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## CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE OF THE CITY OUTSKIRTS BON PASTOR (BARCELONA)

**Abstract**

The paper presents the territorial and axiological context and the peculiarities of the participatory project developed by the Polis Research Centre and the Bon Pastor Neighbourhood Association, as well as the first steps in the design of two interventions. The first intervention, the Wall and Party Walls in Rodriguez de la Fuente Square, is proposed within the framework of the sustainable development strategies of Barcelona City Council. Its main objective is to achieve thermal insulation of the affected dwellings, thus contributing to the well-being of the residents and to the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into the atmosphere. Besides, it is aimed to solve landscape discontinuity. In the lower part of the party walls, there is a wall, a kind of plinth that the residents have chosen as a site for the expansion of the work on the civic remembrance of the neighbourhood. There, the “Living Memory” space will be set up, reserved for interventions by children from the quarter’s schools through a work programme run in cooperation with them. The second intervention is the case of the centennial Mulberry Tree classified as a tree of local interest. In 2018, the mulberry tree suffered some damage from thugs who threw firecrackers inside. Therefore, the need was pointed out to reorganise the space around the tree in order to create dissuasive effects and preserve its integrity. These are preliminary studies to be discussed by the agents involved in the project: the Sant Andreu District, the IMPUQV (Institut Municipal del Paisatge Urbà i la Qualitat de Vida), and the Bon Pastor Neighbourhood Association.

**Keywords:**

urban design, bottom-up governance, civic remembrance, participation, Bon Pastor, Barcelona



## CONTEXT

At the previous Aesthetic Energy of the City conferences, we presented the progress of the *Bons Pastor's Remembrance. Let's do it!* project. In 2016, we introduced the first works related to the implementation of the “Remembrance Spatial System” into the neighbourhood (Remesar, Crespo, 2017). Later, in 2018, we introduced the vision of the residents (Angosto, 2019; Remesar, 2019c). Since attendees can consult these documents, we will simply provide a few remarks to contextualise the two ongoing subprojects.

Bon Pastor is a neighbourhood in the north of Barcelona on the banks of the Besòs River, integrated into the Sant Andreu district. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bon Pastor's current area was a rural territory, rich in water, crossed by the Rec Comtal,<sup>1</sup> the infrastructure supplying water to Barcelona, and several irrigation ditches. The Rec was used as the driving force of various flour mills, providing drinking water to the city since the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and as a source of water for several Indian Chintz manufactures that had large fields for drying cotton fabrics in the area. Later on, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, those manufactures became textile factories, the origin of the industrial revolution in Barcelona.

Those lands were under the rule of the Municipalities of Barcelona, Santa Coloma de Gramenet and Sant Adrià de Besòs. The Bourbon regime of 1714 divided the old “county of Barcelona” into a series of independent municipalities (Sants, Les Corts, Sarria, San Gervasi, Horta, Gracia, Sant Andreu, and Sant Martí) which, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1897) and later, were annexed to the city. In 1944, Barcelona annexed the territory under the rule of Santa Coloma, yet still even today, a part of the right bank of the Besòs River is under the rule of Sant Adrià. After 1848, three railway lines connecting Barcelona with France and the interior of the Peninsula were built.

At the beginning of the Second Industrial Revolution, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, some large companies were based in the area, both in the part of Santa Coloma (1905 Can Sala; 1907 Sanchís Industries) and in the part under the control of Barcelona (1918 La Maquinista Terrestre y Marítima), attracting the working population to the Carolinas (1923), La Mina (1923) and Sanchís (1930), the small

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<sup>1</sup> El Rec Comtal was a hydraulic structure that served as one of the main water suppliers in the city until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was used to irrigate and also to operate various mills built along its route. Its construction began in the 10<sup>th</sup> century following, in part, the layout of an old Roman aqueduct. It had a length of more than 12 km from Montcada to the city. After the cholera epidemic in 1885, Barcelona City Council began the construction of “a new safe conduction network that prevents leaks and improves the drinking water conditions and makes it reach the city with enough pressure to distribute it throughout the Eixample as well. An aqueduct would be built, the Alt de Montcada one, following the coastal slope of Collserola from a pumping station, located in the current Trinitat Vella, to a reservoir located on the hill of Vallcarca, at a height of 100 meters” (Guàrdia, 2011, pp. 185–186). Gradually, following the growth of the city, the Rec started to disappear, and its archaeological ruins are listed as the Site of Local Interest.

quarters in the land under the rule of Santa Coloma, and to the Estadella quarter (1926) in the municipal area of Barcelona, in the midst of rural surroundings.

After the territorial annexation in 1897, Barcelona City Council called for an international competition to solve the problem of integration of different urban areas with the *Ensanche* fabric designed by Ildefonso Cerdà.<sup>2</sup> Leon Jaussely, a French architect belonging to the “Art Public” school (Remesar, 2016), won the contest with his design (1903–1907). Although the project was not fully implemented, it did have a great influence on Barcelona’s urban planning by introducing proposals that were in line with the technical development at the time. Jaussely’s ideas became part of urban culture and, in one way or another, became reality, albeit only partially:

- a. The limitation of growth following the model of the Cerdà block and the definition of a new type of growth.
- b. Round motor belts, the Mediterranean promenade and diagonal connecting roads, as a re-structuring element of the city.
- c. The definition of a new bipolar urban centre: *España Square*, the gateway to Montjuic, and *Barcelona Square* (now Francesco Macià Square) linked by the axis called *Big Avenue*. In *Barcelona Square*, the Mancomunitat Palace,<sup>3</sup> the new City-Hall and the *Big Exhibitions and Conferences Hall* were to be located.
- d. The delineation of two areas of special intervention: the *Western Core*, which includes a garden-city project as an extension of the Les Corts district and the *Latin Quarter*, delimited by the Industrial School, the University Hospital and the Experimental Farm, as well as the *Eastern Core*, encompassing the New Cathedral (Sagrada Família) and the Besòs Park transformed into a garden city.
- e. The creation of a *large park strip*, which would be developed and transformed into a park system three years later.
- f. The concern about rail links: the formation of large freight stations (Sant Andreu, Verneda, Poblenou) on the outskirts and the removal of level crossings are pointed out as the initial milestones (Galera, Roca, Tarragó, 1972).

Some of the ideas were materialised in 1917 in the Urbanisation Plan-Map<sup>4</sup> of Barcelona (a simplified version of Jaussely’s project) that, given its long

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<sup>2</sup> The “Barcelona Reform and Expansion project” (Cerdà, 1859) largely defined the character of Barcelona’s landscape. In his proposal, Cerdà extended his *Ensanche* beyond Barcelona’s administrative limits, through Sant Martí to the Besòs River, where he would locate a large park extending over the limits of Santa Coloma and Sant Adrià.

<sup>3</sup> The Mancomunitat de Catalunya was an active institution between 1914 and 1923/1925 grouping four Catalan provinces: Barcelona, Girona, Tarragona, and Lleida; with only administrative functions but of great political importance: it represents the first Spanish recognition of the personality and territorial unity of Catalonia since 1714.

<sup>4</sup> In 1914, a municipal committee, resulting from the initiative of the Regionalist League, apolitical party hegemonic at the time in Barcelona City Council, formed by Manuel Vega y March, Guillem Busquets, Jaume Bofill Mates and Josep M. de Lasarte, prepared a programme limiting Jaussely’s Plan proposals. The Plan-Map sets up a basic road network for Barcelona (articulated by the ring road belts), a park system, the limitation of growth according to the model of the Cerdà block, the creation of a new urban centre in the axis between *España Square* and *Barcelona Square* (Diagonal-Urgell-Sarrià Streets). The scheme of the plan was in force until the approval of the

validity (1917–1953), will influence: the creation of the Parks and Gardens Service under the direction of Rubió i Tudurí (Rubí i Tudurí, NM, 1926) in 1917; the opening of some diagonals such as Gran Vía P (now Avenida Josep Tarradellas); the approval of Waterfronts Act in 1918; the enactment of the first zoning decrees in 1923 and 1927, etc.

An important part of the Sant Andreu territory, and therefore of the current Bon Pastor quarter, was the “Eastern Core” designed by Jaussely, which led to the take-off of the industry in the area, as well as the creation of large railway support infrastructure, and new neighbourhoods. In 1929, in the context of the Barcelona International Expo and within the framework of Spanish legislation (the 1921 Low-Cost Affordable Homes Act, known as “Casas Baratas”), the Municipal Housing Board built four groups of single-family homes in rows. Two of those groups were situated on the Besòs riverbank, in lands owned by the Santa Coloma Municipality.<sup>5</sup>

The specialisation of this area as industrial and worker housing one was ratified by the Maciá Plan (1934) designed by Le Corbusier and the G.A.T.E.P.A.C<sup>6</sup> group. Between 1932–1936, very close to the current Bon Pastor district, Josep Lluís Sert, Joan Baptista Subirana and Josep Torres Clavé built the “Block House.”<sup>7</sup> It was the first attempt at construction of social housing that greatly contrasted with the neighbouring small and single-family homes located in Bon Pastor and Baró de Viver.

