

**Leisure Coast City. A comparative history of the urban leisure waterfront**  
Barcelona. Buenos Aires. Chicago. 1870-1930

**proefschrift**

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## Summary

The urban waterfront is in the spotlight. During the last decades harbour facilities have been moved away from urban centres. This has left great amount of land close to city's central areas free for intervention and development. Projects for the recovery and restructuring of obsolete industrial areas by the water are sprawling all over the globe. Urban ideas and interventions of various types and qualities have been applied. These actions have proved to be a global phenomenon, but we have observed this phenomenon is not new. The process of recovery of the urban waterfront that takes place currently began more than a century ago with the discovery of the urban waterfront as a space of leisure.

The transformation of urban waterfronts has shared some processes with the general growth of cities. However, certain urban issues have been particularly present on the waterfronts. Waterfronts, as urban spaces, have followed a development signed by different conflicts than those of the rest of the city. On the one hand, they have been spaces especially open to intervention, for their location created little conflict with the social order of cities. On the other hand they have been conflicted spaces regarding the struggle between the installation of harbour facilities and leisure spaces, linked to jurisdictional problems between national and metropolitan authorities.

The use of the urban waterfront as leisure space was different in Europe and in North and South America. Urbanism was developing in the whole western world, having Europe and the United States as the centres of this development. When it came to the realisation of waterfront projects the process differed by geographical zones and other areas and cities were included in the global picture. In most of European capitals the waterfront was occupied by harbour facilities, and due to commercial expansion, these spaces were growing and became segregated from urban space. This process did not allow the development of leisure areas on the waterfront. On the other hand, in North and South America the waterfronts became spaces of opportunity and the development of harbour and leisure space was contemporary and flexible, giving an important role to landscape on the waterfront.

A thorough search was done on case studies to look for the origin of the phenomenon of the use of the waterfront as leisure space. The cases of Barcelona, Chicago and Buenos Aires appeared to be the most suitable for the analysis of this phenomenon. They appear as models for other waterfront cities throughout the western world. Incidentally they were also hosts of international exhibitions in the period between 1870 and 1930.

This project studies the issues of leisure space in urban waterfronts between 1870 and 1930 with an analytical and critical view, searching for primary and secondary sources to evaluate the use of leisure in the projects for the urban waterfront and the way this has been practised in three particular case studies. The reciprocal influence between leisure activities, urban design and mass events will be analysed as a main backbone of this research.

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## **Chapter 0**

### **Introduction**



## Chapter 0 - Introduction

The urban waterfront is in the spotlight. During the last decades, the moving of harbour facilities out of the city has left a great amount of free land on the urban waterfront. Projects for the recovery and restructuring of obsolete industrial areas by the water are sprawling all over the world. This has proven to be a global phenomenon, as observed by most of recent literature on the subject, but it is not a new one. The process of re-use of the waterfront for leisure purposes began with the discovery of the urban waterfront as a space of leisure, more than a century ago. The combination of technical, political, social, and economical transformations provoked significant changes on the spatial configuration of the city in general and on their waterfronts in particular. The process of translation of urban ideas and their application on urban waterfront areas followed a similar development, which started with the birth of the discipline of urban planning and design. Stephen Ward<sup>1</sup> describes the process of trans-national cross influences as “a significant historical phenomenon: the extensive international flows and exchanges that have been going on since the nineteenth century in the field of planning”<sup>2</sup>.

The transformation of urban waterfronts has shared some processes with the general growth of cities. However, certain urban issues have been particularly present on the waterfronts. Waterfronts, as urban spaces, have followed a development signed by different conflicts than those of the rest of the city. On the one hand, they have been spaces especially open to intervention, for their location created little conflict with the social order of cities. On the other hand they have been conflicted spaces regarding the struggle

between the installation of harbour facilities and leisure spaces, linked to jurisdictional problems between national and metropolitan authorities.

The problem of the leisure waterfront has been addressed consistently in the last decades, but some knowledge gaps have been found. The main phenomenon observed by architects and urbanists<sup>3</sup> has been the conflict between the development of technical facilities and the need for open space. Particular case studies have been published and specific disciplines have dealt with the subject. However, few authors have dealt with an interdisciplinary research on the urban waterfronts. Issues that have not been properly analysed are the theories and practices of leisure behind these spatial transformations. This is why this research intends to explore the impact of leisure concepts acting as a key element in the transformation of the urban waterfront. Even though sociology and cultural studies have addressed the subject of leisure as part of their discipline, *leisure studies* in the past decades have finally approached the subject of leisure as an independent field. Different theories appear and it is still a young discipline. However, this field of study is a useful tool for understanding the object analysed. The analysis of the processes of evolution of leisure practices<sup>4</sup> will structure part of the theoretical context.

Urban projects for waterfronts have responded to certain leisure concepts, related to their location and to the international network of professionals dedicated to urban design and planning. These professionals, be them architects, designers or engineers have been greatly responsible for the formal - and also behavioural - changes of these leisure areas. Starting our analysis on the 1870s we can observe that the *Park Movement* was based on the first development of

the *Rational Recreation* movement, providing green spaces within the steadily growing metropolis.

At the turn of the century, waterfront projects follow the *City Beautiful Movement* and the next stage of *Rational Recreation*, where World Exhibitions act as a platform for didactic recreation, making the visitor an active user of space. Later, in the first decades of the twentieth century, active leisure begins to be present on waterfront projects with the inclusion of sports structures and buildings, thus diversifying the use of these spaces.

<sup>1</sup> Ward, Stephen, *Planning the Twentieth Century City: the advanced Capitalist World*, Wiley, Chichester, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Cohen, Jean-Louis, *Scènes de la vie future*, Flammarion, Paris, 1997, Pg.8

<sup>3</sup> Among others: Meyer, Han. *City and port : urban planning as a cultural venture in London, Barcelona, New York, and Rotterdam: changing relations between public urban space and large-scale infrastructure*, Utrecht, International Books, 1999

Fava, Nadia, *Progetti e processi in conflitto: il fronte marittimo de Barcelona*, phd thesis, UPC Barcelona

Breen Anne, Rigby Dick, *Waterfronts: cities reclaim their edge*. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1994

Bruttomesso, Rinio, *Waterfronts: a new frontier for cities on water*, Venice, International Centre Cities on Water, 1993

Costa, Joao Pedro, *Multifunctional land use in the renewal of harbour areas: patterns of physical distribution of the urban functions*, IFHP 2001 World Conference, Barcelona, Working Party MILU, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Among others: Racionero, Luis, *Del paro al ocio*, Anagrama, Barcelona, 1983

Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990

Corbin, Alain, *L'Avènement des loisirs, 1850-1960*, Flammarion, Paris, Rome, 1995

Even though this process of formation and evolution of the waterfront touched most of the western world and communications and relations were generalised, it has not been universalising and has particular characteristics in different parts of the world. This is why the case studies chosen: Barcelona, Chicago and Buenos Aires, will work as models for these processes in different geographical locations. For this analysis, the recent studies on translation and transference<sup>5</sup> of urban ideas will be used as guidelines to understand the way they signed the development of the waterfront in each particular geographical location. There is a purposeful choice of what would be considered by traditional bibliography: two *central* cases and one *peripheral*, for we will try to challenge this established idea of the influential and the influenced throughout this research.

This project studies the issues of leisure space in urban waterfronts between 1870 and 1925 with an analytical and critical view, searching for primary and secondary sources to evaluate the use of leisure in the projects for the urban waterfront and the way this has been practised in three particular case studies. The reciprocal influence between leisure activities, urban design and mass events will be analysed as a main backbone of this research.

### 0-1 – Justification. Disciplines and topics.

Being aware of the complexity of this study, it seems necessary to justify its four main themes: history, the waterfront, leisure and landscape.

History is present in our environment and culture as a dynamic source that should be considered in every step of project making. Although globalisation should be taken into account and new ways of dealing with urban processes require a new way of looking at them, history cannot be left aside as a static source of data.

“In the world of architectural research it must be possible to reconcile the traditional, predominantly object oriented approach of ‘plan analysis’ with a contextual one. A reconciliation, consisting of a more analytic, social conception of history, based on a multi dimensional framework, and with a feeling for the changes in paradigm behind, should be used to facilitate a more systematic deconstruction and interpretation of social phenomena and of the belonging architectural or urban housing”<sup>6</sup>

Urban projects for the waterfronts have proven to be a reflex of plans in the municipal scale. They reflect the urban phenomena in a smaller, more controlled scale, adding some particular issues. These specific areas allow a more restricted field of study, which overall provides accurate information about the urban processes.

No matter what the philosophy, meaning

or approach given to it, leisure, in societies in which the primary necessities are covered, is an essential part of human life, therefore an essential subject to deal with when it comes to urban design and planning. The history of leisure gives a new perspective. Sociologists have been the main authors referring to leisure. Giving a historical perspective changes our view on leisure, giving it a more resilient and influential role in the development of society.

“Authors have neglected the temporal depth, minimised the roots of practices, and overestimated innovation. The historical study conducts, on the other hand, to underline the antiquity of such anchorages”<sup>7</sup>

Landscape is an essential part of the urban environment; public open space has been treated as one of the main issues of urbanism since the beginning of the discipline as such, since the end of the nineteenth century. This issue has been treated differently throughout time and location, but certain patterns have been followed, which will be analysed in each case study.

The research based on case studies gives an insight into the role that leisure areas have had in the planning and design of cities within the period studied. This may allow an approach to the concept of leisure and its applicability in the urban field. In this case the research will collaborate with an in-depth study into the subject of leisure and its importance in the thinking and designing of cities. The case studies are a tool, which will give the possibility of defining these ideas and finding subsequent uses for them in the future. The research will contain an analysis of determined projects for coast cities. Not only the built projects, but also the un-built will be

considered, which are generally underrated and should be taken into account, for they give an approach to the way planners and designers have conceived cities.

## 0-2 – Theme definition and aims of the research

There are two main approaches to the object of this study. On the one hand there is the highlight of the mentioned reciprocal relationship between *leisure* ideas and the development of urban leisure spaces on the waterfront. On the other hand there are the processes of *translation and transference* that take place in the mentioned spaces.

The definition of *leisure* as time free from work is simple and understandable. Applied to the urban environment and to urban design, it tends to acquire a much more complex set of attributes and possibilities of interpretation. Definitions of the term *leisure* are countless and it is not the objective of this study to analyse all of them. However, it is important to recognise that the definitions are many and their application to our field will be considered when relevant.

Accepting the premise that leisure is time free from work, we can assume that if we narrow down the study to industrialised countries, leisure takes a considerable amount of time of an average citizen, which can be used in urban space. Therefore we will analyse leisure behaviour and theory through the studies made by disciplines other than urbanism, to later understand the concept of leisure reflected in the design, program and discourse of those responsible of the planning of waterfront cities, be them designers or planning officials. Theories about leisure in fields as diverse as sociology, economy, philosophy, history, geography and

politics have approached the subject in many different ways. Recent literature such as Alain Corbin's *L'avenement des loisirs* has addressed the issue of leisure as a crucial one in social and cultural development.

“All this contributes to place leisure in the centre group of desires, attentions and regrets. The moment has come to think about a time frame of history founded on the retrieval of stages that, since one century ago, have given rhythm to the becoming of new temporal references; to try out a history that puts on the first place, not the struggle to acquire free time, but the invention of its uses.”<sup>8</sup>

In chapter 1, page 15, we will analyse some of these authors in order to comprehend the meaning and evolution of the concept of leisure in the urban environment during the period studied – 1870 to 1930.

Even though the link between leisure and urban design has not been thoroughly studied, urban projects for waterfronts have had the tendency to respond to certain leisure concepts and behaviour. Reciprocally, urban design has influenced leisure behaviour in the city. This phenomenon is being studied through the combination of analysis of leisure studies, urban planning and mass events, while narrowing the gap between theory and practice. As part of this phenomenon, mass events have consistently been catalysts of leisure projects and plans in an urban scale<sup>9</sup>, speeding up the processes of building and expanding leisure areas on the waterfronts. Therefore this study focuses on the origin of these urban waterfront leisure spaces.

Most of the recent literature related

to leisure in the urban context can be found in the 1960s and 1970s. The various approaches to define leisure show the variety of possibilities to be applied to urban design. Leisure as benefit of ownership<sup>10</sup>, as a state of mind<sup>11</sup>, as creative element<sup>12</sup>, as cultural reflection<sup>13</sup>, as spectacle<sup>14</sup>, to mention only a few possible approaches. These authors were deeply concentrated in the quantitative aspect of planning and analysis of leisure areas. In recent years, this post-war traditional system of leisure planning has been questioned and reformulated by authors such as Patsy Healey<sup>15</sup>, and Bianchini<sup>16</sup>, introducing the concept of developmental planning and interactive policy making and John Hannigan<sup>17</sup> critically commenting on urban leisure.<sup>18</sup> A more extensive introduction to this subject will be found in chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> Among others:

Cohen, Jean-Louis, *Scènes de la vie future*, Flammarion, Paris, 1997.

Collins, GR & Crasemann Collins, C , *Camillo Sitte, the birth of Modern City Planning*, Rizzoli, New York, 1986

Crasemann Collins, C , *Werner Hegemann and the search for universal urbanism*, New York, London, 2005

Nasr, Joe, Volait, Mercedes (eds.) , *Urbanism, Imported or Exported?* Native Aspirations and foreign plans, Wiley Academy, West Sussex, 2003

<sup>6</sup> Van Wesemael, Pieter, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight, A socio-historical analysis of World Exhibitions as a didactic Phenomenon (1798-1851-1970)* Rotterdam, 010 Publishers, 2000

<sup>7</sup> Corbin, Alain, *L'Avenement des loisirs, 1850-1960*, Champs Flammarion, Paris, 1995

<sup>8</sup> idem

Regarding the *translation and transference* of urban ideas applied to the waterfront projects we will look at some of the authors that have been dealing with these subjects.

The concept of *transculturación* was coined by Fernando Ortiz<sup>19</sup> in the 1940s, in his description of the cultural complexity of Cuba. Even though this concept refers to a different cultural reality than that of the cases studied, his description of the re-territorialisation of ideas can be used in this case. For the first time, Ortiz analysed the process of a mixed culture from a different perspective, not talking about acculturation but about trans-culturation, putting local culture in a more prominent position than what had been considered until then.

In the field of urbanism, this kind of analysis was re-addressed more recently by Joe Nasr and Mercedes Volait<sup>20</sup> in the compendium of articles with the premise of importation-exportation of urbanisation which placed cases of America, Africa and Asia in a central position. The authors point at the lack of awareness of the complexity of these processes in recent specialised literature. In particular they point at the under-representation of peripheral cases compared to the central ones that established the models of urban planning. They highlight the fact that most of the literature regarding international exchange of urban design ideas in developing countries was mostly focalised in colonial and post-colonial situations<sup>21</sup>. Nasr and Volait abstain from the colonial cases, focusing on another perspective, one in which the complex combination of exchange of ideas, models and the visit of professionals of urbanism shaped the international scope of city planning. In a more specific analysis, Jean-Louis Cohen<sup>22</sup> also addresses this process of exchange dealing with the influence of North American urbanism

and architecture on Europe. He considers the translation of the American model in the 1920s or americanism as the unconscious of Europe, in a process of passing from the horizontal to the vertical urban planning. The studies of George Collins and Christiane Crasemann Collins of Camillo Sitte<sup>23</sup> and Werner Hegemann<sup>24</sup> address the process of translation, especially of texts and the way they are interpreted by the translators, as transference and retro-transference. In the book on Hegemann, for example, the author points at the way the urban planner, on his visit to Buenos Aires, was not only an influence on local urbanism, but also took with him some ideas he developed, inspired in the city he visited for the first time.

All of this literature deals with the complexity of the circulation of ideas and the construction of knowledge in the specificity of certain contexts. These theories will be used as a framework for the analysis of the case studies.

### 0-3 –Case Studies

The process for the choice of case studies and time frame has been ongoing and thorough. This has followed a development from a wide and generalising system to a more precise and analytical system through the filtering and distilling of concepts throughout the research. The historical, recent and ongoing re-functionalising of harbour areas into leisure spaces gives meaning to the choice of limiting the study to cities' coastal areas. This restructuring causes the elimination of barriers to communicate the city with its water, whether it is a river, lake or sea.

To begin with, through the reading of secondary bibliography on the subjects mentioned, a time framework was set, which allowed the subsequent choice of the case studies.

This choice was directed to finding diversity in the evolution of the concepts of leisure throughout time and space and the possible geographical relations between them. This first approach to the time framework was limited to a period between the end of the nineteenth century and the end of the twentieth.

The selection criterion for the case studies was based on three filters.

First: waterfront metropolis.

Second: metropolis whose harbours turned obsolete and used as leisure spaces.

Third: metropolis that hosted mass events.

Within the first approach to coast metropolis a series of suitable cases were instinctively found. Two general types of waterfront cities were found: *leisure-cities* and *work-cities*.

The first type, *leisure-town*, is born because of the presence of water and this leads to an immediate development of leisure spaces. Amongst waterfront leisure cities we can find Scarborough, Brighton, Cannes, Nice, Nordeney, Scheveningen or Blackpool, which were born, as Corbin<sup>25</sup> explains, because of the *lure of the sea* in the beginning of the nineteenth century. *Leisure-towns* escape the urban scale; this is why they are not considered in this project. Nonetheless, this subject deserves a whole separate research project.

The second type: *work-city* is the one that is relevant for this study, for its complexities can be enlightening in the way urban planning has developed in the coast. *Work-cities* were born because of the presence of water, which was used as a means for trade and transportation. The growth of economy and trade during the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries gave way to the need of more space and independence between harbour and city. Harbours were then pushed out of the cities. This was caused mainly by the fact that by the beginning of the twentieth century and further on, the use of the container as means of trade left all the harbour buildings deprived of use. Harbour facilities became obsolete and this led to new leisure spaces in old harbour areas.

Stepping then to the subject of mass events, we can say that they have been influential in the subsequent planning and designing of cities and their coasts in particular cases. Especially when regarding the use of leisure space. Therefore the list of case studies is reduced.

Within this framework three case studies were chosen. In this selection it was intended to give a picture as wide as possible within western culture, so as to understand the relations and influences between one another. The cases chosen are Barcelona, a seafront in Europe; Chicago, a lakefront in North America; and Buenos Aires, a particularly wide riverfront in South America. All three cases share many characteristics in the period studied, but differ in many others, working as models of the city typology in their geographical zones. They are all cities that are limited by water, and even though the type of waterfront is different in each case, the presence of the horizon as a physical and aesthetic element is predominant in all of them.

These cases are considered to be able to answer several critical questions regarding the subject of leisure, mass events, landscape architecture and waterfronts. It is important to note that this analysis is aimed at the western world; therefore the cases have been limited

to western cities in the wide sense of the word. The cases give a broad enough conception of the possible differences and similarities in various geographical and cultural conditions.

#### 0-4 – Time frame

Initially, we considered doing a diachronic research which would give a wide scope of information about the evolution of the concepts of leisure, its practices and the consequences of it in the configuration of urban space on the waterfronts. Given the complexity of the case studies, and after a thorough study of the literature related, it became clear that a more determined period had to be studied for this kind of research.

Therefore, based on theories about urbanism and leisure it was finally decided to concentrate in the period which seems to be the cradle of the current conception of leisure space on the urban waterfronts, and that is the period around the turn of the century, namely from 1870 to 1930. Before this period, in the beginnings of the nineteenth century some projects for urban leisure waterfronts were developed in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Such were the cases of Saint Petersburg, Antwerp, Napoli, Genoa and Lisbon<sup>26</sup>, among others. These cases show a simple use of the waterfront as space for strolling, and as soon as these cities grew, the harbours in them extended and left comparatively little space for leisure areas. In this study we are dealing with the period in which the urban waterfront saw the most drastic changes ideally and spatially. The choice of the period sets one more filter for the case studies and confirms the choice of Barcelona, Chicago and Buenos Aires as appropriate models.

<sup>9</sup> Meyer-Kunzel, Monika, *Der Planbare Nutzen, Stadtentwicklung durch Weltausstellungen und Olympische Spiele*, Hamburg, Munchen: Dolling und Gallitz Verlag, 2001  
Roche, Maurice, *Mega-Events and Modernity: Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture*, London, Routledge, 2000

<sup>10</sup> Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899

Booth, Charles, *Labour and life of the people in London*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 9 vols. London: Macmillan & Co., 1882-1897

<sup>11</sup> de Grazia, Sebastian, *Of Time, Work and Leisure*, New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1962

<sup>12</sup> Nieuwenhuis, Constant, *New Urbanism, Provo* Vol 9, 1966, Par..2

<sup>13</sup> Glasser, R., *Leisure: penalty or prize?*, London, Macmillan, 1970

<sup>14</sup> Debord Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle*, New York: Zone books, 1994. Original 1967

<sup>15</sup> Healey, Patsy, *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*, Univ of British Columbia Pr, 1997

<sup>16</sup> Bianchini, F. and M. Parkinson, *Cultural policy and urban regeneration*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993

<sup>17</sup> Hannigan, John, *Fantasy City: Pleasure and Profit in the Postmodern Metropolis*, Routledge, 1998

<sup>18</sup> Complete bibliography can be found at end of dissertation.  
<sup>19</sup> Ortiz, Fernando, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, Habana, 1940

<sup>20</sup> Nasr, Joe, Volait, Mercedes (eds.), *Urbanism, Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and foreign plans*, Wiley Academy, West Sussex, 2003

<sup>21</sup> King, AD, *Colonial Urban Development, Culture, Social Power and Environment*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London Henley and Boston, 1976

<sup>22</sup> Cohen, JL 1997, *Scènes de la vie future*, Flammarion, Paris.

<sup>23</sup> Collins, GR & Crasemann Collins, C, *Camillo Sitte, the birth of Modern City Planning*, Rizzoli, New York, 1986

<sup>24</sup> Crasemann Collins, C, *Werner Hegemann and the search for universal urbanism*, New York, London, 2005

<sup>25</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, 1988

<sup>26</sup> These cases are commented by Branch, Melville, C., *Comparative Urban Design. Rare engravings 1830-1843*, New York, 1978

The years that are used as a limit for this period are not arbitrary. They do not depend exclusively on a specific political or economical event; instead they depend on a series of events that, even though related to social, economical and political transformations, relate to specific issues of urban transformation that took place in the cases studied.

The period we are dealing with has been seen by some historians as a period of development of the western world, whose production guaranteed the civilising intentions of the capitalist system and the diversification of politics. However, the primary sources of the period<sup>27</sup> tell us a slightly different story. The economy in Europe was growing indeed and the production of all kinds of materials, raw and industrialised was growing as well, but the problem was the lack of profitability of this large production. Prices, profits and interest rates were in constant depression in Europe, and this would affect all sections of society. Agriculture especially suffered this development between 1875 and 1895.

The spread of industrialisation in the previous decades over western and central Europe led way to a large demographic growth and a concentration of population in cities and industrial centres. The countryside was also in transformation, the advances in technology had brought a crisis of agricultural production and unemployment, which was a crucial problem for the continent. Within this situation and given the low quality of life, emigration was one of the most common answers.

According to Hobsbawm<sup>28</sup>, the world in 1880 was divided into two, "the developed and the lagging, the dominant and the dependent, the rich and the poor"<sup>29</sup>. This appears to be a reductive statement, and he extends into the

relativity of his categorisation, but it serves as an ordering tool for understanding. Hobsbawm also sees these two worlds as different in the sense that the first one, namely Europe, had a history in common and cultural ties that despite conflicts could be understood and related as one continent. The other world had almost nothing in common between its parts, except the relation they had with the first. By 1880, Europe was not only the core of capitalist society but also the most important component of world economy and bourgeois society. However, the sudden growth and development of other corners of the world was following a different course than that of Europe. The United States was developing urban centres that could compete with those in Europe. Other cities in former colonies were also beginning to develop within an economic model that provided raw material for the European continent. These cities began participating in an exchange and trade system that necessarily involved them in international relations, despite the different mechanisms and position of both sides.

"The nineteenth-century capitalist world market generated within it, disproportionately large urban centres through which the flow of their economical relations channelled: Melbourne, Buenos Aires, Calcutta, all had about half a million inhabitants each in the 1880s, which was larger than Amsterdam, Milan, Birmingham or Munich"<sup>30</sup>

The ideas of progress and advance were present in every development, change was a given fact as a positive element and the linearity of history was as evident as the continuous improvement given by technological discoveries

and their implementation to everyday life. Today we see these issues differently and the complexity of the patterns of development and the diversity of social and cultural issues at stake are considered.

Despite the technological development and the changes in every sphere, life style of the poorer classes did not evolve too much. It was still the main interest of the majority of the population, even in Europe, to eat and have a roof over their heads, which was not too different to what was happening at the time in the *underdeveloped* world.

Within this economical and political situation, Britain had the power when it came to free trade. It was the only country that did not charge trade fees, while being the biggest exporter of manufactured goods and also the biggest importer of raw materials. The majority of the foodstuffs consumed in Britain were produced elsewhere.

Some authors insist on the nationalistic character of this period and the tight bond between the ideas of empire and nationalism tied to the relations with the rest of the world.

"Economical reasons, those of primary as of secondary character, contributed to the exacerbation of the imperialist passions of the time only to the extent that they were united to political expectations and ambitions of a nationalist tone"<sup>31</sup>

The late nineteenth century Europe was dominated by a struggle for constitutional order and a new social order. This process had taken a whole century to develop, but signed what would be the political and social situation of the twentieth century. Liberalism supported by an ascending bourgeoisie was confronting the

monarchic order of most of European countries. This tendency proposed the guarantee of human and civil rights, the participation of the state in political life within a constitutional context and fought against the elitist system of aristocratic classes. The power of the individual was sought for and there was a search for the limitation of the intervention of the state to favour that of the citizen. A rival of liberalism was the radical democracy, which proposed the realisation of the principles of sovereignty of the people and would reject the position that would allow the highest layers of the bourgeoisie to be the only political leaders. However, this tendency was not strong enough to debacle the power of the liberals. It was not until the 1880s that the liberal movement saw itself weakened as the labour classes began to gain power and question the supremacy of the bourgeoisie.

Industrialisation in Europe and elsewhere had brought a large demographic explosion and sustained migration to urban centres. The social classes in this period were divided into a very small minority of high and noble class, the growing and transforming bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The class to grow the most in this period was the proletariat, though this occurred in different scales in all parts of the world.

One of the main reasons for the rural proletariat in Europe to leave the countryside and look for better opportunities in urban centres or elsewhere in far away countries was that the modernised farming required fewer permanent hands than before. At the same time new machinery also cut down the working posts in manufacturing activities in industrialised urban centres. During these years the proletariat had a fast growing tendency and most of them would work in large manufacturing companies located in cities or very near them.

The movement of socialist parties in Europe, United States and some Latin American countries did follow a similar pattern of growth. By 1880 the party barely existed in all areas mentioned, except for Germany where the German Social Democratic Party had been unified in 1875. By 1914, instead, the US had one million votes polled to the socialist parties all over the country and Argentina's elections of the same year showed 10% of the electorate voted for the socialist party. In Europe, socialist and labour parties were serious electoral forces; in Germany and Scandinavia they would take 35 to 40% of the electorate.

According to Hobsbawm<sup>32</sup>, four developments encouraged the transformation to a more privatised and individualised life. The bourgeoisie, both in Europe and the United States lost much of its electoral power as the growing electorate of the working classes outnumbered them greatly. The second development was the loosening of links between the triumphant bourgeoisie and the puritan values. This allowed the bourgeoisie to become the *leisure class*<sup>33</sup>. The loosening of structures of the bourgeois family allowed the concepts of youth and modernity to appear as new related categories. The fourth and last development was the substantial growth of those who belonged or claimed to belong to the bourgeoisie.

We see this period as an important moment of inflection in urban design and particularly in that of the waterfront. Even though the waterfronts in sea villages begun to be used as leisure space by the end of the eighteenth century, as observed by Corbin, harbour cities did not consider this possibility until the last decades of the nineteenth. This phenomenon goes hand in hand with the demographic explosion, the sudden rise in international communications and trade

and the use of the mass event as an instrument of urban transformation and imposition of standardised leisure. With this in mind the choice of the cases can be explained:

Barcelona was a city that had a long tradition of port activities, as most of the harbour cities of the Mediterranean. Leisure activities on the waterfront were limited to strolling on the *Muralla del Mar*<sup>34</sup> and the popular use of sea bathing from the mid nineteenth century.

In 1869 General Prim i Prat became president of the Consejo de Ministros. 1870 was marked by several important events, such as the Congress of Workers Associations, which stated the birth of the workers movement in Barcelona. Regarding technical advances, even though the first railway line of Spain was founded in 1848 with the Barcelona-Mataró line, by 1870 the whole Spanish railway network was established. Yellow fever spread throughout the city in this year, alerting of the need of hygienic measures. Most relevant for our study was that just before 1870 started, in December 1869, General Prim promulgated the law that gave the lands of the Citadel back to Barcelona, which would finally change the urban morphology of the city.

<sup>27</sup> among others D.A. Wells, *Recent economic changes*, New York, 1889, pg1-2

<sup>28</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, Vintage books, New York, 1987.

<sup>29</sup> idem.pg.16

<sup>30</sup> idem.pg.20

<sup>31</sup> Mommsen, Wolfgang J., *La época del imperialismo. Europa 1885-1918*, Siglo XXI Editores, 1971. (Original in German 1969) p. 11

<sup>32</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, Vintage books, New York, 1987.pg.168-169

<sup>33</sup> term coined by Thorsten Veblen, American economist.

<sup>34</sup> Waterfront protection wall, used as promenade as well

Within the period studied, Barcelona was host of the 1888 Universal Exposition, and this event was one of the first to propose a balcony on the sea and a didactic element in the urban tissue. Many projects for the coast were developed at the turn of the century, but they would not be realised. The development of private beaches would be the only built spaces to compete with the consistently growing harbour.

By 1930 the city had a decisively different morphology, the town extension of Barcelona planned by Idelfons Cerdà was being built accordingly; industrialisation was spreading throughout the periphery and especially on the waterfront. The Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed in 1931 and a new political and economical organisation was implemented in Barcelona. The crash of the stock market affected Barcelona, as well as most countries of the western world. Urban leisure space was approached in a different manner, and the exhibition of Barcelona of 1929 was a platform where new urban and architectural ideas were implemented.

Chicago, as a new town, developed mainly by private investment, was a pioneer in the design and building of waterfront parks, and served as a model for many North American cities.

In 1869 one of the first national economical crises took place in the United States, due to speculation of gold prices, which reached businesses in Chicago. In the same year, in Chicago Rand McNally was established as a railway guide company, and would for the following decades be in charge of the mapping of Chicago. Most relevant of all, 1871 was the year of the Chicago Great Fire, and this event was decisive in the urban transformation and marked a turning point, not only for architecture but also

for the social organisation of the city.

Within the period, Chicago was host of the 1893 World Columbian Exposition. This event had a strong influence in the plan of Burnham of 1909, having some of the professionals working on both exposition and plan. The use of leisure space is one of the main themes discussed and applied in the Exposition and the urban plan.

The greatest depression of the United States closes this period in 1930. The Stock Market Crash of 1929 transformed the economical situation of the city, while migration from the southern states was occupying the city. The projects for the waterfront changed characteristics and the World's Fair of 1933 was a platform for these new typologies of urban design and architecture.

Buenos Aires went through a long process of conflict between port development and leisure provision on the waterfront. Despite this conflict, the projects that began in the 1870s were finally built by the end of the 1910s.

The civil code and the first national census were realised in 1869. This marked a new set of organising tools for the city and the country. These events would mark a political transformation that affected the subsequent organisation of the city and its public spaces.

Buenos Aires hosted the celebrations of the Centennial of Independence in 1910 with an international exhibition. This fact, together with a period of strong economical development, was one of the causes and motors that led to the preparations of the celebration and to the urban plan of 1909, which was concentrated in the development of green areas and used the waterfront as part of a park and circulation system.

1930 was also a turning point year for Buenos Aires, the coup d'état, combined with the

economical crisis derived from the international depression, would open a completely different economical model for the city. Regarding the projects for waterfront leisure spaces, the characteristics of them after 1930 are radically different and open the doors to the appearance of the modern movement in Argentina.

These three cities acted as models for developments in each geographical zone. They are subject to ideas, planning and design that were characteristic of the period. They have many issues in common, such as the ideas of hygiene and sanitation, circulation and use of green spaces. These ideas had the tendency to rule the urban design and planning of leisure spaces. The professionals acting in these projects had strong influences of the *Picturesque*, the *Park Movement*, the *Ecole des Beaux Arts*, of the *City Beautiful Movement* and the *Garden City*. In the case of Chicago, these paradigmatic designers were F.L. Olmsted, D. Burnham and E. Bennett. In the case of Buenos Aires they were J.J. Bouvard, B. Carrasco and J.C.N. Forestier. In Barcelona the main protagonists in the ideas of reconfiguration of the waterfront were Alsina Amils, Leon Jaussely and Jose Ortega.

Despite the similarities and the exchange of urban ideas, the cases will show how the local urban situation has influenced the development of the waterfront. The realisation of the projects has shown many peculiarities related to their local context. Within the period studied (1870-1930) a subdivision of periods was applied. This will be different in each case, given the peculiarities of each city and its waterfront, depending also on their relation to the context, will determine the limits of each sub period. The analysis of these cases, in the period studied, will give the

necessary tools to understand the relationship between the ideas and concepts of leisure and their materialisation in urban waterfronts. The programs of the projects in the period studied shed light into practices and contents that are still used today and especially into a diversity that may not be now in the spotlight and could be used for later developments of the kind.

### 0-5 – Research questions and Hypotheses

The questions used for the analysis of the case studies are the following.

1 - First of all, and in general, we analyse the economical, social and political context of each case. Then we describe what the role of the waterfront was in urban landscape.

2 - Through the case studies we are answering questions about the origin of the urban leisure waterfront. These projects were planned and developed by architects, engineers and administrative authorities, so we study the role of each of these actors and the relationship amongst them.

3 - To understand the evolution of these spaces within the time framework set, we analyse the programmes of the projects, how they were conceived and which of them were actually built.

4 - In general we try to figure out in each project of each case what the influence of leisure theory and leisure activities was on the materialisation of the projects.

5 - As one more element of analysis we look at the influence of the mass events in the planning of the urban waterfront in each case.

6 - As a conclusion we bring these cases together to find a model pattern to test the idea of centrality of each case in the international scene

of the time. We also attempt to find innovation in program in each project that could be eventually used in future waterfront developments.

The hypotheses of this study have been regularly modified according to new findings during research. However, some of them are maintained and gained strength.

1 - The first hypothesis has to do with the origin of the planned leisure waterfront. The first complex and planned projects for waterfront parks and avenues were conceived in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Certain changes in social, economical, cultural and urban aspects allowed the waterfronts to become new complete leisure spaces in urban centres.

2 - Regarding the case studies, we can say that the development of the leisure waterfront in European metropolis took much longer to be applied as planned space, than it did in North and South America. Apart from a couple of exceptions, the European port cities that were developing into metropolis at the end of the nineteenth century had such a strong harbour tradition that it was very difficult for the city to change its approach to the waterfront. Instead, the development of urban space in North and South American cities worked hand in hand with the development of waterfront leisure space.

3 - Urban ideas travel and circulate, as well as any other cultural concepts. These ideas have been considered by recent literature to be born in a certain central position and sent to the periphery. We consider that these peripheral cases do not only receive and reproduce ideas coming from abroad, but also add their own perspective to the projects, resulting in a hybrid that relates to local reality. Therefore, the case of Buenos Aires acts as a cross-road of urban ideas coming from Europe and the United States, presenting a

combined and especially original materialisation of projects on the waterfront.

4 - Finally we want to remark that leisure ideas and behaviour had an important influence on the conception and materialisation of waterfront landscape throughout the period studied and up to this date. Reciprocally, urban plans and projects were strongly influential in the development of leisure activities of the urban population.

### 0-6 – Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is structured into three sections.

1 - The first section is a general analysis of the evolution of leisure in the urban context throughout history, seen by commentators of leisure studies and urban history. Together with the analysis of leisure, an overall introduction to park design issues in the period studied will be presented.

2 - The second section and main body of research is dedicated to the three case studies, giving an account of the contexts of leisure in each case as well as analysing thoroughly the different aspects of the social, economical, political and especially spatial conditions of each urban waterfront. Each professional and project is analysed thoroughly.

3 - The third and last section will be conformed by a set of conclusions and final notes on the potential of these historical studies to shed light on past interventions that could eventually help on new developments of the kind.



## **Chapter 1**

### **Urban leisure space, landscape and the waterfront**



## Chapter 1 - Urban leisure space, landscape and the waterfront

Leisure and landscape have been tightly interdependent since pre-historic times, and especially since ancient Greece, where these two concepts began to be defined and studied. When it comes to defining the relation between leisure, landscape and the waterfront there are greater differences. The use of the waterfront as leisure space has had different characteristics throughout time, and these processes of transformation have been different for seas, rivers and lakes. The bibliography published up to this date about the subject of leisure, waterfronts and mass events is wide but fragmented, according to what has been found. The following is a selection of literature found relevant for this study.

Waterfronts have been studied by historians as part of a system of cities, regions and civilisations, such as the books of Fernand Braudel on the Mediterranean<sup>1</sup>, and partial case studies of city ports are numerous. However, the study of the attraction of the waterfront is remarkably described and analysed by Alain Corbin<sup>2</sup> in *The Lure of the Sea*. This historical account not only gives a precedent for the subject we have researched but is of great use as a tool, for the methodology of analysis (of perceptive and discursive systems) is suitable and applicable to a study in urban and architecture history.

