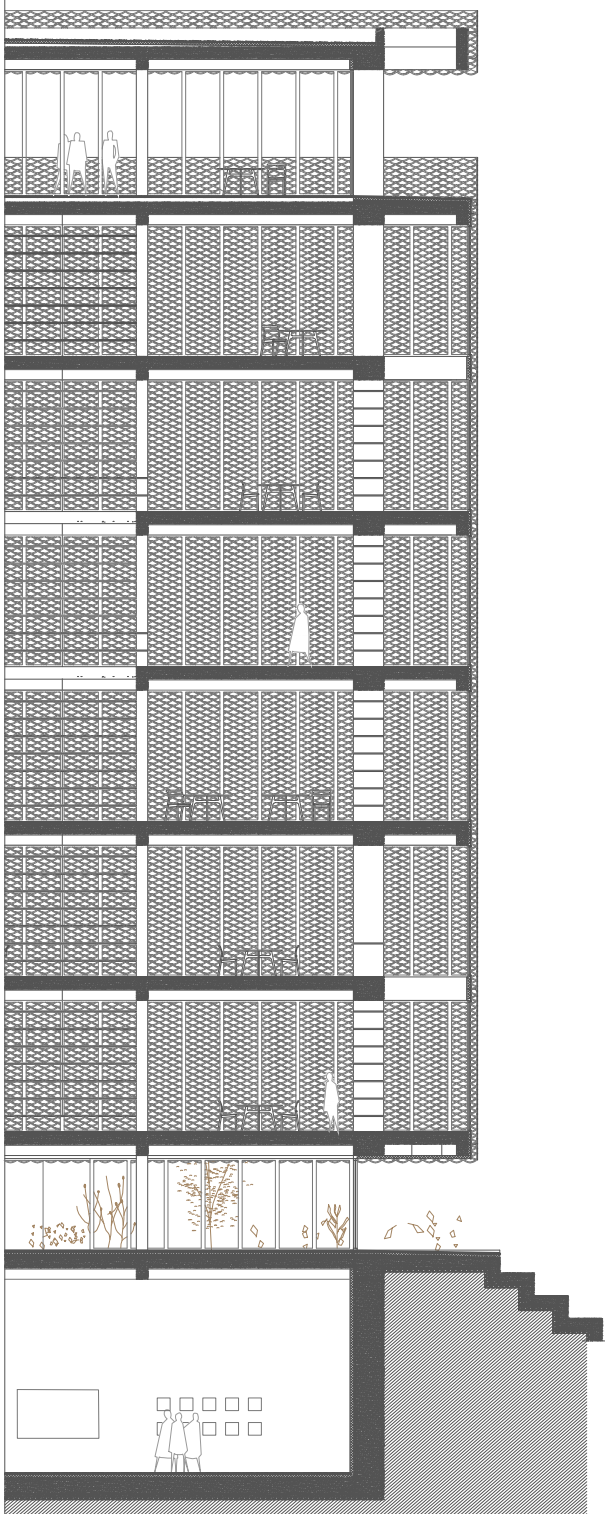
Keywords: Landscape, Limits, Platform, Apertures, Threshold, Horizon



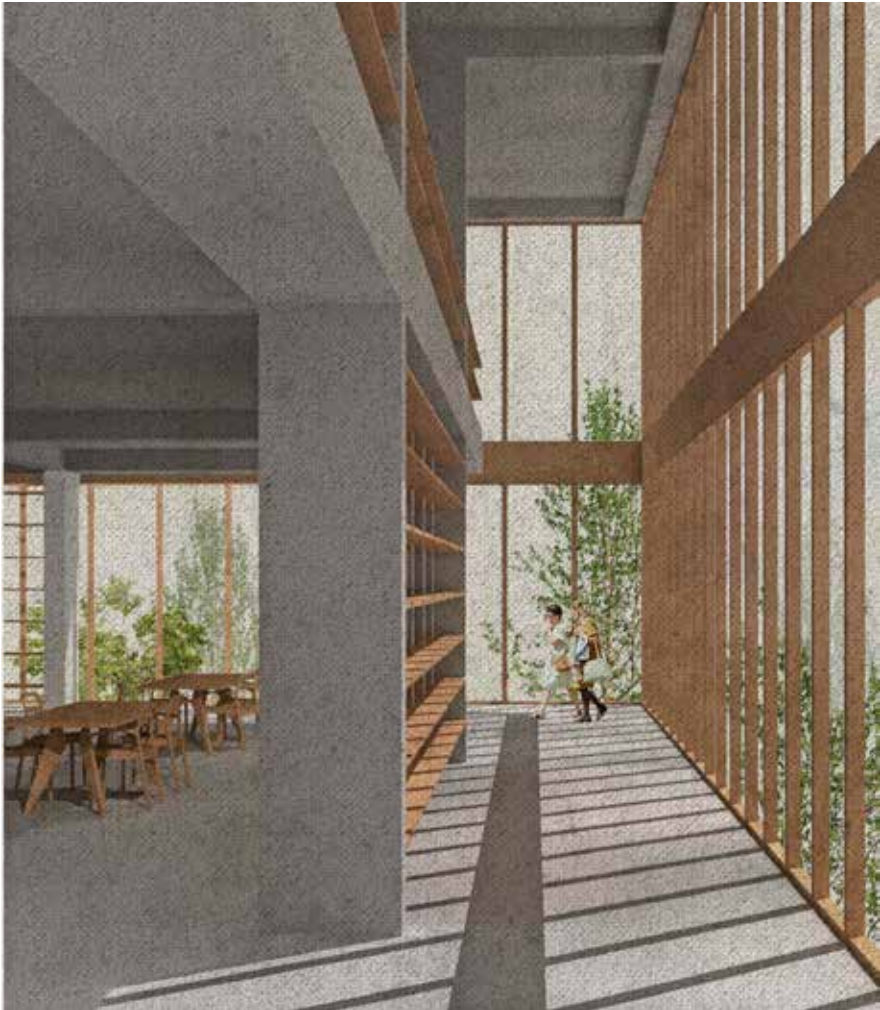
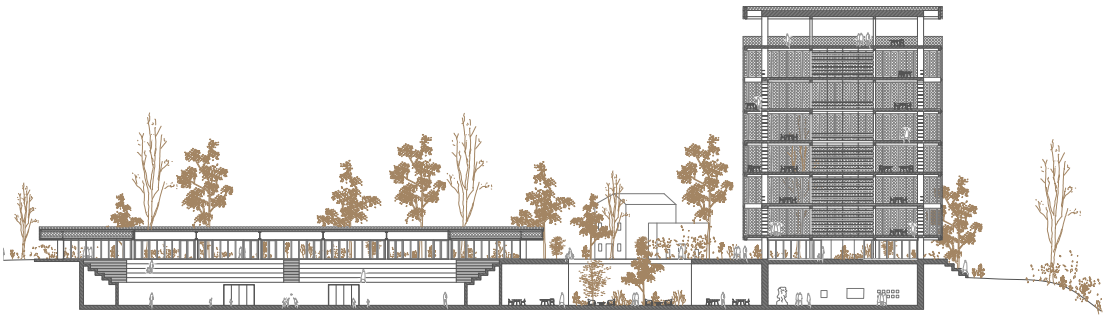