During the Spanish War, Bon Pastor suffered the bombing (1937) aimed at destroying the Sanchis factory (Chemistry) carried out by the Italian aviation which resulted in nine casualties, including three children, among residents of the affordable houses. After the war, the territory was annexed to Barcelona (1944–1945) and, in the framework of the Francoist development period, it grew as an industrial (Industrial Estates) and massive worker housing area. However, the growth of the neighbourhood was based on social segregation (poverty, lack of facilities, stigmatisation, etc.) in the context of repression and oppression:

1953 Regional Plan. It was carried out jointly by the Municipal Urbanisation Office, managed by Pere Falqués and Ezequiel Porcel, as well as by architect Ferrán Romeu.

<sup>5</sup> The irrigation ditch “La Madriguera” was the boundary between the two municipalities providing water to the three large industries and quarters located in the territory.

<sup>6</sup> GATEPAC (the acronym for the group of Spanish artists and technicians for the Progress of Contemporary Architecture) was a group of architects who promoted rationalist architecture and the modern movement in Spain. GATPAC is the acronym for the group that worked in Catalonia.

<sup>7</sup> The Block House is a recreation of the proposal for *à redent* housing formulated by Le Corbusier in 1922. The GATCPAC project, aimed at social housing, places the complex in a north-south direction, so that the houses are always oriented to the south and east. Each home is accessed via a long-covered corridor that is always on the north and west side. The blocks, long and narrow, are connected with a metal structure of two bays. The ground floor has a covered terrace in front of the living room. Upstairs, each pair of bays has three bedrooms. The resulting density is 1,140 inhabitants per hectare, much lower than that of traditional urban fabrics of closed house blocks such as the ones in Ceda’s Eixample (<https://www.arquitecturacatalana.cat/es/obras/casa-bloc>).

The time of the Franco regime was the time of repression. The Church called apostolic “missions” the work in the district. Social assistance (...) and almsgiving made up for much of the services to which citizens were entitled.

Nevertheless, Bon Pastor remained a united neighbourhood in the face of deficits and adversities: a struggling and united neighbourhood that went out to claim the “absences” of public investment in health (a struggle for the Health Centre in the middle of 70’s), education (a struggle for a professional school in recent years), transportation (a struggle for the underground and for improvement of the bus lines arriving to the area at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), and public space. They also fought for a culturally active neighbourhood supportive to the less favoured (Angosto, 2019).

Soon after the first of Barcelona’s reconstruction works, in 1947, the Francoist authorities began the studies for planning Barcelona’s region. One of the criteria was the city’s zoning into specialised areas for housing, industry, etc. Those works were the basis for the 1953<sup>8</sup> *Regional Plan*. The plan encompassed actions aimed: 1. to push the growth of the city towards the Besòs River; 2. to promote the industrialisation of the areas bordering the Besòs River through the creation of large industrial estates; 3. to consider these areas as a “reserve” for subsequent massive housing operations. The 1953 *Regional Plan* aimed at the industrial, residential and infrastructure growth and development of the territory. The plan guidelines were developed through partial plans and municipal decrees. This way, two partial plans and their subsequent modifications were fundamental for the future of the Bon Pastor area. The stages were as follows:

**1955.** *Partial Plan*<sup>9</sup> for ordering the sector limited by the railway line, Santa Coloma Avenue, the Besòs River and the extension of Aragón Street<sup>10</sup> that defines an extensive area for industrial development.

**1958.** *Municipal decree regulating the zoning areas.* For Bon Pastor, the following zoning areas are defined: Large Industry Zones, Medium Industry Zones, Intensive Residential Zones in isolated blocks, and Semi-Intensive Suburban Residential Areas. In terms of housing, these decrees will have a huge impact on the Bon Pastor landscape. One or two-storey buildings in the Estadella, Carolinas and La Mina quarters will be replaced by four or five-storey buildings between party walls. New buildings inside the Milans del Bosch estate will rise four or five storeys. Several isolated block operations will appear and tower blocks of up to fourteen storeys will be erected. Finally, in the years of 1965–1968, one Partial Plan puts on the table the reconversion of the Milans del Bosch residential area.

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<sup>8</sup> We must remember that, from 1939 to 1952, Spain was hungry and ration cards were used, in parallel with the existence of a large black market.

<sup>9</sup> The partial plans were one of the instruments of the 1953 Regional Plan aimed to specify its guidelines in specific areas of the city.

<sup>10</sup> This plan will undergo several extensions and its final version of 1957 indicates that it is not really a partial plan but rather an expropriation programme.

**1959.** Modification of the previous *Partial Plan*,<sup>11</sup> adding a series of plots for the creation of protected housing, built in isolated blocks in the framework of Barcelona's Social Emergency Plan, which aimed at intensive housing construction; the possibility of increasing buildable area (that is, increasing the number of floors) in the Estadella, Carolinas and La Mina neighbourhoods; the creation of new streets and green spaces (squares) in these neighbourhoods (specifically the one that will eventually be called Plaza Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente).

**1965.** *Plan for the new railway link "Besòs-Litoral" and subsequent provisions* (Ministerial Order, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1967 approving the Barcelona Rail Links Plan).

**1968.** *Partial Plan for remodelling the Milans del Bosch housing estate*,<sup>12</sup> highlighting the disappearance of the horizontal city model represented by the group of low-income affordable houses.

**1976.** At a later stage the *General Metropolitan Plan* (PGM) was decreed, maintaining many of the criteria of the previous 1953 Plan, which would affect the neighbourhood especially in relation to: 1. the transformation of the Milans del Bosch estate following the criteria of the 1968 *Partial Plan*; 2. fixing the layout for the peripheral Barcelona ring road affecting the territory on the right bank of the Besòs River.

In terms of social action, since the mid-1960s, the popular resistance against Francoism was organised into three large segments: labour, with the creation of class unions against Franco's vertical union; culture-university and local communities. This resistance, fundamentally urban, was known under the label "urban social movements" (Borja, 1973; Castells, 1973; Domingo and Bonet 1998). Referring to the large residential operations in France in the 1960s, Castells argues:

The "form" that these houses take is a consequence of the mechanism that originates them: they had to be built quickly and at affordable prices, therefore, on free and inexpensive land, located on the periphery of the agglomerations. It was necessary to build massively and, if possible, entire groups of collective housing. Thus were born the peripheral urban estates that came to modify the French landscape and feed all the reactionary ideologies about the dehumanization of the city, relying on the perfectly legitimate dissatisfaction of the inhabitants of "cheap houses," and that imputed to the form what in reality it was a consequence of facilities deficiencies and spatial segregation, directly determined by the need for a low cost price (Castells, 1972, p. 195).

<sup>11</sup> Since 1953, the Barcelona Urban Planning Commission, the coordinating body of the 1953 Plan, had the power to buy or expropriate land for public domain – as was the case with the Partial Plan of 1955 – and to build limited-income housing (Law 1955). In addition, the Commission could develop the land and sell it to the bodies in charge of the production and management of the houses. This affected companies that built houses for their workers, as happened in the case of Bon Pastor in 1959.

<sup>12</sup> The new 1976 General Metropolitan Plan (PGM) will reinforce this rationale by assigning code 18, i.e. a zone subject to volumetric planning, to the small-houses estate.

His reflections can be perfectly applied to Bon Pastor, both in the 1929 “cheap housing” operations and in the development of the housing estates in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1964 Spain, Manuel Fraga, the Minister of Information and Tourism, launched a massive propaganda campaign to commemorate the twenty-five years of “peace,” presented as a great triumph of Francoism. The political discourse of the campaign tried to introduce a more conciliatory narrative, a departure from the previous one of a warlike “crusade,” with the intention of capitalising on the idea of peace associated with economic and social improvements due to enormous economic growth. The objective of the campaign was to leave the Civil War behind, extolling the virtues of the economic Development Plan that allowed for the reactivation of the economy through the industrialisation and modernisation of Spain, for example, the mass manufacturing of the Seat 600, or the tourist boom, under the slogan “Spain is different” (Remesar et al., 2016). This same year, the Associations Law<sup>13</sup> was enacted, giving rise to the current neighbourhood associations, which channelled the resistance struggles against the dictatorship in the urban dimension towards resistance against speculation, urban deficits and living conditions (transport, health, education, etc.).

In the early 1970s, the establishment of the Bon Pastor Neighbourhood Association was approved under the rules of “Heads of Family Associations decree.” Its emergence marks the origin of a combative culture in the neighbourhood that, step by step, has been achieving enormous improvements, e.g. in its fight for a health centre (1974), traffic lights in the streets, the urban renewal of the neighbourhood (*Bon Pastor un barri amb futur*), etc., successfully dealing with many urban policies and political changes in Barcelona.

Hence, as a result of the residents’ struggle and pressure, a 1985 PERI proposal (Special Reform Plan) for Bon Pastor (project by Lluís Alegre and Jaume Barnada) was adopted to rehabilitate a group of houses (a total of 333 houses) by means of the enlargement of the habitable surface from 48 to 70 sq.m. thanks to a “remonta” i.e. a second storey (80 were rebuilt), and to improve public space and urban infrastructure. At the same time, the PERI considered the replacement of the remaining 451 houses by medium density blocks. This project was based on economic aid from Spain’s central government. In 1988, the central government stopped providing aid for the rehabilitation.