In the case of urban planning for the waterfront, published work can be found aiming at a very factual comparison of case studies, neglecting the issue of leisure or giving it little relevance. The book by Breen and Rigby<sup>3</sup> is basically a catalogue of projects without any sort

of analysis into them. It shows a set of categorised recent projects from different waterfront cities of the world; it is a useful resource, but that is basically all it offers, references. Books like Johnstone and Wood<sup>4</sup> address social issues within the planning of coast areas in developing countries, focusing on water provision and the relation between public and private administration. However, they fail to analyse the subject of leisure as a main incentive for these projects. In his book *City and Port*, Han Meyer<sup>5</sup> compares the historical evolution of four harbour cities, trying to focus on the cultural significance of the spatial development of these areas. He states that urban planners are accountable for the cultural significance of the design of infrastructure works. Nonetheless, leisure as a concept and activity is not analysed in Meyer's work. Alvaro Arrese's<sup>6</sup> study of the coast of Buenos Aires is formed by an arid and superficial historical description of the development of the waterfront. This leads to a design for an area of the city, which has no connection with the previous research, not to mention that cultural or social context is barely addressed. Other case studies have been recently developed as doctoral theses, especially at the UPC of Barcelona. These are, for example, the work of Nadia Fava<sup>7</sup> who studied the whole development of the coastline of Barcelona, from its origins to present time. Verena Andreatta has finished her theses in the relationship between harbour and city in the case of Rio de Janeiro. These particular case studies show an approach to the subject of the urban waterfronts with a fresh perspective. They provide a wider contextual study that includes variables such as social issues in their research. Another interesting work is that of João Pedro Costa, lecturer in town planning at Lisbon State University, who has been focusing on the re-use of port areas around the world.

Costa focuses on the physical development of these areas, being more analytical than previous authors on the subject.

<sup>1</sup> Braudel, Fernand, *The Mediterranean in the Ancient World*, Penguin Books, London, 2002, (1998)

<sup>2</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*. London. Penguin Books. 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Breen Anne, Rigby Dick, *Waterfronts: cities reclaim their edge*. New York, McGraw-Hill. 1994

<sup>4</sup> Johnstone, Nick, Wood, Libby, *Private firms and public water: realising social and environmental objectives in developing countries*. Cheltenham, Elgar. 2001

<sup>5</sup> Meyer, Han, *City and port: urban planning as a cultural venture in London, Barcelona, New York, and Rotterdam: changing relations between public urban space and large-scale infrastructure*. Utrecht, International Books. 1999

<sup>6</sup> Arrese, Alvaro Daniel *Buenos Aires and de la Plata Riverfront : design concept for restructuring the urban core*. Delft, Publikatieburo Bouwkunde. 2002.

Landscape has been studied as a discipline since the origin of its planning as an urban element. We have used secondary and primary bibliography for the analysis of this issue in each case study. In general there are numerous studies on the evolution of landscape. We have used as references, among others, the works of George F. Chadwick<sup>8</sup>, as a general overview of the history of landscape in the nineteenth century; Elizabeth Barlow Rogers<sup>9</sup>, who gives a detailed and current interpretation of the evolution of landscape design; Galen Cranz<sup>10</sup>, who studies park design from the perspective of public intervention, and gives a categorisation of parks that fits with our research. In each case we have studied primary sources such as the texts of the designers of the parks, to understand their relation with the rest of landscape design in the world and with the development of each city.

In the case of masse events some remarkably interesting works have been published. In *Architecture of Instruction and Delight*, Pieter Van Wesemael<sup>11</sup> gives an insight into an evolution of World Exhibitions. He describes the whole process of conceiving, building and demolishing that was useful for this study, but he aims only at the exhibitions themselves and leaves little analysis to the influence on urban plans. His method is also applicable to this research for there is a shared opinion in the need of contextual analysis of architecture and urbanism. Meyer-Künzel<sup>12</sup> does a thorough research into mass events including rare images, which give an insight into the great influence that these events have in the urban development. Nonetheless, hers is a general approach, with various case studies but without a deep research into one specific case. In her book *Fêtes Geantes*<sup>13</sup>, Florence Pinot de Villechenon analyses and criticises thoroughly

the preconceived ideas about World Expositions and provides an updated concept of the use of these Exhibitions as pre-figuration, re-structuring and remembrance. Her perspective is helpful for a present view of the historical case studies of this research. In a more descriptive manner, Carlo Olmo and Linda Aimone<sup>14</sup> give a more precise account of the period we are interested in here, and cleverly categorise the aspects of the world exhibitions dismembering each case studied.

Primary and secondary sources and bibliography about the development of each urban project in the mentioned case studies is wide and varied. Primary bibliography will be used as source for case studies. The comparative interdisciplinary study will provide a different perspective on the case studies and on the approach to the issues dealt with. The next section will be dedicated to leisure studies and the way authors in this discipline have approached the subject of leisure, relating it with waterfront developments throughout the western world.

## 1.1 - Leisure and its influence on the waterfront – Commented literature

Amongst the studies made on urban history and leisure history we can find very different approaches. This section will focus on leisure behaviour throughout time and the spatial contexts in which it developed. This will not be an extensive analysis of leisure practises in history, but will serve instead as an introductory background for the objects later analysed. As explained before, this section will categorise the development of urban leisure into Leisure as social manifestation and Leisure as instrument of development.

The first section will be dedicated to the current state of the matter regarding leisure (chapter 1.1), to be able to understand how the situation we are currently living in was influenced by a previous context in social, economical and political matters.

Giving a further approach to the period that matters in this study (1870-1930) there will be an overview of leisure practices and their role in the city during the industrial age (chapter 1.2 and 1.3). In later chapters these issues will be more specifically analysed in the cases of Barcelona, Chicago and Buenos Aires.

### 1.1.1 - State of the matter

Since this is a historical study from an urban perspective we will see what the commentators of the discipline have analysed. In general, urban historians have barely touched the subject of leisure. Only when it comes to open space and park design, leisure seems to be a more present issue, but mainly analysed in an object-focused manner, with little attention to the context and conditions around them. Therefore,

it seems necessary to revisit these authors and the way they describe leisure behaviour within the urban and try to combine these perspectives with those of culture and leisure historians.

Mumford<sup>15</sup>, as an urban historian, hardly mentions the issue of leisure and follows a traditional pattern of spatial analysis. The case of Watkin<sup>16</sup>, partly for he belongs to another generation, seems to be less rigid, but it is difficult not to place him as a defendant of post-modernism, sticking to a period-framed theory. Watkin proposes the breaking of accepted categories, but he still uses them as an organising device for his book. He considers the development of architecture to evolve around the classical language. He supports Leon Krier in his belief that “architecture can express nothing else but its own constructive logic” and that architecture and building are “only concerned with creating a built environment, which is beautiful and solid, agreeable, habitable and elegant”<sup>17</sup>. This statement is reductive and does not allow interpretations of architecture as parts of a whole, as part of an urban system in which each one of these parts has a wide set of expressions that can be interpreted in different ways. With this approach, architectural language, form and style appear to be the main conditioners of architecture and urbanism history.

From other disciplines and perspectives the analysis of leisure activities throughout history has been much more detailed. Gary Cross’ work is exclusively focused on the history of leisure from the seventeenth century till nowadays. Although his study chooses to have England and the United States as case studies, there is a great part of it that can be applied in a more general way to the whole of the western world. His perspective is rather descriptive so it doesn’t pose critical questions. He even states that:

“We can understand the play of people of vastly different societies because it has something in common with our own pleasures – desire for variety, intimacy and freedom from anxiety.”<sup>18</sup>

This is one of the first approaches to the conception that even though leisure has a tradition of local belonging, it is also a social practice that is adaptable and understandable in a leap through cultures. Alberto Luis Gomez<sup>19</sup> proposes a historical approach to the development of leisure geography. This study is intended to be applied to the Spanish context, and it is deeply influenced by German *Sozialgeographie*. Peter Hall<sup>20</sup> reviews Mumford, and in his book *Cities in Civilisation* he proposes the perspective of cultural history to analyse the city, and the Golden Ages of cities reflected in their creativity. What seems more valuable about the work of Hall is the inclusion of different disciplinary analyses to shed light on the evolution of the city. Despite this fact, the case studies he chooses seem to repeat a model that prioritises the *central* cases and disregards the *peripheral* ones.

In the field of the history of leisure waterfronts the most relevant author is Alain Corbin<sup>21</sup>. With his analysis of history through perceptive and discursive systems he sheds light on a history of human behaviour and social practices that are useful for this study. Even though Corbin’s book refers mainly to the seafront outside the urban context, it is still influential in the realm of this study. Corbin’s book *L’avenement des loisirs*<sup>22</sup> also serves as a source for the evolution of leisure between 1850 and 1960, with a focus on European leisure practices.

The mentioned authors will appear as referents throughout the chapters. The authors to be addressed in the second and third section of

this chapter belong to different disciplines, and their theories will be analysed accordingly.

<sup>7</sup> Fava, Nadia, *Progetti e processi in conflitto: il fronte marittimo de Barcelona*, phd thesis, UPC Barcelona, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Chadwick, George, *The Park and the town, public landscape in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries*, The architectural Press, London, 1966.

<sup>9</sup> Barlow Rogers, Elizabeth, *Landscape Design, a Cultural and Architectural history*, Harry N Abrams, NY, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Cranz, Galen, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*, the MIT Press, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Van Wesemael, Pieter, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight, A socio-historical analysis of World Exhibitions as a didactic Phenomenon (1798-1851-1970)* Rotterdam, 010 Publishers, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Meyer-Künzel, Monika *Der Planbare Nutzen, Stadtentwicklung durch Weltausstellungen und Olympische Spiele*, Hamburg, Munchen: Dolling und Gallitz Verlag, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Pinot de Villechenon, Florence, *Fetes Geantes, les Expositions Universelles, pour quoi faire?*, Editions Autrement, Paris, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Aimone, Linda, Olmo, Carlo, *Les Expositions Universelles, 1851-1900*, Belin, Paris, 1990, 1993.

<sup>15</sup> Mumford, Lewis, *The city in History, Its origins, transformations and perspectives*, translated to Spanish E.L. Revol, Ediciones Infinito, Buenos Aires, 1979. Original 1961.

<sup>16</sup> Watkin, David, *A history of Western Architecture*, London, Lawrence King Publishing, 1995, 1986.

<sup>17</sup> quoted In Watkin, David, *A history of Western Architecture*, London, Lawrence King Publishing, 1995, 1986.p.8.

<sup>18</sup> Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990.p.2

<sup>19</sup> Gomez, Luis Alberto, *Aproximacion historica alestudio de la geografia del ocio. Guia Introductoria*, Editorial del Hombre, 1988.

<sup>20</sup> Hall, Peter, *Cities in Civilisation*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1998.

<sup>21</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, 1988.

<sup>22</sup> Corbin, Alain, *L’Avenement des loisirs, 1850-1960*, Champs, Flammarion, Paris, 1995.

### 1.1.2 – Current leisure theories

We will analyse the different approaches to leisure theory that are most directly affecting the planning and policies of leisure practice.

During the 1970s the issue of leisure became extremely publicised and many authors addressed the subject, due to the economical and social changes that occurred in the period after the Second World War in Europe. This phenomenon also happened in North and South America in different ways. During that decade the main focus of leisure studies professionals was set on the planning of leisure in a quantitative manner, on sociological studies that would respond to *needs* in a static and definite way. The 1980s show a different situation; there was a radical critique to the pluralist account, focusing on social divisions and inequality in structural terms. During the 1990's the mainstream social theorists were busy with the subjects of culture, leisure and lifestyle, giving a restructured and contextualised post-modern perspective. Also in the 1990's there are some holistic approaches to the subject, theoretical traditions trying to explain the increasingly global nature of experience and governance of leisure.

In the following section we will analyse the leisure theories found and will apply a series of categories to the waterfront landscape. Basically, this categorisation is organised into two groups: leisure as a social manifestation and leisure as an instrument of development. These categories show a different picture of the leisure situation at a given time. The bottom-up manifestations are those in which the population, responding to certain traditions and customs perform certain activities, without the control or mandate of authorities. These activities tend to be more

resilient, attached to place and more traditional. On the other hand, the top-down leisure manifestations are those in which authorities and government introduce ideas and provide spaces for certain determined leisure activities. These manifestations tend to change regarding periods, political structures and economical changes. Each of these categories is divided into sub-categories. The bottom-up manifestations are sub-grouped into leisure for social classes, for children and as individual manifestations. On the other hand, the top-down manifestations of leisure are focused on cultural, commercial, and health provision development. These categories will be explained through current leisure theory and then applied to the case studies. Some of the issues in each category may overlap, but it is the intention to keep the difference between provision of leisure activities and spaces and the actual leisure activities performed by the citizens.

### 1.1.3 - Leisure as social manifestation – Bottom up manifestation

Leisure for social classes

To talk about leisure for social classes at present time deserves a whole study of its own. However, a short description will serve here as introduction to the following chapters. It is feasible to say that the majority of the population in the western world (Europe, US, and some social layers in other parts of Latin America, Asia and Africa) follow leisure practices that belong increasingly to mass consumption. The 5 day work week and the 8 hour work day, that seems to be still decreasing, allows for the average citizen to have the opportunity of practicing the main common activities of home leisure such as

watching TV, reading, listening to music, surfing through the internet, entertaining and buying through internet and telephone. Also public and outside activities are common like outdoor sports, biking, jogging, fitness or commercial activities such as shopping, eating out and attending spectacles such as theatre or cinema. Yet activities such as strolling through the park are still common and up to date.

The case is of course different for less developed countries, where just a small section of the population has these possibilities and the majority does not.

Leisure for children

In his study, Ralph Glasser<sup>23</sup> questions the value of leisure as a positive or negative issue. He centres his attention on the quality of the way we actually use leisure. His main question refers to the way the system makes a burden out of leisure; that leisure time is given to people in the interest of a *trouble free* industrial society. He also questions the dialectics between *cultural* leisure and *superficial* leisure. He talks about the evolution of a person throughout his/her life and the evolution of approach to leisure. Thus childhood is a time of flexibility within which there is almost no dichotomy between work and non-work. A person then goes through a breaking down period that leads to the choices of leisure narrowed down by circumstances.

Leisure as individual fulfilment

Within psychology we can find interesting studies by Csikszentmihalyi<sup>24</sup> and Tinsley and Tinsley<sup>25</sup>. They develop a combination of both objective and subjective views. In Csikszentmihalyi's opinion, leisure is a state achieved whenever a person is in optimal

interaction with its environment. Tinsley and Tinsley state that leisure is an experience that may occur in all aspects of life. Both authors share the conditions and characteristics attributed to leisure.

The conditions are:

- a- the individual is free from obligation
- b- the activity is voluntary
- c- the activity is pleasurable
- d- the activity is culturally recognised as leisure

The characteristics are:

- a- attention centred in a limited stimulus field
- b- total involvement in the activity
- c- loss of anxiety and constraint
- d- lack of consciousness of time and space
- e- enlightened perception
- f- enjoyment

De Grazia<sup>26</sup> gives the ultimate condition that elicits the leisure experience, which is that leisure is not free time, but a state of mind. John Neulinger<sup>27</sup> supports this perspective saying:

“leisure, then, has one and only one essential criterion, and that is the condition of perceived freedom (...) Leisure is no longer defined in contrast to work, but is seen as an overriding experience that determines the quality of both work and non-work time.”

The last decades have been decisive in the development of urban leisure; the rejection of suburban familialism has led to gentrification and a return to the city. The yuppies<sup>28</sup> and dinks<sup>29</sup> are stereotypes deeply rooted in reality. Cross states, very diplomatically that:

“There is a contradictory phenomenon of individualised

leisure organised in a mass scale by a pleasure industry. This surely was an achievement of the *hidden persuaders* of capitalism, but this culture was also a product of people’s felt needs”<sup>30</sup>

#### 1.1.4 - Leisure as instrument of development – Top down manifestations

Leisure as cultural development

In the past 40 years, in the western world, leisure has not only increased as time free from work, but it also has gained ground in all kinds of research fields. Studies on tourism, urban leisure and recreation are being developed from economical to social and from political to spatial sciences. However, culture has been one of the main issues addressed within leisure studies.

Ian P. Henry<sup>31</sup> provides a deep analysis into the leisure policies of Britain, but despite its local condition, it sheds light on processes that are happening at a global level, especially in Europe and the US, but not disregarding Asian and Latin American countries. His main hypothesis is that in the end of the twentieth century, leisure was a relevant source of identity in terms of production function. Henry rejects the discussion about the definition of leisure itself.

“It is not intended here to enter into what has become a relatively sterile definitional debate, but rather to underline why such debates are sterile, and to highlight certain implications for theorising the nature of leisure policy.”<sup>32</sup>

To support the content of his work, Henry uses the definition of leisure given by Kaplan in 1975:

“Leisure consists of relatively self determined activity/experience that falls into one’s economically free time roles, that is seen as leisure by participants, that is psychologically pleasant in anticipation or recollection, that potentially covers the whole range of commitment and intensity, that contains characteristic norms and constraints, and that provides opportunities for recreation, personal growth and service to others”<sup>33</sup>

Henry writes from the perspective of policy making and it is true that nowadays, leisure as cultural development has become part of most urban policies; culture is used as a way to enrich the lives of citizens, to increase tourism up to the point of turning culture into a commodity. It is difficult then to separate the concepts of cultural and commercial leisure.

<sup>23</sup> Glasser, R., *Leisure: penalty or prize?*, London: Macmillan, 1970.

<sup>24</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975.

<sup>25</sup> Tinsley H. And Tinsley, D., *Psychological and Health Benefits of the Leisure Experience*, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University, 1982.

<sup>26</sup> de Grazia, Sebastian, *Of Time, Work and Leisure*, New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1962.

<sup>27</sup> Neulinger, J., *To leisure: An Introduction*, State College: PA: Venture Publishing.

<sup>28</sup> young upwardly mobile urban professional

<sup>29</sup> double income no kids

<sup>30</sup> Cross, Gary, A social history of leisure since 1600, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990.p.226

<sup>31</sup> Henry, Ian P., *The Politics of leisure policy*, 2nd edition, Palgrave, 2001.

<sup>32</sup> idem.p.4.

<sup>33</sup> Kaplan, M., *Leisure: Theory and policy*, New York, Wiley, 1975, p.26.

Even though the debate about the definition of leisure might be sterile, it is important to analyse the different applications of these concepts on activities, to be able to give a wider view into the implementation of space for leisure purposes. Other perspectives on leisure activities and their purpose provide a wider view on their significance. James Murphy<sup>34</sup> gives a clear subdivision of leisure as behaviour, that can be useful for any study of specific cases, be them historical or current. In his categorisation the structural –functional approach is opposite to the social-action one. In the structural-functional approach, leisure is residual instead of an integral part of life. On the other hand the social-action approach views individual behaviour as fulfilment through leisure experience. Then he observes 2 dominant views: the objective and the subjective. Within the objective view, leisure is seen as quantitative, residual or discretionary time; as a form of activity; as a symbol of social class; as a social instrument and as a function of social groups and lifestyles. On the subjective side we find the philosophical and psychological perspectives. On the philosophical side the author traces back to the concept of leisure described by Aristotle, as the basis of culture and the end toward which all action is directed. All these concepts are useable and applicable to the construction of leisure space currently. Ralph Glasser adds to the debate, describing the shift from earlier ideas about culture, pointing that mass culture became prominent from the second half of the twentieth century.

“Mass media emphasis on the interpretation of popularisation of cultural matters indicates a ready enough market for an effort on the middle section of the social diamond to be consciously preoccupied

in its leisure with the pursuit of enlightenment and culture.”<sup>35</sup>

Glasser’s work can be called Holistic for he tries to find a link between the purely theoretical meanings of leisure and its actual applications. For him “Culture is the outward manifestation of mans’ attempt to understand himself in relation to his environment”<sup>36</sup> and leisure activities should reflect this uncertainty.

The systems of reproduction have not only influenced industrialisation, production and work, but they have also influenced leisure activities, especially in the last three decades, the commercialisation of literature, music, cinema and sport, widening the reach of a standardised culture to the population. However, the pursuit of enlightenment and culture loses part of its appeal and value, transforming the appreciation of these matters and the way of using them.

From another perspective, Johan Huizinga<sup>37</sup>, introduces the idea of the *Homo Ludens* as the natural evolution from the *Homo Sapiens* through the *Homo Faber*. According to Huizinga, Man the Player had to be brought to the spotlight, for social sciences had not given the concept of play the supreme importance it should have. On Huizinga’s opinion play was older than culture, being one of the main bases of civilisation.

Leisure as commercial development and planning

As much as the cultural development of leisure, the commercial development of recreation and leisure has been extremely relevant in the urban context of recent decades. Planning is on top of the line in the discussion, and guides most of the development of leisure spaces to

provide city dwellers with the *optimal* conditions of leisure. The issues of standardisation and commoditisation are of great concern in the academic context<sup>38</sup>.

For Glasser<sup>39</sup>, social activities are considered a source of release that at present time have to be paid for. Clubs, restaurants, dance halls, drinks, drugs and gambling are just some of these activities. Through this he observes that there is a universal tendency of people to adjust to the problems by isolating themselves from them. Sport, even though it was incorporated into urban daily life since the nineteenth century, appears now as a rising leisure phenomenon; in the first stages of life, the person has an active participation which leads to a later passive participation that is more centred in the urge for emotional identification. Indulgence recreation brought new activities to the picture in the 1970s when the cult of the body became essential. Glasser’s study concludes that within the western cultural disintegration, leisure has become almost purely commercial despite the fact of some minorities using their leisure time for more significant purposes.

Ian Henry gives an account of the process of planning in Britain and uses a determined time frame to illustrate it. During the post war period until the mid seventies, the maturing of the welfare state takes place in Britain and leisure is added to the portfolio of welfare services, “one of the communities everyday needs”, as quoted by Henry. The role of the commercial sector in leisure is developing specially within the areas of tourism and home entertainment. This is a period of great multinational investment in British leisure industries, and a time of growth of voluntary leisure organisations, particularly for

the upper socio-economic groups.

If we compare the theoretical view of leisure and the application of it to practice a big gap is to be found. When it comes to a practical way of applying leisure into commerce, management and planning, the quest for the significance of leisure for the individual practically disappears. Leisure becomes almost an exact science and it is mostly called recreation. The aim of most studies in this field is the effectiveness of planning of leisure spaces with a profit goal.

In the planning area Pat Farrell<sup>40</sup> approaches the subject in a purely pragmatic way. She proposes three areas of planning process: 1-organisational patterns; 2-segments of the program service unit and 3-activity clustering. This categorisation is simply a tool for leisure planners, the consideration of management and marketing for leisure planning is used as the instrument for providing leisure events and activities, in a format that can be used disregarding the location or type of activity. Within management, leisure is considered as a service that can either be provided by the state or by private investment. In a similar line to that of Farrell, Frank Guadagnolo<sup>41</sup> gives an essential list of leisure planning. It consists of: planning, organising, staffing, co-ordinating, reporting and budgeting. This approach is shared by most of management professionals. Most literature about management and planning aims to specific cases and activities within leisure, predominantly in the United States. This gives an insight mainly on the ways leisure is used in planned activities. These are: the arts, coastal recreation, camping, commercial recreation, mass media, play, sport, religion, travel and tourism. Gold<sup>42</sup> gives a supply and demand analysis, plus goals, needs and

design aspects at the time of leisure planning.

Bannon<sup>43</sup> makes a thorough comprehensive study of leisure planning in a completely pragmatic way. His process requires a step by step action that consists of: analysis; establishment of goals; strategy; program; implementation and evaluation. His whole study is the development of this model. Bannon's view of the situation of leisure is also quite pragmatic. In his view "in the past people found satisfaction in their work but they don't anymore"<sup>44</sup> and personal guilt produced by increased leisure calls for a need of productivity. He believes that in the process of leisure planning, particular desires and needs have to be defined in advance and he believes that this can be simply found by having the community participate in the first steps of planning. To his knowledge the causes of the increase in demand of leisure services are the growth of population, leisure time, income and increased mobility. He states that "Planning is political, it determines who gets what when and how."<sup>45</sup> In a position that also seems too determined to approach the subject he affirms that:

"Any procedural or theoretical model is useful only for defining major tasks to be performed (...) Most social models rely on a simple problem solving approach."<sup>46</sup>

His book may be very useful in the case of directly planning recreation facilities (not leisure), for he gives a practical and safe process of application of a recreation project. Nevertheless, even though he goes through all the details possible in the process of planning, there seems to be no questioning whatsoever into the quality of space and life of the individuals that would be

using this recreational space.

From the economic perspective of Clawson and Knetch<sup>47</sup>, economies interest falls into 4 main areas within this subject: the work/leisure choice; allocation of time between leisure activities; demand for specific leisure activities and evaluation of projects through cost-benefit analyses. The two broad questions for them are efficiency and equity.

"By and large, leisure and work are competitors for time. If one increases, the other decreases. This is so for the individual and for society as a whole."<sup>48</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Murphy, James, "concepts of leisure" *Recreation and leisure: an introductory handbook*, by Graefe, Alan, Parker, Stan, Oxford: Venture, 1987.

<sup>35</sup> Glasser, Ralph, *Leisure: penalty or prize?*, London: Macmillan, 1970. Chapter VII.

<sup>36</sup> idem. Chapter IV.

<sup>37</sup> Huizinga, Johan, *Homo Ludens, a study of the play element in culture*, The Beacon Press, Boston, 1950.

<sup>38</sup> Among others: Horne, John (ed.) *Leisure Cultures, Consumption and Commodification*, Leisure Studies Association, 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Glasser, Ralph, *Leisure: penalty or prize?*, London: Macmillan, 1970.

<sup>40</sup> Farrell, P and Lundgren, H., *The Process of Recreation Programming. Theory and Practice*. New York: Wiley, 1983.

<sup>41</sup> Guadagnolo, F., "Management of leisure services" in *Recreation and leisure: an introductory handbook*, by Graefe, Alan, Parker, Stan, Oxford: Venture, 1987.

<sup>42</sup> Gold, S., *Recreation Planning and Design*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1980.

Gold, S., *Urban Recreation Planning*, Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1975.

<sup>43</sup> Bannon, Joseph, *Leisure resources, its comprehensive planning*, Prentice Hall Illinois, 1976.

<sup>44</sup> idem. pg22

<sup>45</sup> idem. pg28

<sup>46</sup> idem. pg.35

<sup>47</sup> Clawson & Knetsch, *Economics of outdoor recreation*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966.

<sup>48</sup> idem.

Clawson and Knetch seem to simplify the question of leisure and to reduce it to its basically practical terms. This is, as the ones of management, a perfectly useful tool, especially in the quest for profit of these activities. It does leave aside any hints of social significance of leisure or any open questions about the benefits of these activities and projects besides the cost and financial success of them.

From a philosophical perspective, Lefebvre<sup>49</sup> develops a new sociology of leisure. He mainly states that leisure ideas and practices are part of a larger apparatus of ideological reproduction that serves to maintain capitalist social relations. Lefebvre calls our urban society a "bureaucratic society of controlled consumption"; he also states in an acid critic to urban society that "Never has the relationship of the human being with the world experience such profound misery as during the reign of habitat and so called urbanistic rationality"<sup>50</sup>. This position sheds some light into the real processes of consumption, and what we mentioned earlier about the commoditisation of leisure activities. Lefebvre goes far enough to criticise the whole of urban society, which is not our opinion, but we share in the idea that commoditisation of leisure can only lead to standardisation and the loss of local identity and sense of place of each determined urban centre.

Much has been written about the spectacle of leisure and about consumption and commoditisation. Regarding the subject, the theories of the Situationists in the 1960s are remarkable. The position of the Situationists towards the city is a clearly critical one, especially regarding the urban planning ideas of the period just before them. The tabula rasa methods of planning and the whole theoretical framework in

which it was developed is challenged by a view of the city in which the user becomes a protagonist. What really concerns this study is that for the Situationists it was leisure practice what would provoke change in the city. Contemporarily they would strongly criticise the contemporary city in its use as a spectacle, in the inhabitants being mere spectators.

The Situationists Constant Nieuwehuis and Guy Debord state a new concept of leisure interpretation,

"A logical consequence of the growing amount of leisure time is the idea [that] recreation is becoming meaningless. Recreation is the recouping of energy lost during the working process. As soon as there is a surplus of energy available for activities other than work, recreation becomes pointless and makes way for the possibility of true creativity -- the creation of a new way of life, of a new environment. That is the reason why the youth of today no longer turn to hobbies and clubs for relaxation but seek excitement in communal initiatives."<sup>51</sup>

"At this point the humanism of the commodity takes charge of the worker's *leisure and humanity* simply because political economy now can and must dominate those spheres as political economy. The *perfected denial of man* has thus taken charge of all human existence."<sup>52</sup>

Constant opens up a new conception of leisure by which free time becomes the possibility of creativity beyond recreation. Debord on the other hand, in a more complex approach to the

subject, points at the commercial side of leisure and the way it negatively transforms behaviour.

The significance of mass leisure has been studied and criticised later in the twentieth century by various authors. Among others: Marcuse<sup>53</sup> considered that leisure only lashes the worker more firmly to the wheel of labour. Debord<sup>54</sup> criticises mass consumption as part of the society of spectacle, a part of a society in which passiveness allows for the mere observation and inaction of the masses. Adorno<sup>55</sup> criticises the model of the culture industry for its impossibility to attain the whole spectrum of diversity of society.

Leisure as spatial development

Leisure space in the urban context has recently been constantly addressed. New parks, squares, culture facilities, harbours, waterfronts, malls, festival markets and promenades have all been developed in the last decades and are growing and taking over spaces of the city.

There have been particular studies on the development of leisure and recreation space especially in the United States. The methods of zoning from the sixties were harshly criticised in the 1970s.

"The predilection of the city planner for sorting land use by functions and putting all like uses together has segregated residential areas into compounds which include only houses"<sup>56</sup>

The authors of this book focus on the human element as a crucial one in the provision of public space, leaving form and program in the background.

The role of the city planner has also been

questioned in the 1970s, for:

“having no direct mechanism, such as market indication, to inform him about what people want has led him to make assumptions about objectives. This condition, in which he has only limited responsibility for the services produced, and few direct and intimate links with what people want and need, has impelled him to rest his case on what people ought to want, such as the orderly, the efficient, the beautiful”<sup>57</sup>

In this publication the authors intend to give a wide description of what outdoor recreation is and try to provide methods for the subsequent planning of these spaces. One of the main issues in this book, which is touched by most of the authors is related to the importance of recreation as an economical value that can not be measured for it is not market priced. This issue is discussed thoroughly, but there is little mention about the real significance of urban public space for the dweller.

Cranz<sup>58</sup> finds in a historical point of view 4 steps of development of park environments during the last century. Before 1900 there were the pleasure ground era and the park movement<sup>59</sup>. Between 1900 and 1930 this was focused on children and their play needs. From 1930 to 1965 park planning is driven by demand. Finally, within the last years comes the Open Space Era which is a time of experimentation and new concern with involving citizens in the urban parks.

We agree with this categorisation, having studied particular projects of especially the first two periods explained by Cranz. There have been numerous studies and projects for open space

development in the last 4 decades, with different character and pointing at the economical and human significance of them. Many different typologies of development of public space have been introduced. These have mainly been provided by the governments and authorities in a top-down manner. However, few new methods of cooperation and participation have arisen in the past decades, involving citizens and private firms. These projects have proved more difficult to be implemented, but some of them have been successful in providing a diverse and participative urban leisure space.

The waterfronts have been a crucial space in the city for these kinds of developments. The abandoned harbours and technical facilities of the nineteenth century have been restructured and adapted to new uses and programs combining passive and active, cultural and commercial leisure practices. The following chapters, on the specific case studies will deepen into this subject.

#### Leisure as health provision

Sports and fitness have turned into extremely topical leisure activities since the 1980s. The cult of the body and the image has taken over the image of the city and everything that is urban. This is also the case of the theoretical framework, even in the academic world, leisure studies<sup>60</sup> are concentrating more and more in the sports activities and its spectacle. This is also the case with the mass events related to it, Olympic Games and football world cups are becoming more topical than ever before.

One representing the new leisure condition, breaking with the past rules and regulations of play was Aneurin Bevan, a trade union leader and Labour Party member, who

said in 1950:

“I think the desire for playing is justification in itself for playing; there is no need to seek the justification of rational well being for playing, because your own well being is a sufficient justification. The idea that you must borrow some justification for playing is one of the worst legacies of the Puritan revolution...This idea that you must get all girls and boys in rows, like chocolate soldiers, and make them go through evolutions, is a miserable substitute for giving them sufficient playgrounds in which they can play games in their own way”<sup>61</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Lefebvre, Henri, *The Urban Revolution*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1990 (original 1970) Ch.1 p.2.

<sup>50</sup> idem. Chapter 4 par.4.

<sup>51</sup> Nieuwenhuis, Constant, *New Urbanism*, Provo Vol 9, 1966.

<sup>52</sup> Debord Guy, *Society of Spectacle*, New York: Zone books, 1994. Original 1967.

<sup>53</sup> Marcuse, Herbert, *One Dimensional Man*, Beacon Press, 1991, 1964.

<sup>54</sup> Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Zone Books, New York, 1995 (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1967)

<sup>55</sup> Adorno, Theodor, *The Culture Industry*, London, Routledge, 1991, 1972

<sup>56</sup> Van Doren, C., Priddle, G., Lewis, J., *Land and leisure, Concepts and methods in outdoor recreation*, Maaroufa Press, 1974. pg.11

<sup>57</sup> Perloff, Harvey, Lowdon Wingo jr., “Urban growth and planning of outdoor recreation”, pp.36-54 in Van Doren C., Priddle, G., Lewis, J., *Land and leisure, Concepts and methods in outdoor recreation*, Maaroufa Press, 1974.

<sup>58</sup> Cranz, Galen. *The Politics of park design: A history of Urban Parks in America*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1980.

<sup>59</sup> This period will be properly analysed in the following section of this chapter 1.3

<sup>60</sup> Leisure Studies Association Conferences 2002/2003/2004 have increasingly addressed the issue of sport above others.

<sup>61</sup> Aneurin Bevan, as quoted in McIntosh, *Sport and Society*, Oxford, Brailsford, 1963, p.108.

With this quote we are introduced into the transformation of *Rational Recreation*<sup>62</sup> into a kind of play that is justified by itself, and not as before, by the benefits it can bring to other more practical areas of life.

This short introduction to the current different perspectives of leisure practice and theory can serve as a reference to understand the development of leisure space in the period that concerns us, from 1870 to 1930. This context helps us understand that there is a combination of leisure behaviour and leisure policies that have an influence in the subsequent configuration of urban spaces for leisure. Having stated this, we will focus our following analysis on the manifestation of leisure in public space, observing the way activities changed and diversified, and the way projects and plans were instrumental for the transformation of these activities and the environment in which they were practised. Our interest will shift to the practice of these activities especially on the waterfront.

## 1.2 - Pre industrial leisure and landscape

If we do agree with the definition of leisure as time free from work (which allows the convention for simplification purposes), it appears convincing to say that leisure has been a part of human life and behaviour since the beginning of work. Therefore, to guarantee the existence of leisure, there has to be work.

Historically, according to studies made by Rosenzweig<sup>63</sup>, Meller<sup>64</sup> and Glasser<sup>65</sup> we see that in pre-industrial society, leisure was the time free from work, dependant on the agriculture cycle and eventually on religious festivities. Through literature and art of Greek civilisation we can observe that leisure was considered part of an ordered system in man's environment. Glasser states that in antiquity leisure was social. Leisure was tightly related to religion and social gathering: feast days, periods of resting, rituals of two solstices, these were events regarded as leisure. The work-day was relegated to day-light and the change of seasons would be one of the main indicators of activity rhythm.

In studies done on English and American culture on the eve of the Industrial Revolution these two cultures participate in a similar leisure practice, with slight differences. In the north of the New Continent the practice of seasonal communal leisure did not vanish, and lengthy festivities such as Christmas and MayDay remained. From the mid-seventeenth century, in the USA, the decline of authority of the Church and the growth of material wealth of the upper classes gave new opportunities for leisure. In the France of the 1670s the building of parks such as Versailles, inspired the construction of centres of pleasure, palaces and gardens with animals throughout France. These typologies led to the

later to the building of museums, zoological and botanical gardens.

Since the eighteenth century several social practices were generalised throughout the bourgeoisie, such as the practice of hunting and racing as leisure, the beginning of the pleasures of shopping in the city and the birth of commercial parks. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century the most popular past-times in the city were the rough and blood sports. In the urban environment such practices as football played in the whole town were common, the programmatic boundaries within the city were not yet settled and the lack of rules permitted such practices. Also cock fighting, ratting and cock throwing would be practiced in the street without much constraint.

### 1.2.1 - Waterfront leisure before the Industrial Revolution

The approach to the seaside as a leisure source is a relatively modern social practice. According to Corbin:

“With few exceptions, the classical period knew nothing of the attraction of seaside beaches, the emotion of a bather plunging into the waves, or the pleasure of a stay at the seaside. A veil of repulsive images prevented the seaside from exercising its appeal.”<sup>66</sup>

The studies of Alain Corbin serve as a tool for the wider understanding of the processes of the unravelling of the shores as leisure spaces. Corbin analyses the variables that may have provoked this phenomenon, the emotional relation of the user with the sea, from fear and respect to lure and attraction. In both the Classic and the Judeo-Christian<sup>67</sup> culture the seas and rivers were seen as a danger and a threat, in all kinds of myths the water was depicted as a vibrating extension of chaos, which symbolised the disorder that preceded civilisation (figure 1-01). In Dante as much as in St. Augustine or Shakespeare it is possible to feel this fear and respect of the troubled waters. Therefore it was not until the eighteenth century that the waterfronts began to be used as leisure spaces for various reasons that will be introduced here.



**figure 1-01** - ca.1550 - DE REGNIS SEPTENTRION: MONSTRA MARINA & TERRESTRIA, QUAE PASSIM IN PARTIBUS AQUILONIS INVENIUNTUR. Sea monsters and strange animals as found in northern countries on land and in the sea.

author: Sebastian Münster  
source: <http://historic-cities.huji.a>

**figure 1-02** - 1840- Slavers throwing overboard the Dead and Dying - Typhon coming  
author: Joseph Mallord William Turner  
source: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, <http://www.thecityreview.com/ruskin2.gif>



**figure 1-03** - 1824 - A Storm off the Coast, Brighton  
author: John Constable  
source: Private Collection, Salander-O'Reilly Galleries  
<http://www.artcritical.com/>

<sup>62</sup> Reform movement that conditioned leisure activities in the nineteenth century. We will analyse this in the following sections of the chapter.