- Lower ground floor 1st and 2nd level-
-Interior view -



- Section and Tower floor -



- Section and interior view -

Concluding the Park

Aina Marquès López

Can Ginestar is one of the last areas in Viladecans which is more related to the mountain landscape than to the town. In the same park there is a special building: a *masía*. Considered a recognisable point, it has become an icon for Viladecans.

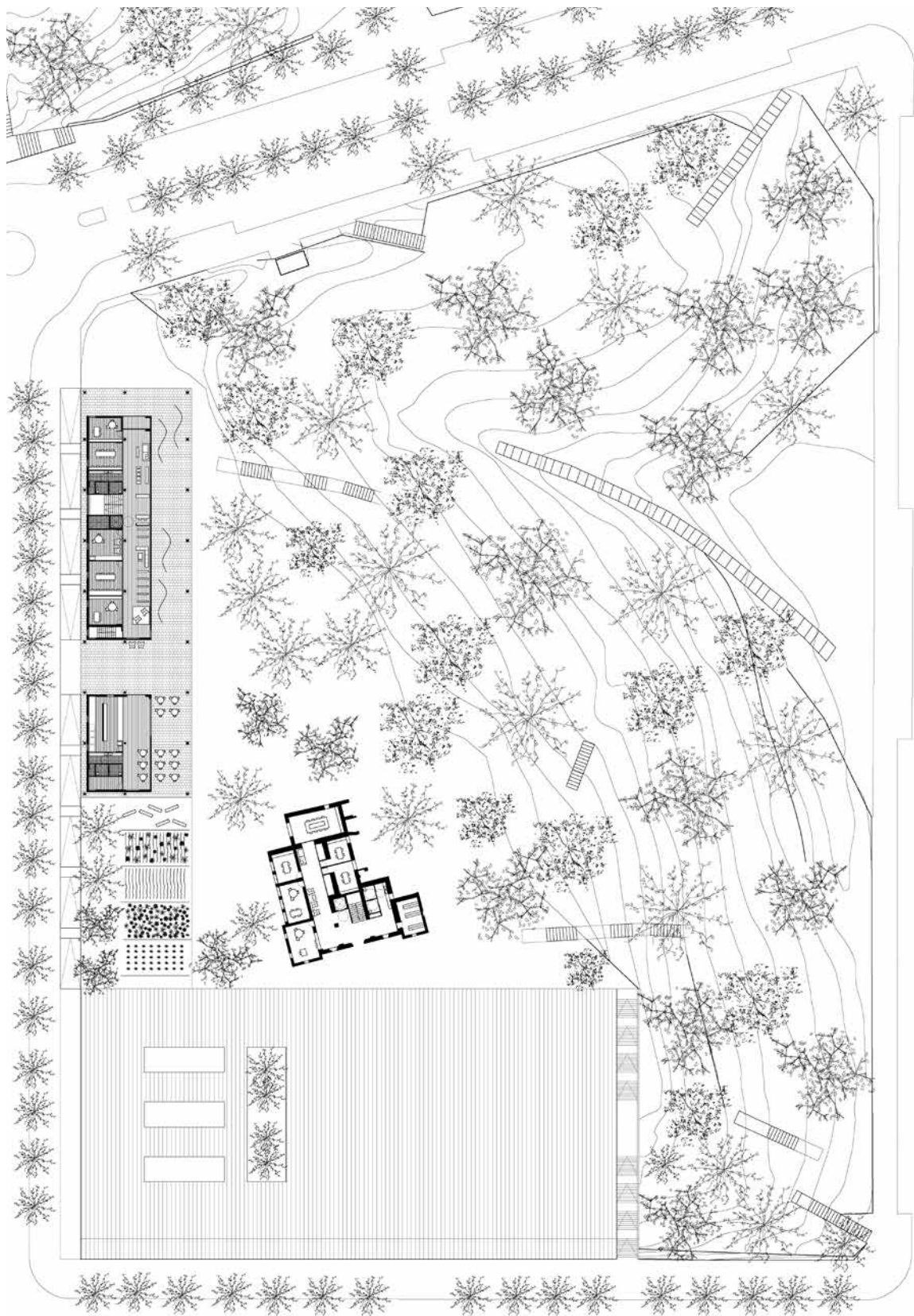
Beyond its historic value, the *masía* may be one of the reasons why the park still exists. This is why it becomes an element to talk with, to value. In the project, it hosts the neighbourhood's civic centre.