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<sup>13</sup> In 1941, the Franco regime promulgated a decree to control the existing associations (cultural, sports, etc.) that were created under the 1887 Law. Control over those institutions was total. In addition, in 1963, the General Secretariat of the Movement, the only fascist party allowed at that time, promulgated a decree to regulate the so-called “Associations of Heads of Family,” with the aim of promoting civic participation and representation in local, provincial and national bodies. The fight between the Falangists and the Catholics for the promotion of these associations with a clearly political purpose resulted in the opposition of the Presidency of the State to the approval of the LACF (Heads of Family Associations Law).

During the Olympic works, the ring road belt was drawn affecting the football field located among the small, single-family homes. As it passed through the neighbourhood, the ring road belt ran in a trench and, as it happened in other parts of Barcelona, was covered by a large concrete slab, creating a square covered by a pergola that, a few years later, would become a sustainable electricity production plant thanks to photovoltaic panels. One of the neighbourhood's lines of thinking starts here: to become a sustainable neighbourhood.

The Municipal Housing Board decided to reformulate the plans, considering the demolition of the small houses and their replacement by new housing blocks and creating a commission to monitor the affected residents. As a result, in 1998, the Municipal Housing Board (PMH) drafted the document *Criteria, Objectives and General Planning Solutions in the Bon Pastor Housing Estate*, which was finally approved on 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1999.

In 1999, some other plans affecting the territory were also proposed: 1. the environmental recovery of the Besòs River; 2. the project of La Maquinista Mall and the housing estate within the limits of Bon Pastor; 3. the Sagrera project linked to the arrival of High-Speed Train to Barcelona.

This project involved the total coverage of the railway line, creating a new linear park to commemorate the route of the Rec Comtal. The project is only partially finished today. It started a long process of give-and-take between different local governments and the residents, until 2000–2001 when the residents proposed a redevelopment plan, replacing the small houses by blocks of flats to rehouse the residents. The plan was approved in a popular referendum. The process, comprising five stages, is currently underway (stage IV). The plan, *Bon Pastor, a neighbourhood with future*, is a strategic document allowing for the implementation of a series of interventions to conduct the physical remodeling of the neighbourhood and definitively enable the replacement of the small houses. The principal aims of the proposal are: 1. to promote Bon Pastor as an open, plural and inclusive neighbourhood, linked to the district as well as the city; 2. to preserve its strong community personality, social activity and cohesion, and commitment to educational quality; 3. to preserve an intercultural yet united nature of the neighbourhood, maintaining a balance between urban growth and economic activity, as well as its commitment to the quality of its natural environment.

The Plan for the Future was embodied in agreements signed by the residents, Barcelona City Council and the Generalitat de Catalunya, and it foresaw a model of sustainable and balanced development for Bon Pastor. From a planning point of view, the ideas of this plan are contained in the MPGM (Modification of the General Plan), approved in its final version in 2003 (Jordi Romero Sabi). Nevertheless, the process of reconversion and relocation faced the opposition



of a group of residents who in 2003 created another association, AVIS,<sup>14</sup> as a counterpoint<sup>15</sup> to the Neighbourhood Association that was the main promoter of the new plan.

However, the process continues and the first relocation blocks were built between 2006 and 2010. These blocks of flats are located outside the limit of the old social houses estate, along the new street running where the Madriguera ditch used to be. Although with delays, the home replacement plan has concluded stages I–III, stage IV is being finalised and, now, it is being negotiated how stage V will go ahead.

Despite advances in the inhabited environment, Bon Pastor remained a segregated neighbourhood in the 1980s and 1990s; spatially segregated (Salas, 2016; Santamaria, 2018), partly due to the set of physical “barriers” (the railway, river, ring road belt, and industrial estates), and partly due to the difficult access to the city as a whole due to public transport deficits. The underground<sup>16</sup> finally got to Bon Pastor in 2010 and in 2016 there was a noticeable improvement in bus transport with the implementation of stage IV of the Orthogonal Bus Network.<sup>17</sup>

Bon Pastor is a united neighbourhood when facing urban deficits and adversities, as it is struggling to reclaim the “absences” of public investment in health, education, transportation, and public space. It is a culturally active neighbourhood supportive towards the less fortunate. However, Bon Pastor is at risk of social exclusion, another cause of segregation.

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<sup>14</sup> This name is a pun. On the one hand, it means “Association of Independent Neighbours.” Since many of the promoters were elderly people and grandparents – *avis* in Catalan – another meaning of the name is “grandparents.”

<sup>15</sup> From 2004 to 2015, the project called “The Horizontal City” proposed by the University of Barcelona was implemented. The response to the residents and City Council’s project was internationalised through an international ideas contest but it had only a limited impact on the local public opinion (Col. Repensar el Bon Pastor, 2010; Portelli, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> The 1971 Metro plan envisaged three stops of the so-called IV line in the area of Bon Pastor, closely linked to the industrial estates. In the early 1980s, the investment agreement between the City Council and the Generalitat (Regional Government) put an end to the idea to extend the underground to Bon Pastor. Finally, the pressure from the residents resulted in the Bon Pastor station being included in the Infrastructure Master Plan 2001–2010. In 2010, the Bon Pastor underground station opened (Angosto, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> The Orthogonal Bus Network originated in 2012 from the studies developed by the Centre for Transport Innovation (CENIT) of the UPC and the BCNecologia (Urban Ecology Agency of Barcelona), headed by Salvador Rueda between 2000 and 2020. The layout of this network is based on the concept of “superblocks” (superillas) proposed by Rueda since the end of the 1980s (Rueda, Salvador, 1999). The BCNecologia was a consortium made up of Barcelona City Council, Barcelona Metropolitan Area and Barcelona Provincial Council. In December 2019, the Barcelona Urban Ecology Agency began a process of transferring its personnel and assets to Barcelona’s Regional Urban Development Agency, created in 1999. The process was completed on October 1, 2020. The transfer reinforced the existing organisation with which it shares objectives and methodologies. Consequently, the Barcelona Urban Ecology Agency ceased to be operational for all purposes (Rueda, 2010, 2017; Rueda et al., 2018, 2020).

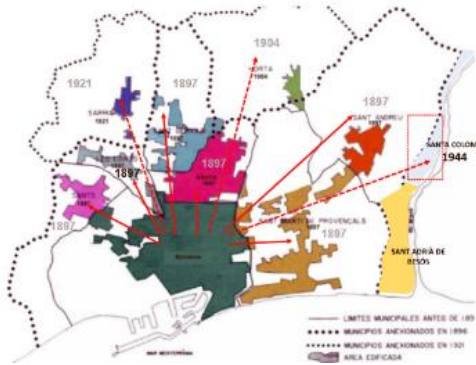


Fig. 1. Processes of Barcelona's territorial annexation of its neighbouring municipalities.<sup>18</sup>



Fig. 2. Industrial growth. The image shows the territory in the mid-1930s. In yellow, the large industrial facilities.



Fig. 3. General view of the territory in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the foreground, the factory of the Terrestrial and Maritime Machinist. The rural character of the territory can be seen.

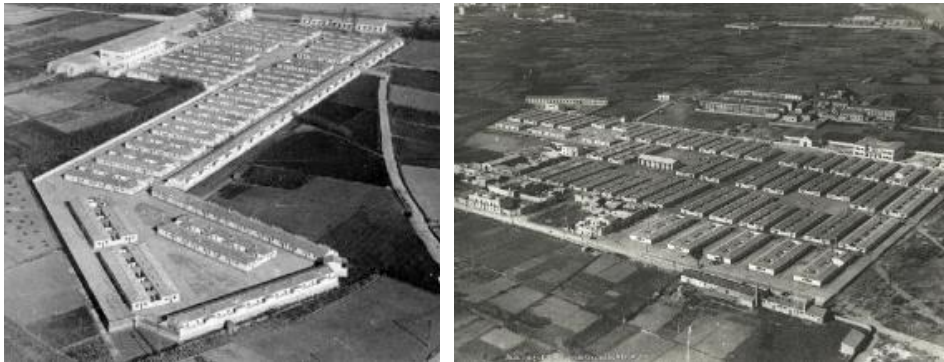


Fig. 4, 5. Between 1929 and 1933, the current district of Sant Andreu hosts two great experiments to solve the problem of workers' housing. Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, the groups of "cheap houses" (Baró de Viver and Bon Pastor) promoted by the Barcelona Housing Board and built by Fomento de la Vivienda Popular, a company linked to the economic and religious oligarchy.

<sup>18</sup> Source of all photos: authors' archives.