<sup>63</sup> Rosenzweig, Roy, *Eight hours for What We Will, Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

<sup>64</sup> Meller, H.E., *Leisure and the changing city, 1870-1914*, London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976.

<sup>65</sup> Glasser, R., *Leisure: penalty or prize?*, London, Macmillan, 1970.

<sup>66</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, 1988.p.1

<sup>67</sup> For the purposes of this study we are not considering oriental culture and water, among other religions and cultures, Islam and Hinduism have a different approach to water and the waterfront, which would be too wide a study to include in this project.

<sup>68</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, 1988. pg.59

<sup>69</sup> Bollerey, Franziska, 'The Urbanisation of the shore. From Fishing Village to Sea-side Resort', in *Daidalos 20, On the waterfront: Town and Harbour*, Berlin, 15Juni 1986.

<sup>70</sup> Brosse, Monique, *La littérature de la mer en France, en Grande Bretagne et aux Etats-Unis (1829-1870)*, Thesis, Paris, 1978 University of Lille III, 1983. vol.1, p.9

<sup>71</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, 1988.p.14



figure 1-04 - c.1558 - Landscape with the Fall of Icarus  
author: Pieter Bruegel the elder  
source: Musees Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels  
<http://www.artchive.com/artchive/b/bruegel/icarus.jpg>

figure 1-05 - 1813- Bathing in Bridlington, Yorkshire  
author: engraving of R.D. Havell of an original by George Walker.  
source: <http://www.jasa.net.au/images/seabathing.jpg>



From an engraving by R. & D. Havell of an original by George Walker:  
bathing at Bridlington, Yorkshire, 1813.

Until the eighteenth century river or sea bathing was considered an immoral pastime better left to the *ill-mannered* lower classes<sup>68</sup>. These ideas began to change, and the causes of this change are described by Corbin as three phenomena: the idyllic vision of the prophets of natural theology, an exaltation of the fruitful shores of Holland, a land blessed by God; and the fashion for the classical voyage along the luminous shores of the bay of Naples. In this context, the beginning of change in the appreciation of the sea is the birth of natural theology in France and England, which starts to analyse man in a different way; from considering the relation between man and the universe in terms of analogies it switches to considering the external world as a spectacle.

According to Bollerey, the main causes for the birth of the appeal to the waterfront were the ideas of Enlightenment and Romanticism<sup>69</sup>. With Enlightenment, the scientific approach to nature brought the recognition of the seaside as a source of health. The Romantic view provided an idealistic image of the coast that increased its appeal. These causes brought with them the moving of certain urban social practises to the shores.

Although Romantics did not *discover* the sea, they did install a different appeal to it than before, especially the creative artists.<sup>70</sup> They renewed the meaning and enlarged the significance of practices that were already solidly established. The hedonistic aims towards the visiting of the sea replaced the health purposes. Literature captured the appeal of the waterfront in the eighteenth century. From Germany, Goethe travelled to Naples and wrote about the *unexpected delights of the shore*. A theme normally used by the Romantics was the integrity of the ocean, unaffected by historical change, as the example of Byron in his book *Childe Harold*. Some of Shelley's

poetry shows us an image of the sea as one of the natural elements with a ceaseless discourse. The presence of water also takes part in the idea of the civilising powers of the organisation of work and leisure. Corbin mentions the role of this organisation in Defoe's novel:

"Daniel Defoe summarised and reworked these evil images of the sea-shore. Robinson Crusoe's island features all the characteristics of the Garden of Eden after the Fall: there is a prospect of serene happiness provided man does not spare his sweat, organises his time, and carefully orders his labour"<sup>71</sup>

Painters were also part of this movement towards the seashore, Constable, Turner and Cotman (figure 1-02/1-03) showed images of the sea that according to Corbin:

"...paid particular attention to the strand, the territory in which the elements were supremely ephemeral and undefined, and which encouraged pantheistic reverie"<sup>72</sup>

This type of representation was conceived as completely different to other representations of the sea by previous Flemish and Dutch painters (figure 01-04), in whose paintings the limits between the elements were determined and unbreakable.

In the later eighteenth century, after millennia of fear of the sea, this aversion is overcome. One of the main reasons for the sea to become the source of appeal was the spreading of the idea that it was a source of health provision (figure 1-05). It became increasingly popular to believe that salty water was beneficial to health,

and drinking it even an effective method for losing weight. By the mid-eighteenth century another health issue came to be related with the seashore, that of the relief of *melancholy*. Patients would go to the sea-side, accompanied by their doctors, convinced that the sea air would soothe the patient's psyche.

Bathing had already been generalised in different cultures since centuries before, having Roman times as an example of the practice of this activity, which combined leisure with health. However, in the seventeenth century, this activity was once again praised. The recommendations of the benefit of bathing came from authors such as Francis Bacon who wrote:

"We have also a number of artificial wells and fountains, made in imitation of the natural sources and baths, as tinted upon vitriol, sulphur, steel, brass, lead, nitre, and other minerals; and again, we have little wells for infusions of many things, where the waters take the virtue quicker and better than in vessels or basins. And among them we have a water, which we call water of paradise, being by that we do it made very sovereign for health and prolongation of life."<sup>73</sup>

Other advises on the benefits of water came from medicine. In 1667 Dr Robert Wittie, the principal advocate of mineral water, published several books proclaiming the waters as a cure for all ills, recommending Scarborough as a place for using these waters. Other doctors refuted these claims. Possibly on the basis that all publicity is good publicity, Scarborough developed as a fashionable spa town patronised by the gentry and

aristocracy. Almost a century later, the benefits of mineral water were confirmed and in 1740, the waters of Brighton were prescribed for medicinal use for the first time. These recommendations would also help to publicise these seafront towns as places for health, leisure and recreation. In 1792 Dr Richard Russell<sup>74</sup> published a treatise on the benefits of seawater (figure 1-06) and he wrote: *The Sea washes away all the Evils of Mankind*. He became known far and wide for the miraculous cures from drinking seawater and bathing in the ocean. Seawater therapy included bathing early in the morning, drinking at least half a pint of seawater, and massage with freshly collected seaweed. The bath was followed by half an hour of rest in bed, and then outdoor exercise.

figure 1-06 - 1755  
- A Dissertation on the use of sea water in the diseases of the glands author: Dr. Richard Russell  
source: <http://www.jasa.net.au/seaside/Sickness.htm>

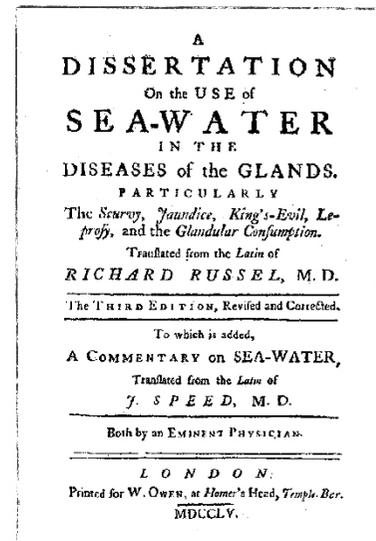


figure 1-07 - ca. 1723 - Grand Canal From the Palazzo Balbi  
Author: Canaletto, Giovanni Antonio Canal  
source: Palazzo Ca' Rezzonico, Venice  
<http://www.opaintings.com/images/canaletto/canaletto-2.jpg>

<sup>72</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, 1988. pg.165

<sup>73</sup> Bacon, Francis, *New Atlantis*, NuVision publications, 2007, 1626.

<sup>74</sup> Richard Russell (1687 – 1759) was an eighteenth century British doctor who encouraged his patients to use what was later called the "water cure", that is, medical therapy by the submersion in, and drinking of, seawater.

<sup>75</sup> Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Bertheidigung des Hygrometers und der de Lüc'schen Theorie vom Regen Göttingen*, 1800. Lichtenberg (1742-99), professor at the University of Göttingen, was the leading German expert in a number of scientific fields, including geodesy, geophysics, meteorology, astronomy, chemistry, statistics, and geometry, in addition to experimental physics. This volume is a defense of Jean André Deluc's theory of rain formation.



**figure 1-08** - 1633- The Beach at Scheveningen  
author: Simon de Vlieger  
source:National Maritime Museum, London Repro. ID: BHC0774 <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections>



**figure 1-10** - c.1760 - Vauxhall, London  
source:<http://www.heyerlist.org/theconvenientmarriage/vauxhall1779.jpg>

**figure 1-09** - c.1810 - Bains De Dieppe  
author: aquatint by Ambrosie Louis Garneray  
source: <http://www.philographikon.com/imagesfrance/diepebainsdegarneray.gif>



**figure 1-11** - 1790 - Englischer Garten -Munchen  
author: Von Sckell  
source: Margret Wanetschek, *Grünanlagen in der Stadtplanung von München, 1790 – 1860*



The fear of poisoning of waters due to the disposal of city sewage on rivers and sea was also part of this movement towards the shores, especially in France. That was why legislation in Marseille proposed the first law against the poisoning of the coasts in 1726.

A centre for the appreciation of the sea was the Mediterranean coast, which was in the eighteenth century a great attraction (figure 1-07). Among English and French elite it was increasingly fashionable to go to the coast of Italy, on the *Grand Tour*, to be in contact with what was becoming an ideal, the classical Greco-Latin culture. However, locally, England was a pioneer in the development of seaside resorts. According to Corbin, the fact of approaching the sea as a tourist attraction in a combination of health and leisure came from the original inland spas, such as the one of Bath. Habits of the inland spas were repeated in the seaside resorts such as Brighton, where a strictly codified and ritualised social life was expressed in the visits to the meeting rooms, theatres and bookshops. Mainly younger people would visit these resorts, while older generations would stay in the safer, more expensive and more traditional London. In Britain these kinds of resorts were a response to the needs and desires of the people, instead their continental counterparts were projects realised ex-novo.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Germany was added to the countries that were seeing the shore as a source of health provision. Dr. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg<sup>75</sup> wrote about the *benefits of sea water*, while the first great German sea resort of Doberan<sup>76</sup> was being built and bathing life was introduced in Nordeney by the House of Hannover.

In the Netherlands, the case of Scheveningen (figure 1-08) comes to show how the

practice of visiting the sea shore became an escape from the stench and miasma of the canals in the city, especially in the autumn, and especially by travellers from other areas of Europe, who were not used to it. However, accessibility was one of the issues that permitted this approach to the seashore. The central urban element that begins to articulate these coast resorts with the city is the road, which consisted in a road for carriages and two paths for pedestrians, bordered with trees, preparing the walker for the view ahead, that of the sea. By the end of the eighteenth century Scheveningen profited from the commercial side of the resort with the sale of shells, stuffed fish, marine plants, artificial flowers, and models of ships.

In France, Boulogne (figure 1-09) was the first bathing resort, opened as such in 1790, but the whole infrastructure of baths would not be built until 1824. Dieppe became a more important and visited bath resort since it was built in 1822. These places did not only count with the seafront but also with warm water bathing facilities and galleries in front of the sea with cabinets for men and ladies, restaurants and gardens.

It is important to state that until the mid nineteenth century it was the aristocracy that used and even decided on the construction of these seaside resorts. It would not be until the appearance of the railway as a means of transportation for leisure that the middle classes would have access to this type of places.

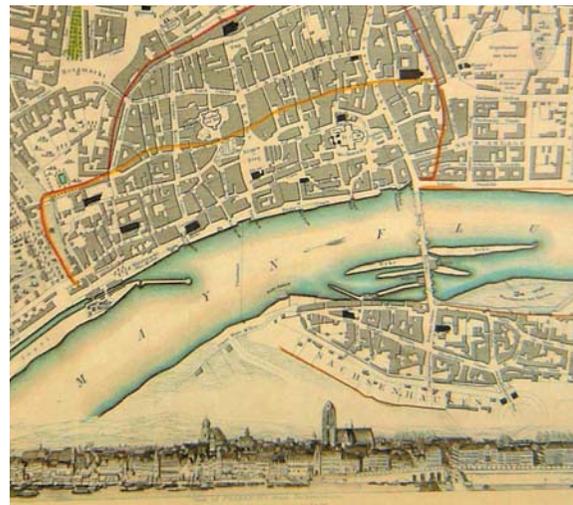
The spatial layout and buildings in bathing resorts would reflect the rules that were implicit in society, such as the division of space by gender, class and age<sup>77</sup>. In Dieppe, for example, a gallery taking the form of a tent would be the nexus between the ladies' and men's pavilions which included dinning room, rest

rooms, billiards hall for men and a promenade. Sea resorts in North America were also becoming popular, such as Rockaway Point and Coney Island near New York.

Spas and bathing facilities were not the only type of public space development on the waterfronts. We have to make a difference here between the development of bathing facilities on seafront and riverfronts cities, which developed in very different ways.

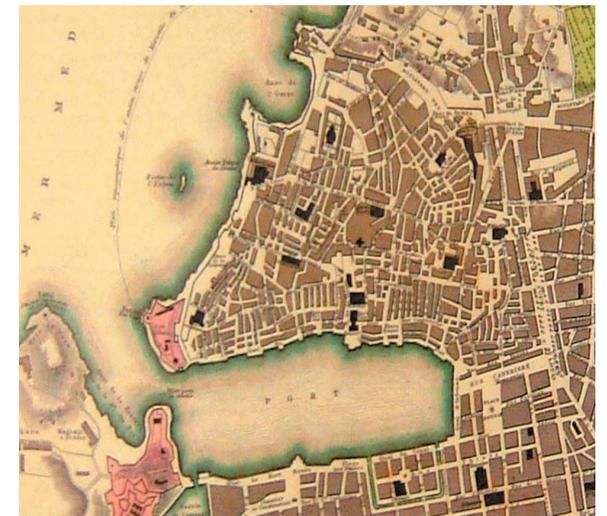
During the seventeenth century a series of parks and pleasure grounds next to the water were developed in European cities. Amongst waterfront projects there was the building of the Vauxhall in London (figure 1-10) in 1661 and the first advises of the benefits of bathing. The Vauxhall stood on the Surrey side of the Thames, and it was mainly accessed by water. They were then called new Spring Gardens and they consisted mainly of lawns, walks and arborees.

**figure 1-12** - 1837 - Frankfurt - detail  
source: Branch, Melville. *Comparative Urban Design: Rare Engravings, 1830-1843*, New York: Arno Press, 1978.



**figure 1-13** - 1832 - Antwerp - detail  
source: Branch, Melville. *Comparative Urban Design: Rare Engravings, 1830-1843*, New York: Arno Press, 1978.

**figure 1-14** - 1838 - Marseille - detail  
source: Branch, Melville. *Comparative Urban Design: Rare Engravings, 1830-1843*, New York: Arno Press, 1978.





**figure 1-13** - 1836 - Genoa - detail  
source: Branch, Melville. *Comparative Urban Design: Rare Engravings, 1830-1843*, New York: Arno Press, 1978.

**figure 1-14** - 1837 - Copenhagen- detail  
source: Branch, Melville. *Comparative Urban Design: Rare Engravings, 1830-1843*, New York: Arno Press, 1978.



**figure 1-17** - 1837 - Liverpool - detail  
source: Branch, Melville. *Comparative Urban Design: Rare Engravings, 1830-1843*, New York: Arno Press, 1978.

**figure 1-18** - 1835 - Naples- detail  
source: Branch, Melville. *Comparative Urban Design: Rare Engravings, 1830-1843*, New York: Arno Press, 1978.



The gardens had free access and the owners would make a profit with the sale of food and drinks. The Vauxhall would be later transformed in a much more elaborate series of entertainment areas with venues of different kinds. In the 1740s, the Vauxhall evening had parties arriving at the Thames side, normally at Whitehall or Westminster Stairs, where a boat could be hired to ferry them up river to Vauxhall Stairs, on the Surrey bank, just south of Lambeth Palace. This river crossing was an integral part of the evening, as it provided an exciting taste of danger and adventure before the thrills of Vauxhall itself. Vauxhall Gardens finally closed in 1859. Three main reasons are given for the closure: the fact that the railway, which ran past the main entrance, had made travel far from the city much easier and cheaper; seaside towns were becoming fashionable; and the site itself was too valuable as property, which pushed owners to sell their land.

In continental Europe the urban waterfront promenade was also gaining ground as leisure space. The main location of this space was the section of the walls that protected the city from maritime attack. By second third of the nineteenth century, as invasions began to cease, these walls were used for strolling by the city dwellers, while harbours were still part of a system in which the city and the waterfront were tightly connected.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the Englischer Garten along the River Isar was inaugurated in München (figure 1-11). In 1789 the park was created as a military garden, a place of rest for the soldiers. But soon after, in 1808 it was designed as a public park by Friedrich Ludwig von Sckell<sup>78</sup>.

Frankfurt (figure 1-12) did not have a

waterfront promenade or boulevard but it did have two areas that seem to be, according to the map of 1837, two spaces of leisure. One of them is on the western side, a group of trees form an open space next to the water. The other is a wall on the eastern side, which begins with the harbour connecting both sides of the river and finishes in a park and a palace on the further eastern side of the city.

Antwerp, as seen in a map of 1832 (figure 1-13) already had an important harbour, but a section of the waterfront in front of the central part of the city already had a boulevard with trees located on the defence wall, which was a typology that is repeated in many cases of Europe.

Marseille (figure 1-14) had its defence system in the outer side of the city, facing the sea, but the inland dock that formed the port of the city did not need this walls for defence was provided by the forts on the entrance of the city. This allowed a more natural relation between the port and the city and a whole system of streets that led to the waterfront.

Genoa already counted with a complex harbour and a continuous defence wall covering its entire coastline in 1836 (figure 1-15). This did not allow for a waterfront leisure development and green spaces were only developed in the south eastern edge of the city, such as parks and gardens, but there was little relation between them and the seafront, apart from the mere view.

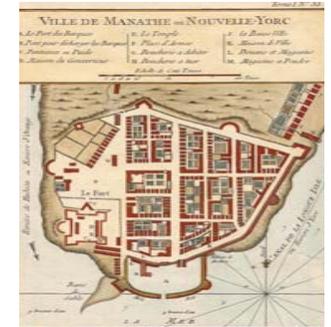
Copenhagen, on the other hand, while having water as a very important element in and around the city, did not have any sort of promenade on the waterfront. Even though already having an important public park inside the city in 1937 (figure 1-16) Rosenborgs Have, and having the Tivoli entertainment park installed in 1840, these were not connected to the water. Liverpool (figure

1-17) was another waterfront city whose harbour was so extended that it was impossible to have any kind of leisure area occupying the waterfront. The complex system of inland docks made a very effective harbour but completely cut the city from its relation to the Mersey River.

One of the pioneer cities to have a waterfront promenade was Napoli in 1835 (figure 1-18). Out of all the plans and maps of cities studied in this period it was the only city to have an explicit green space developed on the waterfront's west bay while the harbour was located on the eastern bay. This boulevard was located practically in the outskirts of the city, but it would soon become part of it as the city grew.

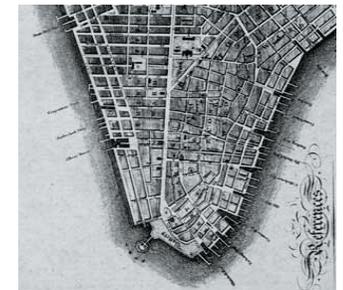
In North America, one of the first actual waterfront promenades projected was the one in Battery Park in New York (figure 1-19a and 1-19b), inaugurated in the 1800s in the lands that had been used by the military for defence purposes.

The use of the waterfront in spas on sea resorts was extremely different to that in the urban riverfronts. In sea resorts the use of the waterfront was active, the presence of hotels and hospitals exclusively dedicated to the recovery of patients was a demonstration of an active use of the water. On the other hand, in the urban context, the use of the water was contemplative. Citizens strolled next to the waters or lay observing the landscape in a passive manner. This use of the urban waterfront would later change to a more active one, and that of the seaside spas to a much more passive one.



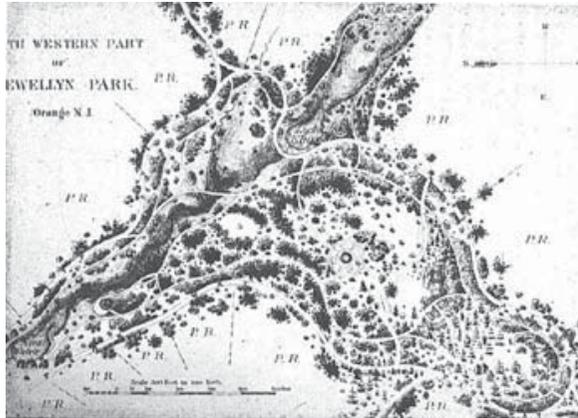
**figure 1-19a** - 1763 - Ville de Manathe ou Nouvelle-Yorc  
author: Bellin  
source: [http://www.helminck.com/Antique\\_Map\\_Bellin\\_New\\_York/Antique\\_Map\\_Bellin\\_New\\_York.jpg](http://www.helminck.com/Antique_Map_Bellin_New_York/Antique_Map_Bellin_New_York.jpg)

**figure 1-19b** - 1811-The Map of the City of New York .Detail  
author: Peter Maverick  
source: The Phelps Stokes Collection  
<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/print/exhibits/movingup/nycmap.htm>



<sup>76</sup> Doberan (its original name) remained a small village until 1793, when the duke of Mecklenburg founded the first German bathing resort, Heiligendamm. Doberan and Heiligendamm have been connected by a narrow gauge railway the Mollibahn since 1886. The town has been called Bad Doberan since 1921.  
<sup>77</sup> In Dieppe, for example, a gallery taking the form of a tent would be the nexus between the ladies' and men's pavilions which included dinning room, rooms for rest, billiards' hall for men and a promenade.

<sup>78</sup> von Sckell (1750-1823) is deemed to be the founder of the English gardens, which he introduced to the German experts with his writings on garden design.



**figure 1-20** - 1853 - Lewellyn Park  
author: Llewellyn Solomon Haskell  
source: <http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/lanar525/images/Llewellyn.jpeg>

**figure 1-21** - 1870 - "A Lager-Beer Saloon in New York, ---  
Discussing the War."  
source: Every Saturday: An Illustrated Journal of Choice  
Reading, October 15, 1870. <http://www.philaprintshop.com/images/evstbeer.jpg>



## 1.3 – Leisure and landscape in the Industrial Age

### 1.3.1 - Introduction to leisure in the Industrial Age

The development of the use of the waterfront takes a very different turn as industrialisation begins to appear in and around the cities. When the urban waterfront began to be used as a different type of leisure space by the last decades of the nineteenth century, the appropriation of the waterfront, as that of landscape in general, takes the role of a civilising tool. Leisure practises and theories, as well as theories regarding urban growth and transformation, are very influential in the shaping of the turn of the twentieth century's urban coasts.

In general, the social practices of this period differ in each country, but there seems to be a direction these leisure practices were taking that were common to different geographical locations. The city of the Industrial Age brings a combination of the ancient rural leisure practices with the new urban ones. The transformation of working regimes, time frames and mechanisation not only affected work itself but it also brought change to leisure activities. The distribution of time, from work divided by seasons, weather, harvest and night and daytime was transformed into a different organisation dictated by the clock and industrial processes.

Some events took place around the mid nineteenth century that marked this transformation of leisure time and the way it was used. In England and the United States a popular urban culture is born; in 1852 the first music hall was opened in

London; the new Bois de Boulogne in Paris by Adolphe Alphand and Central Park by Frederick Olmsted in New York were designed around 1850; a series of International Exhibitions was inaugurated with the one of London of 1841 and the sport-spectacle was originated in the United States. These were only some of the reflections of this change in leisure activities. We will introduce now an overview on leisure practices between the mid nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, combined with the specific leisure activities of the waterfront. Then we will see how the top down manifestations were responsible for the regulation and organisation of all these activities.

### 1.3.2 - Leisure as social manifestation – bottom up manifestations

Leisure for the social classes

Leisure for each social class was deeply transformed throughout the nineteenth century. The first one we will look at here was the high class or aristocracy, which was called by Thorstein Veblen<sup>79</sup> the *leisure class*. The main leisure activities of the leisure class were the visit to theatres, art galleries, concert halls and libraries. Even though the main activities were different in each society, namely a difference between continental Europe, England and the US, the social position and attitude towards the rest of society was not too different in each place. Veblen was one of the first academics to examine the complex relationship between consumption and wealth in society.

Despite the apparently ambiguous message that Veblen gives about the condition of industrial society and the relationship between *business enterprise* and the *machine process*, it is quite clear that he is giving a critical and ironic

account of the *leisure class*.

“the leisure class lives by the industrial community rather than in it. Its relations to industry are of a pecuniary rather than an industrial kind. Admission to the class is done by the exercise of pecuniary aptitudes – aptitudes for acquisition rather than for serviceability. There is therefore a continued selective sifting of the human material that makes up the leisure class, and this selection proceeds on the ground of fitness for pecuniary pursuits.”<sup>80</sup>

In the work of Veblen we are shown how the wealthy found themselves in a position which allowed them not to work and to spend most of their days in leisure. This can be clearly seen in Veblen’s study.

“In the sequence of cultural evolution the emergence of a leisure class coincides with the beginning of ownership. This is necessarily the case, for these two institutions result from the same set of economic forces.”<sup>81</sup>

Veblen states that the leisure class does not only belong to industrial age but that its best exponents are in feudal Europe or Japan. He describes the existence of the leisure class as a natural stage of human evolution, in which the power of the fittest states who belongs to this class and who to the others. Basically, Veblen explained how, in a period of general predominance of production, where the proletariat worked longer and harder than ever, it was the leisure class who had the power over all this production.

The cases of European and Anglo-American cities are quite different regarding the leisure attitudes of the rich. In European cities

leisure style lived around the restaurant, theatre and gallery. The case of Britain and the US were different; the rich would escape the city and leave areas of it for business and other areas for the poor. Therefore the first cases of suburbia arose: Chicago’s riverside and New Jersey’s Lewellyn Park (figure 1-20). These suburbs, however, were not separated from the city, the railroad would allow access to the urban centre. During the second half of the nineteenth century the first phenomenon of sub-urbanisation occurred both in Britain and the USA. Great part of this sub-urbanisation was created because of the lack of space in the city, and it wasn’t precisely quality housing that was produced. In Britain, for the upper class, the Victorian suburban home was transformed into a multi-purpose leisure centre; it was purposely designed to reflect a clear separation between public and private, male and female, adult and child.

On the opposite side of the social spectrum to leisure class we can find the proletariat of the industrial city. It is through literature and the first sociological studies that we can find a faithful account of the social situation of the lower classes. Books such as Upton Sinclair’s<sup>82</sup> *Jungle*, Emile Zola’s<sup>83</sup> *Les Rougon-Macquart*, Charles Dickens’<sup>84</sup> *Coketown* and Victor Hugo’s<sup>85</sup> *Les Misérables* among others, and social studies such as that of Charles Booth<sup>86</sup> in London, among others, show us that during the Industrial age, the only leisure opportunity workers had was to drink or to hang around the tavern. This was mainly due to the long hours of work and the long distance of travel that was caused by the location of the industries in the city.

Drinking provided an obvious escape from the monotony of the factory job. Drink has apparently been the most constant practice of urban leisure, across time and social classes,

in one environment or another; alcohol and gambling seem to be universal (figure 1-21).

<sup>79</sup> Thorstein Bunde Veblen (1857–1929) was a Norwegian-American sociologist and economist and a founder, along with John R. Commons, of the Institutional Economics Movement. He was an impassioned critic of the performance of the American economy, and is most famous for his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899).

<sup>80</sup> Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. New York, The Macmillan Company (1899). p.82

<sup>81</sup> idem. Chapter 2, par.1.

<sup>82</sup> Upton Beall Sinclair, Jr. (1878–1968) was a prolific American author who wrote over 90 books in many genres and was widely considered to be one of the best investigators advocating socialist views and supporting anarchist causes.

<sup>83</sup> Émile Zola (1840–1902) was an influential French writer, the most important example of the literary school of naturalism, and a major figure in the political liberalization of France.

<sup>84</sup> Charles Dickens, (1812–1870) was the foremost English novelist of the Victorian era, as well as a vigorous social campaigner.

<sup>85</sup> Victor-Marie Hugo (1802-1885) was a French poet, playwright, novelist, essayist, visual artist, statesman, human rights campaigner, and perhaps the most influential exponent of the Romantic movement in France.

<sup>86</sup> Charles Booth (1840 - 1916) was an English philanthropist and social researcher. He is most famed for his innovative work on documenting working class life in London at the end of the 19th century.

<sup>87</sup> Booth, Charles, *Labour and life of the people in London*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 9 vols. London, Macmillan & Co., 1882-1897.

<sup>88</sup> This is not only the case of London but of most urban situations at the time

<sup>89</sup> Booth, Charles, *Labour and life of the people in London*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 9 vols. London: Macmillan & Co., 1882-1897.pg.336

<sup>90</sup> Pfautz, Harold (ed), *Charles Booth: On the city, Physical pattern and social structure*, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1967. Pg.146.

<sup>91</sup> Dickens, Charles, *Hard Times*, Bantam Classics; Reissue edition, New York, 1981, 1854. p.30

<sup>92</sup> Sinclair, Upton, *The Jungle*, New York, Bantam classics, 1981, original 1906.

<sup>93</sup> Henry, Ian P, *The Politics of leisure policy*, London, Palgarve, 2000.

Booth's<sup>87</sup> enquiry was done at the end of the nineteenth century with the aim of providing objective statistical summaries of the trade and class situation of London. He gave a picture of how society in London was organised and how marginal classes were left out of the picture of leisure<sup>88</sup>. In Booth's work we can observe how more than 35% of the population at the time was under the level of poverty and had practically no access to any of the leisure commodities that the upper class could achieve. Booth talks mainly about Sundays and the shift in social practices carried out in that *free* day, as number of churchgoers in upper and lower classes decreased. He describes leisure practice in upper classes as an enriching cultural action, the visiting of museums and concerts being the main activities. "Amongst the upper classes holiday making has been raised to the level of a fine art and invested almost with the character of a religious observance."<sup>89</sup> Booth speaks about leisure mainly for men in all classes. He speaks about the growth in Sunday activities for younger people as a drastic change in the previous 10 years. On the other hand, even though he says that the enjoyment of music affects all social classes, there appears to be few options of leisure practice for the poor, "Drinking was observed to be the leisure time activity, par excellence, amongst the working classes"<sup>90</sup>.

In several literature pieces we can find very sensitive depictions of the way the attitude towards work and leisure was practised during the nineteenth century. In Dickens' *Coketown* "you saw nothing...but what was severely workful"<sup>91</sup>. The industrial city was witness to a predominantly work environment. In Zola's *Les Rougon-Macquart*, the contrast between two families of opposed social classes is shown, with the stories of each reflected in each of the 20 novels, such as *Nana*, the story of a Paris prostitute or

*Germinal* that showed the first labour movements in the same city, as a reaction to the desperate working conditions. This situation is very clear also in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*<sup>92</sup>, the novel that depicts a family of immigrants from Eastern Europe that have to start their life from scratch in the city of Chicago. Despite their will to improve their life, they are constantly subject to the ills of the city from overwork, to lack of work, to the work of women and children, to the abuse of the bosses, to extreme poverty and misery. Obviously leisure was reserved for another social class.

The issue of drinking automatically affected the planning policies, as Ian Henry<sup>93</sup> describes, the need of regulative leisure policies in the beginnings of the nineteenth century Britain were caused by the absenteeism and drunkenness at work, so that the levels of production would be kept stable. However, the social practises proved to be resilient to the new legislation.

The Industrial Age sees the mechanization and massification of production contemporarily. All over the western world great changes took place, where, as explained before, work and leisure became opposites and the expansion of the workday regularised and reduced leisure time. The factory of the industrial revolution institutionalised the puritan's work ethic. Even though clocks can not count for the particularity of modern time it becomes as important as the steam engine in the industrialisation of work. As Richard Biernacki argues:

"The introduction of the modern method of calibrating hours in a metric independent of tangible occurrences, with units that are interchangeable and uniform across the seasons, coincided with the expansion of urban wage labour during the fourteenth century."<sup>94</sup>

However, the lack of synchronisation of time did not allow the influence of the clock to develop until the nineteenth century. One of the main differences with previous periods was that the structure of the work-week became standardised and the work time was extensively widened. However, it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that some serious movements appeared for shortening of working hours.

In Britain, Robert Owen<sup>95</sup> and Robert Peel<sup>96</sup> were the first ones to propose a shorter working day as early as 1810. They proposed a 10 hour working day, but by 1817 Owen had reduced it to eight hours and coined the slogan "Eight hours labour, Eight hours recreation, Eight hours rest". In England, a ten hour working day was legislated for women and children in 1847. During the second half of the nineteenth century, there is a more positive approach to state interventions in the field of leisure policy. New legislation as the Factories Act (1847) the Public Health Act (1848) and The Education Act (1870) brought about a support for the middle class philanthropist for *Rational Recreation*. The Factory Act of 1833 was an Act of Parliament which limited the workday for children in factories. Those between 9 and 13 could work only eight hours, and children between 14 and 18 could work twelve hours. Children under 9 were required to attend school. However, this did not mean yet the real reduction of working time for all workers. In 1884, Tom Mann joined the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) and published a pamphlet calling for the working day to be limited to eight hours. Mann formed an organization, the Eight Hour League, which successfully pressured the Trades Union Congress to adopt the eight-hour day as a key goal.

In France, the 40 hours work week was requested during the Popular Front with the 1936 Matignon agreements, but this did not reach an effective regulation. A twelve-hour working day was established following the 1848 revolution. In the 1866 Convention of International Workingmen's Associations that took place in Geneva the claim was official, without the shorter working day there would be no opportunity for improvement of the working class.

In the United States, after the Civil War, Congress passed an eight hour law on June 25, 1868, but it was largely ignored. In the 1880s the issue was revived. The following song was written during that revival and became the official song of the eight-hour-day movement. The tune is by Rev. Jesse H. Jones and the words are by I.G. Blanchard. An excerpt of the song read:

"We mean to make things over,  
We are tired of toil for naught.  
With but bare enough to live upon,  
And never an hour for thought;  
We want to feel the sunshine  
And we want to smell the flowers.  
We are sure that God has will'd it.  
And we mean to have eight hours.  
We're summoning our forces  
From the shipyard, shop and mill:  
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest  
Eight hours for what we will!"<sup>97</sup>

Despite union efforts, the eight hour day was not established in the United States until 1938 with the passage of the Wage and Hour Law.

Australia and New Zealand were the pioneers in the declaration of the eight hour work day, for which the first demonstrations were held by carpenters in New Zealand in 1840. They achieved the eight hour day which was confined to union workers and craft tradesmen until the

beginning of the twentieth century. Australia soon followed with the official act written in 1855.

Latin America was the area to follow, due to the great uprising of workers and labor movements. In Puerto Rico in May 1899, while under US administration, General George W. Davis succeeded to Island command and decreed Freedom of assembly, speech, press, religion and an eight-hour day for government employees. In Peru, a strike for the eight-hour day was held in May 1919. In Uruguay during the second term of president José Batlle y Ordóñez such things as unemployment compensation (1914), eight-hour workdays (1915), and universal suffrage were introduced. In Chile it was introduced in 1924, after the Saber noise event (Ruido de sables), by the September Junta. The Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920, produced the Constitution of 1917, which contained Article 123 that gave workers the right to organize labor unions and to strike. It also provided protection for women and children, the eight hour day, and a living wage.

For Europe, it would not be until after the Second World War that the eight-hour work day would be valid by law for most of the population.

In contrast with the proletariat, the middle class had a greater opportunity of transforming their leisure time and activities. They intended to imitate the upper classes in some issues, but could not afford most of their leisure activities, so they slowly adopted peculiar leisure activities that developed greatly under the *rational recreation movement*, which we will be analysing as a top down manifestation of leisure in a later section of this chapter.

As Cross evaluates, the reach of the reformists was not so extreme, some traditional attitudes survived. It was mostly the middle

classes who responded to reform, upper and lower classes remained with their own leisure practises, the lower with the pub and the music hall and the well-to-do would continue practising sports, commercial and recreation activities such as tennis, golf, theatre and concert hall attendance, and their own private country house activities.

The result of reform by the end of the nineteenth century brought types of leisure that would more deeply reflect the social class differences and a more privatised, sedate and universal leisure would arise. As described by Cross, the main causes for the rise of leisure for the masses were the new wealth and technology, the new organisation of time in blocks, by hour, weekend or holiday, and the rise of new capitalist practises.

"Critics find in consumer leisure the manipulation of the capitalist impresario, who has created a passive, if easily rated, crowd of pleasure-seekers, deprived of playing any active role in history or even in personal development."<sup>98</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Henry, Ian, *The Politics of leisure policy*, London, Palgarve, 2000.

<sup>94</sup> Biernacki, Richard, "Time Cents: The Monetisation of the Workday in Comparative Perspective", in Roger Friedland and Deirdre Boden, eds. *NowHere: Space, Time and Modernity*, Berkley: University of California Press.p.62.

<sup>95</sup> Robert Owen (1771–1858) was a Welsh social reformer and one of the founders of socialism and the cooperative movement.

<sup>96</sup> Sir Robert Peel, (1788 –1850) was the Conservative Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1834 to 1835, and again from 1841 to 1846.

<sup>97</sup> Berks, W., "Linear Notes", *The hand that holds the bread*, New World Records, NW 267, 1978.

<sup>98</sup> Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990.p.124

<sup>99</sup> Hannigan, John, *Fantasy City: Pleasure and Profit in the Postmodern Metropolis*, Routledge, 1998.p9

<sup>100</sup> Motion Picture World, 1no.25 (August 1907), p.391. Cited in Waller, GA, *Main street amusements*, Washington and London, Smithsonian Institution Press.

In the industrial city, as mentioned before, it was the aristocratic and land owning elite that created the modern leisure forms of tourism, urban entertainment districts and street fashion. This fact would change by the beginning of the twentieth century, and the middle classes would have access to different aspects of leisure practice due to the new technologies, the widened transportation of railroad and tramways. These causes led to the decline of local fairs and allowed the development of amusement parks, football and baseball games. The birth of new means of communication led to the uniformity and mass dissemination of leisure reading. The proletariat would then imitate the leisure practices of the rich in their tea-drinking and visiting parks on Sundays, playing cards and other games developed by the leisure class.