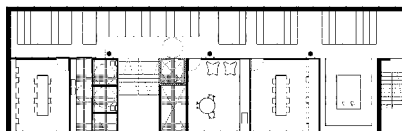
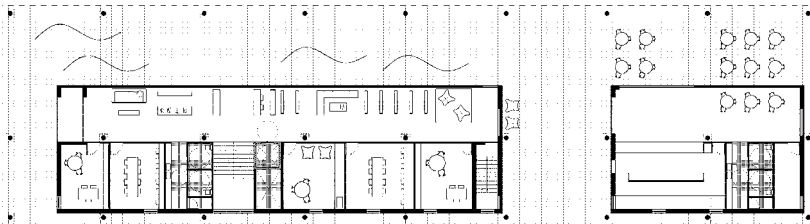
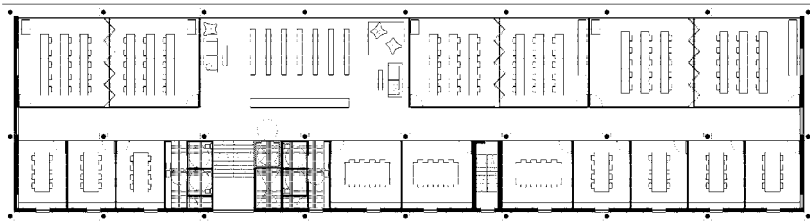
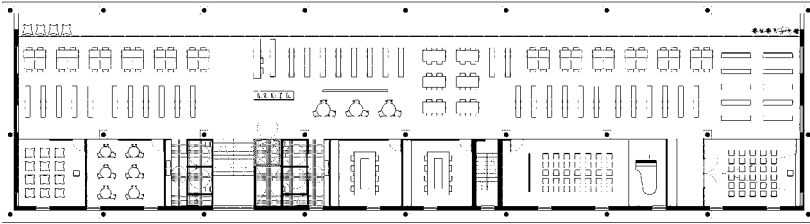
The proposed program for this project has considerable dimensions, and has two main parts: a sports centre and a library. One of the main challenges of this project is to maintain and take advantage of the surrounding green areas as much as possible. Moreover, in order to create a final transition point between the park and the town, a "dry" square and a new façade to the street are projected, playing with the different heights between the park and the street.

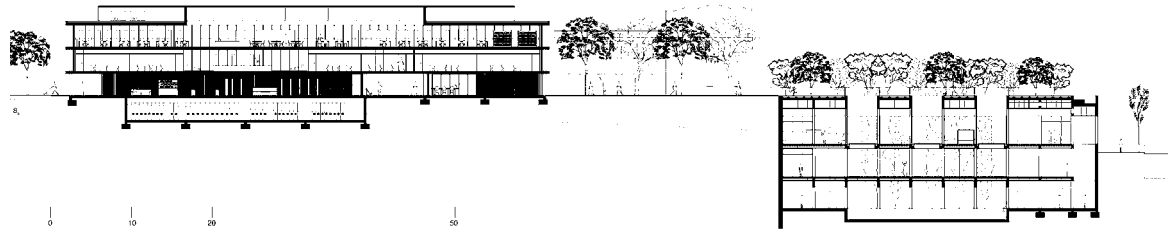
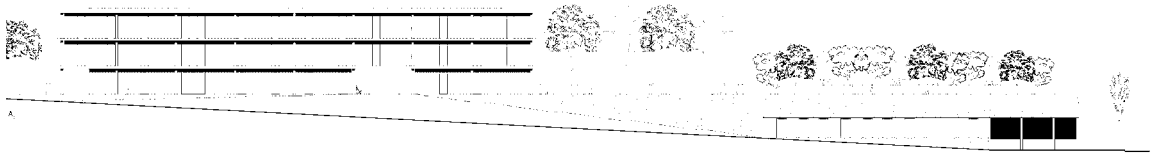
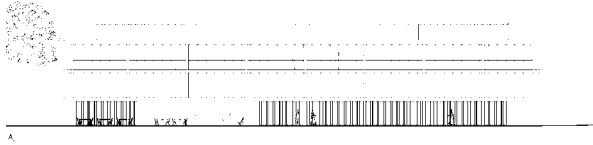
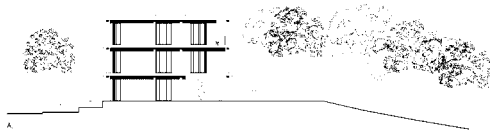
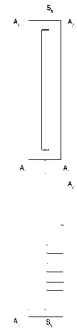
The sports centre, half-buried, creates a new street façade, and the plaza becomes its rooftop. The library, however, emerges from the basement and grows three floors, opening to the park.