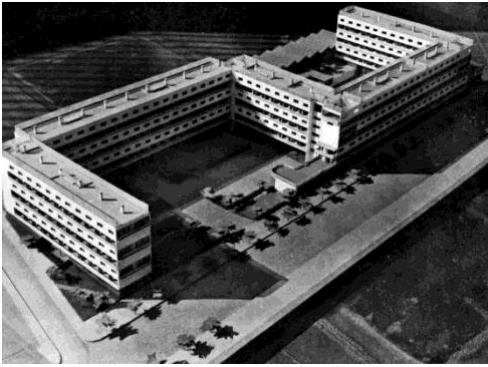


Fig. 6. [Left] The Second Spanish Republic, the “Block House” (Casa Bloc designed by Sert, Subirana and Torres Clavé) promoted by the Institute Against Forced Unemployment, Generalitat de Catalunya. Against the isolated and closed housing estate model, structured as a village – a model very close to what the Nazi concentration camps will look like – the Block House incorporates the principles of Modern Architecture (redoute construction, corridor street, duplex flats, etc.) and is inserted into the urban fabric. The distance between the two towns and the Block House is less than a kilometre in a straight line.

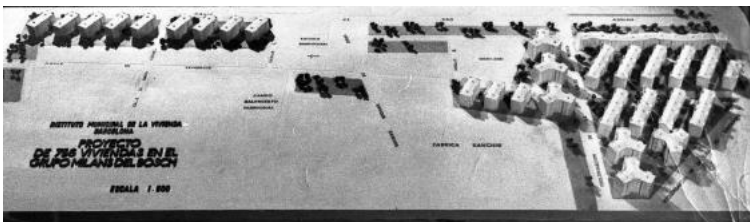


Fig. 7, 8. [Above] 1955. Within the framework of the Regional Plan (1953), the development of the Partial Plan, the first step in the creation of large industrial estates in the area.



Fig. 9, 10. [Left] Within the framework of the Regional Plan (1953) and the Barcelona Social Emergency Plan (1959), the development of the Partial Plan determines the creation of new residential estates in the area in the form of isolated blocks. The project is aimed at building 756 homes, divided into seven different housing developments, plus the construction of a Catholic school and a market.

[Below] The model of the project. Below, an aerial view of the early 1970s showing different housing developments.





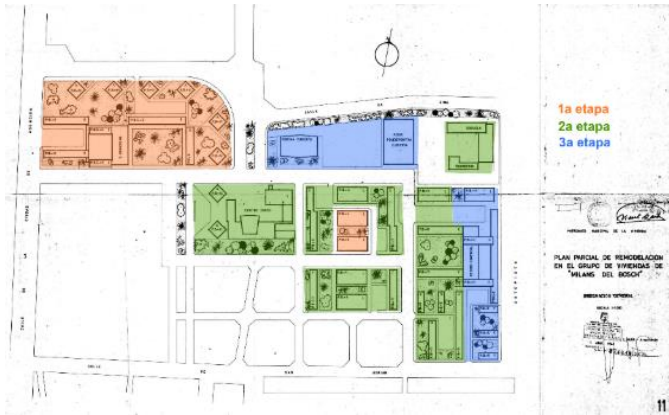


Fig. 11. 1968. *The Partial Plan for remodelling the Milans del Bosch housing estate*, highlighting the disappearance of the horizontal city model represented by a group of low-income affordable houses.



Fig. 12–14. 1985. As a result of the residents’ struggle and pressure, a 1985 PERI proposal (Special Reform Plan) for Bon Pastor (project by architect Lluís Alegre – Jaume Barnada) is adopted to rehabilitate a group of houses (a total of 333 houses) by means of the enlargement of the habitable surface from 48 to 70 sq.m. thanks to a “remonta,” i.e. a second storey (80 were rebuilt), and to improve public space and urban infrastructure. In the image, some of the houses that opted for the “remount,” now bricked up awaiting demolition.



Fig. 15. Evolution of the plans for the conversion of the residential estate. 1999. The four ideas for the *Criteria, Objectives and General Planning Solutions in the Bon Pastor Housing Estate*.



Fig. 16. 2000–2001. After the neighbourhood’s rejection of the previous ideas, the City Council organises an ideas contest. Plan of the contest winning project for the remodelling (architect Romero Sabí) of the estate.



Fig. 17, 18. Between 2000 and 2001, the *Bon Pastor*, a neighbourhood with a future participatory process is developed. As a result of the process and the agreements signed between the residents and the City Council, a five-stage plan is prepared for the remodelling of the residential estate (2003 Plan).

## THE REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

In 2004, the Generalitat de Catalunya enacted the Neighbourhoods Act as an instrument “to improve neighbourhoods, urban areas and towns that require special attention.” In 2009, the call for projects was issued, and Barcelona City Council presented an integral project for Bon Pastor-Baró de Viver that, initially, received a subsidy of €8.6 million. However, with the arrival of the nationalist city government (2011) and the beginning of cuts to projects and services, the subsidy was compromised. In 2016, the City Council deployed its own project for neighbourhoods at social risk known as the “Neighbourhood Plan.”

It is in this context that Bon Pastor’s Neighbourhood Association started its dual working process on its social and historical remembrance. On the one hand, working with CR POLIS<sup>19</sup> on *The Bon Pastor’s Remembrance. Let’s do it!* project, which derives from the “Remembrance Mural” experience resulting from a citizen participation process in Baró de Viver neighbouring district in 2011 (Salas, 2015). On the other hand, working with Barcelona’s History Museum (MUHBA) and following the neighbourhood organisations’ idea to preserve a row of small houses by turning them into a “museum space of popular housing.”

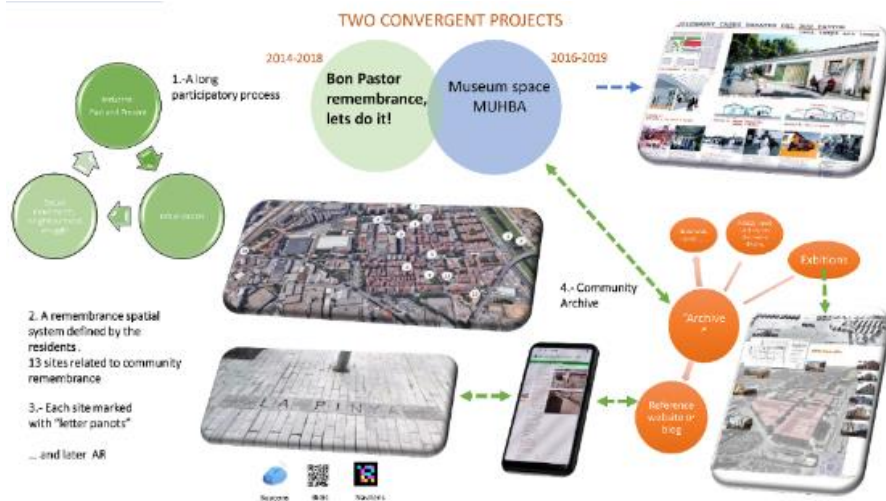


Fig. 19. General summary of *The Bon Pastor’s Remembrance. Let’s do it* project in convergence with the MUHBA museum-space project.

<sup>19</sup> It is relevant to note what the function and role of our research centre is. The Polis Centre works as a laboratory of ideas formulating concepts and preparing drafts for public space projects, translating in a formal way the wishes or requirements that residents made explicit in the participatory process. Then, the Centre starts a long process of negotiations and hopefully subsequent collaborative work with the technical bodies of the City’s Council to finally implement the project (Remesar, 2019a).

An Urban Improvement Plan (PMU, 2011) was drawn up taking into consideration this new reality. The effects of the City Council's "Neighbourhood Plan" (2016) will facilitate the development and the confluence of both projects that present different points of agreement. The two projects are underway today.

At the end of 2013, Bon Pastor's Neighbourhood Association contacted the POLIS Research Centre with the idea of a project like the one carried out two years earlier in Baró de Viver. The idea encompassed a project concerning Bon Pastor's "Civic Remembrance." It started in 2014 with some resistance from the district administration that was in the hands of the right-wing nationalists (CIU) at the time. We worked on the first stage of the project from 2014 to 2018. After three years,<sup>20</sup> a few creative workshops, several neighbourhood forums and a couple of exhibitions, it was made public in December 2017 and discussed among the residents in January, February and March 2018. *The Strategic Action Plan* (CR POLIS, 2017) allows us to organise a working process and prepare a roadmap to operationalise the outcomes in order to implement them. The outcomes proposed in the participatory process include: 1. a spatial system of sites relevant to the civic memory of the neighbourhood articulated from the dimensions of **"our present and industrial past, the urban aspects of the territory and the remembrance of social movements and neighbourhood struggles;"** 2. the development of the **"Remembrance Archive."**

How is this spatial system to be developed? The residents participating in the workshops chose 13 sites relevant as an expression of civic memory. At each of these sites, a series of "letter panots,"<sup>21</sup> to remember the site by means of its name inscribed on the pavement, is planned (see the image of La Pinya). Due to the irrelevance, some of the 13 sites should also receive an artistic intervention to highlight their memory value, at the same time endowing the neighbourhood with some works of public art.<sup>22</sup> In addition, one of the "panots" should incorporate a "Vidi," "Navilens" or "Beacon" device, allowing us to introduce Augmented Reality (AR) in public space. It is through these artefacts that the Space System connects with the other main project, the Archive. Indeed, one of the proposed activities for the Archive consists of developing an information platform (it can be a website) that would include information (textual, visual, audio, etc.) at each of the 13 sites. The QR, Vidi or Beacon artefact connects the

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<sup>20</sup> To learn more about the work methodology of this process, you can consult (Remesar, 2019a, 2019c).