According to Hannigan<sup>99</sup> the beginning of the twentieth century is the *golden age* of urban entertainment. He states that this was the time of the new commercial culture centred on leisure and entertainment, which was established in urban areas. Hannigan's study states that there was then a will to break the everyday constraints of class and gender, and gives the example of the movie theatre as a space where the difference between classes was blurred.

"The moving picture theatre is not confined to any class or clique. The millionaire and the clerk, the labourer and the capitalist sit side by side and both found equal enjoyment in the pictures"<sup>100</sup>.

This was actually not the case; it was very difficult to find members of different classes attending similar venues of any kind of spectacle. The only entertainment venues where you could

find a mixed audience were the jazz clubs and cabarets in the larger northern cities of the United States.

During the period between the European wars, several achievements were reached by the proletariat besides the 8 hour day, also the paid holiday gained widespread political support. In the dawn of Fordism, the conception of leisure as time allowed for consumption was gaining grounds.

The first 40 years of the century saw the most dramatic expansion of leisure, both time and resources grew dramatically for recreation activities, in Europe and North America, and later on in other parts of the world. According to Ian Henry, this period saw the laying of the foundations of the welfare state. In Britain, the first decade of the century hosted the Unemployed Workmen's Act, the introduction of school rules, the old age pensions and mainly the planning act, which represented the state's willingness to intervene in spatial development.

#### Leisure for children

As it occurred with their parents, the way children experienced leisure after the mid nineteenth century depended highly on social class.

Upper and middle class children were starting to experience a more similar leisure life for it was tightly related to schooling system. In the western world, during the nineteenth century, schooling became a dominant childhood experience. Around 1800 only a small number, mostly boys, had a formal education. The work of educators such as Pestalozzi in Switzerland or the Lancaster in England was applied to some of the education systems of Europe and the

United States. However, until the last decades of the nineteenth century, education was limited to the smaller number of children of the upper classes. Later, by 1900, most children attended publicly supported schools for a few years, and many attended consistently between about 5 and 16 years of age. Regarding leisure, in the early nineteenth century, within the new systems of mass production, the first production of toys, games and children's books took place. This was still a privilege of the upper and middle classes.

Despite the movements for improving the situation of children, the reality of most of them in the industrial age was crude. The United States had the typical experience of early industrializing nations. When poor children with their families left the family farm where they had worked alongside their parents in all chores contributing to the family's survival, these children followed their parents into employment in mines, mills, and factories.

In a study that crosses continental boundaries it has been observed that the employment of children in different countries was a demand-driven phenomenon, according to Rahikainen<sup>101</sup>. Demand increased during the pre-industrial and industrial phase of economic development which reduced children's participation in education. Once the production processes of industrialization moved from labour intensive to capital intensive, the demand for children declined and education became a viable option. It would not be until the turn of the twentieth century that this situation would change mostly for European and North and South American countries, together with social and labour reform.

One of the main characteristics of the play of the lower and middle classes was that it was

held in the street, the street was their playground, children would act unsupervised to their own will. It is remarkable how the conservative character of children's play, their songs and games have been preserved with little change since the nineteenth century.

During this age there were some movements to guide and control children. Sunday schools, for example, were part of an evangelical campaign to *Christianise* leisure. The main social practises in Sunday schools were the offering of social services and musical training, the distribution of youth magazines and the stimulation of the unique English affection for the oratorio.

The adolescence in this period also had differences of class. The youth of the middle classes would be subject to the reformation of recreation in school, which was a *character factory*. On the other hand, the labouring classes were increasingly employed in odd jobs at factories and liberated from the dependence of the parents. These led to independence and free time that allowed the habits of leisure to be established. For all youth in the nineteenth century, leisure was increasingly expressive and influenced by commercial amusements.

Women worked as much as men, which depended also largely on social class. For women, a distinct and new role of home-maker was settled. This was part of the system of separation of tasks throughout the Industrial Age. In the years from 1800 to 1900, in the USA the birth rate fell steeply from 7.04 to 3.56 children per mother. The fact of needing less time for child bearing evidently allowed for more time for leisure.

### Waterfront leisure

In the city of the eighteenth century the difference of class in the use of the areas in the limit of the water was not great. The port area was an extension of the working class street (figure 1-22); however, the upper-class visitor would also be an active member of conversation. The merchant would control his business from there. "The harbour was a public space in which the theatricality of social positions was played out."<sup>102</sup>

The spectacle of the sea and the city met in this peculiar urban space.

"the practice of walking along wharfs and stone piers, which continued in new forms, expressed the fascination exerted by a stage on which spectators could observe particularly manifest displays of energy, activity, heroism and fortune."<sup>103</sup>

During the last decades of the eighteenth century a short period of enjoyment of the spectacle of the city harbour took place but it was soon replaced by the idea that the harbour had nothing to do with the lure of the sea. Therefore, there was a return to the appreciation of the coast as a part of nature, not of the urban, while what turned to be the attraction of the city were the monuments and the classical picture of the city, which had little to do with the industrial port.

The harbour at the second half of the eighteenth century was a nest of diversity, of international relations and active exchange. This was a place for tourists as well as for locals, the morning or evening visit to the harbour became part of the classical sea-side holiday, even a part of education of aristocratic youth. But this didn't last long, during the wars of the Revolution and

the Empire the ports closed and some of them were even abandoned.

During the nineteenth century, as bathing resorts were flourishing for the upper and middle classes, the working classes had to continue using the waterfronts of cities for bathing, as well as for washing, fishing and other practices. Cities in the Mediterranean were examples of these practices, where the growth and development of harbours would affect these popular activities with the contamination of the waters and the expansion of technical facilities.

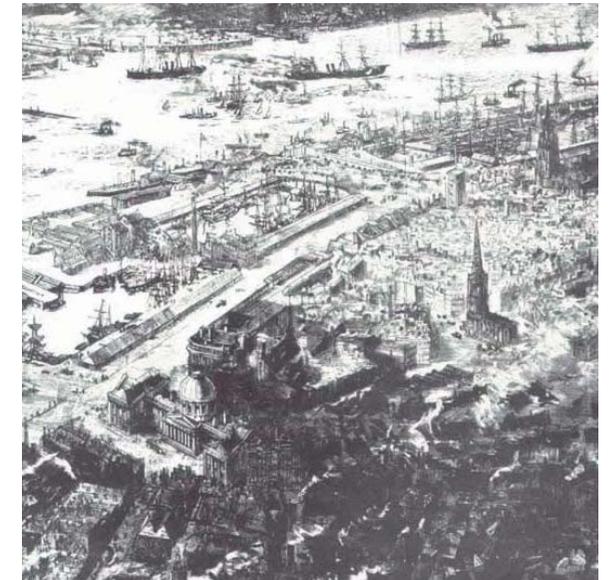


figure 1-22 - Port of Liverpool

source: <http://www.oau-oxford.com/images/industrial/birds.jpg>

<sup>101</sup> Marjatta Rahikainen, *Centuries of Child Labour: European Experiences from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*. Hampshire, Ashgate, 2004.

<sup>102</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, 1988.p.191

<sup>103</sup> idem.p.189

### 1.3.3 - Leisure as instrument of development – top down manifestations

#### Leisure as cultural development

With industrialisation, a deep change can be observed in leisure practices. This is explained by Cross through the unfolding of four main changes. These were: that work and leisure could increasingly be experienced as radical opposites; a radical division localised leisure out of the work environment; and that the segmentation of work and leisure tended to polarise generations and gender.

As we have seen, during the nineteenth century, work and leisure became at the same time increasingly related, interdependent and separated. A clear example of this has to do with the policies of Henry Ford in his factories:

“Ford also employed legions of social workers into the homes of his workers to insure that their leisure activity was morally sound and consistent with the *rational corporate expectations*.”<sup>104</sup>

This new conceptualisation of leisure and free time also brought differences in leisure activities of each social class. On the one hand, the Industrial Revolution produced a class that could dedicate to leisure: the *leisure class*<sup>105</sup>.

“A more intense work regimen purged much leisure from life and, for the rich and successful, industrialisation substituted an ethic of economic accumulation for leisure”<sup>106</sup>

We will come back to this concept in the section dedicated to the social manifestations of

leisure, where we will analyse leisure behaviour of each social class. However, it is important to highlight here the importance of the movements that were used as instruments of development by authorities, which deeply influenced the middle class. A very influential one was the *Rational Recreation Movement*. Especially since the mid nineteenth century, for the middle class, working time was increased, and leisure time reduced and regularised; the *Rational Recreation Movement* was set to control and regulate leisure time and activities. To address the problems of shifts in the development of work and leisure in the second half of the nineteenth century, a new wave of reformers took charge of the issue of leisure and how to use it. These new ideas depicted leisure as being the best area in which to inculcate self-control, familiarism and respectability, but were mainly practised by the middle and labour classes, in a world of competition, urban life and bureaucracy. As Cunningham<sup>107</sup> described it, *Rational Recreation* was a movement to restrain and control leisure, stressing the improvement factor, although some reformers sought not to suppress or moralise popular leisure but to transform it.

The working class grew steadily and through factory work they could hardly count on free time. Apart from the rational recreation movement, other movements had a greater influence in the working classes. Amongst them were the movements of *Sabbatarianism*, a strong movement against alcohol and prostitution; *Puritanism*, which had appeared centuries earlier also adopted these tendencies of regulating leisure; and the *Temperance Movement*, which attempted to greatly reduce the amount of alcohol consumed or even prohibit its production and consumption entirely.

It is logical that most of the leisure reform movements of the second half of the nineteenth

century such as the *Rational Recreation Movement* took place in England and North America primarily, for they were the locations where industrialisation developed faster and it had a stronger influence in society. However, other industrialised countries such as Germany, France and Belgium did go through similar processes, in which the transformation of work regimes and time frames had a strong influence in the development of leisure behaviour.

Certain organisations were related to this gravitation to organised leisure: in Germany and Austria the Alpine Union were founded in 1862 with the aim of encouraging the growth of mountaineering and to support the life and culture of mountain people; in 1863 the Italian Alpine Club was constituted in Torino, with similar aims as its German and Austrian counterparts, adding the preservation of the mountain landscape. Other organizations were inspired by Anglo-Saxon ones, such as the Touring Club Italiano, which was founded in 1894 by a group of bicyclists to promote the values of cycling and travel.

In France especially, the question of leisure was for a long time related to proletarian struggle<sup>108</sup>. Southern European and Latin American countries also developed a stronger regulation of leisure behaviour, having systems developed for regulating drinking, gambling and prostitution.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the activities encouraged by the reformers were more directed to active leisure, making sport one of the main activities that were considered beneficial for health and civilisation. The movement brought a regularisation of leisure practices both in urban centres and the countryside:

“these trends, along with regulated sport contributed to cultural uniformity and

reduced the disorder associated with both rural popular leisure and the degrading pleasures of the new industrial cities."<sup>109</sup>

Children had been working in different areas until the end of the nineteenth century, including the rough work in factories. At the beginning of the twentieth century, within the context of increased public interest in welfare of the young, the first playgrounds for children were built (figure 1-23).

The *American Playground Movement* was inaugurated for the building of neighbourhood parks in immigrant areas of Chicago and other cities. The Playground Association<sup>110</sup> was created based on the playground movement. The philosophy of the playground movement ruled that games and play areas should be age and sex differentiated. One of the first playgrounds was Hull House in Chicago, opened in 1894; it carried sand piles, swings, building blocks and indoor baseball. These are features that would become commonplace throughout the whole of the twentieth century and even up to this date they are being built all over the world.

#### Leisure as commercial development

By the last decades of the nineteenth century, shopping became part of the everyday life in the city for all social classes, no longer exclusively as a need but also as a leisure activity; the market day of the medieval city became the everyday of the Industrial one. However, the market and the shops would have a different use and concept, the market would be a source of necessities, and the shops a source of leisure, a place where people could go to show

themselves<sup>111</sup>. This new commercial fragment of urban life is reflected in the buildings of the first half of the nineteenth century, buildings such as the A.T. Stewart store in New York, the Schlesinger and Meyer building in Chicago, by Sullivan or the Galleria Vittorio Emmanuelle in Milano by Giuseppe Mengoni (figure 1-24).

In a similar way, the appearance of new theatres and opera houses gave new stages, not only for actors and performers but also a space for spectators, mainly from the upper classes, as a platform to exhibit themselves.

Another phenomenon of the transformation of urban leisure since the beginning of the industrial age was the appearance of commercial parks, which had an admission fee that would allow the enjoyment of evening music, healing waters, walks, lawns, clipped hedges, grottos, fountains, and statues. The drink and conviviality that was once hosted in the church, moved to the coffee houses.

By the end of the nineteenth century, in the cities, the singing saloons and cheap theatres were sprawling, as well as dime museums and exhibitions of freaks, but one of the most popular establishments was the music hall. This was home to pantomime, shadowgraph, puppetry and the magic lantern, as well as the first projected films since 1896. The development of film then becomes one of the clear cases of commercialisation of leisure. Actually, the first projections of film were mainly associated with the poor and working classes.



**figure 1-23** - ca.1910 - a model playground  
author:Brown Bros.

source: Dickson, Marguerite Stockman, Vocational Guidance for Girls, ebook. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15595/15595-h/15595-h.htm>

<sup>104</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Post Modernity*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1989, pg126

<sup>105</sup> This term was coined by Thorsten Veblen in the end of the nineteenth century. Veblen, Thorsten. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899

<sup>106</sup> Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990. p.57

<sup>107</sup> Cunningham, H., *leisure in theIndustrial Revolution*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 1980, p.78

<sup>108</sup> Corbin, Alain, *L'Avenement des loisirs, 1850-1960*, Champs-Flammarion, Paris, 1995. p.12

<sup>109</sup> idem. P.99.

<sup>110</sup> Supervised playgrounds were placed into slum areas for their value in reforming the young child. By 1905 some larger cities were making appropriations for the first time for the maintenance on these playgrounds. The National Playground Association, whose mission was to spread the playground movement, deemed the appropriations "very inadequate" to cover actual operating costs, the Association did believe it was a "good beginning [from which] growth was sure to follow."



**figure 1-24** - ca.1880 - Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milano  
source: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/it/thumb/1/1e/Galleria\\_Milano\\_\(1880\).jpg/250px-Galleria\\_Milano\\_\(1880\).jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/it/thumb/1/1e/Galleria_Milano_(1880).jpg/250px-Galleria_Milano_(1880).jpg)

**figure 1-25** - 1884 - Football, varsity, team photograph  
source: <http://www.archives.upenn.edu/img/20050922004x350.jpg>



In the mid-nineteenth century the leisure industries enter the international market. Pioneers of tourism such as Thomas Cook in the UK and P.T.Barnum in the US encouraged the homogenisation of leisure. Thomas Cook organised in 1841 the first tour, bringing five hundred excursionists from Leicester to Loughborough; the travellers were all members of the Temperance society previously mentioned. In the same year, the first national railway timetable was set and the first Atlantic steamship was used; the first railway terminus hotel was installed in New York and the first major travel company was opened in the US. By the end of the nineteenth century travel for pleasure was well established. However, the differences of class and age prevailed.

By the mid nineteenth century the first generation of tourists was proliferating, who according to Jean Urbain:

“degrades by repetition – that is to say by convention – adventure into an excursion, the archetype into a stereotype, the model into a mass experience, production into consumption, and the foundation account to endless anecdotes.”<sup>112</sup>

This idea of Urbain points to the standardisation and normalisation that has affected social practises, including and especially leisure. This can be related to the later observation of Kracauer<sup>113</sup>, who presents tourism as the organised bombardment of the senses and argues that the commercialisation of tourism no longer enables people to savour the sensation of foreign places.

The mechanisation of work leads to a great amount of criticism of the consumption society, reflected in authors such as Henry Durant, saying: “the machinery of amusement completes

the industrial training of turning actors into spectators.”<sup>114</sup> Others, such as members of the Frankfurt school, Neo-Marxist sociologists, had a definite pessimistic view of the *culture industry* stating that the pleasure industry, in pursuit of profit, manufactures a type of leisure of pseudo-choice and illusory freedom<sup>115</sup>.

The 1920’s were famous for the celebration of pleasure and the erosion of the work ethic, the values of conspicuous consumption that Veblen<sup>116</sup> had so much criticised by the end of the nineteenth century in America, became unfashionable.

Eventually, the growth of free time in the twentieth century allows for a more optimistic point of view, such as that of Bertrand Russell<sup>117</sup>, who considered a progressive democratisation of leisure, and Burns<sup>118</sup>, who had the idea that leisure was the opportunity for men to go beyond what they know of life.

#### Leisure as health provision

The transformation of sport is a good reflection of the way leisure evolved during the industrial era. The rural less regulated games of pre-industrial times developed into the organised activities of the gymnast to the professionalizing of sport and the commercialisation of the sport spectacle.

Sport before industrial development was a chaotic practice, lacking boundaries, legal tactics or referees; they were hardly distinguishable from riots. For the rich, sport was a way to display privilege and status. As the end of the nineteenth century approached there was a new attitude toward sport and the body, different from the traditional notion of *flesh* of the Judeo-Christian belief<sup>119</sup>. Sports then were to promote morality, and they soon formed part of the public school curriculum in Britain, Europe and the US. Hiking

and camping also became popular by the 1870s, in the romantic quest for the simplicity and purity of nature.

The reform brought compulsory sport to English children and youth. In the US the role of a sport organisation such as the YMCA was based more on the will for moral rectitude than on physical conditioning. In both countries athleticism and militarism increasingly dominated leisure. Organisations such as the boy scouts were also prepared for providing physical activity that would serve as a moralising instrument for the young. New sets of rules were used to transform sports such as football or rugby into sports of gentlemen instead of games of rural youths (figure 1-25). However, modern football returned to its popular roots, seeing football clubs becoming limited companies with shareholders and boards of directors. Even women by the end of the century were keen on practising sports such as croquet or lawn tennis. Still, sports activities were predominantly reserved for men.

### Landscape projects and leisure principles

As a consequence of the worsening conditions of the industrial cities, different public spaces were developed in and around them. In Europe private and royal property was given to cities so that public parks could be built, in America (north and south) these parks were built ex-novo, normally in the outskirts of the cities. Many parks were financed by the development of terrace houses or villas built around the edges but within park boundaries.

In the United States, landscape design since the mid nineteenth century was signed by the *Park Movement*. The movement for urban parks was a consequence of the industrial revolution

and the influx of population into rapidly growing towns without open public space amenities for leisure enjoyment. This phenomenon awakened social consciousness about living conditions of the urban working class.

As the creators of *Transcendentalism*, Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) were of great influence in the *Park Movement*. Thoreau abandoned the city to live in the countryside, in the natural condition of man. His conception of leisure was extremely related to contemplation and nature, using leisure as a means to enhance the soul:

“We constantly anticipate repose. Yet it surely can only be the repose that is in entire and healthy activity. It must be a repose without rust. What is leisure but opportunity for more complete and entire action? Our energies pine for exercise. That time we spend in our duties is so much leisure, so that there is no man but has sufficient of it.”<sup>120</sup>

Emerson, who shared some of Thoreau's principles, believed in individualism, non-conformity, and the need for harmony between man and nature. However, opposed to Thoreau's ideas he was faced with a greater conflict, for he was convinced that man was supposed to live in society, but the conditions given by the industrial city were, for him, mistaken. Thoreau and Emerson were a great influence in the *Park Movement*, which developed by the mid nineteenth century. Other influences came from Britain, in the work of Humphrey Repton, whom, from his *picturesque* conception of landscape design, influenced the subsequent development of the discipline. The first main figure of the actual *Park Movement* was Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852). The

*picturesque* in Downing was different from the one coming from Britain and was focused on the creation of an environment that resembled nature but was much richer because it was made by man. Downing was an advocate of public parks in the US and expressed their moral value:

“That such a project, carefully planned and liberally and judiciously carried out, would not only pay in money, but largely civilise and refine the national character, foster the love of rural beauty, and increase the knowledge of and taste for rare and beautiful trees and plants, we can not entertain a reasonable doubt.”<sup>121</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Mumford, Lewis, *The city in History, Its origins, transformations and perspectives*, translated to Spanish E.L. Revol, Ediciones Infinito, Buenos Aires, 1979. Original 1961. p.584

<sup>112</sup> Urbain, Jean Didier, ‘Semiotiques comparées du touriste et du voyageur’ *Semiotica*, 58, nos3-4, 1986, pp.269-70.

<sup>113</sup> Karcauer, Sigfried, *The Mass Ornament*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1995.(1963)

<sup>114</sup> Durant, H., *The Problem of Leisure*, Routledge, London, 1938. pp.10-19

<sup>115</sup> Adorno, T, Horkheimer, M., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Stanford University press, 2002, 1944

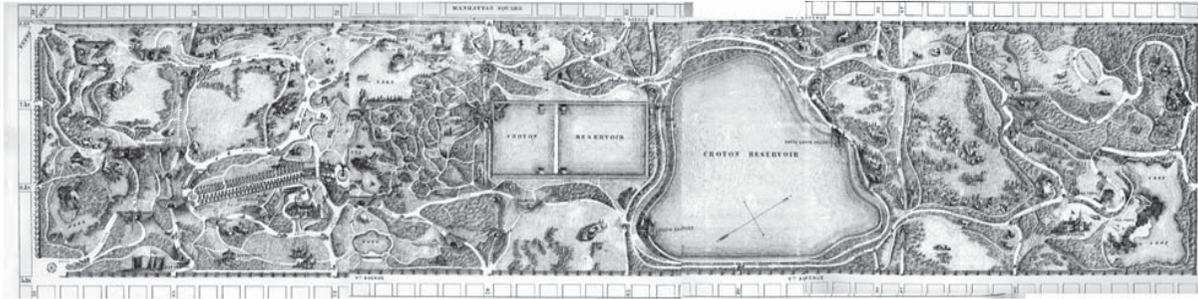
<sup>116</sup> Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899

<sup>117</sup> Russell, B, *In praise of Idleness and other Essays*, London, Routledge, 2004, 1935. pp.26-27

<sup>118</sup> Burns, Robert, *Constraints to outdoor recreation: exploring the effects of disabilities on perceptions and participation.: An article from: Journal of Leisure Research [HTML] (Digital)*

<sup>119</sup> Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990.p.143

<sup>120</sup> Thoreau, Henry David, *Journal*, December 31<sup>st</sup> 1841. Princeton University Press. 2008.



**figure 1-27** - 1859 - Greensward Project for Central Park, New York  
author: F.L. Olmsted and Calvert Vaux  
source:<http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/lanar525/images/Central%20Park/CParkGreensward.jpg>

**figure 1-28** - 1890s - East shore of Lake Calhoun in the .  
source: Minneapolis Collection, Uncat Photo Lakes: Calhoun  
[http://www.mpls.lib.mn.us/history/images/uncat\\_calhoun1.jpg](http://www.mpls.lib.mn.us/history/images/uncat_calhoun1.jpg)



Other types of open spaces were being developed in the US: the park cemeteries. For many cities that were beginning to grow slowly these were the only green spaces in which it was possible to stroll out of the growing city. An example of these was the Greenwood Cemetery of New York City (figure 1-26) built by Major David Bates Douglas in 1838.

The greatest representative of the *Park Movement* was Frederick Law Olmsted. He was appointed superintendent of Central Park in New York in 1857 and then presented his project for the competition for the park with Calvert Vaux and won it. The *Greensward* project (figure 1-27) consisted of open meadows and lawns, backed by a border planting of native material and with most of the natural features kept. The ideas of circulation were based on those for Birkenhead Park by Paxton in Britain. This included separate systems of transport for carriages, horsemen, pedestrians and ordinary street traffic crossing the park. Other parks followed in the projects of Olmsted and Vaux, prospect Park, Riverside and Morningside Parks in New York; the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, the Oakland Cemetery and the Grounds of the university of California. The work of Olmsted and Vaux in Chicago will be analysed thoroughly in the chapter on the case study of Chicago.

It was Olmsted who brought parks as a main fragment of urban development; he produced parks “large enough to completely shut out the city”. These were meant to inspire the “urban man to new standards of courtesy, self control and temperance.”<sup>122</sup> We can see here the will to be, even within the city, able to experience nature. Since the first park designs of Olmsted<sup>123</sup> a new movement of park commissions was originated, which provided green spaces in many cities all around the world. Within the park movement there is an interesting remark that Cross makes: “Park commissioners also believed it their duty to reform leisure time as well as space.”<sup>124</sup> This shows how the *Rational Recreation movement* influenced the way public space was used in the cities, and how those who were in charge of the design of these spaces were also responsible for the activities that were carried out there and when they had to be carried out. An example of the structuring of time and its relation to nature is described by Martin-Fugier as:

“Whereas Rousseau had turned to nature as a way of throwing off constraints on his time, the modern taste of nature, as it spread to new strata of society, structured time more rigidly than before”<sup>125</sup>

The work of Olmsted not only brought the use of the title of *landscape architect* to the vocabulary, but it also expanded the profession of landscape architecture. Examples of these practices based on principles stated by Olmsted were the Mount Royal Park in Montreal, Canada in 1875 and the Boston metropolitan Park District designed in 1893 by Charles Eliot.

The Universal and International exhibitions were a phenomenon that since 1851 in London had some influence in landscape

design and in new forms of leisure, namely a didactic one. The ephemeral spaces created for these events left a landmark in some of the cities they were developed in. But that was not the only consequence. They demonstrated industrial expansion, provided a stage of recognition for the host nation, demonstrated the advantages of international and inter-professional collaboration and provided a leadership role to landscape architects. The Exhibitions in Barcelona in 1888, Chicago 1893 and Buenos Aires 1910 will be part of the analysis of each case study and their influence in the waterfront landscape in each case.

The World Columbian Exposition of 1893, which had as one of the most important organisers Daniel H. Burnham<sup>126</sup>, was the generator of one of the most important movements in the eve of the discipline of urbanism: the *City Beautiful Movement*. This movement heightened the public awareness of the appearance of town centres; it provided a desire for impressive and grandiose public spaces and buildings; it encouraged the redesign of central urban areas and contributed to the formation of a new design profession. This movement had less influence in the use of leisure than the *Park Movement*, for it was more related to the aesthetic qualities of public space and the functional networks of the city than it was to the behaviour and leisure activities of the users. Two relevant examples of this movement were the Plan of San Francisco of 1906 and the one of Chicago of 1909.

An element that appeared repeatedly mainly in American urban landscape was the parkway. This urban element was the consequence of the improved public transportation, the interconnection of varying open space and provided a convenient and pleasant movement

experience. The parkway is a manifestation of a return to the passive use of landscape. The added speed allowed a different kind of observation of the space around the vehicle, but it enforced the idea of contemplation as a main leisure activity. Some examples of these parkways were the river way in Emerald Necklace in Boston (1880-1887), by Olmsted, the Minneapolis Parks and Parkway (1883) (figure 1-28), by HWS Cleveland and the Bronx River parkway (1913-1923), by Gilmore Clarke.

In Europe the situation of urban planning was a different one, and the new discipline of urbanism was also flourishing. In the European continent, by the mid nineteenth century, the disuse of fortifications was giving space for extensive promenades and public gardens. These were mainly located on what were the walls around the cities, which became a pattern of transformation in many European cities. Peter Josef Lenné (1789-1866) was one of the first landscape gardeners in Germany, he followed greatly the principles of his predecessor von Sckell, with a tendency to follow the English model of gardening, but he would later develop a more geometrical typology in the smaller gardens he designed by the mid nineteenth century. Lenné was in charge of developing public parks, and his most relevant works were the redesign of the Tiergarten in Berlin and Sanssouci in Potsdam (figure 1-29).

In contrast to landscaping, the discipline of urbanism in Germany and Austria had an important evolution in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first ones of the twentieth. In general, continental European urban planners were much more concerned about issues in the city such as infrastructure, transportation and aesthetics, than what they were about the

leisure of the city dweller. Most of them admired the technical solutions for sewage systems in the British parks, and the extension and reach of the Park Movement in the US, but they did not dwell on the issue of leisure time and space as their Anglo-Saxon counterparts.



figure 1-29 - 1895 - Palace Sanssouci in Potsdam  
source: www.wikipedia.org

<sup>121</sup> Quoted in Chadwick, George F, *The Park and the town, Public Landscape in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries*, The Architectural Press, London, 1966.

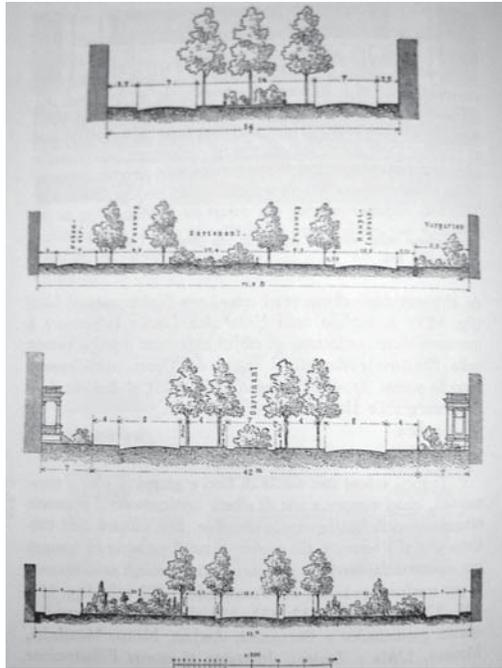
<sup>122</sup> Olmstead, F.L., "Public Parks and the enlargement of towns", Boston 1870, in SB Sutton, ed. *Civilising American cities: A selection of Fredrick Law Olmsted's writing of city landscapes*, Cambridge, MA, 1971.

<sup>123</sup> We will be analyzing Olmsted's work and his leisure principles more deeply in the chapter on Chicago's waterfront.

<sup>124</sup> Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990.p.98

<sup>125</sup> Martin-Fugier, Anne, "Bourgeois Rituals" in Aries, Philippe and Duby, Georges (eds) *A History of Private Life, From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, Cambridge, London, Harvard University Press, 1990. pg.304

<sup>126</sup> Burnham's work will also be more deeply analysed in the chapter on Chicago's waterfront.



**figure 1-31** - 1859 - Types of sections of streets with carriage-ways and sidewalks of different dimensions and positions  
author: Joseph Stübben  
source: Giorgio Piccinato, *La costruzione dell'urbanistica*: Germania, 1871-1914, Officina Edizioni, 1974.

**figure 1-30** - 1904 - *Der Städtebau* magazine  
author: edited by Camillo Sitte  
source: [www.vitruvius.com.br/entrevista/collins/collins\\_1.jpg](http://www.vitruvius.com.br/entrevista/collins/collins_1.jpg)



Camillo Sitte (1843-1903) was one of the first Austrian architects dedicated to the discipline of urbanism in the end of the nineteenth century. His discipline was more related to the crafts and architecture, but his perspective on urban problems had a very strong influence on subsequent town planning. His work *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*<sup>127</sup> was first published in German in 1889 (figure 1-30). This text showed the complexities of urban environments and analysed the civic and artistic character of European cities from an architectural perspective. It would be later translated to many languages across Europe. Sitte's concern was set against the recent planning principles of Austria and Germany, where hygiene was the main issue, and according to Sitte was affecting adversely the free and organic character of above ground planning. Sitte was indeed concerned in providing green and open spaces to city dwellers, but his purposed lay much more in the hygienic and artistic needs than to those of leisure. He was also very interested in the provision of water for public space:

“What would be Venice without water? If the barbaric project to fill in her canals had been carried out, the artistic and spiritually edifying splendour of Venice would have been buried with it. (...)The great importance of the addition of bodies of water to the greenery of cities is expressed by the universal employment in city planning of the technical expression *decorative water*.”<sup>128</sup>

Even though when talking about the greenery in the city, Sitte focuses on health and beauty, he does mention the psychological virtues

of these spaces:

“Such an interval of wide open space is certainly needed by every large apartment-house complex, primarily for reasons of health, but equally so for a psychological uplift of the spirit, which is refreshed by interspersed images of nature.”<sup>129</sup>

Werner Hegemann was another urban planner who was extremely influential in the international scene. He began his work as a planner in Mannheim in 1881, but one of his main contributions to urbanism was the organisation of the 1910 Berlin Exhibition. For Hegemann social activism and reform were closely linked to urban planning, and the exhibitions were central to the developing of these ideas. In his catalogue on International Exhibitions, Hegemann dedicates a short chapter to green spaces. He describes certain French and German parks and the processes through which they passed from being private property of the royalty to becoming public. The main reason for these parks to exist and have such great importance was the hygienic need of such spaces. However, Hegemann still insisted that those so-called public parks were not completely adapted to the needs of the population, and that active recreations, especially for children, such as sports still had to be practised in the outskirts of the city or in barren grounds<sup>130</sup>. This is why he insisted on the need of new public spaces.

Josef Stübben<sup>131</sup> was also greatly influential in the field of urbanism. His speech presented in Freiburg in 1885 was one of the first approaches to the discipline of urbanism as a science. His concerns with the city had a special focus on open space and transportation networks. The need of air and sunlight were two of the main issues to be addressed by Stübben and he made

a wide classification of types of green spaces for the city and regulations that should be followed by every city to provide enough open space per inhabitant. His classification of streets by width and distribution is remarkable (figure 1-31), and would be later followed by many urban planners. He remarked the good influence that these spaces could have on the city population *inclined to rudeness*<sup>132</sup>. With this remark he adheres to the idea that the transformation and layout of open spaces could be influential in the behaviour of the citizens.

Other German planners focused on the international character of urbanism. Rudolf Eberstadt made an introductory remark in his *Town Planning in Germany: The Greater Berlin Competition*: “the task of town building is an international one, where every nation has to learn and every nation may contribute to our knowledge.”<sup>133</sup> This remark shows the way urbanism as a science was becoming increasingly international, as a field of exchange in which ideas were circulating and being translated and adapted to different local situations.

Professionals from different parts of Europe followed foreign urban tendencies, such as the Catalan Cebrià de Montoliu<sup>134</sup>, who wrote on the importance of planning based on the Berlin exhibition of 1910. In his book *Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas a la luz de la Exposición de la Construcción Cívica de Berlín (1910)*<sup>135</sup>, Montoliu expressed how he wished to turn urbanism into a *civic science*, not to be confused with *civic art*. He dedicated his life to translating the works of Ruskin, Morris and Ebenezer Howard, among others, to Catalan and Spanish, with the intention of introducing the Anglo-Saxon concepts of urban planning in the Ibero American world. He was extremely concerned about the living conditions

of the working class and founded the Museo Cívico in Barcelona.

Landscape principles evolved and changed with the turn of the century. One of the representatives of this new park design was Jens Jensen in the US. He worked in residential and public parks during the first decades of the twentieth century. One of his main works was the West Chicago Park District, which included Union, Humboldt, Douglas, Garfield and Columbus Parks (figure 1-32). In these parks he produced an ecologically sensitive use of native plants in soft, natural planting schemes with minimal site disturbance. Even though he did not dedicate to design waterfront parks the presence of water in his designs was deeply rooted in his childhood and youth in Denmark.

“There is, however, a great similarity in the vastness expressed in the open expanse of the prairies and that of the sea. The sea has a distinct power of drawing one out, of arousing one’s curiosity to investigate what is beyond the horizon. This without question had something to do with my own urge to explore lands beyond the sea.”<sup>136</sup>

Jensen was concerned about the social significance of parks and argued that parks should not be expensive or difficult to maintain. Therefore he was not keen on the French typology of parks and gardens for according to him the expenses of their maintenance were too high and made citizens poorer.

<sup>127</sup> City Planning According to Artistic Principles

<sup>128</sup> Quoted in Collins, GR & Crasemann Collins, C 1986, *Camillo Sitte, the birth of Modern City Planning*, Rizzoli, New York. Pg. 304 “Greenery within the city” was an article which first appeared in 1900, and then appeared as an appendix in subsequent editions of *Der Städtebau* since 1909.

<sup>129</sup> From the same text “Greenery within the City”. Pg 305

<sup>130</sup> Calabi, Donatella e Marino Folini, *Werner Hegemann Catalogo delle Esposizioni Internazionali di Urbanistica, Berlino 1910, Dusseldorf 1911-12*. Milano, Saggiatore, 1975.

<sup>131</sup> Stübgen, Josef, ‘Practical and aesthetic principles for the laying out of cities’, *Transactions*, American Society of civil engineers, Chicago, 1893. Translation by W.H.Searles (original in German from 1885)

<sup>132</sup> idem.pg. 5

<sup>133</sup> Quoted in Crasemann Collins, Christiane, *Werner Hegemann and the search for Universal Urbanism*, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, London, 2005.pg.45-55.

<sup>134</sup> Cebrià de Montoliu (1873-1923) Urbanist, writer and translator. With extensive training in urbanism, educational theory, and the scientific organisation of work, he introduced Anglo-Saxon thought and city planning practices at the beginning of the 20th century, based on the organisational analysis of cities and marked by the reforms of municipal socialism.

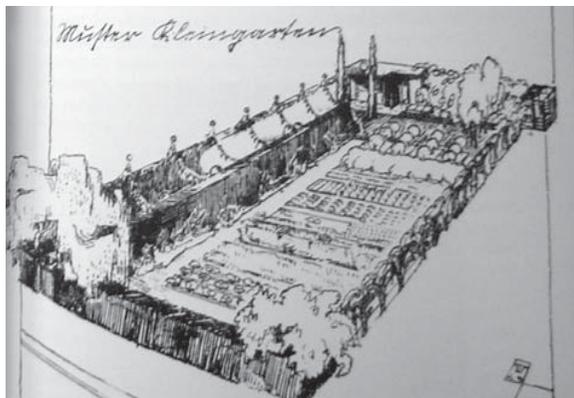
<sup>135</sup> *Modern Cities and their problems in the light of the Exposition of Civic Construction of Berlin (1910)*

<sup>136</sup> Leonard K. Eaton, *Landscape Artist in America: The Life and Work of Jens Jensen*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1964.



