

Barcelona Waterfront

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The Barcelona's waterfront was an old industrial area cut off from pedestrians by a highway. However, from 1982 to 1997, Mayor Pasqual Maragall turned the city which was once not a very scenic Mediterranean facing site for the upcoming Olympic Games in 1992. Along the Barcelona waterfront, the most charming locales might be Barceloneta Beach, Port Vell and Rambla de Mar. Rambla de Mar is a pedestrian bridge designed by Albert Viaplana & Helio Piñon.



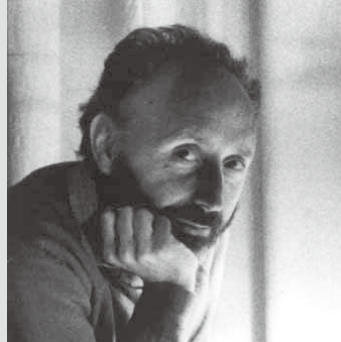
Mayor Pasqual Maragall



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasqual_Maragall_i_Mira



Albert Viaplana (1933-)



<http://www.viaplana.com/indexalbertda-vid.htm>

1966: the title of Architect

1988: the title of Doctor Architect

1978-1989: the Higher Technical School of Architecture of Barcelona

1989-1999: Professor of Architecture Projects at the same school

Helio Piñon (1942-)



http://cavicaplace.blogspot.com/2010/08/helio-pinon-reflexion-sobre-la-docencia_30.html

An architect and a PhD in Architecture from the School of Architecture of Barcelona

Since 1980: the chair of Project and director of the Laboratory of Architecture

Planning approach

Before The Barcelona Olympics

Barcelona's waterfront was once cut off by the B-10 highway from the brown field. Before urban renewal, Port Vell, the old purposeless harbor, was an abandoned area with vacant warehouses, factories, and railroad yards, furthermore, it was polluted by refuse dumps. Meeting the chance of Barcelona Olympics in 1992, the city had a great opportunity to change her fashion.

A Chance from the Games

The City Government had the foresight to approach the plan of their Olympic Games; also, Mayor Pasqual Maragall took this plan as a long-term development: the infrastructure improvements can be the applications of promoting and benefiting Barcelona in the long run. Under their strategic plan, Port Vell was constructed with a commercial, logistical and historical port. The government, especially, focused on the last, a historical site aged by large-scale expansion works in recent decades, with an assumption to fetch a fashion vista.

Embrace the city to the sea

The possibility of the Olympic Games indicated that the waterfront was the key to be redefined. Maragall made use of the finance rising to the challenge of the Olympic Games to give birth to the brand new waterfront. Through creating an open, well-defined relationship to the sea, Port Vell, is now totally integrated into the city in an elegant way.

Port Vell, located between Via Laietana and La Rambla. La Rambla is the most famous and attractive pedestrian street of Barcelona; it has the most fabulous chance to draw folks. The relationship between La Rambla and Port Vell was completely connected to the redevelopment of the waterfront. Moreover, the government hid the highway underground, thus, connecting the city and the waterfront and providing pedestrians a comfortable access of street-crossing experience. On this up-to-the-minute stretch of land, Maragall created new beaches, parks, and neighborhoods.

To unblock the highway of B-10 was not enough to activate Port Vell for the disconnection between La Rambla and the pier. Therefore, Rambla de Mar played a very basic role as a pedestrian bridge to span across the harbor and to connect the land and the pier. Once connected to the pedestrian axis, Port Vell was activated with a shopping center, an aquarium, an iMax theater and a series of public spaces. 75% of tourists now can access to Port Vell easily with many good reasons.



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Design details



Location



La Rambla

This is the main pedestrian street of Barcelona. It has a lot of tourists on this street for visiting the famous sightseeing spots—"Market of la Boqueria" and street performers for instance. It has 3 metro station at the beginning, the middle and the end of this street, so it is very convenient to access this area.

Columbus Monument

Standing at the end of "La Rambla," you can see the statue of "Columbus Monument." It is very tall therefore people can see it even from a great distance. Some people use this statue as a meeting point. And around the statue, cars run on the traffic circle.





source: flickr

B-10 Highway

Before the redevelopment of Barcelona, this highway were used to cut off the waterfront from the land. But now it became a tunnel highway. It's hardly to notice that there is a highway between the land and the waterfront because it is so easy and comfortable to cross the road.