<sup>21</sup> The site is marked with an intervention on the pavement, using the most widespread paving system in Barcelona since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the so-called "panots," pieces of 20 x 20 x 5 cm of hydraulic concrete of different forms (Esparza, 2017). Years ago, "panots of letters" were placed at the corners of streets to show their names. In this proposal, we recover the use of such "panots of letters" (Vergel, 2017).

<sup>22</sup> Bon Pastor is one of the few neighbourhoods in Barcelona not benefiting from the Public Art policy of the City. Therefore, the residents propose that some of these 13 points can be symbolised by public art works, such as, for example, the Monument to the victims of the 1937 fascist bombing, the remembrance of the White Centre, the welcome to the Besòs River, or the remembrance of the neighbourhood struggles to get the underground to the neighbourhood (Remesar, 2020).



site with the Archive through the mobile phone of anyone who directs it towards the emitter device. The phone will receive the information issued by the Archive. This means that the provision of information for augmented reality must be created from the Neighbourhood Documentation Archive, **The Archive** (Remesar and Vergel, 2020b). We have explained how the spatial system connects with the Archive. As its name indicates, the Archive is a physical space in which, in addition to maintaining the platform related to augmented reality, a series of operations related to the Documentation of the Neighbourhood Remembrance are carried out (collection and filing of physical documents, digitisation of documents). Also, and this is very important, the Archive is tasked with the dissemination of this Remembrance (the creation of sound, visual, audio-visual documents and exhibitions,<sup>23</sup> as well as the development of training-informative programmes for schools or visitors<sup>24</sup>). In this sense, the Archive becomes a Centre for Studies and Documentation.



Fig. 20. Sites of Remembrance according to the Remembrance Spatial System

<sup>23</sup> For example, just before the lockdown related to the COVID-19 pandemic, a first exhibition, 'Bon Pastor. The Making of a Neighbourhood,' was held within the framework of the festival *Bon Viver de les Arts*. The Bon Pastor Neighbourhood Association proposed the presentation of the first exhibition about the history of the neighbourhood. This exhibition, which covers the evolution of the territory from its beginnings to the 1960s, is a first step in the activities that the Centre for Documentation and Remembrance Archive will carry out. The exhibition was supposed to open on 23<sup>rd</sup> March at the neighbourhood's Community Centre, but the opening was delayed till September. Later, the exhibition was shown at the "Rubió i Tuduri" Vocational Training Centre, later it was exhibited at the "El Til·ler" School, and now it is shown in the Bon Pastor Market.

<sup>24</sup> See later *The Living Remembrance* project implemented on one of the partition walls.





Fig. 21.  
Intervention at  
Point 12 of the  
Remembrance  
Spatial System:  
La Pinya (2019).



Fig. 22. On a  
partial plan of the  
PGM (1976), zone  
6A (existing green  
space) and zone 6B  
(newly created  
green space) are  
highlighted in  
green, correspond-  
ing, respectively,  
to the zone where  
the mulberry tree is  
and the zone of  
Félix Rodríguez de  
la Fuente Square  
where the party  
walls and the  
property boundary  
wall are located.



Fig. 23. A view of the Party Walls in 2001.



Fig. 24. A view of the Mulberry Tree.

The Archive connects the neighbourhood remembrance project with the MUHBA's project. As mentioned above, the MUHBA's project consists of the preservation of the two rows of houses and the creation of museum space dedicated to the low-income housing. Indeed, the Archive will be placed in this museum space through co-management agreements with the MUHBA and the district. Therefore, the Archive will be able to make use of the museum facilities (its conference room, exhibition hall, etc.) for some of its own activities.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ROADMAP – ACTION PLAN

2019 was a complicated year in the management of projects in the neighbourhood, mainly because of the process of local elections that forced a reshuffle of the city's government structure, both the general government of the city and the government of the district. As it is well known, an electoral year implies that normal activity is frozen for a few months before the start of the electoral process and is activated a few months after. In mid-2018, we began discussions on the Strategic Plan that were slowed down by the electoral process and were reactivated at the end of 2019 with the change of the District General Manager. The district proceeded to organise a task force composed of a coordinator from the district itself, the representatives of the City Council Sculpture Commission, the Heritage Department, the Urban Landscape Institute, the MUHBA, the Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood Association, and the CR Polis. The first meetings were cancelled due to the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and when restrictions began to be relaxed, at the end of 2020, a series of meetings were held *in situ* to assess the possible interventions to be carried out under the 2019–2023 municipal mandate.

According to the technical assessments of the City Council, the following interventions should be prioritised: 1. The Party Walls in Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente Square and the Mulberry Tree space, due to the fact that the district could allocate a budget to carry them out<sup>25</sup>; 2. The development of the “museum space,”<sup>26</sup> that is, the physical rehabilitation of the old houses where it will be located. In relation to the museum, study the monument to “The victims of the fascist bombings of 1937,” which after deliberations will be renamed “Women

<sup>25</sup> This budget comes from the funds of the Tourist Tax managed by “Turisme de Barcelona.”

<sup>26</sup> With a budget from the Neighbourhood Plan, in 2016, the BIMSA (Barcelona of Municipal Infrastructures) launched an ideas contest for a preliminary project concerning one of the small houses rows which should contain the museum space. The contest was won by Mercadé & Fernández Arch at the end of 2017. This team began the study of the executive project, and it is expected that by the end of 2022 or the beginning of 2023 the works will be completed.

for the future”<sup>27</sup> since most of the victims were women. This monument will be located in the square<sup>28</sup> in front of the museum. The activities related to the party walls and the mulberry tree were planned to be concluded in 2021 in the form of an executive project in order to start the adjudication procedures and comply with the budgetary expectations.

## THE WALL AND THE PARTY WALLS INTERVENTION

Barcelona is a city full of party walls.<sup>29</sup> The problem with party walls is when (1) the adjoining buildings are of different heights, or (2) when, for various reasons, another building is not built next to the previous one. The ostensible presence of party walls introduces discontinuity effects, breaking with the surrounding landscape structure.

### Barcelona’s party walls plan

For this reason, for several decades, Barcelona City Council through the Urban Landscape Institute (IMPU) has implemented a plan to improve the city’s party walls, and so doing, to improve the city’s landscape.

The main objective of this plan is to improve the quality of the urban habitat and the quality of life of its residents, especially from the moment that the plan incorporates an environmental dimension. The plan seeks to solve urban discontinuities and ruptures, strengthening the connection between various urban fabrics, eliminating the state of precariousness and provisional solutions with permanent architectural interventions, and so doing, to dignify the immediate

<sup>27</sup> Architect Jordi Henrich, following the residents’ guidelines that emerged in the participatory processes, has developed preliminary studies for the monument, although they have not yet been discussed by the actors involved.

<sup>28</sup> This square was remodelled at the end of 2017 and had no name. On 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2019, a conference was held (Bon Pastor, Laboratory of the Neighbourhood) organised by the MUHBA to present the museum project. It was the last day that public events and inaugurations could be organised before the start of the electoral campaign. On that day, José Maria Romero, the Vice-President of the Neighbourhood Association, unveiled a plaque with the new name of the square: Vilabesòs. This name refers to the “Vilabesòs” magazine published by the children of the Carles Aribau school in the neighbourhood between 1934 and 1935. That type of activity was an initiative of José de Tapia Bujalante, the first Spanish teacher to use the printing press in his work with children, based on the technique developed by Freinet. After the war, Tapia emigrated to Mexico (Hernández Huerta, 2005; Jiménez Mier, 2018; Viñao, 2019).

<sup>29</sup> What is a party wall? Party walls (common walls or demising walls) stand on the land of two or more owners and either: (1) form part of a building; (2) do not form part of a building, e.g.: a garden wall (not wooden fences). Walls on one owner’s land used by other owners (two or more) to separate their buildings are also party walls (<https://www.gov.uk/party-walls-building-works>). These walls arise from a particular urban morphology which places construction sites next to each other, as in many streets of Mediterranean cities, or in the so-called “terraced houses,” whereby a row of attached dwellings shares side walls, as can be seen in many cities of the Anglo-Saxon world.

environment. The plan also aims to reinforce the local identity, as well as cultural or social meaning, and to upgrade and reinforce self-sustainability and comfort of the affected buildings through improvements in water tightness and thermal insulation, the opening of windows or the provision of elements for capturing renewable energy, as well as introducing non-colonising plant treatments that humanise corners or complete green spaces. It also includes the placement of nests and spaces dedicated to protected birds to balance the loss of available space caused by the process of rehabilitation or the use of new construction techniques. Throughout these years, the IMPU has gained expertise allowing it to develop a standardised model which, considering the basic criteria of the plan, can be reproduced in different places in an easy and economical way. The plan encourages public–private partnership through advertising, sponsorship and cooperating with other municipal services which operate in the urban space implementing biodiversity and naturalisation initiatives. Furthermore, since the entry into force of the 2030 United Nations Agenda, the plan contributes to achieving some of its objectives, such as: Objective 3. Ensuring a healthy life and promoting well-being for all people of all ages; Objective 11. **Sustainable cities and communities. Sustainable and resilient buildings;** Objective 13. Climate action. Climate change and reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

#### Party walls in Bon Pastor

The two buildings that we see in the image were built in 1965 and we do not know for sure why they left the respective party walls uncovered, or in other words, why the two adjoining lots that face the square did not follow the normal process in the Estadella quarter to build higher structures, taking advantage of the provisions of the 1953 Regional Plan. What we do know is that these two plots adjoining the buildings, which are separated from the plaza by a wall, are affected by the provisions of the 1976 PGM. Since 1976 (PGM), the area has been listed as 6b (newly created green areas). These are two ground-floor lots, one still inhabited today, the other used for religious worship.