**figure 1-32** - 1901 - The lily pond and the curved walkway in the valley at Forest Glen Park, author: Jens Jensen.  
source: Courtesy Mrs. Albert O. Trostel Jr. <http://digicol>

**figure 1-33** - 1917 - muster kleingarten  
author: leberecht Migge  
source: Migge, Leberecht, *Der soziale Garten*, Das grüne Manifest, Verlag : Mann, Gebr. pg43



Another successful park designer in the beginning of the twentieth century in Britain was T.H. Mawson (1861-1933). In his early essays he accepted the combination of the formal and the informal in the same designs producing a composite style. Mawson began designing Wolverhampton's East Park in 1896 and then the redesign of Lord Street gardens in Southport, which included a marine lake, promenade and adjoining park areas.

Germany also had landscape designers that transformed the way of conceiving park design and public and private space. Leberecht Migge wrote the first essays on truly modern landscape. He provided a rational organisation of useful spaces which formed a satisfying and coherent whole (figure 1-33). In his book *Green manifesto*<sup>137</sup> Migge proposed that all social and economic problems of the German nation could be solved by creating as many gardens as possible, which included parks, but most importantly, small, intensive vegetable gardens where everyone could grow their own food. If "everyman" could be self-sufficient, then they supposedly would enjoy relative freedom from the domination of the capitalist system. This system and organisation of green spaces in urban environment implied the use of leisure in a productive manner. Fritz Schumacher and Friedrich Sperber gave a new park to Hamburg with new recreation principles, active recreation was becoming the most important part of urban parks and the designers provided a stadium, swimming pool, running track and formal garden to their project for Hamburg.

In France the Musée Sociale and the Société Française des Urbanistes were the hubs of urbanists and park designers at the turn of the century. They had great influence on urban design worldwide, including Latin America and North

Africa, and they played the role of the exporters of urban principles which were later interpreted by the local professionals. Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier and Leon Jaussely were founding members of these two organisations. Both architects had important roles in the developing of the waterfronts of Buenos Aires and Barcelona respectively; their work will be analysed in the corresponding chapters.

## Waterfront leisure projects

When they began to be used as sea resorts in the beginning of the nineteenth century, places like Brighton, Blackpool and Scarborough were first reserved for the elite. With the development of railroads and mass transportation these resorts became accessible for the less affluent classes, which allowed the railroad companies to build hotels and transform the whole resort facilities into fully urbanised areas. As we saw before, the salons were the stage of leisure for middle and working classes, and the waterfronts became the stage of it in the summer. "The waters are to the summer what the salons are to the winter."<sup>138</sup>

One of the elements that transformed waterfront leisure practices was the pier, which, according to Cross had a "major role in the process of regulating and building family oriented entertainment centres"<sup>139</sup>. The first leisure pier was built in the English town of Margate in 1815 (figure 1-34), to be followed by Brighton and Dieppe. But even though formally they were different, the experience of the pier had its inspiration in Mediterranean similar typologies, such as the marina in Palermo. This was a promenade with fountains and comfortable seats, shops and a marble theatre where the inhabitants of the city would spend their free time observing the passage of the ships through the harbour and stroll in the fresh afternoons. Early pleasure piers were of wooden construction. Many were built on the English coastline, they were originally meant for the traffic of ferries for passengers but they would later develop into full leisure areas. The iron structured piers were introduced with the construction in 1855 of Margate Jetty, in Margate (figure 1-35). This was the first project of a pier by Eugenius Birch. He would be the main builder of leisure piers in England. These piers had

entertainment pavilions, steamer landing stages, theatres and concert halls. In 1863 the northern pier was built in Blackpool also by Eugenius Birch, these types of piers would later develop and expand throughout Britain, France and the US.

The case of the bathing resorts of the north of France was different; places like Caubourg and Deauville (figure 1-36) were still reserved for the upper classes and high bourgeoisie families until the beginning of the twentieth century. The cases of Nice and Cannes in the Mediterranean French coast were similar, but the intention of these resorts was to attract a more international public, yet one of upper class.

The Italian bath resorts, which had been developed since the end of the eighteenth century, included places such as Lucca and Chianciani, which were located on the mountains. But resorts such as Montecatini and Viareggio on the seaside gained importance in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Viareggio, whose administration had tried to keep as an international and exclusive bath resort had become a relatively massive holiday place with a growth of population of three hundred percent during the summer. The area of Liguria followed a similar development to that of the Cote d'Azur, developing different centres for bathing. Sanremo (figure 1-37) is finally the bathing resort *par excellence* of the Italian coast of ponente. Next to the border with France, Bordighera became one of the most popular sea resorts of Italy as an exclusive holiday resorts with private villas and services such as restaurants, casino and hydrotherapeutic establishments.



**figure 1-34** - 1830-Margate first pier  
source: [www.antiquemapsandprints.com/scans/scans128.htm](http://www.antiquemapsandprints.com/scans/scans128.htm)

**figure 1-35** - ca.1890 - Margate Pier  
author: Eugenius Birch  
source: <http://viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk/gallery/450/op0/op00650.jpg>



<sup>137</sup> Migge, Leberecht, *Der Soziale Garten, Das grüne manifest*, Gebr. Mann Verlag, Berlin, 1999, 1926.

<sup>138</sup> This passage from the *Journal des Dames* of June 5<sup>th</sup> 1846 was quoted by Anne Martin-Fugier in Aries, Philippe and Duby, Georges (eds) *A History of Private Life, From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, Cambridge, London, Harvard University Press, 1990.



**figure 1-36** - 1869 - On the Beach of Deauville,  
author: Eugene Boudin, 1869  
source: Louvre, Paris. <http://cache.eb.com/eb/image?id=31214&rendTypeld=4>



**figure 1-38** - 1880 -Napoli,  
source: Archivio Storico del comune. Giancarlo Alisio, *Napoli e il Risannamento. Recupero di una struttura urbana*. Napoli, ESI, 1980

**figure 1-39** - 1914 -Marseille  
source: handbook for travellers, Baedeker  
[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/baedeker\\_sfrance\\_1914/marseilles\\_1914.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/baedeker_sfrance_1914/marseilles_1914.jpg)



**figure 1-37** - 1900 - Sanremo, Italy  
source: Sanremo. Paolo Sica, *Storia dell'urbanistica*. II,2. L'Ottocento, Laterza, Bari, 1981.



The use of the urban waterfront as leisure space was different in Europe from that of North and South America. As described before, urbanism was developing theories and practices in the whole western world, having Europe and later the United States as the centres of this development. When it came to the materialisation of the waterfronts the process differed by geographical zones and other areas and cities were included in the global picture. The situation in most of the European waterfront capitals was that of cities which waterfront was taken over by harbour facilities, and due to commercial expansion, these spaces were growing and became segregated from urban space. This process did not allow the development of leisure areas on the waterfront. On the other hand, in North and South America the waterfronts became spaces of opportunity and the development of harbour and leisure space was contemporary and flexible. We will see some examples of these spaces in Europe and America to illustrate this development. A series of projects were developed throughout the nineteenth century in Europe that had influence on the relationship between the city and the shore. Amsterdam, for example, had its first city plan in 1835, which provided the integration between the city and its waterways. A similar case was that of Copenhagen. However, the harmony of city and waterfronts were taken over by work activities, not leisure ones.

Only a couple of exceptions can be found in Europe, such as Napoli and Marseille. The waterfront promenade or *lungomare* in Napoli (figure 1-38) dates back to the mid nineteenth century, and was originally a regular avenue, with wide sidewalks and lines of trees. This, according to Giancarlo Alisio<sup>140</sup> was a promenade for the elite, belonging to one of the richest neighbourhoods of the city. Napoli had subsequent project for the

waterfront, as space for strolling and bathing, being one of the only waterfront cities in Europe to make this kind of use of the coast still in the end of the nineteenth century, and despite the growth of the harbour. Marseille was also a city to implement a leisure area on the waterfront. It opened its new harbour of Joliette in 1844, which allowed the lightening of port activity in the city's old harbour. While some other small towns of the Mediterranean were starting to be used as places for vacations of the elite, first in winter, later in the summer, Marseille was still not an attractive place for tourism. However, a new space for practice of boating was appearing in the northern side of the coastline by the mid nineteenth century. The struggle between harbour facilities and leisure areas was increased in the second half of the century, but not enough to make leisure space disappear. Emile de Girardin<sup>141</sup> asked himself:

“Can a maritime city be at the same time a great trading city and a great pleasure city? Is it impossible to make Marseille fashionable as a winter residence and as a city of sea bathing?”<sup>142</sup>

In any case there were no bathing structures and the public would complain about this. For solving this there were no local municipal initiatives, and it was the private sector that developed the necessary spaces for waterfront leisure. The duality of harbour space in the north and leisure parks for the bourgeoisie in the south shore would mark the evolution of the Marseille coastline (figure 1-39). These were the two exceptions of the European waterfront. The majority of the waterfronts of the European capitals, seaports, river and canal ports developed during the nineteenth century in the commercial and technical aspects, not leaving much space for

leisure development.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, in other parts of the world such as Latin America, new projects for leisure areas on the waterfront were being planned; some examples of these are those of Montevideo in Uruguay, Lima in Perú and Río de Janeiro. In Montevideo one of the first urban beaches was developed in the area of Pocitos, by 1906 the area already had tramway access and a great hotel run by the same company. A zoological garden was also part on the neighbourhood since 1894, which made the area an innovative waterfront resort, steps away from the city centre (figure 1-40). In Lima, once the city walls of the Spanish were torn down in 1870, the city began expanding towards the coast with the extension of three railway lines, one of them towards the harbour of Callao. Residential neighbourhoods grew across the southern waterfront of the city. The plan of 1902-1906 for Río by Pereira Passos and Paulo de Frontín under the presidency of Rodriguez Alves proposed the complete restructuring of the central area including the waterfront promenades of Botafogo and Flamengo, with gardens and beaches, which would last for more than a century.

This is the end of an account of leisure practices in the urban context and the waterfront. This will only serve as a background to understand the main core of this research, which is the case studies, now concentrated on leisure spaces in urban waterfronts. The cases of Barcelona, Chicago and Buenos Aires will be used as models to understand these processes of development of the waterfronts in the period from 1870 to 1930.



figure 1-40 - 1896 - Playa de Pocitos-Montevideo  
source: foto de archivo

<sup>139</sup> Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990.p.135

<sup>140</sup> Alisio, Giancarlo, *Napoli, uomini e luoghi delle trasformazione urbane, il lungomare*, Electa Napoli, 2003

<sup>141</sup> (1802-1881) French journalist, publicist, and politician.

<sup>142</sup> Quoted in Bonillo, Jean Lucien, *Marseille, Ville et Port*, Parenthèses, Marseille 1991.



**Chapter 2**  
**Barcelona 1870-1930**  
**The struggle for the urban leisure waterfront**



## Chapter 2 – Barcelona 1870-1930 – The struggle for the urban leisure waterfront

*Barcelona, waterfront city, empire of industry, of commerce and art, and with legitimate aspiration to capital of the Mediterranean, does not have a waterfront boulevard, as the ones other towns without the titles of this one actually have realised here and in foreign countries for the leisure of their inhabitants and impulse to the adoption of sports and nautical exercises, that so much contribute to the hygiene and transcend the public morality of great urbis*

Jose Ortega, 1918

The case of Barcelona will be the first one to analyse in this thesis. The main reason for this choice has to do with the fact that within the case studies, it is the only one from the *old continent* and the one supposed to influence and set a standard of urban development for the rest of similar phenomena worldwide. This might be the case of the urban plan as a whole, for a plan like the one of Idelfons Cerdà of 1859 was a pioneering tool, which set an example for future urban plans all over the globe. When it comes to the urban waterfront, as it will be seen during the development of this chapter, the situation was rather different. The process of transference, retro-transference and importation-exportation of urban ideas, concepts and tools takes a different turn, and in this case, as in many other European ones, Barcelona is rather late in the institutionalised use of the coast as an area of leisure.

During this period analysed (1870-1930) Barcelona goes through a fast process of industrialisation, as well as demographic, economical and commercial growth. The social

environment of the city was also transformed. The bourgeoisie was taking place while the higher most powerful classes were establishing their power strongly. The working class was also growing in number as the industry required more and more labourers, who would emigrate from the countryside to the city and establish in the limits of the urban area. All these issues coexisted with the spatial transformation of Barcelona. The plan of Cerdà was slowly materialised while the waterfront and harbour were also changing their shape and functions.

The development of the waterfront of Barcelona was, as in most cases in the rest of Europe, very different from those in America. Great European Metropolises that were in development in this period followed a pattern in which the harbours took over the privileged space of the waterfronts, and continued to grow as the demand for space increased. Therefore, coast spaces for leisure purposes were only left to the traditional uses of the waterfront such as bathing and fishing, with decreasing space and in an increasingly polluted environment. The urban projects for the waterfront for leisure use were scarce and almost absent until the first decade of the twentieth century. A couple of cases are the exception to this pattern, namely Marseille and Naples. The Bay of Posilippo in Naples was hardly touched by the industrial harbour, and continued to be used as leisure space and baths almost without interruption. The case of Marseille, with the very early expansion of the harbour to the outskirts of the city left the old harbour for leisure use and the promenade next to the seaside became an internationally renowned project. Barcelona followed the other European pattern and suffered the conflict for waterfront space between the harbour and leisure activities,

where the battle was won by the harbour.

There is one single study on the waterfront of Barcelona that addresses specifically the issue of leisure space, apart from the study of the development of the harbour. That is the PhD thesis of Nadia Fava, from the UPC Barcelona. Most of the literature that refers to the city's waterfront such as the port study of Joan Alemany<sup>1</sup> or Baños Soria<sup>2</sup> is relegated to the harbour development and loose images of the waterfront. On the other hand, the studies of Barceloneta of García Martín<sup>3</sup> or Mercedes Tatjer<sup>4</sup> address other of the area's functions but only of a limited location.

<sup>1</sup> Alemany i Llovera, Joan, *El Puerto de Barcelona historia i actualitat*, Barcelona l'Avenç 1984. Biblioteca ETSAB.

<sup>2</sup> Baños Soria, *Imatges Retrospectives de la Marina, Zona Franca i polígon Industrial Pedrosa*, Edicions de la Diputació de Barcelona, 1997

<sup>3</sup> García-Martín, Manuel, *El Barrio de la playa de Barcelona que la voz popular llama Barceloneta*, Barcelona Catalana de Gas, 1989.

<sup>4</sup> Tatjer i Mir, Merce, *La Barceloneta del siglo XVIII al Plan de la Ribera*, Barcelona, Saturno, 1973.



## 2.1 – Introduction – urban, political, economical and social contexts

*The following introduction is provided to understand the context in which the phenomena studied took place. It is not a thorough historical description of the city but a series of highlights of events that concern this study, the origin of the city, its cultural development and the political, social and economical forces that guided its growth. It is possible that the relation between the context and the actual development of the waterfront is not obvious, but many of the contextual events that took place in Barcelona were an influence on the materialisation of the harbour and leisure areas of the waterfront. For those who know the history of Barcelona well, it is recommended to skip this context and read the projects directly. The last sections of this chapter deal with the actual leisure development of Barcelona and its waterfront, which can give a contextual frame to the projects that followed.*

### 2.1.1 – History

#### The origins of the city

The origins of the city of Barcelona can be traced to the Roman Empire. Catalunya lay within Hispania Cietrior or Nearer Spain, the northern area of the Mediterranean coast of actual Spain. By 210 BC all this territory was in the hands of the Romans after a long war with the North African power of Carthage.

The social origins of the people of Catalunya was what some historians call the Celtiberians, the combination of Iberian tribes from North African origin and Celtic tribes that had come down through the Pyrenees. The arrival of the Romans gave way to a change in cultural characteristics and the birth of the Catalan language which, as other Roman languages, derived from the Latin.

Barcelona was not born as a city but as a harbour. In the first century BC there was no settlement to be even called a village. However, in the location of what today is Barcelona there was the only harbour of the area between Narbonne and Tarraco that was connected to the main road by a smaller path. Within time a township and later a Roman city developed on the location. The first settlements (figure 2-01) were on the Montjuic, but the lower location between two streams, the Besòs and Llobregat, turned out to be a more suitable location. This was due to the access to water and to the proximity of the harbour. The place was recognised as an Augustan Colony by 15 BC, named Barcino. This was a small town, built in the typology of the *oppidum* (figure 2-02) or fortified camp. The city had a surface of about 25 acres, was surrounded by a wall with four entrances and followed the norms of the Roman urban structural system.

<sup>5</sup> Fava, Nadia, *Progetti e processi in conflitto: il fronte marittimo de Barcelona*, PhD thesis, UPC Barcelona, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, 1988.

<sup>7</sup> Taylor, Fredrich, *Principles of scientific management*, 1911



**figure 2-02** - Oppidium. Entremont. France.  
source: [http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/entremont/fr/archi\\_urb.htm](http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/entremont/fr/archi_urb.htm)

**figure 2-03** - 1563 - Barcelona by Wyngaerde  
author: A. van Wyngaerde  
source: Alemany i Llovera, Joan, El Puerto de Barcelona historia i actualitat, Barcelona l'Avenç 1984. Biblioteca ETSAB.



An important landmark left from the period was the Temple of Augustus, and some sections of the original city walls are also left. What is clear is that during the Roman Empire the population of Barcino did not grow much, for the city kept its original size for centuries. The main political buildings were in the city but the greatest part of the population lived in the farms around it. By the second century AD, the Jewish community was growing in Barcino, and this gave way to a plural and polyglot society.

The city developed slowly and was finally the victim of the decline of the Roman Empire as were the rest of the cities of the Empire. By the beginning of the fifth century AD the generals and officials had fled the city and when the Germanic barbaric tribes came into Barcino to invade they only found the local dwellers. The Vandals<sup>8</sup> were the first to occupy and seem to have been rather barbaric. The Visigoths<sup>9</sup>, who were less aggressive than their predecessors came later. They were the ones to establish the roots of the feudal society in Catalunya.

By 711 the Arabs were entering Spanish territory and Catalunya was no exception. Barcelona had almost no way to defend itself, being a small coastal town its harbour was very vulnerable and the Goths that were in charge found it safer to give in. The Saracens quickly transformed the racial configuration of Catalunya, but they did not get behind the Pyrenees, for the land belonging to the Goths was protected by the geography. The Saracen rule did not even get to last a hundred years, for by 801 the Franks were invading from the north, and occupied the territory of Barcelona in that year.

The political organisation of the area was that of the *comarques*<sup>10</sup> settled by Charlemagne and his successors. These comarques slowly

became more independent and as this happened the Arabs were once again tempted to invade. This process was developed between 850 and 950, while the feudal system was getting established. The new landlords abolished the old system of small peasant freeholders of land. Peasants became practically the noble's slaves, and nobility developed a complex system of hierarchy ruled by the chivalry similar to the feudal model.

The struggling farmers joined forces with the monastic foundations, which had been seriously attacked by the feudal lords. The consequence was a pact that resulted in a bill of rights that did not return the original rights to the people but at least avoided some of the abusive measures taken by the lords. By the end of the twelfth century most of the farmers owned their land and leased it.

By the beginning of the twelfth century the territory of Catalunya was expanding and being consolidated. The union with the neighbouring kingdom of Aragon made the consolidation of the area and the count kings of Barcelona yet more powerful. Barcelona was not a serious sea power, this was caused by two reasons, the harbour (figure 2-03) was a shallow one, so heavy ships would not be able to enter, and the Moors were controlling the water around it, which made trade rather difficult. However, the twelfth century saw a rapid development of trade thanks to the alliance between Aragon and Catalunya. This allowed the commerce and diplomatic relations with more than 126 places through the Mediterranean. The economy expanded and allowed the growing luxury trades of a medieval surplus economy. By the fourteenth century the kingdom of Aragon and Catalunya was run from Barcelona.

This situation of the city made its harbour flourish and become an important part of the city.

The Llotja or Lodge (figure 2-04), the city's stock exchange was placed right in front of the water, where all the commerce of the city was being carried out. Pere Llobet, the architect of Saló de Cent, designed the building in the 1350s.

The social situation in Barcelona during the later Middle Ages depended on political organisation. The count-king of Barcelona did not rule absolutely. The government of the city of Barcelona was ruled by the Consell de Cent or Council of the One Hundred. This institution became one of the most durable European political institutions. This was due to the fact that it allowed the *lower* people to participate in political decisions. Apart from this government institution, there was some class struggle, mainly between the *Biga* and the *Busca*. The *Biga* were the established trades men and patricians and the *Busca* the smaller businessmen. These two classes were in struggle for the *Biga* claimed free trade and the possibility of luxury importation of goods, while the *Busca* searched for a more protectionist system of commerce.

**figure 2-04** - Salo de Cent - Consell de Cent  
source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/xcaballe/167813409/>



**figure 2-05** - Santa Maria del Mar  
source: [http://www.bearcave.com/gallery/albums/barcelona\\_2005/IMG\\_0119.sized.jpg](http://www.bearcave.com/gallery/albums/barcelona_2005/IMG_0119.sized.jpg)

<sup>8</sup> Vandals: The Vandals were an East Germanic tribe that entered the late Roman Empire during the 5th century. On October 13, 409 they crossed the Pyrenees into the Iberian peninsula. There they received land from the Romans, as *foederati*, in Gallaecia (Northwest) and Hispania Baetica (South), while the Alans got lands in Lusitania (West) and the region around Carthago Nova.

<sup>9</sup> Visigoths: The Visigoths (Western Goths) were one of two main branches of the Goths, an East Germanic tribe (the Ostrogoths being the other). Together these tribes were among the loosely-termed Germanic peoples who disturbed the late Roman Empire during the Migration Period.

<sup>10</sup> Comarques: a comarque is defined as a division of territory that is formed by various villages. The equivalent in English would be shire or county.



**figure 2-06** - 1760- Barcelona - Barcino Metropolis Hispanici Principatus Cattaloniae in Littore Maris mediterraeae  
author: Seutter  
source: Galera i Monegal, Montserrat, Francesc Roca, Salvador Tarragó presentació de Pau Vila, Atlas de Barcelona [segles XVI-XX], Barcelona Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya DL 1982. Biblioteca ETSAB.

Language wise, throughout the middle ages, the vernacular Catalan was the language spoken, and even priests gave mass in this language, but Latin was the literary language, and the one with which the intellectual would communicate with the rest of their European counterparts.

Morphologically, the city changed rapidly, the Roman walls could not bare the fast growth of population, so new fortifications were built, which were constructed under the orders of Jaume I (1208-1276) and took a hundred years to be built.

The following king, Pere III built voluminously in Barcelona, the main buildings of Drassanes, the Casa de la Ciutat, the Cathedral and the Saló del Tinell. One of the most relevant building concerning of this period was the church of Santa María del Mar (figure 2-05), built in 1329 and located just metres away from the harbour. Santa María del Mar was built over a burial site that dates back to the first century AD. The building gained great popularity for it was built by the workers and for the workers. The neighbourhood in which the church was located was la Ribera, inhabited mainly by harbour workers and manufacturers of products related to the sea.

The guilds were, as in many European cities, the core of the Barcelonese economy in medieval times, nobody could learn a trade if they did not belong to one. Until the eighteenth century all work was done by hand, and the manufacturers' workshops were small. The guilds were considered family organisations, they controlled the relation between masters and apprentices, a strict control over the quality of materials was done by inspectors and though they were not religious organisation they followed

religious life in Barcelona.

Apart from the iron trade, all trades related to the sea were the most relevant in the city. The shipyards or Drassanes used to be located just next to the sea, but the landfills on the waterfront of the last 60 years have left the Drassanes landlocked. The fishing trade was also a powerful one in the last years of the Middle ages and up to the nineteenth century. However, the sailors and fishermen had little influence in politics during the Middle ages.

Superstition and religion were part of sailors' everyday life. Saint Peter, Saint Elmo and Saint Eulalia were the patrons of the sailors and fishermen and they all had their churches in Barcelona. The relation of women to seafaring was a difficult one. The sea was the one who took away husbands lives and who brought infidelity.

The fifteenth century was one of decadence and sickness for Barcelona. There were deadly epidemics of plague that were recurrent during the whole century, the rural economy was collapsing and banks were failing. The problems between the *Busca* and the *Biga* grew more serious and broke political consensus, the *Busca* took over the *Consell de Cent* and expelled most patricians from municipal office. In 1462 a civil war broke out that lasted 10 years. Finally it was the inheritance of the throne of Aragon and Catalunya by King Ferdinand, and his marriage to Isabel de Castilla that changed the power structure of Spain transforming it into one single reign. The inquisition installed by Ferdinand was a transforming instrument in the social net of Barcelona. The persecution of Jews and Muslims, who had lived freely in the previous centuries, changed the social and economic structure of the city. Many businesses were in the hands of Jewish tradesmen and they rather left the city than

convert to Catholicism. This left Barcelona with a small proportion of manufacturing and trade. However, the fact of belonging to the crown of Castilla and Aragon did bring some benefits. Manufacture, especially wool and textile, grew and the guilds developed and flourished.

### The Bourbon Rule

During the sixteenth century the independence of Catalunya was systematically decaying and the cities became increasingly dependent on Madrid, the capital of the state. In 1635 war broke between France and the Hapsburg Austrian Empire. The invasion by the French was almost welcome by the Catalans, but this brought a period of unrest and anarchy. The war of Spanish succession brought chaos all over Europe from 1701, and Barcelona surrendered to the rule of the Bourbons on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1714. This brought political and physical changes to the city of Barcelona. The local institutions were suspended and with them even some of the buildings were demolished. The Consell de Cent and the Diputació were abolished. The New Plan designed by the central government was established, and with it new labour and tax laws. Workers had to pay 8.5 percent of their salary, based on a working year of one hundred days for peasants and day labourers and on hundred and eighty for artisans. The local universities were closed and the publishing of Catalan was banned. However, this did not stop the people from speaking their language.

The main destiny of the tax money collected by Madrid in Barcelona was the Citadel (figure 2-06) located close to the shore of the city, next to the medieval city. Prosper Verboom, a Dutch military engineer, designed this structure. In order to build the citadel, most of the

Ribera neighbourhood was destroyed without compensation to the owners.

The formal limit given by the wall and the military structure constructed by the Bourbon rule were used for the construction of the civic expansion. Engineer Verboom was also in charge of the first project for a more benign and lasting urban development, la Barceloneta, which will be later studied in detail.

Trade was beneficial for Barcelona and Catalunya, given that the Bourbon Empire was not in charge of the textile market of northern Italy and the Netherlands, Catalunya was the main producer of textiles in the Empire. The conversion of cereal growing to viniculture also expanded and diversified the local production. There were slight crises during the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, but they did not damage the economy too much. The ones who did get damaged were the workers, who could not depend on guilds any more for they were an obsolete institution and had no expectation of trade unions.

Two symbols of prosperity were located on the waterfront: the remodelled Llotja, designed by Juan Soler i Faneca and the new customs house which is now the Palace of Civil government. These buildings and the new arrangements of the city around the port marked a shift towards enlightenment, the representation of the cities allowed the conception of formal changes that would imply also social organisation.

The first real urban intervention that was done in Barcelona was that of the Ramblas. The Cagall river was covered when the wall built by Jaume I was torn down, turning the riverbed into an avenue. By 1717 when the wall had been constructed the population of Barcelona was of 37,000 people, by 1798 there were more than 130,000 (table 2-01).

table 01  
population Barcelona and joined districts

year	Population
1835	118,280
1842	121,815
1849	173,337
1850	189,000
1857	183,787
1859	190,684
1860	189,948
1863	190,298
1887	275,500
1897	516,238
1900	533,000
1910	587,000
1920	710,000
1930	1,062,157

source: Tatjer I Mir, Merce, 'L'Evolució de la població de Barcelona entre el 1860 i el 1897', in Sobrequés i Callico, Jaume, Historia de Barcelona, La Ciutat Industrial, 1833-1897, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1995. and Instituto Nacional de Estadística. [http://www.ine.es/normativa/leyes/rd508\\_01\\_estat.htm](http://www.ine.es/normativa/leyes/rd508_01_estat.htm)

Between the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the French took over great parts of Catalunya, guided by Napoleon, who took Ferdinand VII, the last of the Bourbons, out of his throne until 1814, when he took over the reign once again, which would last until his death in 1833. In this period two important urban interventions took place in Barcelona. The Plaça Reial would be the residential square and Plaça San Jaume a ceremonial one with the buildings of the Generalitat and the Ajuntament on its perimeter. Ferran street would cross Plaça San Jaume in an operation that required the demolition of a series of medieval buildings in the area. The economic situation had been damaged by the independence of the American states; this reduced the export market of Catalunya to only Cuba and Puerto Rico, therefore hurting the local market seriously. The decade between 1823 and 1833 was called the Ominous Decade. The French army occupied Barcelona, but it was not extreme in its measures and it was a neutral peacekeeping force. In his last year as king, Ferdinand VII appointed a new Captain General for Catalunya, who was an Asturian liberal and protected those of his kind in Barcelona. The liberals in the city saw a certain amount of success in the relations with the rest of Europe, in contrast with their royalist counterparts.

### **New government regime and industrialisation**

The political differences between city and country in Catalunya after the death of Ferdinand VII were steep. Carlos María Isidro de Borbón had taken over the throne after his brother, and the peasants supported him. They were against any kind of liberalism and progress, including the development of technology, for which they destroyed any factory that could be found in the

outskirts of Barcelona. The city, instead, still had a rather liberal leadership, by Manuel de Llauder, a Catalan who was a moderate politician and managed to be popular enough to keep some extent of peace in the city. The moderates were all with him, but the extreme liberals and the extreme leftists were not, which caused some disturbances in the streets.

These social conflicts brought also a series of changes on the urban fabric of Barcelona. The anti church feelings produced by the alliance of the church with the Carlistas set to destroy much of the Churches properties across the city. Juan Alvarez Mendizábal (1790-1853) was the minister of finance under Isabel II after a long exile in England where he became a firm believer in market driven virtues of classic English liberalism. Mendizábal initiated one of the most drastic changes in urban policies of its time, he decided that to raise money to defeat the Carlistas the best thing to do was to propose a law to expropriate Church properties and sell them. This meant that the urban tissue of Barcelona saw many transformations, and fortunately a wide extent of much needed open spaces in the Barri Gòtic.

During the 1830s and 40s Catalunya became the only area of Spain that was developing an industrial production and market that could compete with those of northern Europe. Independence was not possible, but the industrial production of the area could save Spain from becoming economically an English colony. The development of industrialisation in Catalunya brought also the labour and social problems that corresponded with it and were not present in the rest of Spain.

Socialist ideas that were adopted in Barcelona in the 1840s had deep influence on

the urban tissue through the work of the plan of Idelfons Cerdà. Pere Felip Monlau i Roca (1808-71) was one of the firsts to bring these ideas inspired in his case by the French socialist Henri de Saint-Simon. Monlau was a moderate socialist, demanded social equality and equality of rights but he did not dwell on the independence of Catalunya. On the other hand, the other one who introduced socialist ideas in Barcelona, Pere Mata i Fontanet (1811-77) was a fervent independentista<sup>11</sup>.

Industry started to shape the layout of the city (figure 2-07), factories were banned inside the city walls and especially textile industries were placed close to the rivers on the outskirts of the city, where there was little urban legislation. Almost all of the industrial oligarchy of Barcelona was in charge of the textile industry or linked to it. But this was not a secure business either. The fact that Catalunya was the only region that was industrialised enough in Spain, made those in charge of it not have a back up of power elsewhere in the country, and especially not in Madrid. This made the Catalan industrialists rich but not powerful enough. Protectionist laws ordered by the national government did not allow free trade to expand in the area but by 1841 the measures taken were less strict and less products were banned from importation. Still, a local organisation, the later famous Industrial Institute was founded in 1848 by Joan Güell to protect the local production. In 1868 the Glorious Revolution, where Queen Elisabeth II of Spain was overthrown, brought the victory to free traders due to a new democratic government regime. The struggle for autonomy of Catalunya did not only pass through production and commerce but also through the use of language. The language of the street in Barcelona and the surrounding provinces was Catalan, different

from the Castilian spoken in the rest of Spain. This was not a literary language though, but local intellectuals made sure that it became one in the nineteenth century.

### The mid-nineteenth century

By the 1850s Catalunya as a whole had 1.67 million inhabitants, Barcelona 189,000 (table 01). The population of the countryside grew slowly, but that of Barcelona steadily and rapidly. The spending of public money in public services was scarce and the development of railways in Catalunya was slow, much slower than the rest of Europe. By 1848 Barcelona had only built one railroad to Mataró, France already had 1,140 miles of working rail tracks. It was not until 1878 that the rail reached the border with France.

Industry in Catalunya was hardly comparable to that of Northern Europe, the hard machinery production was small. However, as mentioned, the textile industry was strong and thriving by the mid nineteenth century. Catalunya was the world's fourth largest producer of cotton goods after England, France and the United States.

As much as the mid nineteenth century in Barcelona created the upper middle class who controlled the industry and trade it also created a proletariat that lived in yet worse conditions than the one in industrial England at the time. Living conditions were appalling, population density was twice the one of Paris and epidemics sprawled among the population. The normal workday was of twelve hours, but normally most of them would work from 14 to 16 hours to be able to fend for their families. The history of Spain was divided by the Glorious Revolution of 1868. This provided six years free of Bourbon rule and the implementation of a Constitution, which though

conservative, did provide universal suffrage, intended for men over the age of 21. The Republic of Spain that followed was not easy to govern. Some labour movements were starting to appear, and the first Spanish Workers Congress was held in Barcelona under the aegis of the Communist International.

figure 2-07 - 1856 - Barcelona

author: Guesdon

source: García Espuche, Albert, Ciutats: del globus al satel.lit, Barcelona, Madrid, Electa España, 1994.

Smoke coming from factories can be seen on the outskirts of the city



<sup>11</sup> Independentista: this movement has had many followers in different nations and situations. In this case the Independentista movement fought for the independence of Catalunya from the central government of Spain in Madrid.



**figure 2-08** - Alfonso XII  
source: <http://www.nndb.com/people/329/000117975/>

### 2.1.2- Economical, political and social context – 1870-1930

#### Spain's economical and political and social situation

In 1874 the Bourbon regime was restored in Spain<sup>12</sup> and a new constitution and the *Ley Municipal*<sup>13</sup> were signed in 1876. The constitution of 1876 was limited to the mere declaration of the existence of rights, leaving space for the further delimitation of them. The main rights to be considered were those of the nationals and foreigners, the inviolability of address, the register of documents and effects, the obligation of defending the land when it was forced by law, the obligation to contribute to expenses of the state and the secret of correspondence.

The legitimacy of the regime was established in the constitution that formed the model of state by a legislative power divided into two chambers: the Congress of Deputies and the Senate. The monarch would keep great part of his functions as a head of state and executive power. With this system the so-called *dynastic parties*: conservatives and liberals were alternated in power. The decade of 1880 saw a peaceful period between conservatives and liberals in the government of Spain.

The emigration to America and the slow population growth of the country (Spain only had 18.5 million inhabitants by 1900), added to the segregating problems given by epidemics and starvation showed the disadvantaged position that Spain had compared to Northern Europe. Almost 80 percent of the population of the county was employed in the production of agriculture. The protectionist system did not allow the proper development of local economics and the participation of Spain in the international

market. Only a limited amount of products left the Spanish borders as exports, namely wine, oil and fruit.

The development of industry and transportation was limited to some restricted areas of the country, the Basque Land with its steel industry and Catalunya with its textile one. Andalucía and Asturias were also competitive producers of iron, plumb and coal, which were highly demanded in the period.

In 1887, following the steps of the rest of Europe, the 'Ley de Asociación' admits the creation of workers unions. He following year the Union General de Trabajadores (UGT) and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) are founded. In 1890 the new suffrage law establishes the universal vote, still only limited to men over 25.

In 1897 Spain entered war with the United States and though it in the following year Spain loses its remaining colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. This defeat was legalised through the treaty of Paris. One of the consequences of this event was the establishment of the *regeneracionismo*, a process through which Spain could overcome the modes and policies of the past to find a new way to reorganise the country.

In 1902 Alfonso XII (figure 2-08) took over the throne of Spain with Antonio Maura as chief of government. He installed rather open policies that were intended to avoid the feared workers revolution, decentralising the administration. This was the way that the new regionalist, workers and republican political forces were born.

Between 1909 and 1927 the war against Marruecos gave political and economical instability to the country. During this period the Great War in Europe took place but Spain remained neutral. This fact did not bring any

economical benefits to Spain for it did not take advantage of the economy of war.

The dynastic parties did not represent properly the interest of the civil society, so the regional parties gained more protagonism. During 1917 there was a great deal of conflict in the most independent regions. The Basque country and Catalunya, striving for independence, saw a time of internal confrontation, between republicans and the national parties and between anarchists and the law enforcement forces.

The anarchists all over the country and especially in Catalunya were active in the revolts. The Russian Revolution influenced some of this movements ideologically, especially the CNT. The consistent conflicts and instability lead finally to a coup d'état in 1923 by Miguel Primo de Rivera, who was captain general of Catalunya, and was immediately recognised by the king Alfonso XIII, son of Alfonso XII. The army and the bourgeoisie supported Primo De Rivera, while he was only confronted by the workers unions and by the republicans. This conflict ended up with repression and censorship and produced the creation of a Military Direction made of nine generals and an admiral. The constitution was suspended, the ayuntamientos<sup>14</sup> were dissolved and political parties were banned.

### Barcelona's political and economical and social situation

The agricultural character of Catalunya was very different to that of the rest of Spain, for Catalunya had a much more fertile land. The southern part of Spain was especially poor. The landlords had great stretches of land worked first by slaves and later by day labourers who worked the barren lands with hardly any pay and lived

in complete poverty. In Catalunya, in the early nineteenth century sharecropping farmers were responsible for the production of vegetables, wheat, barley, oats and wine. These *pagesos* or peasants were still attached to the medieval system and were also protected by these laws. Relations between the landlords and the peasants tended to be good, in contrast to those in the southern parts of the country.

This situation changed by the mid-nineteenth century, when industrialists of the city began to invest in farmland. The production changed from extensive plantation of cereals and vegetables to the intensive one of vines. Another industry that was booming during these decades was the one of cotton goods, Catalunya imported cotton and provided with the majority of cotton manufactures of Spain. Banks were multiplying on Barcelona, between 1881 and 1882 sixteen new banks were started in Barcelona. Much of the starting capital for these banks came from the remaining Spanish colonies, Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Society in Barcelona was divided into three main sectors, related to their political affiliation. On the one hand there was the tradition represented by the political parties of Cánovas and Sagasta, who were monarchic, conservative and far from the needs of the new emerging social classes. On the other hand there were the republicans and the nationalists, who represented a new bourgeoisie that did not find its place in the national scene. Finally there was the proletariat, who was backed by the PSOE described earlier.