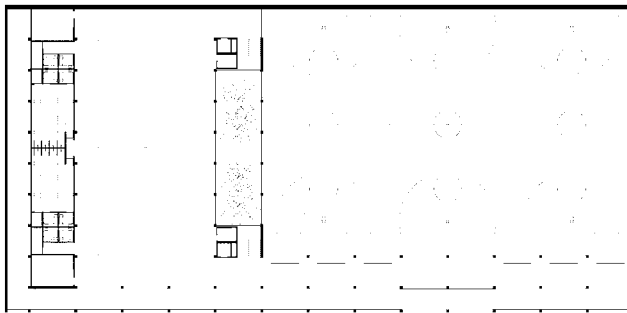
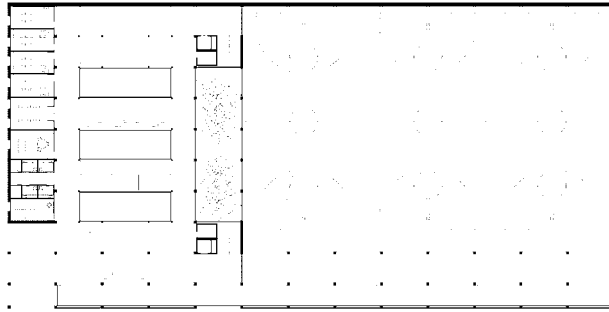
Regarding the public space, new accesses to the park are created. One of them, with two ramps, is understood as a topographical element and visually breaks the wall between the street and the park through the diagonals created.

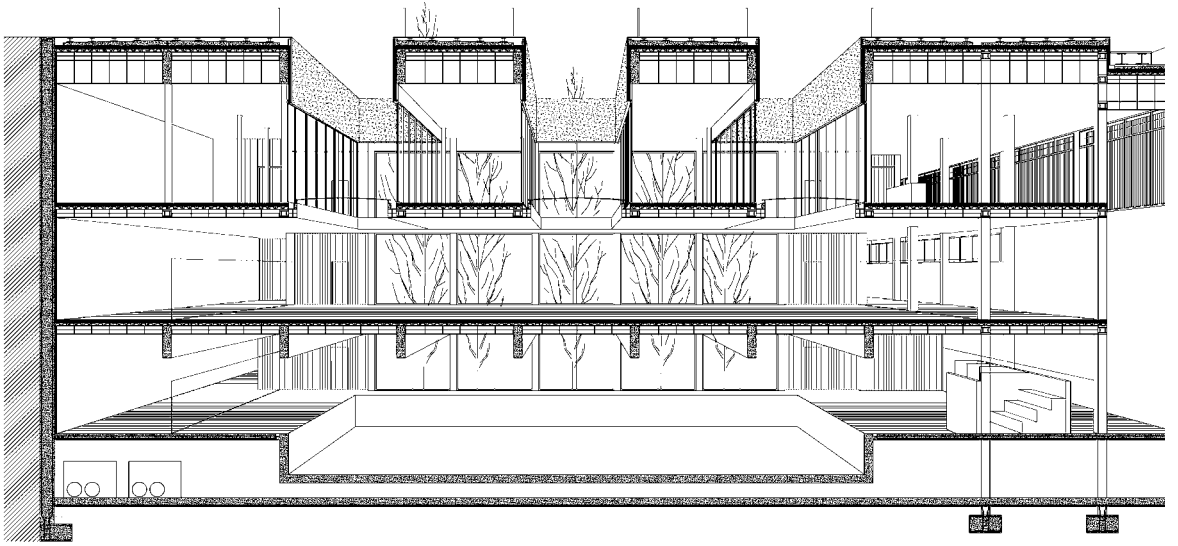
Keywords: Transition, Dialogue, Restoration, Half-buried, Ramps, "Dry" Square









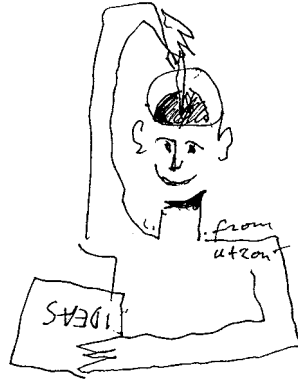


4

— Lectures

About the Wisdom of Architects

16 October 2018



by Alberto Campo Baeza

The spirit of Wisdom is intelligent and holy. It is of one nature but reveals itself in many ways. It is not made of any material substance, and it moves about freely. It is clear, clean, and confident; it cannot be harmed. It loves what is good. It is sharp and unconquerable, kind, and a friend of humanity. It is dependable and sure, and has no worries. It has power over everything, and sees everything. It penetrates every spirit that is intelligent and pure, no matter how delicate its substance may be.

Wisdom moves more easily than motion itself; she is so pure that she penetrates everything. She is a breath of God's power—a pure and radiant stream of glory from the Almighty. Nothing that is defiled can ever steal its way into Wisdom. She is a reflection of eternal light, a perfect mirror of God's activity and goodness. Even though Wisdom acts alone, she can do anything. She makes everything new, although she herself never changes. From generation to generation she enters the souls of holy people,

and makes them God's friends and prophets.

There is nothing that God loves more than people who are at home with Wisdom. Wisdom is more beautiful than the sun and all the constellations. She is better than light itself, because night always follows day, but evil never overcomes Wisdom.

*Her great power reaches into every part of the world, and she sets everything in useful order.*¹

T.S. Eliot makes a precise distinction between information, knowledge and wisdom. Firstly in his poem *Choruses from the rock*, in 1934, and later in his paradigmatic essay *What is a classic?* In *Choruses from the rock*, he writes:

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

And in *What is a Classic?*:

In our age, when men seem more than ever prone to confuse wisdom with knowledge, and knowledge with information.