#### Aims and objectives

In the participation process, the residents recorded their opposition to these party walls (site 9) being covered by graffiti, stating that, since the square (Rodríguez de la Fuente Square) is a central point in the neighbourhood – a local school is located in the square next to the library, the community centre and the neighbourhood parish church – urban decorum solutions should dignify the landscape.

**Brief description.** As we can see in the image, there are two large party walls with an area of approx. 390 m<sup>2</sup>, separated by a ventilation courtyard. We cannot see its basement due to the two properties affected by the 1976 plan. The edge of the properties adjacent to the square is a wall of about 50m in length and varia-

ble height of between 3 and 5 meters. The square has children's play area and it is next to a school, as well as the local community centre, library, and church.

Party walls introduce discontinuity in the urban landscape, showing a vertical plane (Remesar, 2019b; Ríos Díaz, 2017) of the public space that is not in accordance with basic criteria of urban aesthetics. Despite the fact that the dividing walls have a rainfall partition, an insulation intervention concerning the party walls would help thermal comfort inside the residential buildings and reduce energy consumption, thus reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Given the legal situation of the properties – it will not be possible to build on them in the future – this intervention would also allow for opening windows on the party walls to improve the ventilation and lighting of the flats.

The intervention also aims:

1. to solve the problem of the walls constructively and compositely through the application of materials that enable thermal insulation;
2. to insert a visual filter in those areas that require more privacy;
3. to develop a geometric layout with different depths and colours;
4. to use a colour palette that alludes to the constructed work to generate a dialogue between the existing structures and the new intervention.

Energy rehabilitation of buildings is a solution to high energy consumption and can be seen as a necessary action to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. It also provides savings: the improvement of the insulation of building facades and roofs using efficient materials leads to a reduction in heating consumption of more than 70%. The investment made in rehabilitating a property is amortised year after year, since it recovers the money invested in the form of savings made in energy not consumed. Rehabilitation improves living conditions and comfort by minimising heat in summer, cold in winter, noise, etc. It also helps to improve residents' health by minimising the occurrence of diseases associated with humidity, respiratory problems, allergies, etc. With the entry into force of the new Energy Certificate of Buildings, a higher rating of energy efficiency implies an increase in the target value of housing.

### Initial ideas for the party walls project

Following the recommendations of the IMPU, we began a study how to solve the problem of the party walls.<sup>30</sup> The exterior insulation systems commonly in use in Barcelona were analysed using a SWOT scheme regarding the three different systems we could use for the project.

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<sup>30</sup> Shortly after presenting these first studies, the IMPU informed us that the Department of Construction Licences of the City Council did not authorise the intervention on the party walls. Thus, the project that we present will be divided into two parts. On the one hand, the intervention concerning the party walls will be referred to in point four of the proposal for the Remembrance System. The operational scheme will be maintained with the possibility of introducing a work of public art (White Centre). On the other hand, the intervention on the wall that overlooks Plaza Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente is to be carried out.

Table 1. Pros and cons of the proposed insulation systems

System	+	-
Exterior Thermal Insulation System (SATE)	Solid colour + possibility of opening windows including corten steel jambs + visual filters in pipes and intermediate space.	Relatively expensive
Ventilated Facade System or TRESPA	Modular with a set of colours and depths + possibility of opening windows including corten steel jambs + visual filters in pipes and intermediate space.	Very expensive
Wall preparation and insulation injection	Solid colour + possibility of opening windows including corten steel jambs + visual filters in pipes and intermediate space.	Less expensive

Fig. 25, 26.  
Two Working  
Proposals for  
the Party Walls.

A priori, any of the systems fit well the objectives of the project, as they allow:

1. to open windows;
2. to introduce visual closure elements between the two party walls;
3. to use colour as a compositional element for the walls surface.

In regard to the colours, we start by evaluating the choice of colour palette. For this purpose, we carry out a small study to test the colours that colour-blind people could see. However, a subsequent study and readjustment must be made to have the criteria for the arrangement of the colours on the wall.





Fig. 27, 28.  
Proposal of  
the living  
Memory  
Wall.



#### Initial ideas for the project concerning the wall dividing two properties

The wall in the Plaza marks the boundary between two properties affected by the 1976 PGM. This wall has a long history as a place for the residents' artistic expression. We found the first example of such expression in 1999, with a series of murals based on the initiative of Bernardo Gago (1930–2016), a painter resident in Bon Pastor.<sup>31</sup> Subsequently, the 1999 murals were painted over twice with graffiti. The wall is 50 m long with a maximum height of 4 m and a minimum of 3 m. The first conditioning factor for our study is that the intervention on the current wall must be movable. In fact, when the two affected properties disappear, the intervention on the actual wall must be integrated into the new basement of the party walls. In addition, the improvements to the current wall should not imply an infrastructural improvement of the properties since, when the time comes, the expropriation process should not be conditioned by the improvements. The objectives for this intervention are based on three dimensions: Landscaping, Remembrance, and Materials features. Regarding the landscape, the action must be consistent both with the general landscape of the square and with the complementary project on the party walls. This dimension conditions the use of materials and colours.

We are thinking of the use of perforated aluminium sheets that can be attached to the wall with a very simple structure and that do not, strictly speaking, imply an improvement in the condition of the affected properties.

<sup>31</sup> With the collaboration of Agustina Segarra, Roberto Navalón, José María Martínez, José Pérez, Jorge Garrochena, Sara Martínez, Mónica Ramírez, Ester Miguel, and Ino Cabezuolo.

Perforated aluminium is a mouldable, aesthetic, durable, easy-to-maintain and low-cost material. This material makes graffiti difficult but it is not a definitive solution. In the neighbourhood, we can find a couple of examples that show that graffiti is also possible on perforated sheets. Insulation material will not be needed as it is not done for the purpose of housing. For this reason, a thicker-textured sheet should be taken into consideration. The anchoring system for this type of aluminium cladding is relatively simple as it fits into a metal structure attached to the wall that can be stainless steel or aluminium. A concrete socket with a height between 20 and 50 cm to prevent degradation due to shocks or dog's urine would be needed. As for the colours for these aluminium plates, they must be in line with the colour proposal for the party walls, although there is the possibility of proposing a neutral colour, depending on the study of continuity and coherence between the dividing wall and the party walls.

A series of images about the evolution of the neighbourhood are planned to be installed on the metal facing. Given that the intervention area is within the limits of the Estadella quarter, the most appropriate would be if the images were referring to this sector and not to the whole neighbourhood. The proposal is based on a series of metal plates distributed in the Barcelona neighbourhoods that used to be shantytowns (Montjuïc, Marina-Besòs, Sant Martí; Prosperitat, Carmel, etc.) until the late 1980s. It is an initiative of historical memory so as not to forget the difficult living conditions of many citizens in the midst of Franco's developmentalism. The plates were designed by Judit Masana and consist of a trapezoidal totem made of corten steel finished off by a solarised photograph on a bronze plate. The result is of great aesthetic quality. For the photographs on the wall, a similar solution is proposed.

At one end of the wall, some space will be dedicated to "living memory." As a consequence of the existence of the "Archive," which, as we have seen, has already started the production of dissemination materials (exhibitions), it is proposed to start a programme with the neighbourhood schools. The programme is based on the introduction of school content – at all levels – concerning the physical and social history of the neighbourhood. The schools will be invited to participate in this space by designing "murals" resulting from the pedagogical actions carried out in each one of them. These interventions may change every six months and will be conveniently registered and disseminated by the Archive.

We do not forget, however, the agreement with *The Remembrance. Let's do it!* Project. Certainly, it will be necessary to incorporate in the pavement the "panots of letters" that make up the project of the Spatial Remembrance System.

These first ideas have already been discussed with the Urban Landscape unit of the City Council and with the Bon Pastor Neighbourhood Association. The progress of the project and its discussion is pending technical actions that the Sant Andreu District must perform with the cooperation of two owners of the properties affected by the 1976 PGM.