Immigration, as in most European cities was a very important issue in demographic growth. Industrialisation had worked as a magnet for country side population and besides the smaller growth rates of local population; it

was immigration that marked the real growth of the city. The ciphers show us the growth of the immigration remaining in Barcelona, in 1861 the maximum immigrants who stayed in Barcelona was 4.248, while in 1896 the number had raised to 13.270. As studied by Merce Tatjer<sup>15</sup> the immigration did not only come from the Catalunya countryside but also from other parts of Spain, mainly Andalucia, and even from abroad, especially the neighbouring France. Immigrants also arrived from Italy and England. The Italians dedicated mainly to the task of running hotels and restaurants, and to artisanship. French and English citizens, on the other hand were more linked to industrial and technical facilities, running textile, metal and mechanic factories.

<sup>12</sup> For details on the economical development of Spain in the nineteenth century: Fontana, J. *Cambio Económico y actitudes políticas en la España del siglo XIX*, Ariel, Barcelona, 1971.

<sup>13</sup> Ley Municipal: In urbanistic matters the aims of the Ley de Ensanche of December 22 of 1876 were not to formulate a new urbanistic legislation. Instead it searched to revise the structure of the Juntas de Ensanche and regulate the relations with the Ajuntaments, reducing the independence of those. For more on Spanish urban legislation in this period: Nadal, Francesc, Poder Municipal Y Espacio Urbano en la Configuración Territorial del Estado Liberal Español (1812-1975), Cuadernos críticos de geografía humana, Universidad de Barcelona, Año VII. Número: 37, Enero de 1982.

<sup>14</sup> municipalities

<sup>15</sup> Tatjer I Mir, Merce, 'L'Evolució de la població de Barcelona entre el 1860 i el 1897', in Sobrequés i Callico, Jaume, *Historia de Barcelona, La Ciutat Industrial, 1833-1897*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1995.



figure 2-09 - Manuel Girona i Agrafel  
source: <http://www.cehfe.es/75/paginas.cat/historia.cat.htm>

figure 2-10 - Eusebi Guell  
source: Joan Bergós i Massó/Joan Bassegoda i Nonell/Maria A. Crippa: Gaudí. Der Mensch und das Werk. Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern 2000



This is a period in which, as in many other European cities, the working conditions changed. The artisanship tradition is transformed into the industrial and the workers tasks as well as the relations between each other and with the bosses are dramatically transformed. According to the study of Idelfons Cerdà<sup>16</sup> in 1856, the workers population formed 33,04% of the inhabitants of the city. Almost half of this population worked on areas related to the textile industry. Even 40% of these were women working in textiles or in domestic service. This situation would stay unchanged until the end of the nineteenth century.

### Restoration and Renaixença

The third Carlist war (1872-75) provided yet more contrast between the countryside of Catalunya and Barcelona. The peasants, as their ancestors, were conservative and reluctant to any sort of change in customs, culture or politics. King Carlos Maria de Borbón was supported by the peasants, but resisted by the more progressive city of Barcelona who supported the republic. However, the power of the king was too great to be toppled and in 1874 the monarchy was restored in Spain and so began the period of the Restoration.

This was the period of the Renaixença in Catalunya, which consisted on the establishment of four distinctive movements. The *Catalanista* belonged to the small cultivated elite and was focused on literary and cultural values. The *Carlista* was supported by people in deep Catalunya and seen in Barcelona as an insignificant reaction. The opposition to Catalanisme, the Republican or *Federalist Catalanisme*, defended the idea of having an independent Catalunya, a state within a state. Finally the winning movement was the

*Regional Conservatism*, moderate, obsessively concerned with protectionism, and supporter of ancient virtues, rights and privileges.

In Catalunya, as well as in the rest of Spain, religion was also a matter of conflict produced by the Constitution of 1876. The constitution stipulated that the only religion to be practised in the country was the Catholic Apostolic Roman. This produced conflicts with ambassadors of foreign countries as well as in the education system. Civil matrimony was another issue of conflict for the church would not allow it. After serious discussions with the Vatican the civil matrimony was finally allowed.

The restoration carried with it a deep administrative and legal centralisation. The Basque and Catalan nationalism were fast to react to these measures. Catalunya was in the middle of a bourgeois revolution and a process of shaping a cultural identity. This led them to the formation of the Lliga de Catalunya and the Union Catalanista. The main Catalan political organisation of the bourgeoisie at the time was the Centre Catalá. Catalanism was known for its protectionism and this caused the split of the Centre Catalá in 1887, which conservative side formed the Lliga Regionalista led by Joan Mañé i Falguer (1823-1901). Bourgeois Catalanism consisted in attitudes and responses. This position viewed Catalunya as a special place, different from the rest of Spain in most aspects. They had no confidence in the centralised state and did not trust the National government.

Another important character in the Catalanist<sup>17</sup> movement was Josep Torras i Bagés. He had a great influence in the clergy of Barcelona and also in all Catalan life: art, architecture, literature and poetry. Antoni Gaudí and the poet Joan Maragall were followers of Torras' ideas. He was a traditionalist; born and raised

in the countryside of Catalunya he followed the principles of the *Casa Pairal*<sup>18</sup> and the patriarchal family. Torras' version of Catalan Independence was shown in his book *The Catalan Tradition* (1892). He insisted in regionalism against nationalism, being the natural state to be in, the one related to the natural origins of man and the bond of this to the Church. To what regarded culture Torras i Bagés was as strict as he was about regionalism. He believed in folk culture such as festivals against modernism and internationalism.

During this period characters such as Manuel Girona i Agraful (1818-1905) (figure 2-09) and Eusebi Güell i Bacigalupi (1800-1872) (figure 2-10) were powerful heads of dynasties in Barcelona. They sponsored the industrial and urban development of the city and region. Especially the Güell family was extremely powerful; owning in 1895 a great amount of shares in shipping, railroads, steel, Portland cement, domestic gas and were owners of the Caixa and the Banco Hispano- Colonial. The end of this economical period was signed by the fall of the production of wine due to the *phylloxera vastatrix*, a kind of aphid that affects vines. The period between 1880 and 1890 was a period of economical crisis where the crisis of the vines ended up affecting the whole lease and banking system of the entire region.

### Anarchism at the turn of the century

The problems caused by the lack of hygiene and workers rights, together with a growing antipathy for the Church and all that was clerical brought with it the rise of anarchism. One of the main inspirers of anarchism in Spain and especially among the industrial workers of Barcelona was Mikhail Bakunin (1814-76). He had been a member of the *International Socialist*

*Movement* until his struggles with Karl Marx made him leave the organisation. But his influence in Catalunya was brought by his Italian disciple Giuseppe Fanelli. He arrived in Barcelona in 1869 and his influence was fast and steady. The belief of the Catalan folk in the power of human society and the deception of the Church and all governments that had ruled the region in the past decades made this a very susceptible people to a proposal such as that of anarchism.

There were bombings throughout the 90s to organisations such as Foment de Treball Nacional and the captain general of Catalunya Arsenio Martínez Campos. But the main anarchist display was that of the bombs thrown by Santiago Salvador at the Liceu theatre, in 1893, during the performance of William Tell, which killed 22 people. This brought panic to Barcelona and a state of siege was declared. The following spectacular bombing happened in June 1896 during the feasts of Corpus Christi. The following years saw the crudest repression of the police and many anarchists were shot.

The population of Barcelona in 1900 was almost of half a million people (table 01). The last decade of the century in Barcelona was one of relative progress. For the bourgeoisie this was a period of commercial development, where there were few obstacles. For the middle classes instead this was an unstable period.

The *Republican* Catalanism coming from the middle and lower classes could not really compete with the conservative Catalanism of the bourgeois bosses. The highest classes, those that were in charge of the main industries and exportations, especially textiles, were in rather good terms with Madrid. They needed their support, for it was to the rest of Spain and the Spanish ex colonies that the Catalan market was

exporting to.

The *Conservative* Catalanism was relegated to the professional higher middle classes. In 1892 the Catalan constitution was signed in Manresa under the presidency of the Union Catalanista of Domènech i Montaner. This document mainly declared Catalunya in charge of its laws as a state. It addressed the issues of civil, penal and mercantile laws, only Catalans could pursue professional careers in Catalunya, Catalan forces would be in charge of public order and education would be carried out by Catalan principles. Madrid did not accept this document, but it was the base of the new political party Lliga Regionalista that gained seats in the national government.

<sup>16</sup> Cerdà i Sunyer, Idelfons, *Monografia Estadística de la Classe Obrera*, Barcelona, 1856

<sup>17</sup> Marfany, J.L., *La cultura del Catalanisme: el nacionalisme català en els seus inicis*, Barcelona, Editorial Empuries, 1996

<sup>18</sup> Casa Pairal: This was a traditional Catalan and Gallega family institution. The house would belong to the family and the eldest of sons would inherit it and raise his own family there. Each sibling would have his own function in the Casa Pairal.

As social unrest arose due to the unacceptable poor working conditions and protests raised at the turn of the century, the upper middle class that was in charge of the industry of Barcelona came up with a potential solution to the social problems. Religious unions would develop, as they had in France due to the papal encyclical of 1891. In Barcelona this method was not strong enough to fight against the growing anarchist ideas. A Jesuit, Antoni Vincent was the one to try to apply this system to Catalunya, he did not lack success in the countryside, where conservative peasants were more Catholic. However in the city this was not the case and by 1904 only 4% of the workers of Barcelona had joined the Catholic Syndicates.

In 1900 the situation of the workers was still in disadvantage compared to the evolution that was taking place in the rest of Europe. The lowest *jornaler*<sup>19</sup> earned two pesetas a day, a skilled factory worker made five pesetas. About fifty thousand women worked in the textile mills of Barcelona, earning half the pay of men. Even children were active at work being almost thirty thousand in Barcelona earning even less than women. In the textile industry men and women would work over 70 hours a week and there was almost no right for free Sunday. This situation changed in 1904 with the labour laws. Still, Catalans, as well as all Spanish, would have to wait until 1919 for the eight-hour day.

Epidemics and lack of hygiene were still one of the biggest problems in dwelling and workplace as factories; there were no safety measures in neither.

### **War with Morocco and the Setmana Tragica**

The loss of the last colonies of Spain on the Caribbean and the Philippines made the

country focus its view on the African continent. After discovering mining sources in Rif<sup>20</sup>, the conservative governor Antonio Maura decided to send a military mission to the north of Africa with the expectation of solving the economical loss caused by the loss of the colonies. The reaction of Barcelona to this decision was crude and violent. In July of 1909 the Setmana Tragica took place. The problem was that most of the richer classes could buy themselves out of war by paying a certain amount that the poorer classes could not afford, so these groups of workers reacted violently. The conflict started when some female members of the bourgeoisie were giving medals to the soldiers that were departing. These men threw their medals into the water and the struggle began. Shortly after, the working masses were taking over the army and Guardia Civil headquarters. Anarchism resurfaced here and many churches and clerical buildings were burned or destroyed in the following days. The revolt left 78 dead, thousands of wounded and 112 buildings destroyed. Maura reacted with violence and repression. International criticism made the king fire Maura and replace him for the liberal Segismundo Moret.

This event had its consequences on labour policies after that, mainly, the Catalan institution Solidaritat Catalana, voted to extend the union to a national scale forming the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo in 1911. The military repression also had consequences in the politics of Catalunya, Catalanisme finally took a wider toll in the elections and the Mancomunitat de Catalunya was formed. The social struggle of the 1920s finally leads way to the coup d'état of the captain general Primo de Ribera.

### 2.1.3 – Leisure Precedents - Leisure as social manifestation

*This section is intended to give an overview on the bottom-up manifestations of leisure in Barcelona. Some of these activities had little to do with the waterfront but show what type of behaviour Barcelonese citizens had in their free time. Indoor and outdoor leisure activities and the differences of these activities between social classes are explored. This will help to understand the how and why of the decisions that were made from the top to provide these leisure spaces in the period studied.*

#### Leisure in the Catalan countryside

Leisure in the Catalunya countryside can be compared to farmlands across Europe, the social relations and the customs and habits were conservative and follow the long-terms of history. Particularly in Spain and Catalunya there was a very strict and accepted the hierarchy of power and a predominance of the *Casa Pairal*.

*“No Polynesian or African tribe had a more rigid hierarchy than that of the rural Catalan family as it existed through the middle ages and into the seventeenth century. It was a society of pure production that had to make everything it consumed, including its amusements: hence the role of the *llar*<sup>21</sup> as the primal site of Catalan folk culture, music making, song, and recitation of *rondalles*<sup>22, 23</sup>.”*

Leisure activities in the city for certain social classes did follow the patterns of the countryside. However, the diversity of a growing

metropolis provided many more facets adapted to social class and location in the city.

#### Leisure in Barcelona before 1870

Leisure in the first half of the nineteenth century in Barcelona was characterised by the refinement of music and theatre.

The love of music in Barcelona has been sustained throughout the centuries; especially the nineteenth century was a time of worship of this form of art. During decades the upper middle social class of Barcelona was fixated with Italian Opera. Francisco Javier Castaños y Aragorri, capitan general of Catalunya under Ferdinand VII, had been one of the most enthusiastic sponsors of music in Barcelona. With this purpose he imported an Italian Opera company and installed its director. The works of Rossini, Donizzetti, Verdi and later Puccini were played in the Teatre de la Santa Creu on the Ramblas. The military engineer Francisco Cabrer had built the Teatre Principal in 1778 and it replaced the old Teatre de la Santa Creu. By the 1860's the theatre could not hold the demand of places and it was extended. By the same time another theatre was built on the Ramblas: the Gran Teatre Liceu. This was built between 1844 and 1847 and became the place of the upper bourgeoisie of Barcelona. The building was designed by Miquel Garriga i Roca to host 4000 people.

The Liceu was a public theatre, but the Club connected to it was an exclusive and private space. The theatre and the club were spaces where the spectacle was not only on stage but also in the public. It was a place to show yourself off, where the old and the new wealthy would meet and discuss events and news. It was the home of the high bourgeois society. This created some resentment amongst local musicians. The music that was played and listened to at

the Liceu was all foreign, mainly Italian, and this became a problem for local musicians who wanted to participate in the scene with their own compositions. The one to criticise this issue was Josep Anselm Clavé i Camps (1824-75). He was a musician, song collector and politician. Clavé was convinced that music was not a good of the higher richer classes but that it was an asset of the people, rescuing Catalan traditional music. Clavé had also been a faithful socialist and an active politician demonstrating in the *Jamancia*<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> day worker

<sup>20</sup> mountainous region of north Morocco, from Cape Spartel and Tangier in the west to Ras Kebdana and the Moulouya River in the east, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the north to the river of Ouargha in the south. It is part of the Cordillera Bética that also includes the mountains of Southern Spain.

<sup>21</sup> *Llar*: This could be translated as fireplace, but it is also understood as the place of meeting. Even the kindergarten for Catalans is called *Llar d'Infantes*.

<sup>22</sup> stories or fables

<sup>23</sup> Hughes, Robert, *Barcelona*, Vintage Books, New York, 1992. pg.101

<sup>24</sup> *Jamancia*: rebellious anarchist group.



figure 2-11 - 1830s - Barcelona

author: Guesdon

source: García Espuche, Albert, Ciutats: del globus al satel.lit, Barcelona, Madrid, Electa España, 1994.

Between the Ciutadella and the limit of the city there is the Passeig de la Esplanada. Passeig de Gracia begins at the end of the Ramblas and continues westwards

Music was not only performed in the context of theatre but also in the form of dance. The Sardana is the traditional dance of Catalunya. The dance consists in a group of people standing in circle and holding hands, alternating male and female in the circle. The music is a 6/8 compass, as many traditional dances in the Spanish coast of the Mediterranean. Its origin is not certain, but it is believed that it came from ancient Greek times, where this type of dance was already being practiced. However, the origin of the modern Sardana is more recent, coming from the mid

nineteenth century. The first official account of the Sardana was the *método para aprender a bailar la sardana llarga*, written by Pep Ventura and published in 1850. It is said to come from the area of Empordà, close to Barcelona. In 1860, on the occasion of the visit of the queen Isabel II, for the festes of Montserrat, Pep Ventura and Miquel Pardàs assisted with their *coblas*, to join the spectacle. This dance has been adopted as a symbol of Catalan identity since the mid nineteenth century.

Some of the first specific physical locations for leisure in the city were as in other cities, the boulevard. The first one to be built in Barcelona was the Passeig de l'Esplanada, located next to the Ciutadella. Later, the Passeig de Gracia (figure 2-11) was designed and built to connect the city of Barcelona to the village of Gracia in 1821.

Other leisure activities included cockfights, and bullfights. Cockfights were generalised throughout European towns and cities since ancient history. In Barcelona it is believed that these were brought by the Phoenicians or the conquering Moors. This sport, even though condemned now by ecologist and animal rights activists has always been a part of cultural tradition in Spain and Latin America.

Bullfighting, as in the rest of Spain, was also a popular source of entertainment in Barcelona. Before the building of the first Bullfighting plaza, this practice would be held in the city's squares, and it was done on a horse. In 1834, Plaza el Torin, the first Plaza de Toros of Barcelona was built of brick and wood, in the limit between the Barceloneta and the Ciutadella. This building was completely finished in 1888 and provided space for 12,000 spectators.

## Leisure in Barcelona – 1870-1930

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Barcelonese experienced the proliferation of new shapes of leisure, recreation and social relations.

### Outdoor activities

*Excursionism* took deep roots in Catalan culture. This was a movement related to tourism in a country where tourism did not yet exist. Excursionism meant purposeful educated travel with the aim of discovering one's own country. This was a discipline that was influenced by Ruskin through the scientific search of geology, biology and ecology by personal experience. Through this movement a spirit of ruin restoration was invited, tours of the countryside of Catalunya were organised by architects poets and historians. The first excursionist society was founded in 1876, which then split and reformed in 1890 as the Excursionist Centre of Catalunya. Two architects were especially influenced by this movement, they were Josep Vilaseca i Casanovas (1848-1910) and Lluís Domènech i Montaner (1849-1923). A great inspirer of these two architects was Gottfried Semper. His book *Style in the Industrial and Structural Arts, or Practical Aesthetics* (1860-63) can be considered influential to these young Catalan architects.

During this period in Barcelona two events in the same location added a new space of leisure to the city. These were the design and building of the Parc de la Ciutadella by Josep Fontseré and the subsequent Exposició Universal held there in 1888. These will be further analysed in the following chapters.

By the beginning of the century the mountain area around Barcelona was beginning to be populated and especially used for leisure

purposes. The funicular to Tibidabo was inaugurated in 1901 by doctor Andreu and in 1908 the Ajuntament bought great part of the Montjuic. By 1917 there was already a theme park at Tibidabo that was extremely popular.

Bull fighting became a very popular leisure activity in the beginning of the twentieth century. Two great Plazas de Toros were inaugurated: Plaza de Toros las Arenas was inaugurated in 1909, by a design of Augusto Font I Carreras and had space for more than 14,000 spectators. Soon after, in 1916, the most famous Plaza de Toros in Barcelona, la Monumental was opened in 1914 under the name *El Sport*. These plazas would continue to hold bullfighting events during most of the twentieth century.

Sports developed slowly in Barcelona and the beginnings of them were, as in the rest of Europe, limited to the higher social classes.

“All kinds of sports were essentially distinguished. Crowned by the fame of lovers of progress, some members of the good society replaced the horseback riding for the bicycle”<sup>25</sup>

The first local event that registered sports practised in public, was the Festes de la Mercè of 1868, where horse races, a swimming competition and a regatta took place. It would take some decades until sports became a more common form of leisure.

The practice of sport and physical activity as a whole became popularised in the last years of the century. A great amount of swimming, tennis and football clubs were inaugurated and immediately put to use. Clubs such as the FC Barcelona, the RCD Espanyol, the Club de Natació de Barcelona and the Real Club de Tennis

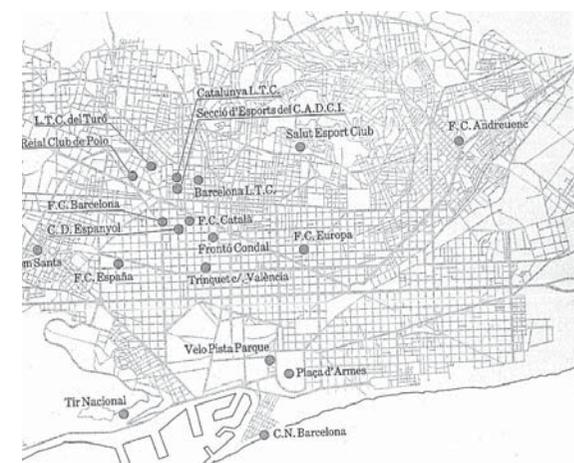
de Barcelona became rapidly popular. Buildings for sports began with the hippodrome of Can Tunis, opened in 1883. Later, the Barcelona Futbol Club and the Lawn Tennis club Barcelona were active since 1899.

In 1911 the magazine *Stadium* (figure 2-12) published an article that showed a map of the city with the sports locations in it and counted twelve football fields, two tennis lawns, two velodromes and one swimming club.

Football would later be the sport that would attract the working classes. The new clubs inaugurated in the workers quarters such as that of Jupiter in Poblenou opened in 1907 and Fabra i Coats in Sant Andreu opened in 1917 gave a new option of leisure for the economically less fortunate. Apart from football, cycling and swimming would gain popularity among the working classes.

figure 2-12 - 1911 - Football stadiums in Barcelona  
author: revista Stadium

source: Fabre, Jaume, *Noticiari de Barcelona: De l'Exposició Universal als Jocs Olímpics*, Barcelona, La Campana, 1991.



<sup>25</sup> Sempronio, *Barcelona era una fiesta*, Editorial Selecta, Barcelona, 1980, p.206.



**figure 2-13-** 1905-Plano de Barcelona propiedad del excelentísimo Ayuntamiento Constitucional  
source:Diputacion Provincial de Barcelona, No106  
Highlight on avenida Parallel, where bars and cabarets were placed

### Indoor Activities

Leisure for the higher classes in Barcelona had much to do with religion in this period. Most of the houses of the rich had their own chapel and especially women would spend hours in prayer.

The situation for the middle classes was different. They were much more concerned with the cult of tranquillity. This was a conservative environment where the woman was in charge of the house and the children and spent most of her day taking care of domestic responsibilities and having a reduced and convenient social life. Girls would be married off and love and romance belonged mostly to literature and not to real life. As the end of the century approached and due to woman's labour in the World Exhibition, the stigma put on the role of women was beginning to slowly change. In the middle class the women began to be able to go out to the streets and buy their own clothes. They would go for walks on Passeig de Gracia and though they did not sit in cafes they did show themselves in the street. The house of the bourgeois family was always crowded with people, the children's tutor, the dancing master, the tailor, doctor, lawyer, notary would all be visiting the house. Entertainment there was based mainly at home. The piano was played and games like Parcheesi and whist were played in the free time by children and adults. The man of the house would spend most of the day at the office, but in his free time he would enjoy the promenades through the Passeig de Gracia and in the cafes and private clubs.

Other spaces in the city were adopted as leisure locations. Theatre in the beginning of the twentieth century became a popular past time for a wider section of the population. The Liceu was active still for the higher classes but a new area of

theatres was blooming at the Avinguda Parallel. The Café Sevilla, for example was inaugurated there in 1898. The Teatre Espanyol was built there in 1892 and the circus performers Onofri opened a new theatre, the Comtal, in 1903. Many other theatres were opened in that area, and later cabarets, bars and cafes were added to the theatre.

Cinema arrived in Barcelona early on. Just a year after the brothers Lumière introduced the moving pictures in Paris, in 1896, the photographer Napoleó Fernandez opened the first cinematographer of Barcelona. A specialist in the subject, Palmira Gonzales, stated that one of the reasons for the popularity of this entertainment was that it was accessible also for the lower classes. Many cinemas were built by the beginning of the century, but very few of them survived for their lack of infrastructure. By 1911 though there were already 139 cinemas in Barcelona.

### Leisure for the lower classes

Of course leisure for the poorer section of society had little to do with their middle class neighbours. Only women from labour classes worked. These classes had their bars, cabarets and dance halls that were concentrated in the Barri Xinó (figure 2-13) and along the Avinguda Parallel. The working classes, in contrast with their counterparts in the rest of Europe preferred the café and club. There was a tradition of labour party meetings that would last throughout this whole period.

Excursionist associations, free-thinking centres, spiritist centres, republican casinos, choral groups and popular atheneums were meeting places for the proletariat. According to Tatjer it was difficult to separate sociability

and the need of cultural incentives in the labour environments of Barcelona. The study, reading and discussion of ideologies were very hard to avoid in these environments. Excursions were also a current activity for the working classes. The press was a tool of the working classes, publications such as *Acracia* (1886-88) and *El Productor* (1887-93) were good exponents of this means of communication.

All in all, the Barcelonese society went through a period of transformation of leisure use, all social classes involved, and as pointed by Meller<sup>26</sup> it was not only the locals but also the inhabitants of the whole region, that, with the appearance of the railway would visit Barcelona on feast days to take advantage of the entertainment and amusements in the city.

**Press and Literature** – reflection of the local culture according to leisure

As mentioned before, literature in Catalan was an instrument for the strengthening of local identity. There was also an event to celebrate the local literature and especially poetry. This was the Jocs Florals or Flower Games. Every year, from 1859 on a literary elite of Catalans would gather in Barcelona to give yet more meaning to the significance of the Catalan literature. The Jocs Florals had their origin in the Middle ages and the fact of resurfacing this celebration was not casual for this period was praised by the Catalan elite for it would reinforce the idea of identity of it people as an old traditional culture. The Jocs Florals were open to everybody, but some pointed the mediocrity of the poets that would participate in such an event.

In the arts, education and literature, the openness that came from outside Spanish borders

in this period is established. The republicans, convinced of the importance of education in the future of Spain establish the project of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, with Francisco Giner de los Ríos and Emilio Castelar heading it.

In literature, the romanticism gave way to realism with Benito Perez Galdós, Emilia Pardo Bazán and Leopoldo Alas Clarín as the greatest exponents in Spain. By the end of the nineteenth century, the so-called *generación del 98* became popular in literature and other arts. This generation of writers was inspired by the moral and social crisis created by the loss of the last colonial territories in America and Asia. The movement in which they are said to be inspired was the *regeneracionismo*<sup>27</sup>. Amongst the most relevant representatives of this generation we can count Miguel de Unamuno, Enrique de Mesa, Ramiro de Maeztu, Antonio Machado and the brothers Ramiro and Pío Baroja.

The first realist novelist to write in Catalan was Narcís Oller i Moragas (1846-1930) (figure 2-14), he wrote *La febre d' Or*<sup>28</sup>, which was evidently based on the literature of Zola. This is the story of a new rich speculator, who lives in Sarriá, the new neighbourhood in the upper part of the city of Barcelona. This book shows the life in the sitting rooms of the Eixample and the world of consumer objects that became more present than the economy that provided them.



**figure 2-14** - Narcís Oller i Moragas  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotográfico. AHCB-AF - c42/854 - Cunill

<sup>26</sup> Meller, Helen, *European Cities 1890-1930's, History, Culture and the Built Environment*, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, New York, 2001.

<sup>27</sup> Regeneracionismo is the name given to the intellectual and scientific movement that took place between centuries XIX and XX. It searched for the causes of the decay of Spain as a nation. It is important, however, to differentiate it from the Generation of the 98, with which it is usually confused, since, although both movements express the same pessimistic judgment about Spain, the regeneracionistas do it from an objective, documented and scientific a form, whereas the Generation of 1898 does in more literary subjective and artistic form.

<sup>28</sup> Oller i Moragas, Narcís, *La febre d'or*, edicion 62, dins MOLC, 1980.



**figure 2-15** - Plànol de la ciutat enmurallada de "Barcino"  
author: Hansen  
source:<http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imagen:Barcino.png>

**figure 2-16** - 1856 - Barcelona by Wyngaerde  
author: A. van Wyngaerde  
technique: aquarelle  
source: Alemany i Llovera, Joan, El Puerto de Barcelona historia i actualitat, Barcelona l'Avenç 1984. Biblioteca ETSAB.



#### 2.1.4 – Urban context – the city and the waterfront

*In this section we do approach the subject matter more closely. The development of the town into city and the political events which conditioned its shape show a close connection between the development of the city and the harbour, even though the decisions made for one and the other might have developed in opposite directions. The traditional uses of the waterfront for bathing appear as a resilient activity that prevails, even though the development of the harbour left consistently less space for leisure activities.*

#### City limits

The city of Barcelona had been walled subsequently, first by the settlement of Barcino in the Roman Empire (figure 2-15), later by the medieval walls of the Visigoths and later by the Bourbon dynasty (figure 2-16). The mid-nineteenth century saw two urban transformations that had a significant social meaning. One was the tearing down of the walls of the Bourbon Empire, the other one was the plan de Eixample by Idelfons Cerdà (figure 2-17).

The Bourbon walls limited the city and it was impossible to expand an urban tissue beyond them. Even though population grew steadily it was not until the city was bursting and hygiene and space problems arose that the Bourbon walls were finally torn down. One tentative of breaking this limit was the road designed to link the village of Gracia with the Ramblas in Barcelona. Gracia was a town to the north-west of the city, on the bottom of the Tibidabo Mountain. This was a workers town but during the beginning of the

nineteenth century it had also become an area for second homes of some Barcelonese families. The first project for a road to Gracia was designed by a military engineer in 1821 and consisted on a properly paved road that linked town and city. The first public transport units did a daily trip to Gracia and allowed the easier communication of the village with the city and the harbour. The protagonism of the port as the main location for strolling was beginning to be changed for the new Passeig de Gracia by the 1840s.

The issue of the walls of Barcelona brought political turmoil. The Madrid based government and the army wanted them kept up, Barcelona and its civil government wanted them destroyed. It was not until 1854, after General Espartero had fallen and the Ajuntament and the Catalan press had enough political force to tear them down. The government finally approved the tearing down of the walls with one exception: the citadel.

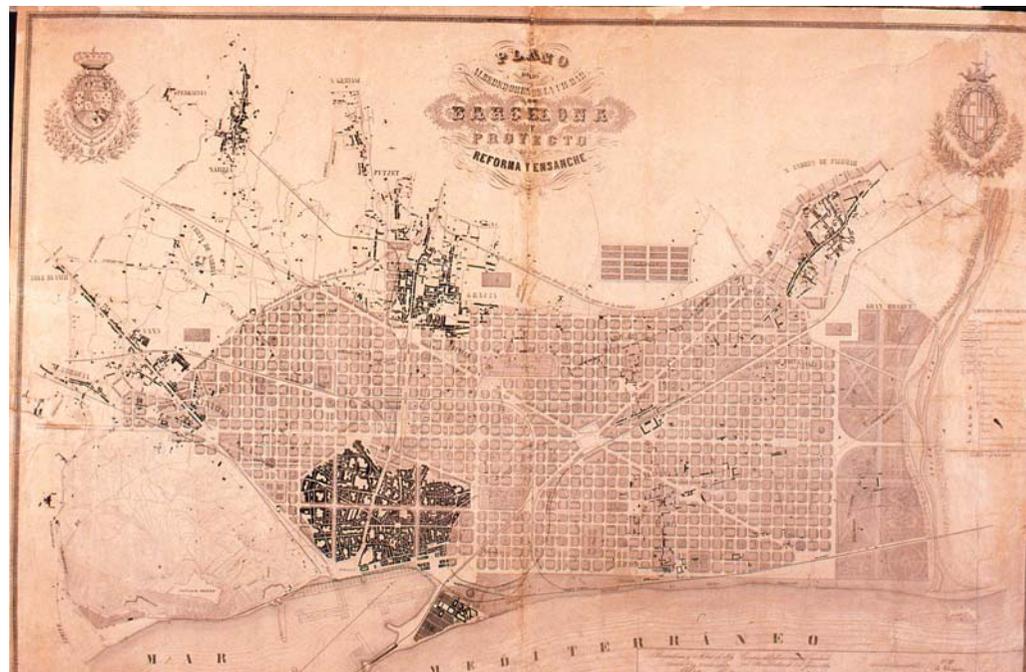
The phenomenon of the destruction of the walls was not only a national one. Throughout all Europe this was taking place<sup>29</sup>: Even though the political situation was different in each geographical location, many cities destroyed their walls due to the need of expansion and to the lack of need of physical protection. Geneva in 1846, Copenhagen between 1850 and 1857, Vienna in 1857 and Florence in 1861 all tore down their walls. Other cities took a longer time to make this decision and open up their cities for new planning. Cities like Lille or Perpignan would keep them until well into the end of the nineteenth century.

## The Eixample of Cerdà

Idelfons Cerdà i Sunyer (1815-1876) (figure 2-18) was in charge of the most significant and revolutionary transformation of any Spanish city. Cerdà was deeply affected by the French ideas of ideal community and was influenced by the socialist principles of Étienne Cabet<sup>30</sup>.

Cabet had conceived the utopian land of Icaria<sup>31</sup> (figure 2-19), a territory divided into a hundred exactly equal departments, with a provincial capital in the exact geometric centre of each department. The general capital was a circular city called Icara, having wide streets lined with trees and canals radiating from its central point. This was an inspiration to Cerdà and his principles of equality and the wish to provide a living space where there would be no social hierarchies is shown in his grid plan for Barcelona. Of course this was an ideal, and as soon as the Eixample was being constructed some areas were more desirable and expensive than others. According to Meller<sup>32</sup>, Cerdà was also strongly influenced by the ideas of the French mining engineer Frédéric Le Play (1806-1882)<sup>33</sup>. Le Play, who had published *Les Ouvriers Européens*<sup>34</sup> in 1855, had introduced the idea of using social surveys to understand the conditions of the city and then use these studies for a proper urban planning. Cerdà partly followed these ideas.

Cerdà was a Catalan and studied civil engineering in Madrid. In 1849 he moved to Barcelona to make a comprehensive study of the city. In 1855, the year after the demolition of the walls begun, he drew the first comprehensive surveyed plan of Barcelona and its surroundings. In 1856 he managed to put together the *Statistical monograph on the working class in Barcelona in 1856*. This publication was the product of a Commission formed by Cerdà whose objective was:



**figure 2-17** - 1859 - Plano de los alrededores de la ciudad de Barcelona y Proyecto de Reforma y Ensanche  
author: Ildefons Cerdà  
source: Arxiu Històric de Barcelona. file 10055.

<sup>29</sup> Sobrequés i Callico, Jaume, *Historia de Barcelona, La Ciutat Industrial, 1833-1897*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1995.

<sup>30</sup> French philosopher and utopian socialist. Creator of the Icarian communities, of greater influence in Barcelona and in the US than in his native France.

<sup>31</sup> Cabet, Etienne, *Voyage en Icarie*, Adamant Media Corporation, 2002, original Paris, 1842.

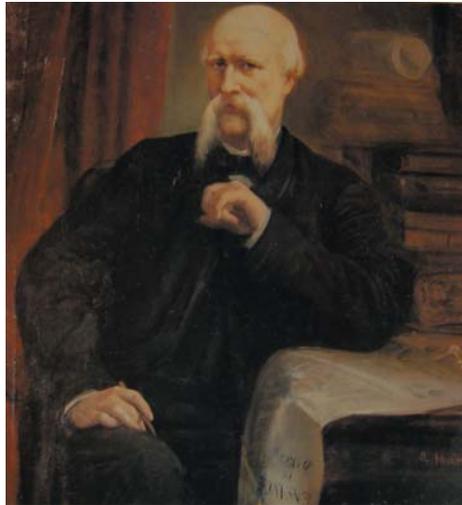
<sup>32</sup> Meller, Helen, *European Cities 1890-1930's, History, Culture and the Built Environment*, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, New York, 2001.

<sup>33</sup> Brooke, M.Z., *Le Play: engineer and social scientist: the life and work of Frédéric Le Play*, London, Longmans, 1970.

<sup>34</sup> Le Play, Frédéric, *Les ouvriers européens [Texte imprimé] : étude sur les travaux, la vie domestique et la condition morale des populations ouvrières de l'Europe ; précédées d'un exposé de la méthode d'observation*, Tours : A. Mame et fils, 1877-1879

<sup>35</sup> Cerdà i Sunyer, Idelfons, *Monografia Estadística de la Clase Obrera*, Barcelona, 1856

<sup>36</sup> Cerdà i Sunyer, Idelfons, *Teoria General de la Urbanización. Reforma i Ensanche de Barcelona*, reed. Instituto de Estudios Fiscales, Barcelona, 1968. original 1867.



**figure 2-18** - Ildefons Cerdà i Sunyer  
source: Busquets, Corominas, Eixaguirre, Sabate, Treballs sobre Cerdà i el seu Eixample a Barcelona, More, Barcelona, 1991.



**figure 2-19** - 1848 - Voyage en Icarie  
author: M. Cabet  
technique: print  
source: <http://web.tiscali.it/icaria/urbanistica/cabet/cabet.htm>

“to promote, between factory bosses and workers, an arrangement that would fix, as much as possible, and in a harmonic manner the convenient relation between capital and labour”<sup>35</sup>

This was the basis for all subsequent urban plans of the city. He later published the book *General Theory of Urbanisation, and the Application of its Principles and Doctrines to the Reform and Expansion of Barcelona*<sup>36</sup>, in 1867.

In 1859 the Ajuntament of Barcelona held a competition for a new town plan. There were two main projects on the table, the one of Antoni Rovira i Trias (1816-1889) and the one of Cerdà.