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Plaza

Behind the statue of “Columbus Monument,” there is a plaza. It can be an entrance of the bridge—“Rambla de Mar.”



source: Google Maps



source: Google Maps



source: Google Maps

Rambla de Mar

This is the bridge called “Rambla de Mar” which connects the plaza to “Port Vell.” “Rambla” means avenue/watercourse in Spanish and derives from the Arabic word “ramla” that means sandy riverbed. The deck is made of wood and it has a continuous and informal fashion for function and leisure. On the deck, there are glass dividers and benches, that invites people to sit and



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source: BARCELONA PHOTOLOG



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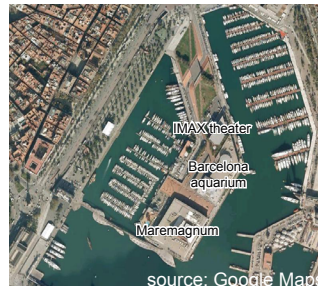
stay. There is no guardrails, that invites people to hang their feet over. And it has the Swing Bridge, it opens once every hour, on the hour, to let boats through, and also, by request, for longer periods.

Port Vell

After crossing “Rambla de Mar,” people can reach “Port Vell.” It is the most popular port of Barcelona. Nearly 75% of all visitors come here. It has a complex with shops, cinemas, bars and restaurants called “Maremagnum,” Barcelona’s aquarium and an IMAX theater. Around those institutions, there are some public spaces. People can sit on a bench to enjoy the view of the port and chat with their families, lovers, friends... Sometimes, there are illegal vendors selling fake bags. When police officers show up, those vendors pack the bags quickly and run away.



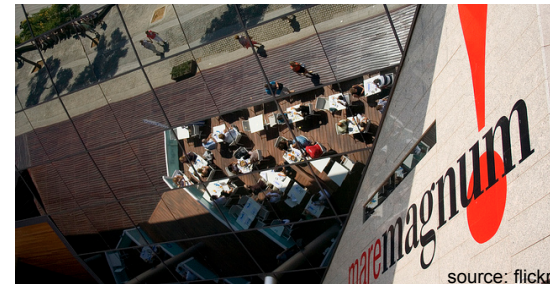
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Barceloneta Beach

This is the most famous beach in Barcelona, which face to the Mediterranean Sea. It is artificial but marvelous and beautiful! During summer, the beach is always crowded with many local people and tourists. But a certain local old man said “I hate to swim in the sea, because the seawater was polluted during the industrial time.”



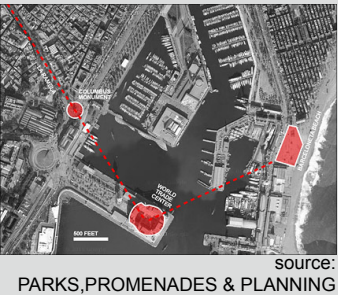
Critiques

OPTION A:

The new appearance of the Barcelona waterfront is definitely successful in all aspects; however, it still misses some fundamental opportunities. There is one option to extend the axis of La Rambla over the harbor to connect the Barceloneta Beach. Rather than Port Vell, which attracts people by the new development of public spaces, this beach is already a popular attraction and a sight occupied with people. Therefore, strong axis coherence from La Rambla, the city center, to the beach would be a clear direction for the pedestrian flow. It would benefit both people who aim to visit La Rambla for the axial clarity and those who want to enjoy the Barceloneta Beach for its leisured nature. The “cross-water” connection would avoid the circuitous route to the coast and strengthen the movement path through central Barcelona.

OPTION B:

Another strategy could be the path over the pier extended from the southern end of “La Rambla” that is the literal extension of “La Rambla” rather than any deviation from its strong axis of Barcelona. This extended path invites people to go to the Barcelona’s World Trade Center before going to “Barceloneta Beach”. This option can create connection from “La Rambla” to the waterfront that the current “Rambla de Mar” is lacking in. However, this option that extended path connects to the World Trade Center is not suitable for the current “Maremagnum” shopping center, because the connection to the World Trade Center reduce the people who go to “Maremagnum.”



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