## THE MULBERRY TREE INTERVENTION

One of the thirteen points proposed by the residents and agreed upon during the participatory project *Bon Pastor's Remembrance, Let's do it!* (CR POLIS, 2017) is the Mulberry Tree. The main aim of this project is to recover the civic remembrance of the people who live in Bon Pastor through interventions in public space, dignifying it and claiming its symbolic values (Remesar and Vergel, 2020b, 2020a). Because of that, we are collecting the ideas put forward for one of the multiple sites specified as sites of remembrance, an ongoing project carried out in the framework of civic participation and co-production.



Fig. 29, 30. Parks & Gardens Department's intervention regarding the Mulberry Tree.

This tree, a large mulberry tree, has witnessed the birth, growth, and transformation of the Bon Pastor suburb. It is a great, fruit bearing, almost centenary tree, located where the boundary between the old municipal limits of Barcelona and Santa Coloma was, at the edge of Bon Pastor's affordable housing estate. It grew up on the banks of an irrigation ditch,<sup>32</sup> where the trail leading to the La Maquinista factory started. The ditch was one of the many that run across the territory and it provided water to the crop fields, the mills and, afterwards, to the factories in the area.

The residents have kept the patrimonial character of the tree in their collective memory. However, over the years, a series of acts of vandalism have affected the tree, endangering its integrity. Because of that, a group of residents called the "friends of the Mulberry Tree" wrote a poem dedicated to the tree trying to enhance its heritage value and its symbolic character. Therefore, the

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<sup>32</sup> This is the "La Madriguera" ditch that ran from the current Trinitat Vella quarter, crossed Bon Pastor's entire territory, and after reaching the old Verneda mill, emptied into the Mediterranean where the Horta Creek is situated. Today, the ditch is remembered thanks to the name of two streets, one in Trinitat Vella and the other where the mulberry tree is.

Neighbourhood Association asked the City Council to protect the tree from aggressions as well as to help provide symbolic value to the place in the framework of the ideas derived from the participatory process.

To solve these issues, in 2018, the Neighbours' Association and the Polis Research Centre presented a small proposal to make a quick intervention at the site using standardised concrete pieces that would enclose the tree grate, creating a distance between the tree and the users of the space. With this small proposal, we also began to conceive the idea of introducing resting furniture such as benches, seats, or urban chairs. This was linked to another of the ideas of the Neighbourhood Association which was about reusing the foundations of the old Bon Pastor Market.<sup>33</sup> The Market was demolished in 2009 because of its poor state of conservation and the concrete foundations were already used as seats in the provisional square built at the market site after its demolition, during the ten years that elapsed till the opening of the new market in 2019. After the construction of the new market, the concrete blocks "disappeared" – we do not know now if they were destroyed or are in the municipal warehouse. However, the idea of reusing and integrating them into one of the public spaces of the quarter is still alive.

Despite the proposal, the Parks and Gardens Department made a small intervention, covering large holes in the tree trunk with metal mesh. This should make access difficult and prevent the throwing of objects and firecrackers into the tree. The residents were not enthusiastic about this solution, since it was considered temporary, and they keep pressing the council to implement a major plan in its place.

#### Current situation: aims and objectives

To explain the current situation regarding the intervention area, it is necessary to approach its urban condition and its relationship with the urban planning of the region. As stated before, the principal instrument for the regulation of the territorial planning in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona is the PGM. This plan was approved in 1976 and is still in force today, regulating the uses and qualifications of the land.

According to this general plan, the area where the mulberry tree is located is listed as 6b, i.e. "local character new green area." Although a part of the space is working according to its classification, the other part of the area, even today, 45 years after the approval of the PGM, continues to be closed off and fenced by a metal fence, without any public space project. This is partly justified by a set

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<sup>33</sup> The old market was built in 1960 and designed by Enric Piqué Marco. It should be noted that this market is listed as a relevant work of modern architecture in the DOCOMOMO catalogue.

of issues related to the general complexity and slowness of urban planning processes and by the particularly complex evolution and transformation of the territory itself.

Madriguera Ditch Street,<sup>34</sup> where the mulberry tree is located, nowadays represents the boundary between the residential area and the 22a industrial activities area. Today, the formalisation of this scheme is a consequence of the approval of the modification of the PGM and the subsequent Urban Improvement Plan (2003). The Plan led to the demolition of the 1929 affordable housing estate and its replacement by vertical housing blocks. Out of this transformation emerged today's layout of the street, and with it, Sant Pol de Mar Square, scarcely equipped and poorly preserved green space. However, it is expected that at any moment this area will be improved, giving rise to a real and proper green square. As occurred with the party walls, today, this public space is affected by ownership problems that prevent the full development of the area, at least, for the moment.

As stated before, the mulberry tree is one of the areas of the neighbourhood that the residents claimed as a site of memory. After the 2019 municipal elections, *The Bon Pastor's Remembrance, Let's do it!* project was reactivated and an initial budget allocated to develop site 6 (Party Walls) and 9 (Mulberry Tree) allowing the residents to launch again the Mulberry Tree initiative in order to make an improvement according to the residents' expectations. This way, the district together with the city's Urban Landscape Institute suggested the possibility of including the Mulberry Tree Project within the programme called Small Landscapes.<sup>35</sup>

Conceiving the Mulberry Tree area as a public space project incorporating the demands for an improvement and symbolic construction coming from the residents involves a multi-scale articulation of two different scales of remembrance: the one articulated at a local-neighbourhood scale and the other articulated at the whole city level. Moreover, the relationship between these two programmes could be considered as a combination of a Bottom-Up initiative, born out the citizens' movement, with a Top-Down initiative, deployed by an administrative body, giving rise to what in public policy studies is called "a bottom linked initiative," i.e. the body with competencies for intervention in public space and a grassroots organisation working together to implement public

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<sup>34</sup> The layout of the street of the Madriguera ditch was drawn in two stages. The first – in the late 1970s or early 1980s. The second – in the first decade of the 2000s, coinciding with the construction of the first rehousing block and the opening of Sant Pol de Mar Square.

<sup>35</sup> "Small Landscapes" is a programme of Barcelona City Council that aims to save specific corners, details and unique elements of the city's landscape, intending to recover and preserve the city's memory. These unique elements include everything from advertising signs to sculptures and public art pieces, etc. Through this programme, the Institute reserves a part of its private funds for the rehabilitation and preservation of this kind of elements and usually these small interventions come together with larger urban projects.

policies, plans or projects through processes of discussion, co-design, co-production, and also co-management (Bovaird, Löffler, 2016; Loeffler, Bovaird, 2020). This is relevant because it implies a quite innovative way to face urban projects, at least in this contextual territory, which has been traditionally avoided by the city's administration.

### Project strategy stage 1

When studying the project, we thought that it would be interesting to split it into two stages and four thematic axes of intervention: pavement, seats, "letters panots," and the mulberry tree poem. The first stage fits the current conditions of the space, and the other one considers the future enlargement of the area. Now, the area where the mulberry tree is placed is in a street bordered by green grass space, planted with some trees and bushes along the roadway with a parking area. The space of the mulberry tree hole is 3 x 3 meters approximately and it is framed by a paved area of 7 x 9. The schools will be invited to participate in improving this space by designing "murals" resulting from pedagogical actions implemented in each school.

1. The possibility of using corten steel, and concrete pieces giving it a sculptural character, etc. The possibility of including any resting furniture and planters or flowerbeds that can accommodate vegetation in order to add some colour and scent to the environment is also considered. In the case of the resting furniture, a search has been made in the catalogues looking for examples with great functionality and enough character to foster the differentiation of space. At this point, we also have resurrected the previously mentioned idea of using the foundations of the old market to reconvert them into benches.

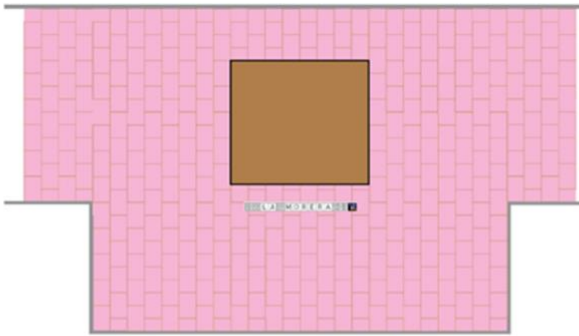
2. We believe it is necessary to remove the litter bin and the water fountain, which are detrimental to the site and provide no differentiating signs.

3. In order to tie in the project with Bon Pastor's Spatial Remembrance System, we introduce the "letters panots" on the pavement. This system, developed in the framework of the participation process, considers marking the 13 sites using "letters panots" on the pavement, plus the inclusion of some interactive elements, such as Navilens, Bidi or Beacon, linked with the Archive's Information System, allowing for providing information about the place.

Finally, we include the poem created by the Friends of the Mulberry Tree. Including this poem is relatively problematic because of its length, so the possibility of using a shortened version is being considered. Now, inspired by several international and local references, we have been exploring some additional possibilities, such as incising it on the pavement or benches. However, in the recent practices of the City Council, we find the installation of some commemorative totems that do not refer to a given square or street but refer to spaces within these urban structures. This could be a good way of integrating the poem.