The project of Rovira i Trias (figure 2-20) proposed a ceremonial square which, linked to the old city by an extension of the Ramblas, would act as the centre of a fan. Five distinctive sections were organised around the old city. There would be a succession of hierarchical spaces and a separation of areas in the city. Rovira i Trias' project was said to respond more to the tradition and needs of the Barcelonese bourgeoisie. The drawing of his plan shows the existing structures finely traced and superimposed with the plan Rovira is presenting. This shows how, despite the fact that elements such as the *Ciudadela* were to be destroyed, they still leave a trace in the city. The limits of the citadel and the old Bourbon wall can be seen, the tracing of the boulevard that goes from the old city to Gracia is also present. When it comes to the harbour and the limits between the water and land this difference between reality and project loses strength. The border drawn by the water is strong and dark, while the project for the harbour is light and almost insinuated. The presence of the railway lines is also very marked and does not coincide with the project for the harbour. In any case the whole network



**figure 2-20** - 1856- Plano del proyecto de Ensanche de la Ciudad de Barcelona  
author: Rovira i Trias  
source: Alemany i Llovera, Joan, El Puerto de Barcelona historia i actualitat, Barcelona l'Avenç 1984. Biblioteca ETSAB.

of transport creates a limit between the city and the sea, and isolates the Barceloneta from the rest of the city.

The project of Rovira i Trias was the one selected by the Municipality of Barcelona in November 1859. Eight months later an order came from Madrid to choose the one of Cerdà. Despite being Catalan, and from Barcelona, Cerdà had presented his project directly to the Madrid government. The Madrid government decided to chose the project of Cerdà, despite the decision of Barcelona. This fact was to create some conflicts in the public approval of the project of Cerdà.

Cerdà's plan (figure 2-17) was more radical and more abstract than that of Rovira I Trias. He was not only willing to provide more space for the growth of the city but to create a new social order. This new order would be guaranteed by the form of the city and by the technology and science that supported it.

The plan of Cerdà proposed 550 blocks covering a surface of nine square kilometres. The great land extension that corresponds to the Ensanche, from Montjuïc to the Besós river and from the limits of the medieval city to the old neighbouring populations, is conceived like a regular grid formed by the longitudinal axes of its 20 metre wide streets. Each block or *isla* had a distance of 133.3 meters on each side. The regularity of this grid is imperturbable throughout the whole urban layout, and it provided equality in the location and transportation network, for all streets had the same width and there was no hierarchy of space. There were some exceptions to this rule, for Cerdà respected the tracing of Paseo de Gracia and Rambla de Catalunya, which gave blocks of irregular measurements. Some avenues did have a different width; those were Gran Via, Aragon and Passeig San Joan. Three diagonal avenues, Parallel, Diagonal and Meridiana broke

this grid connecting different parts of the city and proposing a new centre for Barcelona, the plaza de las Glorias.

The city was made up of *barrios* or neighbourhoods; these consisted on groups of 5 by 5 blocks, and would have one school, day care and social centre each. Four neighbourhoods formed a *district*, which would have one market. Four districts would form one *sector*, which would be provided by one urban park, one hospital and two state buildings. The city needed to have one suburban park, one cemetery and one slaughter house according to the first plan of Cerdà.

Each block was chamfered on the corners to allow drivers to see properly if someone was coming around the corner and to provide more sunlight in the streets. Each block would also have a compulsory open space in the centre, which would allow also sunlight and air to the back facades of the buildings.

The Eixample began to be built in 1860 but it took decades to reach anything related to the extension that Cerdà had planned. The morphology of the grid was kept up to a certain extent, but when it came to the main measures of health provided by the plan, they were not attained to. Speculators systematically occupied the open spaces in the middle of the blocks. The ground and first floors were occupied by dwellers, when this was not in the plans for the lack of light an air. The buildings were not constructed in lasting materials and there were many criticisms to the health conditions of the new city. This was due to the fact that though the formal exterior plan of Cerdà was being developed, there was no adequate infrastructure to sustain the development, regarding especially water provision and drainage.

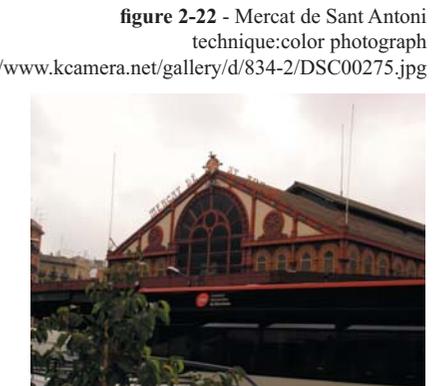
The buildings that were raised on the Eixample during the 1870s were not of a very

high quality and the construction was slow; many of them were even torn down in the 1890s. Only structures such as the Mercat del Born by Josep Fontseré i Mestres (figure 2-21) and the Mercat de Sant Antoni by Antoni Rovira i Trias (figure 2-22) were significant buildings in the period for their iron structures and were kept until today.

The city would later grow rapidly, and the annexation of six neighbouring villages to the city in 1897 produced a great geographic and demographic growth. These were the villages of Sants, Les Corts, Sant Gervasi, Gracia, Sant Andreu del Palomar and Sant Martí de Provençals.



**figure 2-21** - Mercat del Born  
technique: color photograph  
source:[http://foto.epson.com/es/crea\\_foto.asp?idFoto=213179&idAlbum=36397&tamano=5](http://foto.epson.com/es/crea_foto.asp?idFoto=213179&idAlbum=36397&tamano=5)



**figure 2-22** - Mercat de Sant Antoni  
technique: color photograph  
source:<http://www.kcamera.net/gallery/d/834-2/DSC00275.jpg>



**figure 2-23** - 1848 - Muralla del Mar Barcelona  
technique: daguerrotype  
source: Museu Maritim. code: 29291D

**figure 2-24** - 1862 - Barcelona  
author: F. Coello and P. Madoz  
source: Archivo Histórico Municipal. IG.10397/15.2  
The railway line starts next to Plaza del Palacio and follows parallel to Paseo del Cementerio passing by the Plaza de Toros on one side and the Ciudadela on the other



### Waterfront traditional uses

There do not exist many precedents of planned waterfront leisure spaces before the end of the nineteenth century. The harbour was the main development of the waterfront and only the Jardí del General and the Muralla del Mar could be considered as places for promenade before the twentieth century. In 1815 a formal esplanade park had been built with the auspices of the Captain General of Barcelona, Francisco Javier Castaños y Aragorri (1758 - 1852), this was the Jardí del General.

The process of restoration of the Muralla del Mar in the beginning of the nineteenth century was contradictory to the decision already being discussed of demolishing the Walls raised by Bourbon rule. By the mid nineteenth century, the Muralla (figure 2-23) is monumentalised in a process of restoration of the spaces of promenade of the aristocracy of Barcelona, the Ramblas and the waterfront, including the monumentalising of the Plaça del Palau. Contemporary to these works the building of the railway line from Barcelona to Mataró (figure 2-24) in 1851 is the first real limit between the city and the seafront.

However, contemporarily, in the outskirts of the city, the fishing areas of the south and the surroundings of the Besòs were popular beaches for the working classes. The beaches of Can Tunis were popular despite the proximity of the industrial area.

The neighbourhood of Barceloneta<sup>37</sup> went through a different process. The first project for the waterfront neighbourhood was done in 1715, to give dwelling to those who had lost it with the expropriation and construction of the Citadel. The project was actually begun in 1753 but took about a decade to be built to form a neighbourhood (figure 2-25).

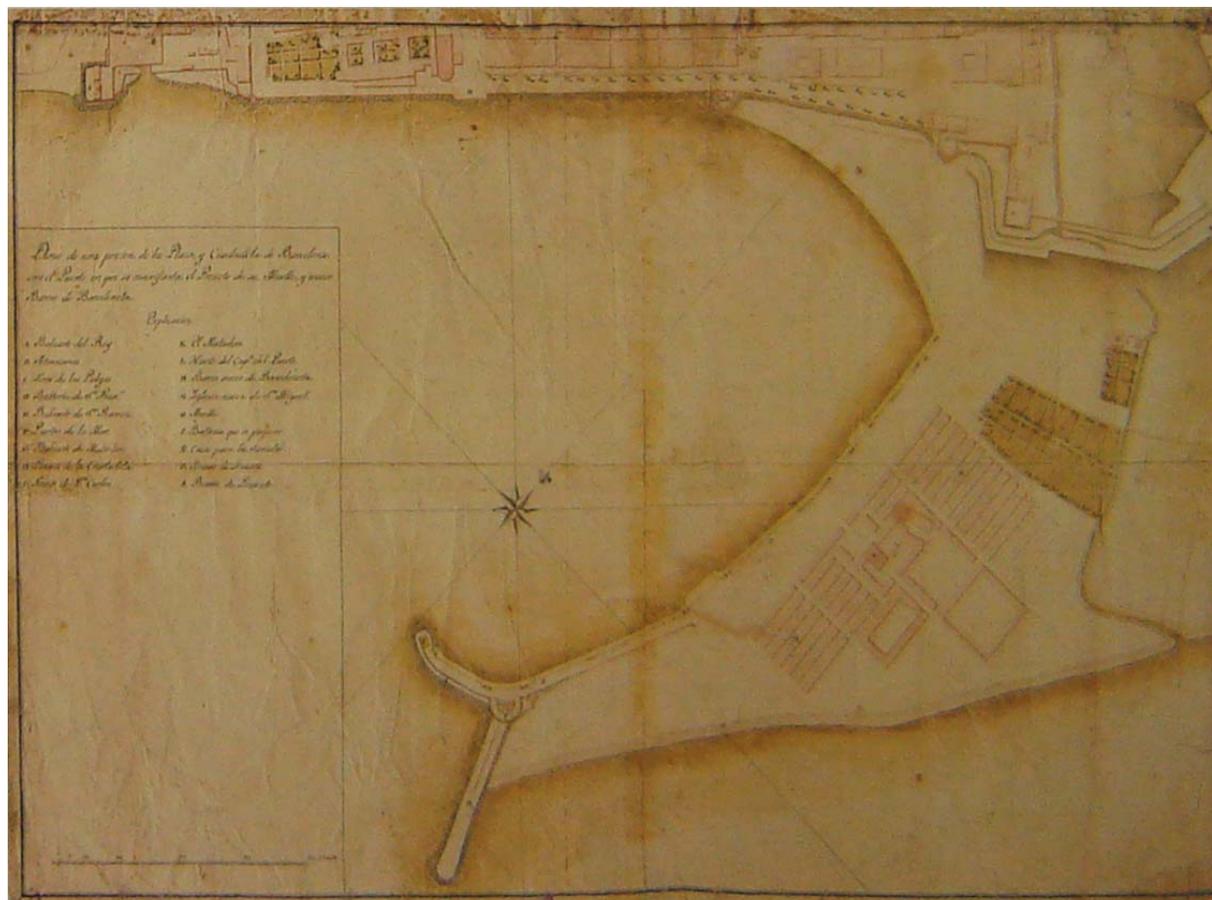
The neighbourhood of Barceloneta was always considered a seafront neighbourhood, but as the development of the city was gravitating to the industrial activity by the mid nineteenth century, Barceloneta also did. Industry in expansion needed new areas for development. Industries first took over spaces around the borders of the medieval city and later they took over a great portion of Barceloneta. The situation of the neighbourhood, close to the harbour and to the railways made of it an ideal place for the development of industrial facilities. The availability of sea water and a tradition of artisan activities undoubtedly helped the neighbourhood become an industrial area. According to the study of Cerdà<sup>38</sup> of 1856 10 % of the urbanised area of Barceloneta was already occupied by machinery workshops. The growth of population of Barceloneta was greater even than in the rest of the city, it was multiplied by five between 1822 and 1900, despite the epidemics of cholera morbo in 1854 and yellow fever in 1870.

Once the south-western side of the Barceloneta was consolidated for lands for the harbour, the northern part of it began its expansion for leisure purposes. This is how the primitive Mar Vella was transformed in the baths of Astillero, San Miguel and Orientales.

The beaches in Barcelona, away from the harbour, had always been popular. Apart from these and especially since the last decades of the nineteenth century, they began to become organised. In 1872 the first baths were installed, the Baños Orientales, which followed the already existing ones of Sant Miquel and Astillero. By the end of the century the most popular baths of the time, the baths of Sant Sebastià, were inaugurated. Slightly further the baths of Poble Nou were opened in 1886.

Since mid nineteenth century Barceloneta had been considered a space of entertainment for the city. Both boulevards, the Don Carlos, which went from la Puerta del Mar up to the cemetery and the Nacional next to the harbour were extremely popular. The Plaza de Toros, which would not only hold bullfighting but also other kinds of spectacles, was the only one in the city between 1822 and 1900. Besides this Barceloneta was well known for its little dining houses and restaurants provided originally for the workers.

This period also sees the development of one waterfront location in the harbour for leisure purposes, which was the *Chiringuito del Puerto*<sup>39</sup>. This was placed in the intersection of the ramblas and the harbour and it would be the place where the passengers of the ship to Mallorca would wait for their trip.



**figure 02-25** - 1753-plano de una porcion de la plaza de la ciudadela de Barcelona con el puerto en que se manifiesta el proyecto de muelle y nuevo barrio de la Barceloneta  
source: Archivo Histórico Municipal. Code IG 2735

<sup>37</sup> Tatjer i Mir, Merce, *La Barceloneta del siglo XVIII al Plan de la Ribera*, Barcelona, Saturno, 1973.

García-Martín, Manuel, *El Barrio de la playa de Barcelona que la voz popular llama Barceloneta*, Barcelona Catalana de Gas, 1989.

<sup>38</sup> Cerdà i Sunyer, Idelfons, *Teoría General de la Urbanización. Reforma y Ensanche de Barcelona*, reed. Instituto de Estudios Fiscales, Barcelona, 1968.

<sup>39</sup> Castells Joan, 'Guia Urbana de la Diversión', in Sanchez Suarez, Alejandro, *Barcelona, 1888-1929: Modernidad, Ambicion y Conflictos de una Ciudad Sonada (Cervantes Completo)*, Barcelona, Alianza, 2001.



**figure 2-26** - gravat de la ciutat i el litoral de Barcelona entre 1565 i 1570 pero l'obra civitates orbis terrarumeditata a Colonia a 1572 source:Alemaný i Llovera, Joan, El Puerto de Barcelona historia i actualitat, Barcelona l'Avenç 1984. Biblioteca ETSAB.

## The Harbour – growth and development

The harbour of Barcelona<sup>40</sup> has been since the birth of the city, the centre of connection of infrastructure, transportation and trade. It has never been a stable structure, it has changed as a structure in itself and it has also transformed the profile of the coast affecting all activities carried out in the area.

The first information on the construction of a harbour in Barcelona dates back to 1434. Then, the only harbour that was known to have a pier and defence towers in that area of the Mediterranean at the time was the one of Marseille. By 1439, the Barcelona harbour, with the authorisation of King Alfonso V, was starting to be built. The following years were times of economical crisis in Catalunya and this led to less commercial activity and the slow building of the harbour. The building of the harbour was being financed by the *dret d'ancoratge*<sup>41</sup>. This stipend was not enough for the proper construction of the harbour, so this fact led to an even slower materialisation of the project.

Since 1440 the port of Barcelona was trading with several ports throughout the Mediterranean. This can be seen in the register of anchorage. The local ports of Catalunya were those of Cotlliure, Sant Feliú de Guixols, Blanes, Palamós and Tortosa. Among the ports of the other kingdoms of the confederation were those of Burriana, Valencia, Mallorca and in a smaller scale Sicily, Naples and Sardinia. International trade was also done with the harbours of France, and even the further eastern Mediterranean harbours such as Alexandria and Rhodes in Greece.

The harbour during the following centuries went through transformations and growth but in general it followed a sustained line

of trade and a morphology (figure 2-26) that did not change much until the nineteenth century.

The use of the steam power engine changed the morphology and weight of the ships. This event combined with the beginning of the use of the railway, brought with it the transformation of the harbour and its environment.

The location of the harbour just in front of the centre of Barcelona brought several conflicts in the use of the city. Through the plans and projects for the area between the harbour and the city of mid-nineteenth century a new system of circulation arises. The building of the Estació de França close to the harbour brought monumental formal link between the Barceloneta and the harbour, but the railroad line caused a functional separation between these areas.

During the nineteenth century the Port Autònom was established as an organisation that would regulate the functions of trade and the physical environment of the harbour. This would eventually bring an end to the communication of the city with its waterfront as the harbour developed and separated itself from the city.

## The projects for the waterfront of José Rafo, Garriga i Roca and Soler i Gloria

The physical and demographic growth of Barcelona and its hinterland that led way to the proposal of the Eixample and the project of Cerdà, also carried with it the need of transformation and growth of the harbour. The period between 1869 and 1914 coincides with the time considered by specialists<sup>42</sup> in harbour history that of free trade, that finishes in the First World War.

In December 1868 the Junta d'Obres del Port was formed. This organisation was in charge of the transformations of the harbour in

all its dimensions and for the first time it was a decentralised system of management which allowed an easier development of projects. The Junta allowed the faster development of the works for the port. This brought as a consequence the building of the Moll de la Muralla. This harbour area, strongly connected to the city would change the speed of trade and traffic and also insure the development of the area of Sant Bertrán as an industrialised area depending on the activities of the harbour.

The first project for the waterfront presented by Cerdá in his proposal for the Eixample of Barcelona was that of José Rafo (figure 2-27), engineer of Caminos Canales i Puertos. The interesting part of this project was that it was the first one to take into account all the variables about the harbour and its relation to the city and especially it mentioned the history of the harbour in the descriptive memory of his proposal. His project developed a set of interior piers that increased the perimeter of waterfront. The main elements of this project were the extension of the northern pier and the construction of a counter pier, the interior order of piers and docks and the construction of docks and warehouses. Rafo's was the most complete of the projects presented for the competition of the port. It included a complete analysis of budget and materials to be used.

The next project for the harbour presented by Cerdá, in 1861 this time, was the one of Miquel Garriga i Roca (1808-1888) (figure 2-28). This was one of the two projects presented by Garriga. The second one, which he did with Josep Fontserè i Mestres is more relevant for this study, for there is a detailed explanation of the proposed ring avenue around the city of Barcelona (figure 2-29). This avenue completed the ring covering the

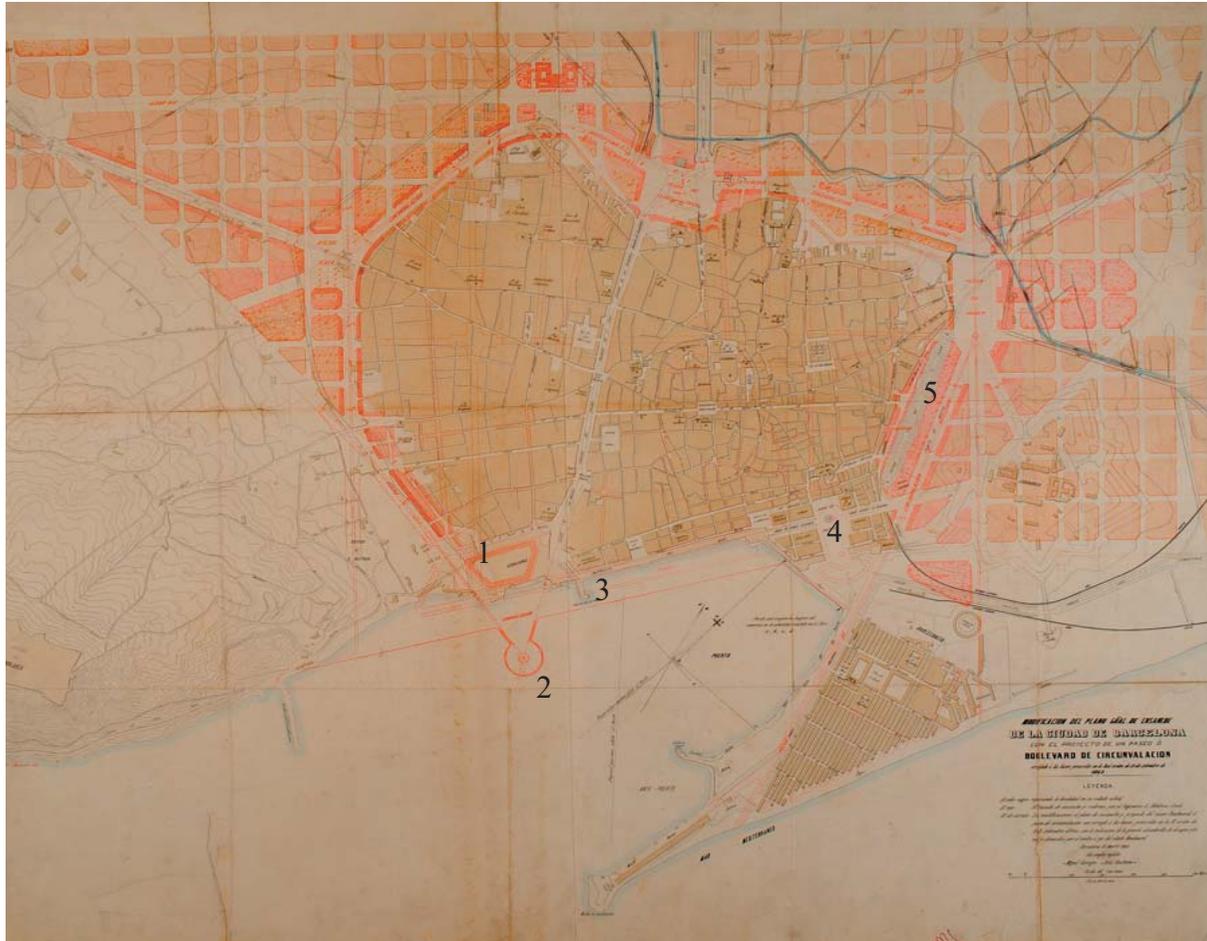
whole waterfront of the city and the western side of the Barceloneta.

The project proposed to replace the Muralla del Mar with a section of boulevard that would change the aesthetic characteristics of the area. The waterfront section of the project consisted on an avenue that began at the foot of the Montjuic, where it met the area of Drassanes (1), and ended at the tip of Barceloneta. Its beginning had the Drassanes as a main central element, but they proposed the elimination of it as a technical facility. In front of it, a circular wharf (2) was proposed, which intention is not clear, neither in the plans nor in the texts. However, given the fact that Garriga and Fontserè are criticising the location of the Drassanes, the wharf may have been meant as a part of the boulevard proposed, a space for strolling and leisure.

**figure 2-27-** 1859 - Plano de los Alrededores de la Ciudad de Barcelona y Proyecto de Reforma y Ensanche -detail Harbour Jose Rafo  
author: Idelfons Cerda  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Code 10,055.



<sup>40</sup> For a detailed history of the harbour of Barcelona the main source:  
Alemany i Llovera, Joan, *El Puerto de Barcelona historia i actualitat*, Barcelona l'Avenç 1984. Biblioteca ETSAB.



**figure 2-29** -1862-Modificacion del Plano General de Ensanche de la Ciudad de Barcelona con el proyecto de Paseo o Boulevard de Circunvalación  
author: Miguel Garriga i Roca and Josep Fontseré  
source: Archivo Histórico Municipal. Code 051

The boulevard would continue, with a small roundabout in the intersection with the Ramblas (3) and with no interruption up to the Plaza del Palacio (4). In this location some gardens were designed, following the pattern of trees of the avenue. A triangle was formed between the arm that came from the south and the one that, parallel to Passeig de San Joan, continued to limit the western side of Barceloneta. The existing boulevard (5) that stretched from Plaza del Palacio towards the north would not be considered by Garriga and Fontserè and instead a park was proposed next to the Plaza de Toros. The area close to Drassanes already held some establishments of entertainment such as the Buena Vista and the Font Trobada. Garriga expected it to become one of the places of recreation of the city, which he compares to the Bois de Boulogne or Champs Elysees, regarding it as a “delicious oriental slope of the Montjuic for great spaces of entertainment”<sup>43</sup>.

Another important issue in this project had to do with the sanitation of the city and a sewage system that was described in detail in the *Memoria*<sup>44</sup> of the project. The technicians proposed the separation of sewage and partially clean waters, such as rainwater, and extended to propose a system of water provision. This sewage system coincided with the tracing of the ring avenue. The project of Garriga was not built and this fact allowed the continuation of the division between the city centre and the Barceloneta.

Francisco Soler i Gloria (figure 30) is the only one of those to participate in the competition of 1859 for the Eixample<sup>45</sup> to propose the elimination of the railway next to the seafront. His project for the example proposes a grid that differs strongly from that of Cerdà. The blocks are much bigger, and geometrically they follow the

formal limits of the Old city. The transformation of the sea front is extremely radical, with the building of a dock that is cut into the land adjacent to the Montjuïc and the Old City. In any case, it still keeps the southern area of the waterfront as a space of development of the harbour, but is not specific in his plans about the northern area. A system of hierarchies is noticed in the plan, with the appearance of great parks, roundabouts and smaller squares, as open spaces. One of those great parks is adjacent to the sea, but there is no sign of a relation between sea and park. The park is geometric and rigid and has no sign of difference in the relation with its four sides.

On the other hand, the fact of moving the railways would have provided a completely different relation between city and seafront. Soler's project moved the station to the inner side of the city, placing it where the market of Sant Antonio lies currently. This would have facilitated the connection of the city with the seafront providing a better space for leisure that would not be reached until the end of the twentieth century.

In reality in this period the harbour develops technologically as it develops its relation to the rest of the city. Ships did not load perpendicular to the sea but parallel, which made them need more waterfront perimeter than that provided by the piers, so that the cranes could easily pull the merchandise out of the ships.

The works of the project of Rafo were begun in 1860 but stopped in 1865 for they were taking too long to be constructed, so the budget given by the Crédito Mobiliario Barcelonés was cancelled. Later, in the 1870s it was slightly transformed by those who were in charge in the Junta d'Obres del Port and for the time of the Universal Exposition of Barcelona in 1888 the

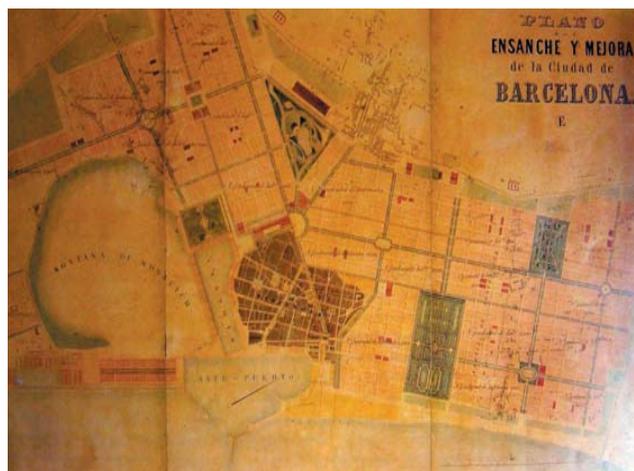
whole project of Rafo was practically finished.

Added to the bad state of the lands of the waterfront another barrier is set between the city and the sea with the appearance of the railway. During the following years, with the indefinite growth of the city with the plan for the Eixample the harbour grows indefinitely as well, but to the southern side, towards the Montjuïc. The projects for the harbour of 1916, 1917 and 1934 show the unlimited expansion of the harbour towards what now is the Zona Franca.



**figure 2-28** -1862-Plano Topografico Geometrico de la Barceloneta.  
author: Miguel Garriga i Roca  
source: Archivo Histórico Municipal. Code IG 2735

**figure 2-30** - 1859 - Plano de Ensanche y Mejora de la Ciudad de Barcelona  
author: Soler i Gloria  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Code D-13511



<sup>41</sup> Right of anchoring. The harbour would be sustained by the taxes charged to the ships that would anchor in it.

<sup>42</sup> Among others

Hoyle, Brian, 'Development dynamics at the port-city interface', in *Revitalising the waterfront*, Belhaven Press, London, New York, 1988.

Turnbridge, John and Ashord, Gregory, *European Port Cities in transition*, London, Belhaven press, 1992

<sup>43</sup> Garriga i Roca, *Proyecto del Boulevard o Paseo de Circunvalacion de la Ciudad de Barcelona*, Barcelona, Septiembre 1862, in Sagarra y Trias, Ferran, Barcelona, ciudad de transició (1848-1868), El projecte urba a través dels treballs de l'arquitecte Miquel Garriga i Roca, Barcelona, Institut d'estudis Catalans, 1966. Pg633

<sup>44</sup> Garriga i Roca, Miquel, Fontserè, Josep, *Proyecto del Boulevard o Paseo de Circunvalacion de la Ciudad de Barcelona, el arreglo a las bases prescritas del 15 de Septiembre de 1862*, Establecimiento tipografico de Francisco Ramirez, Barcelona, 1863. pg.25.

<sup>45</sup> Soler i Gloria, Francisco, *Memoria Facultativa sobre el Ensanche y Mejora de la Ciudad de Barcelona del ingeniero D. Francisco Soler y Gloria*, Barcelona, 1859. Cartoteca de Catalunya.

## 2.2 – The Projects

### 2.2.1 – 1870-1890 – Fontseré. Exposición Universal

*In this chapter we will look into the project of Fontseré for the Parque de la Ciudadela and the Exposición Universal as the first ones to provide a planned area close to the waterfront with a series of variables and programmatic elements that had not been present yet. Some biographical information about the makers of these projects is described, to understand what kind of principles they followed and what their position was towards landscape and leisure.*

This was the period in which the whole urban tissue of Barcelona would be forever transformed. The project for the Eixample de Cerdà was steadily developed and the city was growing geographically and demographically. A period of strong economical and commercial development carried on during the decade of the 1870s with the *Febre d'Or* but this changed in the 1880s with a crisis that took place until the city's recovery by 1890.

Politically there was a rather stable situation that allowed the subsequent building of the city. The *Renaixença Catalana* and the movements for independence and protectionism in Barcelona were active and running, but this did not cause major conflicts in the city.

One of the main urban elements in Barcelona that had to be replaced was the Citadel<sup>46</sup>. This had been the image representing the Bourbon rule and practically all inhabitants of the city were against the conservation of the

remaining fortification. A very large portion of land was taken by the citadel, about 270 acres, and it held some huge structures such as the military barracks. Actually, in 1868 when the Revolution began, those in charge of it began to demolish the walls of the Citadel without the approval of Madrid. This operation did not go too far, for the expense of day workers for this demolition was too great. General Prim, Catalan military man, in 1869 took a different position and made a strategy that proved to be effective. The task of demolition was too expensive, but there was a great need of public space in the city. Therefore Prim decided to give 150 acres to the city for the land to be developed as public space and keep 120 acres for real estate development. The selling of these plots of land would pay for the expenses of the park. This was a political move that gave him popularity, not only for the destruction of a symbol of totalitarian Spanish power but also because he set out to compensate the heirs of those who were expropriated to build the original Citadel. This move though, did not ease the construction of the park, but made it yet more difficult for the amount of lawsuits entangled.

This was also the period of the demolition of the *Muralla del Mar* and the reconfiguration of the waterfront into a port area. The *Muralla* was finally torn down in 1888 for the building of the *moll de la Muralla*, which was used as one of the spaces of representation for the Universal Exhibition of the same year. Not only the *moll de la Muralla* was built, but a whole complex system of piers and harbour reconfigured the waterfront just metres away from the city transforming the use of the area, under the project of José Rafo. According to Casariego the harbour was transforming the facade of the city as “a way to show development, progress, and finally

modernity.”<sup>47</sup>

The harbour facilities were planned and built in this period in a completely independent way from the planning of the city and the *Eixample*. The project of the *Junta de Obras del Puerto* was presented in 1885. On the opposing side was The *Junta de Propietarios de Barceloneta*, who were against this project for it blocked the relationship between the city and the *Barceloneta*, so they proposed a counter project. The proposal was to expand the pier, parallel to the *Paseo Nacional*. They also proposed two solutions for the building of the commercial depot, so that there would be a boulevard to link *Barceloneta* with the city and there would be enough space for the development of the harbour. This counter project was finally approved in 1891 and the works were begun in 1893.

There were two relevant projects carried out in this period that influenced in one way or another, the development of the waterfront and its relation with the rest of the city. These were the project of Josep Fontseré for the *Parc de la Ciutadella* in 1871 and the *Exposición Universal de Barcelona* in 1888, which took place in the same location as the park. These two projects are different in quality and in conditions. However, they were both located in the same place and they both aimed at the transformation of urban space and the erasure of an image that had weighed on the shoulders of the Catalan people, the Bourbon rule. They are also the first attempt to include the waterfront in an urban system that was in its beginnings. Even though the relation of both projects with the waterfront is scarce in surface and development, the intention to include the waterfront in the urban system apart from the harbour function shows a change in perspective in urban design and planning.

### 2.2.1.1-Fontseré

#### Josep Fontseré i Mestre – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

Josep Fontseré i Mestre was born in Barcelona in 1829 and died there in 1897. He was a member of the Junta de Comerç and Josep Oriol Bernadet was his mentor. Fontseré was one in a generation of Catalan architecture that helped reconfigure the city of Barcelona and contributed to the architecture of other Catalan cities in the second half of the nineteenth century. He was a student in the Escola de Mecanica and graduated in 1853 with the title of Mestre d'Obres and Director de Camins Veïnals<sup>48</sup>.

His family was not far from his discipline. His father, Josep Fontseré i Domènech (1799 - 1870) was also a mestre d'obres who was active in the city in the first half of the nineteenth century. His uncle was historian Salvador Sanpere i Miquel, who collaborated in the realisation of the topographic plan of Barcelona for the railway company. His brother also became a mestre d'obres and dedicated his life to the development of waterways and sewers in urban environments.

In Barcelona, Josep Fontseré had an important intervention in urban projects for the tracing of streets inside of the city walls and out in the Eixample. One of his urban projects was the one of the neighbourhood of Hortes de Sant Bertran in 1875.

Fontseré participated in the design of several territorial projects. Among them was the Plano Topográfico de Barcelona made in 1855 in collaboration with Cerdà. In 1859 he also presented a project for the competition for the Eixample of Barcelona, where he got the third price after Cerdà and Rovira I Trias. Fontseré did not only design large scale urban projects but

also the detailed urban equipment, that though not all built showed the level of scale Fontseré was capable of working with.

Other of his urban projects included the geometric plan for the city of Lleida in 1865 and the park of Sama at Cambrils. Among other works of gardening is the one of the tower of Melina in Les Corts (figure 2-31), made in 1875, when he intervened in the masía<sup>49</sup> of the same name.<sup>50</sup>

Among his work in industrial structures he was responsible of the factory owned by Felip Ricart in Poble Nou (figure 2-32). There, he was in charge of the design of the iron structure. In the Raval he also intervened in the Estruch factory.<sup>51</sup> Fontseré also participated in the design of the Mercat del Born, with the collaboration of Josep Maria Cornet i Mas. He was also responsible of the design and building of the masonry cistern built on the ancient roman model also located in the Parc de la Ciutadella, which has been currently transformed into a library.

Fontseré was also an architect of dwelling projects; he designed and built houses in the Eixample and in the Old city of Barcelona. A good example of the typology of family house with garden is the one he designed for Felip Ricart at the Passeig de Sant Joan between 1883 and 1884. Even though landscape architecture or gardening were not his main activities, Fontseré felt strongly about the need of green spaces in the city. F. L. Olmsted had coined the idea of the parks as lungs of the city some time before Fontseré's park design. Following the landscape designer, Fontseré, in his project for the Parc de la Ciutadella included the phrase "Gardens are to the city what lungs are to men". In the document presented for the competition of the Parc de la Ciutadella, the motto that stood as a name for his project for the park said: "Do not demolish to destroy, demolish to make things beautiful"<sup>52</sup>.



**figure 2-31** - Gardens of the Tower of Melina in Les Corts  
author: Josep Fontseré

source:el poder de la palabra <http://www.epdip.com/index.php>

**figure 2-32** - Fàbrica de Can Ricart today  
author: Josep Fontseré

source:<http://www.ub.es/geocrit/b3w-607.htm>

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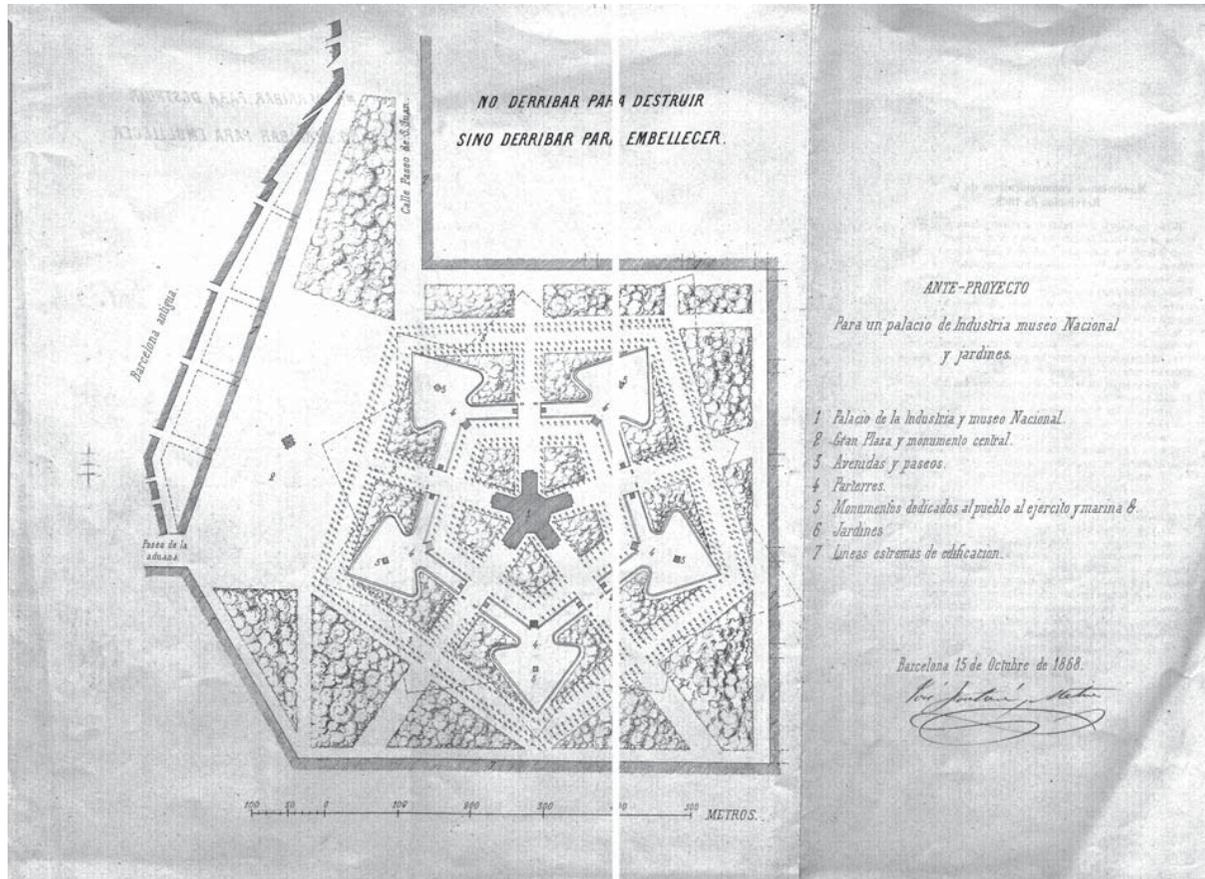
<sup>46</sup> García Espuche, Albert, Guardia Bassols, Manuel, *Un intervento urbano nel tempo lungo: la ciutadella di Barcellona, 1715-1869*, in *Storia urbana*, year 10, n.37, october-december, 1986, pgs.3-28

<sup>47</sup> Casariego, Joaquín, *Waterfronts de nuevo: transformaciones en los frentes urbanos de agua*, Las Palmas, Ayuntamiento de las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Concejalía de Urbanismo, 1999, p.53.