I am becoming an ardent admirer of T.S. Eliot. Maybe because of the same reasons given by Octavio Paz in his acceptance speech for the T.S. Eliot Prize: “*The magnet that drew me was the excellence of his poetry, the rigour of its construction, the depth of his vision, the variety of his parts and the wonderful unity of its content.*”

T.S. Eliot is a true wise man. More than a marvellous poet, a wise poet. For I must confess, a daring confession, that I, who knows that knows nothing, what I would really like is to become a wise architect, like my masters were. And in the same manner as I tell my students that them, as architects, can also reach Beauty, which is not reserved to a special

1. *Book of Wisdom* 7, 22-8, 1

beings; I tell them that they can become wise as well. That they can reach Wisdom. I will try to speak my mind.

Having all the information is good, because if we filter and order it with criteria, we can achieve knowledge. “It is a person with great knowledge”, we can say about somebody. But that is not enough. Because, afterwards, if one is not able to process that knowledge, it is useless. But if we “cook” it, if we collect it with a specific purpose, then it “activates”, it becomes truly useful. That is what wise people do.

I am convinced that, as Beauty, Wisdom is not reserved only to a few. All wise people I have met have in common that they are personally ordinary people, simple... in one word: humble.

Information

Nowadays we have more information sources than ever through digital media. I have never known where all these thousands of people who produce, organise and make available to us that huge amount of information are hidden. Google and its fellows are admirable. They provide us with exhaustive and ordered information which make some people think that libraries are no longer indispensable. Although this may never can nor be like this. But if the Library of Alexandria burned, it would be enough if someone would have had the caution and patience to store digitally all that information which occupies such a small space, so the disaster could be fix.

I remember my last gap year at Columbia University, in New York City. Every day I spent a long time studying in its wonderful Avery Library, where the School of Architecture is based. I was the only one who had books on the table and wrote by hand, filling up my notebooks compulsively. The rest, in deathly silence, were focused on their computers, isolated with headphones and illuminated with the holy light of their screens. I never saw anyone standing up to go to pick a book or writing something by hand.

And all that overwhelming information is now available to thousands of users, people who spend most of their time on nonsense in their iPads, iPhones and iPods. Because information is just what it is. If it is not processed, it remains as an inert material. Maybe it helps somebody to become a scholar. In the scale of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, they remain at the first steps.

Knowledge

But if information is processed, ordered and elaborated, it makes us able to proceed to the next knowledge stadium. Every time that I write some text, the first thing I do is to prepare a script. Of course, beforehand I need to find a good excuse to talk about the issue. In this case, reading the wonderful text by T.S. Eliot *What is a classic?* which I casually got as a present twice this week. The first one is a little precious edition by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in 2013, in Spanish. Today arrived from Germany a second-hand copy of *What is a classic?* edited by Faber & Faber. A fourth edition printed in May 1950 in Great Britain. A piece of jewellery.

Once a great amount of information is stored in our memory, studied and put into relation, the result is a certain knowledge about the issue. What we have always understood as “studying an issue”.

Thus, I understand that a School, in my case an Architecture School, is not only a tool to transmit information, but to produce knowledge. As a coffee bean, it needs to be selected, toasted, grinded, and filtered with hot water to obtain its delicious drink. And maybe, after drinking that great coffee, neurons could awake and take us to wisdom.

I have been studying *The Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.C.) for years, the text who our stoic emperor wrote in Greek. I have already 48 different editions in several languages,

and I cannot explain you how much joy I get every time I go back to them. But I can assure you that still “I know nothing” about that amazing historical figure, neither about its work, although I dared to publish something about him and about the many editions of his marvellous text.

I remember as a child always seeing my father studying. And I wondered: knowing as he does, why does he continue studying? My father was a surgeon and for a while he worked as an assistant to the main Professor of Anatomy of the Medicine School of Valladolid. His academic record was brilliant. He was a true wise man, a role model for our family all his life, never quitting from studying. This is why I try now not to stop to.

Knowledge is science. Based on many data and combined with induction and deduction, it does not tell me what it is, but what I can do with that. “Science tells me what I can do, but not what I should do”. That is how Emilio Lamo de Espinosa expressed it in an article concerning information, science and wisdom. Without wisdom, science is nothing but an archive of tools. And it ends with “we lived sunk in information, with solid scientific knowledge, but we lack almost completely of wisdom.

Wisdom

Going back to T.S. Eliot, following information and knowledge, comes wisdom. But, what does being wise mean? Knowing everything? Knowing everything about something? Because after getting to know many things concerning an issue, we could go a step further, we should achieve something more.

It may look like a medical diagnosis. After having collected all the information of a patient, and then filtering it by the doctor’s knowledge, everything should take us to a precise diagnostic, able to solve the disease.

In the *Book of Kings*, we are told how the young King Solomon asks God for a sympathetic ear, and how God grants him with the gift of Wisdom:

Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him: 'Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be'.²

This is why when we talk about wisdom, we must talk about king Solomon, the wise Solomon. Wisdom understood as capacity of discernment. Of course, more than the wisdom of the doctor applied to heal the patient, or the wisdom granted by God to Solomon, I have in my mind the wisdom of my friend García Márquez in his beautifully written *El Cataclismo de Damocles*, where he offers us:

With the cost of a single nuclear warhead we would reach—even if only for a Sunday of autumn— to perfume with sandalwood the entire Niagara Falls.

If that is not wisdom, then I don't know what it is anymore!