Fig. 31–33. Intervention ideas for the first project strategy.



LA MORERA



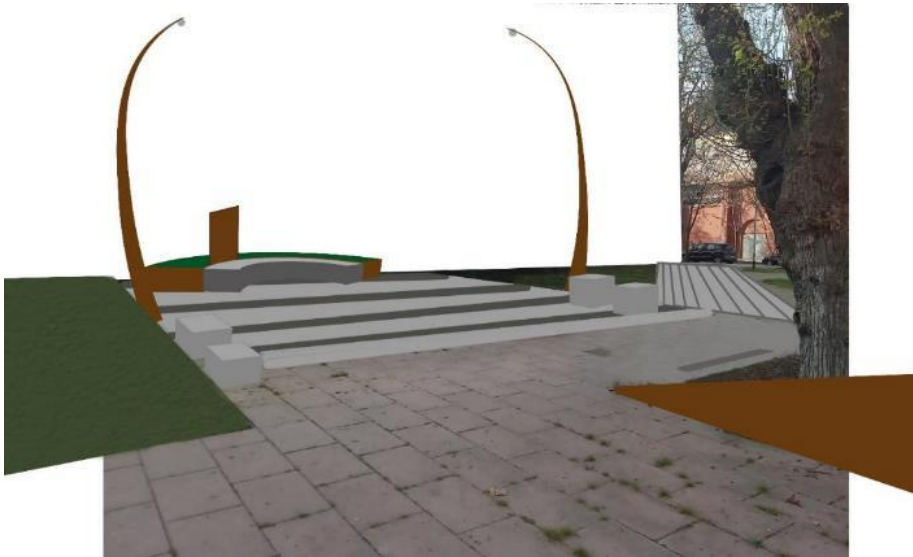


## Project strategy stage 2

In the second stage, the Mulberry Garden should be integrated into a major redesign affecting the whole of Sant Pol de Mar Square. At this stage, the garden would be enlarged by the expansion of the paved area and it would incorporate a greater number of furniture elements. Furthermore, this enlargement could serve as a basis for the subsequent development of the square. This way, the Mulberry Garden would become a reference space from which to structure the rest of the square. The mulberry tree would become the central reference element, allowing for the consolidation of the symbolic and patrimonial value of the tree.



Fig. 34, 35. Intervention ideas for the second project strategy.



As in the first stage, this enlargement should assume the relocation of such urban elements as the fountain, the litter bin, or the lamps, incorporating the enlargement of the pavement to the new boundary wall, and adding one or more seats and planters or flower beds. Finally, the name of the new garden must be approved by the Nomenclature Commission of Barcelona City Council.

These initial ideas have already been discussed with the Urban Landscape Institute and with Neighbourhood Association. The work is far from finished though. Its discussion is pending technical aspects such as materials, the ways of introducing the poem, the possibility of re-using the foundations of the market, or other administrative issues such as the incorporation to the project of other departments of the administration whose input could be useful because of their competences. Despite the fact that the proposal is in a very early stage of development, these initial ideas and criteria of intervention have instilled in the city's administration the need to follow the goals derived from the participatory process, which is not a minor thing, as the ultimate function of our work is to endow the residents with the skills, resources and expertise to claim effective access to the symbolic dimension of their neighbourhoods and to facilitate the improvement of their everyday living spaces.

## CONCLUSIONS

We must emphasise that the presented ideas for interventions are in line with urban values related to Barcelona's policies regarding the protection and use of landscape. In this sense, the Bon Pastor neighbourhood proposals are intended to align with general city policies, trying to maintain their differentiating aspects – their own identity – without creating aesthetic and cognitive dissonances with the rest of the interventions implemented in other neighbourhoods of the city. In a way, this approach would correspond to the idea of “being different among equals.” After many years of spatial and social segregation, the neighbourhood shows the will to demonstrate its distinctive identity signs, recognising itself as part of a larger identity, that of the city. Hence the explicit will – expressed in urban design aspects – to align with the guidelines of various municipal agents (Heritage, Urban Landscape, and Culture) without introducing major formal, aesthetic or material ruptures.

The CR POLIS team shares this neighbourhood “vision.” As we have remarked on several occasions (Salas, 2015), the creation of an urban design project from the perspective of bottom-up creative participation processes places us in the role of facilitator. The facilitator brings together different stakeholders and helps users to participate, modify, experiment, create, produce and update the projects. This approach also promotes knowledge of people's needs, preferences, desires, beliefs, origin, as well as ideological and ethical values. When

we embark on the organisation and development of a citizen participation process, our purpose is “bridging the gaps”: 1. **to empower** a given community, understanding empowerment as the “the ability to take responsibility for” and the “ability to solve” urban or social problems; 2. to encourage people to **get directly involved** – that is, politically – in the decision-making process leading to an effective solution (Remesar et al., 2016; Remesar, A, 2020).

Inasmuch as POLIS is a university structure, we also have the advantage of being able to develop the so-called “advocacy research”<sup>36</sup> – linked to competitive research projects – and what we call an “Ideas Lab”<sup>37</sup> by integrating the problems on which residents are working in the academic structure of the MA in Urban Design. The joint work carried out between the residents and the CR POLIS for the “Remembrance Spatial System” demonstrates the kind of work possible in the dimension of city-making and shows that a coherent and contextual urban design approach allows for integrating the territory with its surroundings, improving the urban landscape, changing the image of city outskirts, as well as contributing to sustainability and maintaining long-term memory of the place. Besides, the two examples – the Wall and Party Walls and the Mulberry Tree – show the importance of “a bottom linked governance initiative” (Moulaert et al., 2019), adding the residents’ voices to technical voices and working together. That is to say, the importance of co-producing public space “outside-in”<sup>38</sup> by ensuring the residents’ access to the construction of the symbolic dimension. The residents’ participation must be taken into account, not just

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<sup>36</sup> An example of this activity is the latest exhibition “Bon Pastor: A changing territory” produced by the Archive. It is interesting that the residents call it “the Bon Pastor timeline.” Where does this concept come from? In both our research and teaching activities, we use the methodology we call “Time-Line/Atlas,” consisting of organising temporally and spatially (plans, projects, pictures, etc.) the study or project problem. In 2016, in the blog of *The Bon Pastor’s Remembrance. Let’s do it!* project, we published the first version of the “timeline” that has been since modified and expanded twice, and which the residents use as a reference. For more information on this methodology, see Remesar 2019b, 2020b.

<sup>37</sup> The “Ideas Lab” has as its main goal to “test” the feasibility of a project. It works independently from other actors (residents), departing from a roadmap set-up by the residents and the CR POLIS staff. When work is finished, it is shown and discussed with the residents and the produced documents become part of the pool of ideas that the residents can use for their negotiations with local administration. It is not intended for various “outputs” – in the form of blueprints – to be converted into executive projects. For students, it is very important to check how these practical works are valued by citizens. In the case of the two interventions presented in this article, the “Ideas Lab” will possibly go one step further, since it is the origin of a “co-production Lab” – the residents x the members of the “Ideas Lab” x the Urban Landscape technical staff x the District political staff (Loeffler and Schulze, 2020).

<sup>38</sup> We believe it is valuable to reserve the term “co-production” for activities which involve service users and communities, since it is rather artificial to call these activities “partnerships,” as they are often informal and sometimes only involve collaboration over the short-term. So, henceforth, we will use the term “co-production” to mean “user and community co-production” (Loeffler and Bovaird, 2020, pp. 31–32).



to legitimate each decision and each intervention in public space, but also to advance a model of deliberative democracy, solving the decision-making problems present in processes based on a “top-down” governance model.

The essence of co-design of public spaces is to bridge the gap between the various actors involved, politicians, professionals and residents (Gibson, 1979; Hillier, 2007), allowing for active participation and commitment, regardless of the social, cultural or professional environment of the participants. “Public participation, particularly where a degree of power has been delegated to the public, implies a decentralised administration and a “bottom up” planning or design style” (Moughtin et al., 1999, pp. 185–186), that is, new forms of urban governance.

In the context in which this article has been presented, the final reflection on the artist-designer seems necessary. What would his/her mission be? As we have argued, this person should be a facilitator capable of energising social processes, aiding their emergence and helping their transformation into processes/objects/actions with a strong aesthetic component. This means developing a great negotiating capacity to convey/manage the interests, motivations and desires of social groups that are not necessarily homogeneous. In addition, it requires political and negotiation skills between the citizens and the administration since, ultimately, this artist-facilitator will have to co-obtain financial resources from the administration to initiate the projects and be able to give up his or her own work in favour of collective co-design. In short, the artist as a facilitator needs to be an actor in the emerging citizen participation processes oriented towards decision-making on “how” to think about the city, so that this thought process produces transformations of the “real” city and enables citizens to exercise their right to the city, “living it” in equity and in a sustainable way. This is no longer the time for the artist’s role as a “demiurge” or a defender, in the social and urban context, of the fiction of the “autonomy of Art.” It is the time to make things happen, in a possible, effective and meaningful way (Manzini, Ezio, 2014).

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