

URBAN PROJECT. IDEAS AND PRAXIS

Intentions

During the 1980s, Barcelona led the urban debate on the so-called 'urban project' as a design strategy focusing on proximity to architecture, public space and infrastructure. On one hand, with the outstanding theorization of Professor Manuel de Solà-Morales (UR-Revista), and on the other, with a number of successful mid-scale urban transformations that illustrated an internationally renowned practice. Since then, new approaches and new paradigms have appeared on scene, in Barcelona and abroad, composing all together an interesting design practice that is the core of this course.

Urban Project can be defined as an instrument of mediation between the city and architecture, and at the same time, constitutes a way of acting and doing research. A design tool that is different either from the conventional planning or the macro-architecture, and that is driven to conceiving projects for operative fragments of the city well-delimited in space and time. The urban project reformulates the architecture of elements and public space in order to generate a new and more efficient urbanity characterised by its greater "clarity and emotion".

The course starts with a theoretical block in which the evolution of the idea of Urban Project is critically reviewed through the analysis some projects, mainly in Europe, that will be analysed and compared in order to understand dominant paradigms, main strategies and significant design solutions regarding ecology, infrastructure, activities, public buildings, mixticity.... The ensemble of the analysis will provide knowledge and tools for a design-oriented practice.

Two workshop experiences of an intermediate scale will enhance the learning during the course. Both site projects will be located in Viladecans, a small municipality (65 993 inhabitants, 20,4 km²) at a 20' distance from Sants Estació.

Bibliography

AAVV: Barcelona Metropolis. Barcelona: AMB, 2014.

Online at: <http://www.amb.cat/web/territori/urbanisme/pdu/metropolis-barcelona>

PARCERISA, Josep; Carles CROSAS (ed.): Barcelona links, Barcelona: LUB, 2013

Syllabus

First practice: A new-old central area alongside the territorial road

The area of intervention is a fragment facing the 'Avinguda de la Generalitat' in Viladecans, between the 'Carretera de la Vila' (translatable to village road) and the 'Carrer de l'Agricultura' (translatable to agriculture street). The duality characterises, thus, the place: not only in the names of the limits of the area of intervention but specially in what happens on both sides of the street. To the northwest, the town has grown up to the street; to the southeast, industrial uses have been finding accommodation since the late 70's.

The proposal will provide a new layout and façade to the metropolitan avenue and will consider the proper the scale of the intervention in order to turn the existing misused 10 hectares into a new-mixed urban site full of complexity.

Each group of students (2-3) will elaborate a proposal that will be discussed weekly in class. The delivery of the exercise is scheduled for Tuesday, April 9.

Second practice: Reshaping la Rambla

The attention will be transferred to a traditional central place in Viladecans, paradoxically with physical dimensions similar to those of the first project. The transformation of Rambla de Modolell is an ongoing project that the municipality is facing in the months to come.

The improvement of the transversal links, the redefinition of the permeable grounds and green areas, the rearrangement of the terraces of bars and restaurants, of street furniture and the strategy in the location of the kiosks will be taken into consideration in the redesign of this public space. The aim of this practice is to define guidelines and proposals that will be later used as a basis for the process of citizen participation. Methodology and a specific assignment will be defined at the beginning of this second practice with a deadline on Tuesday, May 19.

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation is ongoing and the results of every assignment will be graded as follows: 60% first and 40% the second. Assignments will be elaborated in groups of 2 or 3 students but individual contribution will be also evaluated.