About Architecture's Wisdom

Many of you might say: What is an architect doing talking about wisdom? Why? What for? I do it because, among other reasons, I think that in order to make the best architecture possible, wisdom is needed. “The one who only knows about medicine, not even about medicine knows”, used to say Marañón. “For the one who only knows about architecture, not even about architecture knows”, I say.

I remember well my masters, the architects who were my professors in the Architecture School in Madrid, who were truly wise people. Who could well discern about architecture. Moreover of being great professors, they were also extraordinary architects. Truly masters. They gave everything they had when reviewing an academic project. From their well of wisdom emerged Philosophy, History, Music or Poetry in the most natural way. That was more than information, even more than just knowledge. That was Wisdom.

Those masters were wise people. Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oíza in his apocalyptic lectures, Alejandro de la Sota in his quiet ones, Javier Carvajal in his accurate reviews, Julio Cano and his precious lectures and Miguel Fisac in his lectures without lectures. All of them were wise people. All of them had the capacity of discern about architecture and life. I would really like to be like them. Also those egregious professors were wise people, the ones I had during the Selective course I did in the Science Faculty in Madrid in the 60s, whom I will never forget. Enrique Gutiérrez Ríos, Salustio Alvarado or José Javier Etayo Miqueo, were also wise people on those complex Chemistry topics, Biology or Mathematics. They were so wise, that not only had they assumed the knowledge of those subjects, but they also transmitted it to us crystal clear, with a convincing knowledge.

I have recently published a text concerning projecting and researching: an architectural project is a research project. Because I firmly believe that it is true. In that text I describe how, more than 30 years ago, I dared to present in my competition for the Professorship a project of mine which was still under construction, the Orihuela Library, as a research project. All the generous members of the jury, led by Oíza and Carvajal, both full of wisdom, understood that perfectly and accepted it as a research project.

About the History of Architecture

How not to understand that architecture's history, with capital letters, is full of wise architects?

Ictinos and Callicrates (5th century B.C.), the Greek architects of the Parthenon in Athens, were actual wise people. The Parthenon, and the Acropolis before it, were something “out of time”, from yesterday, today and tomorrow. Not in vain, Le Corbusier, as well as Mies van der Rohe, were photographed in front of those ruins, as a testimony of its timelessness, and as an acknowledgment of the roots of their architecture, which is also ours. As well wise is Tasos Tanoulas (1947), the architect in charge of the conservation of the Propylaea. And, was not Apollodorus of Damascus (50-130 A.C.), the architect of the Pantheon in Rome, a true wise man? No doubt. The structural and constructive operation of that marvelous building can only be the result of an architect's gifted mind. Every time I go back to study the Roman Pantheon I keep learning.

And about Marco Vitrubio Polion (80 B.C. – 15 A.C.) with his *De Architettura*, what could we say? How many times have we used, in word and deed, his *Utilitas*, *Firmitas* and *Venustas*?

Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) was so wise that, more than doing an delightful architecture and writing *The Four Books of Architecture*, has influenced architects all over the world during history, even to the present day. And thus, McKim, Mead & White (1869) rose the most representative buildings of the Columbia University in New York City.

When Michelangelo worked in the Campidoglio, he demonstrated how wise he was making the world visible, making it emerge in that unique space. And in the center of it, he placed our Marcus Aurelius riding a horse, to render visible that spatial operation.

And the wisdom of Sir John Soane (1753-1837) was so much that in order to be contrary to the Pantheon's architect, in order to propose its lightness against the massive Roman Dome, he made the light of his suspended domes emerge through their edges, making them float. If that is not wisdom, then I don't know what it is anymore!

To make things in the best possible manner in life, in all fields, in architecture as well, we should try to reach wisdom, try to be wise. Not only having all the information, not only elaborating it and acquiring knowledge, but especially afterwards, always, studying it and discern it in order to, pursuing wisdom, make it like the best, or even better than the best.

And just as we have started with T.S. Eliot, we are going to finish with him now. Because after all, being wise is just achieving to "conjugate the time": present, past and future. That is what the poet offers us in Burt Norton, the first of his *Four Quartets*:

*Time present and time past / are both perhaps present in time
future/ and time future contained in time past. / If all time is
eternally present / all time is unredeemable.*

About Resignation and Universality

18 December 2018



by Alberto Campo Baeza

Every creative activity, architecture included, requires some personal resignation in order to achieve a major universality. This is how our protagonists, a poet, a philosopher and an architect express themselves.

Now you may be wondering: Why are a poet, a philosopher and an architect related to each other? What does T.S. Eliot have to do with Ortega y Gasset? And with Alejandro de la Sota?

T.S.Eliot (1888-1965) was an American citizen who became English and who writes poetry like the angels do. José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) was a clear and transparent Spanish Heideggerian philosopher. And Alejandro de la Sota (1913–1996) was a laconic Bachian Spanish architect. The three of them could have known about each other, because they were contemporaries. If they had met, when meeting, they would be surprised about how many things the poet, the philosopher and the architect had in common.

If we put one single adjective to each one, we would say that T.S. Eliot is transparent, Ortega clear and Sota laconic.

The three of them agree that, each one in its own field, the requirement of some kind of expressive sobriety, some kind of resignation to the excessively personal in order to become more universal.

T.S. Eliot

In his essays *What is a Classic?* and *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, he strongly defends the need for a writer to renounce to the most personal will for the sake of a greater universality. The first text, wonderful, is the speech that he pronounced as the first President of The Virgil Society of London in 1944. The second text was written in 1919, and it contains many of the arguments already presented in the first one.

*When an author appears, in his love of the elaborate structure, to have lost the ability to say anything simply, the process of complexity ceases to be quite healthy, and the writer is losing touch with spoken language.*¹

Try to replace the words “author” and “writer” by “architect”:

*Comes, though, a moment in which new simplicity – even a relative crudity – is the only way out.*²

*To sacrifice some potentialities to take advantage of some others is, to a certain point, a condition of the artistic creation.*³

*Without the constant application of the classical measure, ... we tend to become provincial.*⁴

T.S. Eliot uses the English word *provincial*. I do not know if in English the word “provincial”, which Spanish people

1. T. S. Eliot, *What is a Classic?* London, Faber & Faber Limited, 1945, p. 30
2. *Op. Cit.*, p. 31
3. *Op. Cit.*, p.32
4. *Op. Cit.*, p.55
5. *Op. Cit.*, p.56
6. *Op. Cit.*, p.71
7. *Ibidem*

translate as “provinciano”, has such a derogative sense as it does in Spanish. However, the idea of our poet in its search of the universal in the classic, is very clear.

My concern here is just the corrective action against provincialism in literature. ⁴

A distortion of values, the exclusion of some, the exaggeration of others ... confounds the convenient with the essential, the ephemeral with the permanent. ⁵

The progress of an artist represents an uninterrupted personal sacrifice, a constant negation of personality. ⁶

It remains to be defined this process of depersonalization and its relation with the sense of tradition; is in this depersonalization that can be said that art reaches the condition of science. ⁷

José Ortega y Gasset

Ortega, in his 1951 essay *En torno al Coloquio de Darmstadt* (*About Darmstadt Colloquium*), said:

The style, in fact, represents in architecture a peculiar role that is not present in other arts, even being more pure arts. The thing is paradoxical, but that is the way it is. In the other arts, the style is merely a matter of the artist: he decides—with all his being, certainly and in a way deeper than his will—for himself and before him. His style neither has nor can depend on anyone but himself. But in architecture the same does not happen. If an architect makes a project that boasts an admirable personal style, he is not, strictly speaking, a good architect.

An Architecture Congress was held in Darmstadt in 1951 and Heidegger and Ortega were there. It is surprising that Ortega directly dared to criticize that personal architecture, as Eliot would say: provincial. That makes me think of an

extraordinary architect such as Gaudí, and how his excess of personality decreases the universality that masters such as Mies van der Rohe or Le Corbusier achieved. Ortega continues:

The architect is in a relationship with his profession, with his art, in a very different way than other artists with their respective works. The reason is obvious: architecture is not, cannot, and should not be an exclusively personal art. It is a collective art. The genuine architect is a whole nation. He gives means for construction, purpose and unity. Imagine a city built by many "great" architects, but concerned each one in their own way, in their personal style. Each of those buildings could be magnificent, but the whole will result bizarre and intolerable. [...] The capriciousness would manifest itself naked, cynical, indecent, intolerable. We could not see the building consisting of the sovereign objectivity of a great mineral body, but in its lines we would see the impertinent profile of a man who "has felt like" to do that .

It feels like the words of Ortega could be pronounced today, about the excess of arbitrary and capricious architecture, which we regularly see.

Alejandro de la Sota

One is tired of seeing how the beauty and goodness of things are pursued (perhaps they are the same) with beautifying additions, knowing that the secret is not there anymore. My unforgettable friend J. A. Coderch used to say that if the last beauty is supposed to be like a beautiful bald head (for example, Nefertiti), it is necessary to pull out hair, one by one, with the pain of pulling out each one, all of them. With pain we have to tear from our works the hair that prevents us from reaching its simple end.

These meaning words of Alejandro de la Sota were the closing of a book about his work (Pronaos, Madrid, 1990) and define precisely his position before architecture, and also in life, of this big master of Spanish architecture who every morning played one Bach sonata.

The architecture of Sota shows that great elegance of the precise gesture, of the exact sentence that nearly touches silence. Silence of his work and his personality, which fascinates us. So close to poetry, to poetic inspiration, to silent music.

The architecture of Sota is represented specially in the Gimnasio Maravillas in Madrid. The building, precious, is an impressive example of terseness, of absolute simplicity. To the point that for someone who knows nothing about architecture passes unnoticed, and will find it difficult to understand the beauty contained in it. The same reason why it is difficult to understand the paintings of Mark Rothko. This simplicity of the more logical architecture made Sota say: *"I think that not doing architecture is a good way to do it"*. And when someone asked him about the Gimnasio Maravillas, he just replied: *"it was resolved without problem."*

Knowing this, we could almost agree that Sota would say that *"architecture is not about release emotions, but to escape from them"*, as T.S.Eliot proposed for poetry.

How could we not recognise an authentic universal breath in the three creators? I must admit that, over the years, the intellectual joy produced when in our memory we relate these three characters and these topics is huge. How grant and profitable is the passing of time!

Coda

When I thought I had finished this text, appears Ernst Gombrich. Well, the thing is that Gombrich, whose precious text *The preference for the Primitive* I have known for so long and I have right

now on my desk, does not appear. Periodically, I read again a very special selection of his texts which I have in a bookshelf together side by side to my favourite ones. I have already written more than once about how great is the intellectual joy that takes place over the years when returning to the sources.

The book starts with some words of Cicero, which tell almost everything:

Although at first sight they captivate us, the pleasure does not last long, while the same roughness and crudity of the old paintings maintain the power above us. ⁸

And so Gombrich said:

The more the artist knows how to please the senses, the more defences will have to move against this tendency to flattery.

Ultimately, this preference for the primitive is a clear way to express the necessity of resignation towards what is too much personal in order to achieve universality.

Or, as my old friend Melnikov rightly said:

Becoming my own boss, I begged Architecture to finally take off that marble dress, to remove its makeup and to show herself naked, as a young graceful goddess. And, as it corresponds to true Beauty, to renounce being pleasant and willing.

8. Cicero, *De Oratore* III. XXV, 98

5

— Biographies

Alberto Campo Baeza

Born in Valladolid in 1946, where his grandfather was an architect. When he turned two, he moved to Cádiz, the city where he saw the Light.

He is Professor Emeritus of Architectural Projects at the Architectural School in Madrid, ETSAM, where he has taught for more than 35 years. He also lectured at the ETH in Zurich and the EPFL in Lausanne, the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, the Bauhaus University in Weimar, the Kansas State University, the CUA University of Washington and L'École d'Architecture in Tournai, Belgium and he has been Clarkson Visiting Chair in Architecture by the University at Buffalo. In the academic year 2018-2019, he has been Visiting Professor at the Barcelona School of Architecture, ETSAB.

He has lectured all around the world, and received several prizes such as the Torroja Prize by Caja Granada or the Teaching Excellence Prize from the Polytechnical University of Madrid. In 2013 he received the Heinrich Tessenow Gold Medal from the Tessenow Society in Hamburg, the Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the International Award Architecture in Stone from Verona and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) International Fellowship. Moreover, in 2014 was elected as academic of the Architectural Section from the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando de España. In 2015 he was awarded with the BigMat Awards Berlin and with the International Spanish Architecture Prize (PAEI 2015). In 2018 he has been appointed Doctor Honoris Causa by the University CEU San Pablo and has been awarded with the Piranesi Prize of Rome for his career. In 2019 he has been elected Fellow by the American Institute of Architects.

His works have been widely recognized. From the Turégano House or the Blas House, both in Madrid, to the Gaspar, Asencio and Guerrero Houses in Cádiz, together with the Caja de Granada and the MA Museum, both in Granada, the square "Between Cathedrals in Cádiz", the Moliner Houses in Zaragoza and Rufo in Toledo, the Olnick Spanu House in New York and the Kindergarten for Benetton in Venice. In 2012, he finished an office building in Zamora, in 2014 the House of Infinity in Cádiz and in 2015 the Cala House in Madrid. In the same year, he has been awarded with the Ex Aequo Award by the Conservation Center for the Louvre Museum in Lievin, France. In 2017 he finished the Sports Center for the University Francisco in Vitoria. In 2019 he is developing the architecture competition he won for the extension of the Liceo Francés in Madrid.

More than 30 editions of his book *La idea construida* have been published in several languages. In 2009, he edited the second collection of his texts *Pensar con las manos*, in 2019 *Principia Architectonica*. In 2017 he edited *Teaching to teach* and in 2018 *Palimpsesto Architectonico*. He believes in Architecture as a *Built Idea*, and that its main components are Gravity, which builds space, and Light, which builds time.

He has exhibited his work at the Crown Hall designed by Mies van der Rohe in the IIT Chicago, at the Palladian Basilica in Vicenza, at the Urban Center in New York, at the Santa Irene Church in Istanbul, at San Pietro in Montorio, at the MAXXI in Rome, at the prestigious MA Gallery of Toto in Tokyo and recently at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York and the Pibamarmi Foundation in Vicenza. In 2015 at the Cádiz College of Architects. In 2016 at the Oris House of Architecture in Zagreb. In 2017 at the Architectural School of Buffalo and at the Patio Herreriano of Valladolid. In 2018 at the Alicante University Museum and, finally, in 2019 at the Fundação EPD in Lisbon.

Antoni Barceló Baeza

Palma de Mallorca, 1971.

He works as an associate professor at ETSAB in the Department of Architectural Projects from 2000 to now. Visiting professor in different Architecture Schools (USJ, ETSA La Salle, UIC), Coordinator of different editions in International Workshops (ILAUD, TE'ETSAB 04-05) and member of various juries. He has obtained the DEA and is currently in the process of elaborating the Doctoral Thesis.

Found Barceló-Balanzó architects in 1997, where he develops the professional activity mainly in Projects of different fields for the public administration by means of public contest. His works have been obtained among other recognitions, the First Prize to the best architectural work of the regions of Girona 2013, the First Prize to the best architectural work in Mallorca 2011-13, the First Prize to the best architectural work in Mallorca 2014-16, the First Prize AVS in 2010 for the best work of Building of new construction. With selected works in different editions of the FAD Awards in 2011, 2012 and 2015, in editions 9th and 13th of the Spanish Biennial of architecture and urbanism, as well as Finalists projects of the ENOR Prize 2011 and 2017.

As notable works and projects that have taken recognition; the Auditorium of Teruel, the Cultural Center Cap Vermell; as University Buildings; the new Faculty of Pharmacy in Barcelona, the Postgraduate Study Center of UIB, the Interdepartmental Building (recently won competition and in development) and different Schools and Institutes; as well as Sports Centers; the Sports Hall for the 2018 Mediterranean Games in Tarragona, the S'Aigua Dolça Sports Complex in Mallorca, and Camp del Ferro Sports Center in Sagrera quarter. All of them published in magazines of recognized prestige in the national and international scope. He has recently obtained the first prize in the competition for the construction of a new Hospital in Felanitx, Mallorca

He has been involved in the drafting of the future of the Planning of the Maritime Façade of Palma de Mallorca, where he is currently part of the quality committee for future projects.

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