<sup>48</sup> This could be translated as master of works and roads director

<sup>49</sup> Country house

<sup>50</sup> Navarro Mollevi, I. *Les masies de les Corts*. Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona-Districte de les Corts 1993.



**figure 2-33** - 1871 - Proyecto de un parque y jardines en terreno de la ex-ciudadela de Barcelona  
author: Josep Fontserè i Mestres  
technique: print  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Grafico vol. 8  
i-037a-p-1871-ciudadela fontserè.jpg

### Fontseré – project – 1871 – Parc de la Ciutadella

*It is difficult to consider Fontseré's project as a waterfront development, however, it is a planned park, close to the waterfront and linked with the waterfront neighbourhoods.*

*The introduction of an urban park presents a new concept of leisure, based on the need of free spaces for hygienic reasons. This intention, given by the project of a green area of the city is evident in Fontseré's texts, as well as the didactic intention of buildings providing industrial and artistic knowledge to the citizens. The project follows different landscape principles that introduce a new era of planned landscape in Barcelona.*

### Context and administration

The process of the Revolution of 1868 would allow the Barcelonese to recover the land that had been taken away from them in the eighteenth century by the military authorities, as already mentioned. General Prim, in charge of Barcelona at the time, achieves the promulgation of the law of December 12<sup>th</sup> 1869 that gives the lands of the Citadel back to the city of Barcelona.

The law expressed the use of this land to be public, and if this should not be the case, then it would be given back to the state. The law also expressed the possibility of destining 53.000 m<sup>2</sup> to private buildings.<sup>53</sup>

The city of Barcelona had no parks, and in this sense was very late compared to other cities in the rest of Europe. The presence of the walls and the lack of expansion had made it impossible to provide open space for the city. The project of Cerdà had previewed the inclusion of parks

and squares in the layout, but the slow growth of the grid was not allowing the development of these spaces. This is why there was a need for an open space for city dwellers, to counteract the unhealthy conditions of the city.

During the process of demolition of the Citadel, the Ajuntament held a competition for the design of a new park where the Citadel was placed. There were two finalists out of the competition, an architect named Macchiachini and Josep Fontseré i Mestres. Fontseré finally won the competition. He put together a group of young architects to be in charge of the design with him. Among these were the young Antoni Gaudí and Domenech i Montaner.

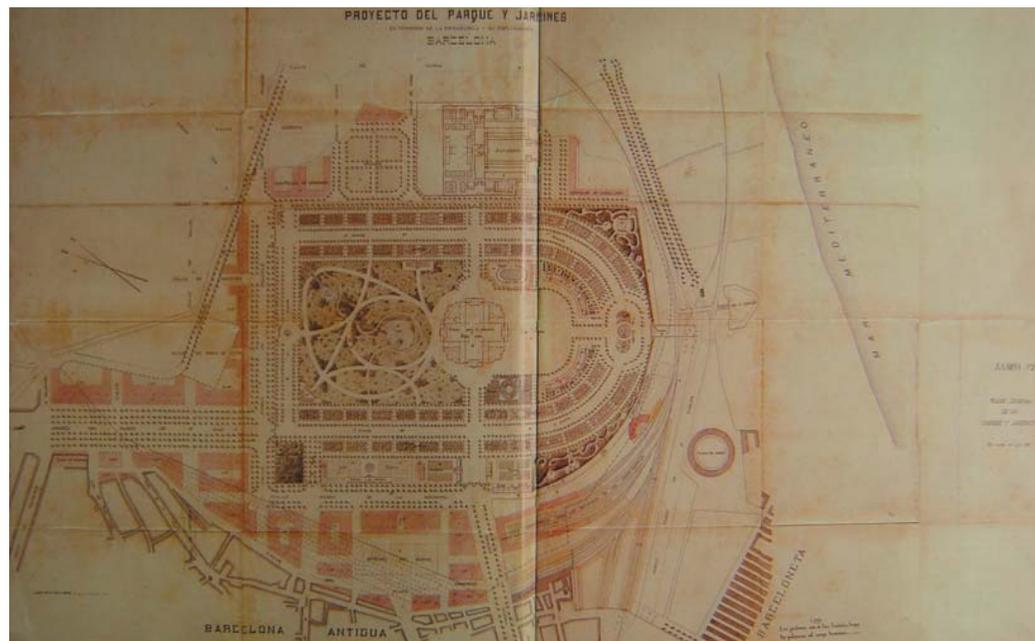
### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The Parc de la Ciutadella was to be placed where the remains of the Citadel were left, next to the old city of Barcelona. The park was not placed directly on the waterfront, but the location was related to the barri de la Ribera and to Barceloneta.

There are three versions of this project, one preliminary one, from 1868 that keeps the structure of the Ciutadella and the other two, from 1871 and 1872 which redesign the whole area. In his first proposal for the park (figure 2-33) there are two main intentions. One of them is to verify the Junta Revolucionaria and give the Ciutadella to the citizens, the other, in which he extends more, is the hygienic need of green spaces in the city. He remarks the lack of these spaces and the way the *mezquino triangulo de tierra pegada a la ciutadella*<sup>54</sup> is not enough to provide open space for the city. Fontseré justifies this by saying that it would make no sense to wait for the park next to Besos to be built, and even then this would be too far to reach for the dwellers of

the old city. The third and not irrelevant intention and justification for his project has to do with the principle he considered to belong to the *Revolución* of 1868, and this was the scientific and artistic development of society. This is why one of the main proposals for the park is the building of museums for science, art and industry.

**figure 2-34** - 1871 - Proyecto de un parque y jardines en terreno de la ex-ciudadela de Barcelona  
author: Josep Fontseré i Mestres  
technique: print  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Grafico vol. 8



- <sup>51</sup> Several specialists have studied the work of Fontseré among others  
Tarrago, S. 'José Fontseré i Mestre', *Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Urbanismo*, Barcelona, gener-febrer 1974, nº. 100, p. 19-20.  
Grau, R., Lopez, M. *Les batalles per L'Eixampla*, in R. Grau (dir.). *Exposició Universal de Barcelona*. Barcelona, L'Avenç, 1988, p. 191- 215.  
Artigas i Mas, *Relació de fàbriques del Raval*. Barcelona, 1992 (Document policopiat).  
<sup>52</sup> Fontseré, Josep, *Anteproyecto para la construcción de un jardín o parque y de museos para la ciencia, el arte y la industria en la actual Ciutadella*, Barcelona, 1868. Archivo Histórico de Barcelona.  
<sup>53</sup> Arranz, M, Grau, R, Lopez, M, *El Parc de la Ciutadella. Una visió històrica*, Barcelona, L'Avenç, 1984, pg.35



sea, the city that beautifully sits on the Mediterranean will have obtained a maritime aspect.”<sup>56</sup>

The following two projects (figure 2-34 and 2-35) are basically the same, apart from the fact that they were made with a year of difference.

The role of the park in the relationship between the city and the sea has received different comments and perspectives. Fava<sup>57</sup> has qualified it as a limit between city and sea and also as a limit between the old city and the Eixample. Others have seen the park rather as a connection than a limit. Here we are considering it as a connection, a will to include the sea side in the process of delivery of open space to the city.

The park was located in a very accessible place. Limited by the streets Pujades, Passeig Picasso and calle Wellington its plan included a little more than 17 hectares. Just out of the old city, on the north east, it created a connection between the Eixample and the old city. This location guaranteed accessibility to most city dwellers.

In this case, the plan of the park was not to resemble in any way that of Verboom for the citadel, so the shape that Fontseré chose was that of the horseshoe. The reason for the choice of this shape is not completely clear, but it must have been related to the fact that the train station and rail tracks followed a circumference that limited the boundaries of the park. This reason and the regular shape of the Eixample left little freedom for the limits of the park itself.

The Citadel was not completely destroyed, the arsenal (figure 2-36) designed by Prosper Verboom was remodelled into a Palace by Pere Falques and the neo-classical chapel and parade ground, known as Plaça d'Armes were also left.

The tracing and character of the park reminds us of the combination of typologies as later proposed by the French park designer Edouard André<sup>58</sup> on *L'Art des Jardins*. André's work was, among other French designers, a sort of guide for park design in the end of the nineteenth century. The Parc de la Ciutadella could be categorised as a *Jardin Paysagere*, for even though it lies out of the limit of 10 hectares, which was one of the requirements of a *jardin publique*, the characteristics are more similar than to those of a park. It could be called a park, but the extension and the scale of the area make of it a garden. The idea of such a small area for a rapidly growing city to be the *lungs of the city*, seems a little exaggerated. In any case this is indeed an area that has great lawns and scattered trees, apart from the geometrical circulation paths. This is a space where the accidents are subtle, where there are different types of vegetation but they are arranged in a manner that is controlled. Within this classification, the park can be divided into two parts, for it is evident that a combination of typologies takes place here. On the one hand there is the *jardin geometrique*, in the general tracing of the park and the south eastern area closer to the sea. This is a terrain reserved for culture, for the ornamental disposition of plants and beautiful flowers. This general tracing carries a boulevard with trees creating the south western limit of the park and providing an intermediate area between the park and the city. Within the park there is an area that definitely leaves the geometrical typology. The inner area is definitely *informal*, with a small lake, winding streams and paths and scattered trees. In any case, for its location it can only be considered a *Jardin Urbain*.

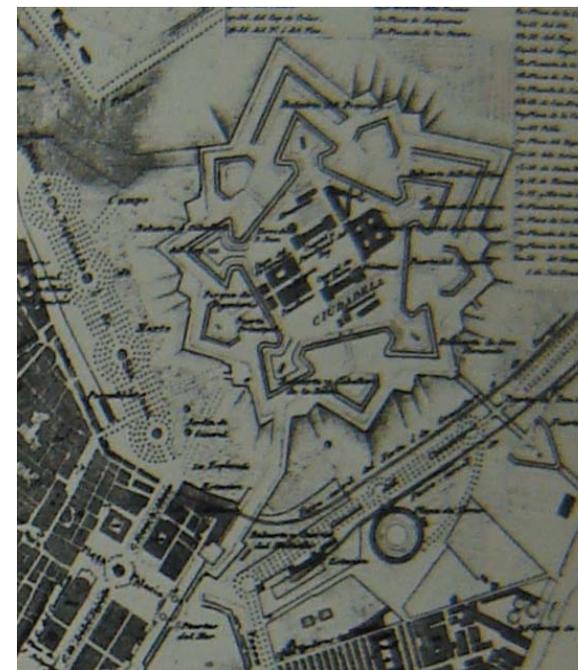


figure 2-36 - 1862 -Barcelona  
author:F.Coello i P.Madoz

source:Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. IG.10397/15.2

<sup>54</sup> “miserable tringle of land attached to the Citadel” Fontseré, Josep, *Anteproyecto para la construccion de un jardín o parque y de museos para la ciencia, el arte y la industria en la actual Ciudadela*, Barcelona, 1868. Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Pg. 1 This area he refers to must have been the park proposed by himself and Garriga I Roca in their plan of 1862.

<sup>55</sup> As noted before, “parks are the lungs of the city”.

<sup>56</sup> Fontseré, Josep, *Anteproyecto para la construccion de un jardín o parque y de museos para la ciencia, el arte y la industria en la actual Ciudadela*, Barcelona, 1868. Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Pg.4

<sup>57</sup> Fava, Nadia, *Progetti e processi in conflitto: il fronte marittimo de Barcelona*, phd thesis, UPC Barcelona, 2003.

<sup>58</sup> André, Edouard, *L'art des jardins. Traite General de la composition des parcs et jardins. Ouvrage accompagne de onze planches en chromolithographie et de 520 figures dans le texte*, G. Masson editeur, Paris, 1879.



**figure 2-37** - L'Hivernacle  
author: Josep Amargós  
source: photo by the author

**figure 2-38**- Umbracle  
author: Josep Fontserè i Mestres  
source: Archivo Historico de Barcelona. AHCB-AF - c5v/227  
- Frederic Ballell



The program of the park included the realisation of the Saló de Sant Joan and the houses and porticos that would surround it; a new market, private buildings; an iron bridge over the railroad tracks; and “a park divided into five parts plus the vegetation necessary to achieve the sensation of variety and movement”<sup>59</sup>.

In the middle of the park there was the space reserved for an industrial pavilion, previewing already the idea of an exhibition space, of the park as a didactic platform for the education of the city dwellers. Other two buildings show these didactic intentions: the hivernacle and the umbracle. Two buildings set for the study of plants and the corresponding observation of the visitors to the park. These buildings show the training of Fontserè more as an architect than a park designer. Even though he was active in the urban transformation of some cities and urban areas Fontserè's work was mainly dedicated to industrial building and dwellings.

Apart from these main buildings the park contained fountains, ponds, parterres, mazes and a winter garden. One of the most remarkable of these elements was the Cascade; a peculiar fountain designed by Fontserè and a team of architects and sculptors, among them the young Antoni Gaudí. It is said<sup>60</sup> that this fountain was an imitation of an earlier fountain in Marseilles, built in the 1860s in the Parc Longchamps by an architect named Henri Espérandieu.

It is remarkable that, though it is not present in Fontserè's texts, in both available illustrations of the plan for the park a section of the structure of the Citadel, the Fort de Don Carles, close to the sea side, remained untouched. More remarkable yet is the fact that a boulevard close to the seaside is insinuated in all illustrations. This boulevard had been discarded in the plan

Fontserè had worked on with Garriga. Another insinuation, which would be finally materialised for the 1888 Universal Exhibition was the bridge communicating the park with this seaside boulevard. The order of heights between the passage to the Fort, the railways and the Passeig de Don Carles is not clear in either drawing. Unfortunately, in the drawing of 1882 the area of the waterfront is not shown. What this drawing does show is that the Passeig de Don Carles and the railway lines run parallel to each other, so that allows to suppose that the passage from the park to the Fort would be a bridge that would pass over both transportation paths.

In any case, and as was explained by André in his *Art des Jardins*, the park in a sea town is a difficult task to be confronted with. The presence of the salty sea air and water would make it difficult to grow a great amount of plants and bushes. Nevertheless the situation was not to be insurmountable, and the reason that the design of the park did not to continue up to the waterfront still remains a mystery.

## Realisation and Repercussions

A long time passed between the decision to demolish the citadel and the actual demolition. The first project for the demolition was set in 1859, together with the competition for the Eixample, to which every contestant assumed the destruction of the citadel to continue the planned growth of the city. The citadel was not demolished until 1869 when finally the project of Fontserè was realised.

Out of the buildings projected for the park by Fontserè, two of them were actually built, the Hivernacle<sup>61</sup> (figure 2-37) and the Umbracle<sup>62</sup> (figure 2-38). The Hivernacle is an iron structure designed by architect Josep Amargós between

1883 and 1887. The building was a greenhouse, a structure of iron and glass that served for the nursing of plants, with a façade composed by a great arch of brick with an opening in the centre that lets light in. The other, the Umbracle, was designed by Fontseré himself between 1883 and 1884. This is a cast iron structure with a roof made of separated iron beams that let air and light pass through. The structure is simple, a nave made by a single large tunnel, flanked by two half arched corridors on both sides.

One of the main features of the park's project that was also built was the Fountain (figure 2-39) designed by Fontseré and realised by a team of seven sculptors. This is a complex structure which water was provided by the Dipòsit d'Aigües on Carrer Wellington, which was designed by Fontseré himself. The fountain is a monument filled with allegorical creatures, Venus and Neptune, river gods and griffins, a grotto that was meant to be used as an aquarium all hold a cascade that seems loaded with weight and character.

Among other buildings in the area there was the arcaded five story apartment building on the actual Passeig de Picasso, which was also designed and built by Fontseré, which overlooked the park.

There are different positions regarding the benefits and errors of this park, its location and the relation it created with the city. The citadel had been rejected for decades, not only for its value as a symbol of Bourbon rule but also as a structure that blocked the old city from everything around it. So, despite the criticisms received regarding the long terms for its construction, the park was well received.

Nadia Fava<sup>63</sup> also considers the Park of the Ciutadella of Fontseré to act as a blocking element between the old city and the Eixample.

According to her, the morphology of the park does not allow a clear communication between these two parts of the city, and sets a division that would remain until this day. We do not agree with this affirmation. It is true that the railway line and the Estación de Francia provided a limit that was extremely difficult to break. On the other hand, the park allows a path on its borders and through it that provide a rest for the senses from the noise and the traffic of the city.

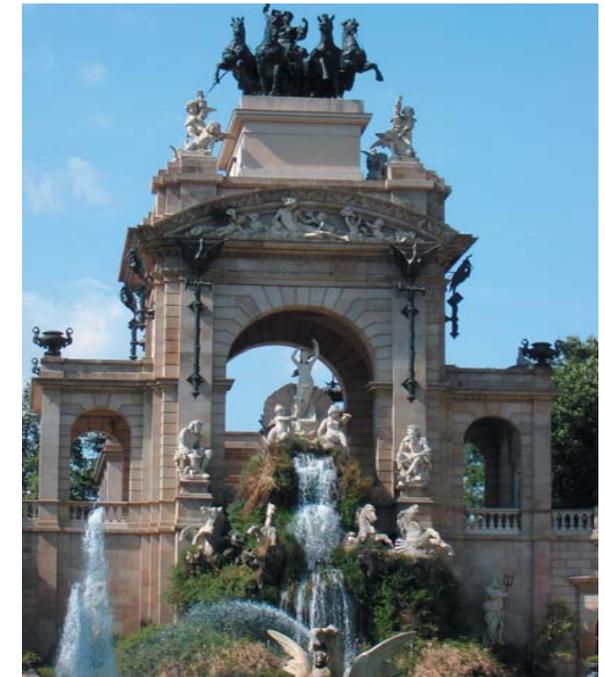
Back to the period when it was built there were also criticisms to the park and its location, Josep Pla, a local, in the memoirs of his youth commented on the park:

“The park seemed empty, although one or two people were passing at the end of the avenue: a depressed, homesick soldier, a gentleman going nowhere in particular, a couple. I sat down on a bench. Under the sweet, gentle leakage of the afternoon, the muffled din of the city went by like a slow sleepy river”<sup>64</sup>

It is not clear whether this is a praise or a criticism. On the one hand it seems that Pla is criticising the lack of activity that took place in the park, but on the other he praises the isolation that the park gives from the city. This double discourse is very common and could be applied to many parks all over the world.

Even though this park was not located directly on the waterfront, it shows us the intentions of, on the one hand the provision of open space to a city that was rapidly growing, and on the other hand the suggestion of a link between the city and its waterfront. This was still not evident, but it would set a base for the development of the maritime section of the Universal Exposition of 1888.

Fontseré was a local architect, who, though following the local traditions and ideas, was evidently influenced by international professionals of his field. This is seen in his discourse as well as in his design, where he takes and interprets designs and concepts from international figures such as Frederick Law Olmsted.



**figure 2-39-** Fountain Ciutadella  
author: Josep Fontseré i Mestres  
source: photo by the author

<sup>59</sup> Bases for the competition for Parc de la Ciutadella, Barcelona, 1870.

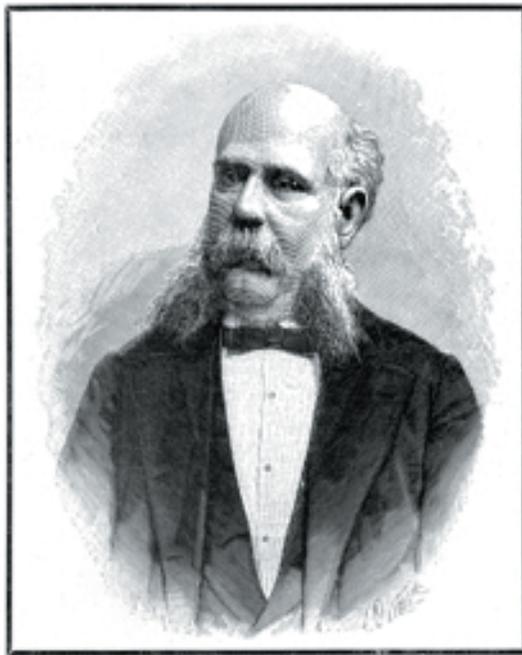
<sup>60</sup> Hughes, Robert, *Barcelona*, Vintage Books, 1992.pg.357

<sup>61</sup> Winter garden

<sup>62</sup> Shade House

<sup>63</sup> Fava, Nadia, *Progetti e processi in conflitto: il fronte marittimo de Barcelona*, phd thesis, UPC Barcelona, 2003.

<sup>64</sup> Josep Pla quoted in Hughes, Robert, *Barcelona*, Vintage Books, 1992.



ESCMO. SR. D. FRANCISCO DE PAULA RIUS Y TAULET,  
MARQUÉS DE OLÉRDOLA, ALCALDE QUE FUE DE BARCELONA.  
Nació en 1822, y en Olérdola (Barcelona), el día de Septiembre último.

**figure 2-40-1890** - Francesc de Paula Rius i Taulet  
author: Carretero  
source: La Ilustración Española y Americana.

### 2.2.1.2-Exposición Universal - didactic leisure, international representation and contemplative recreation

#### The Exposición – relevant facts, intentions and urban landscape principles

The Exposición Universal de Barcelona of 1888 was an event that transformed the Parc de la Ciutadella and influenced the development of the relation of the city with its waterfront. It also brought Barcelona close to its bankruptcy as a city but did attract some international recognition from abroad and pride to local Barcelonese people.

The Exposición Universal was not the first exhibition event ever to be held in the city of Barcelona. Already in 1871 the Festes de la Mercè had been a product of the initiative of the combination of the private sector and the Ajuntament de Barcelona. This was also to be the case of the Exposición Universal.

Universal and International Exhibitions in general had many incentives and reasons for taking place. Since the first national industrial exhibitions in Paris during the eighteenth century and especially starting from the first Great Exhibition in London's Hyde Park in 1851 these international events spread steadily all over Europe and the United States. A follow up of exhibitions in Paris in 1855, 1867 and 1878, Vienna in 1873 and Philadelphia in 1876 set the standard of the international event. No matter where these international fairs were held, one of the main objectives of them was to spread the idea that:

“the material progress of humanity would produce moral progress and diminish violence”<sup>65</sup>.

Many authors, from then and now, such as Arranz have supported this idea of the use of the Exhibitions as an instrument of peace:

“It is the proposal of a new model of international relations, characterised by the suppression of warlike conflicts and based on the exchange of products and knowledge and the direct contact between diverse places on earth”<sup>66</sup>

Reverter Delmás in 1888 also supports this idea saying:

“The combats of the nineteenth century, the ones that provide real glory, property and greatness to the Nations, are combats of industry, pacific fights of science, art and work”<sup>67</sup>

Hence, the Exposición was meant to be a platform for the peaceful diplomatic relations between nations at the end of a century that had seen areas of Europe close and reaching situations of war. Another objective was that of showing the prosperity of Catalunya to an international audience.

As explained by Grau<sup>68</sup> in his chapter on exhibitions and congresses there is an important issue in the name of the Exposición. The difference between ‘International’ and ‘Universal’ is great. The Exposición in Barcelona was not an international exhibition, in which most of the nations of the world are given a platform for the exhibition of their produce. International representation in Barcelona was scarce, though it was there. This was then a ‘Universal’ Exhibition, one in which the items to be shown would represent a universal scope of objects, machines, agriculture, science, fine arts, mining, construction and material development.

This was explicitly stated by the organisers of the fair when they proposed to make an:

“Ordered and methodical classification, that similar to a synoptic chart proposed for the study of sciences, will ease as much as possible the rational study of human activity.”<sup>69</sup>

The international character of this exhibition was nevertheless searched for, and this can be seen in a text of one of the conferences post Exposición:

“In them (Universal exhibitions) we can see graphic portraits of the tastes and aptitudes of each race, as in an archaeological museum we can see the genius the habits and ideals of each epoch painted, forming an instructive series of auxiliary portraits for the comparative study of civilisations.”<sup>70</sup>

Another issue to consider was that this Exposición did not have the pretention of being a national event in which to show the industrial or commercial power or capacity of a nation against others. This was an urban Exhibition, the urban character would make the organisers compare it not to the great ones of London or Paris but to those of Frankfurt (1881), Bourdeaux (1882), Amsterdam (1883) or Nice (1884).

In particular the Exposición was used as an instrument, according to Sobrequés for:

“The occasion to impulse a coordinated group of actions that would give urban landscape those values and those signs that are expected by political, aesthetic, cultural and social requirements owned by a city that aspires to be more than a provincial

or industrial centre to be transformed into an authentic modern capital”<sup>71</sup>

The one in charge of the development of the Fair was a liberal monarchist named Francesc de Paula Rius i Taulet (1833-1889) (figure 2-40). He was the mayor of Barcelona in the 1870s and again from 1881 to 1889. Rius i Taulet was not really the one to conceive the idea of the Exposición, but he succeeded to carry it out. The one to propose the idea was actually Eugenio Serrano de Casanova (1841-18??). He was a former soldier that had fought with the Carlistas in the past but had attached himself later to projects concerning World Fairs. He accompanied the Spanish delegation to the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876 and assisted the architect in charge of some temporary structures for the exposition of Antwerp in 1884. So, given his experience in this sort of events, he came to Rius i Taulet with the proposal. Serrano was not only experienced in the area of exhibitions but also in that of tourism. In Paris he had founded the magazine *Gazette des touristes*, in charge of the promotion of thermal baths and sea resorts.

Serrano was proposing something for which the city was already slightly prepared. Barcelona had a certain tradition of popular exhibitions<sup>72</sup>. The economical environment was not particularly adept but it was certainly in development. Besides, the proposal of a space for industrial exhibition had already been proposed by Fontseré in his project for the Parc de la Ciutadella. This building had not been erected but the idea was already there and in the hands of whoever was willing to develop it.

The intellectual environment seemed to be prepared too, for already in 1867 there existed in Barcelona, under the promotion of the Ateneu Catala, a project of Union of corporations of

science, literature, art and economy focused on the interests of the city.

On other senses this was not a propitious moment for such a large scale project, with banks collapsed from the *febre d'or*, and industry in a recovery process, but Serrano saw this as an opportunity. In 1885 Serrano offered his plan to the Ajuntament of Barcelona. His proposal seemed interesting to Rius i Taulet, for he was promising the city would not have to spend anything in the construction of the fair as long as he received a cut on the admission tickets and the concessions. The expected date of opening was September 1887 and it would run for 6 months. During 1886 and being unable to raise the funds necessary for the beginning of the building of the fair, Serrano was left out of the project.

<sup>65</sup> This was quoted by Grau in Grau, Ramón y Marina Lopez, *Exposició Universal de Barcelona: Llibre del Centenari, 1888-1988*, Barcelona, 1988. Biblioteca Archivo Histórico.

However, the idea of the Exhibition as a platform for peace appears repeatedly in the primary texts related to Universal and Internacional Exhibitions.

<sup>66</sup> Arranz, M, Grau, R, Lopez, M, *El Parc de la Ciutadella. Una visió històrica*, Barcelona, L'Avenç, 1984, pg.62

<sup>67</sup> Reverter Delmás, E. *Guia Catálogo y Memoria de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Imprenta Militar de Calzada e Jzbert, Barcelona, 1888. Biblioteca Archivo Histórico.

<sup>68</sup> Grau, Ramón y Marina Lopez, *Exposició Universal de Barcelona: Llibre del Centenari, 1888-1988*, Barcelona, 1988. Biblioteca Archivo Histórico. Pg. 347.

<sup>69</sup> Fontanals del Castillo, Joaquín, ‘La Exposición en concepto, o crítica de nuestra exposición’, Ateneo Barcelones, *Conferencias públicas relativas a la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Litografía de Busquets y Vidal, 1889. p.620

<sup>70</sup> Ateneo Barcelones, *Conferencias públicas relativas a la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Litografía de Busquets y Vidal, 1889. pg.15

<sup>71</sup> Sobrequés i Callico, Jaume, *Historia de Barcelona, La Ciutat Industrial, 1833-1897*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1995. pg. 83.

<sup>72</sup> As for example the Festes de la Mercè

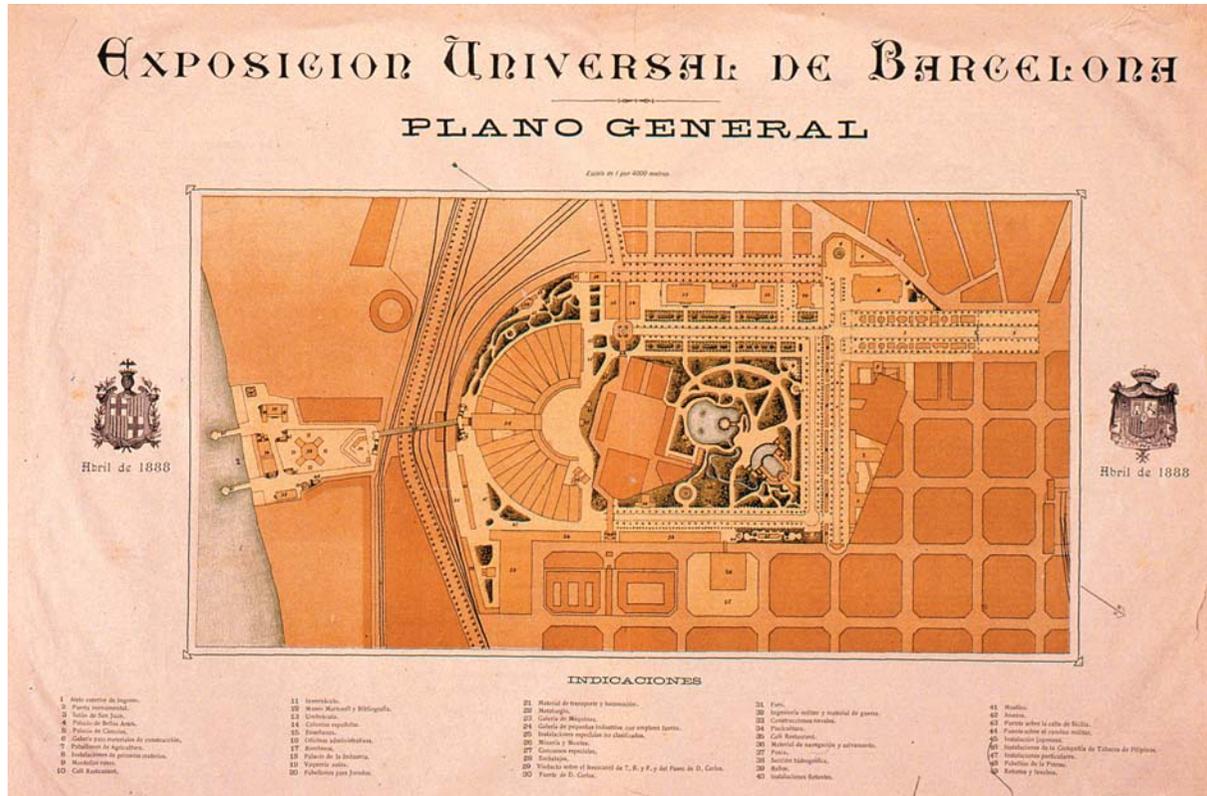


figure 2-41- 1888 -Exposicion Universal de Barcelona  
author: Elies Rogent  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Code 3903

Table 02

Creation of business societies in the province of Barcelona. 1882-1893 (in millions of pesetas)

1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893
276	56	17	20	12	19	7	13	22	25	17	38

source: Carreras, Albert, 'La Coyuntura Economica del 1888', in Grau, Ramón y Marina Lopez, Exposició Universal de Barcelona: Llibre del Centenari, 1888-1988, Barcelona, 1988. pg.412

Rius i Taulet was left in charge of the whole project of the fair. Seeing his funds were insufficient and despite the unease of the city's population and the questioning of the project, Rius i Taulet asked for a substantial loan from the National Government of Madrid to be able to carry out the Exposición. This was granted to him and with the collaboration of a group of professionals of many fields he could carry out the works and establish the six month exhibition.

Until 1886 the one in charge of the Parc de la Ciutadella had been its first designer: Josep Fontseré I Mestres. Despite the fact of having designed himself a palace of industry in the middle of the park, he strongly opposed the establishment of the Exposición in it, and by 1886 Rius I Taulet discharged him of his responsibilities and put Rovira i Trias on his place.

Other important characters in the materialisation of the Exposición were Elias Rogent i Amat(1821-1897) architect, and director of the school of architecture of Barcelona; and Lluís Rouvière (dead in 1904), engineer and great journalist and publicist. They did not only fulfil their roles in their respective tasks as designers, but, being popular characters in the Barcelona scene had a great influence in the appeal of the fair.

Elies Rogent did not only play an important role on the organisation and design of the Exposición, but also on the building of the Eixample. He began his studies of architecture in the 1840s. He was a rebellious student, and challenged the ideas of academic classicism that were prevalent in education. He took off and went to Paris, Berlin and Munich searching for what the *modern*<sup>73</sup> architects were doing.

The whole context of the Exposición

allowed not only the promotion of the area of the Exposición and its surroundings but also the promotion of the surroundings of Barcelona, especially that of the coast villages on the railway line called the 'Litoral'.

"The railway line called the *litoral*, is without a doubt, one of the most beautiful and picturesque in the world. The train runs a few metres away from the ocean bordering the mountains in which, as a group of white pigeons lay rustic *caserios* and factories rising high and narrow chimneys"<sup>74</sup>

In his guide, Chichón makes a detailed description of every village in the coast of Catalunya from Barcelona northwards to France. Industrial villages, historical towns and bathing resorts were all mentioned. The idea of tourism is as present as ever, the quality of each village is explained. Those to be visited for the health benefits of the baths, such as Caldas de Estrach and San Juan de Vilasar not only had the bathing facilities but also cafes and restaurants. Places like Mataró were valuable for the antiquity of their foundation, in times of the Roman Empire. Other waterfront villages were promoted for their religious value, for a certain church or convent. Even a village such as San Baudilio de Llobregat was promoted for its mental hospital, the first of its kind in Barcelona and Catalunya.

Exposición Universal – the project – 1888

*The Exposición Universal was not only the first one to propose a planned specific communication of the city and its parks with the waterfront but also an instrument that determined a new kind of leisure in the area. The didactic element of the Exposición, as in most other international events of the kind, was predominant during the whole six months of its development. The institutional approach to organised leisure was definitely in conflict with the actual use of the waterfront for bathing purposes, which would add to the segregation that was installed by the expansion of the harbour in this period.*

### Context and administration

The context in which the Exposición was carried out was explained in detail in the previous section. Here it should be clear that there are some significant differences between the first project presented by Serrano, and what finally took place, was built, destroyed and remained after the Exposición.

The economical context in which the Universal Exhibition took place is important to understand the process of evolution of the fair, the reason for the local conflict in which it developed and the later consequences of the results.

The Exposición was held in 1888, a year that was not only for Barcelona but for the whole of Spain one of a profound economical crisis. The crisis had begun in 1886, simply one of the causes of the crisis in Spain was due to the fact that the rest of Europe was developing industrially and was producing much more rapidly and in greater

quantities than Spain. This reduced the prices of material that Spain was used to export and brought a commercial and economical crisis. Agrarian and industrial activities all over Spain were reduced while Barcelona's commercial rhythm was being drastically reduced (table 02). The year of the Exposición seems to be the slowest in commercial activity in a span of a decade. As assumed by Jaume Vincens Vives in 1958 and confirmed in 1988 by Albert Carreras<sup>75</sup> the Exposición was used to counteract to the economical crisis following 1886, and a feeling of potential gives Catalunya the stimulus it needed. It is a fact that after the Fair the whole economical situation of the city region and country improved.

The regulations of the Exposición considered different aspects of the event. The duration of the Exposición would be of six months and it would be inaugurated on April 8<sup>th</sup> 1888. A general council was assigned and divided into thirteen Commissions. These were in charge of every different item of the event including installations, expositions, services, accountancy, technique, etc. The regulations were rather clear about the space to be taken by every exhibitor and how these were to be arranged. In spite of this clearness the set up of the Exhibition was rather chaotic.

<sup>73</sup>Observation made by Meller, Helen, *European Cities 1890-1930's, History, Culture and the Built Environment*, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, New York, 2001.

<sup>74</sup>Chichón, Rafael, *Barcelona y la Exposición Universal (Guia Economica)* Agencia Oficial de la exposición Universal, sres Farre y Fabregas, Barcelona, 1888.

<sup>75</sup>Carreras, Albert, 'La Coyuntura Economica del 1888', in Grau, Ramón y Marina Lopez, *Exposició Universal de Barcelona: Llibre del Centenari, 1888-1988*, Barcelona, 1988. pg.412

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The Exposición Universal de Barcelona (figure 2-41) was located in the Parc de la Ciutadella. However, its reach was wider in the city and it included the maritime section on the seafront and parades and other events in other parts of the city.

The Exposición was held mostly and officially in the Parc de la Ciutadella, but this was not the only location to visit for the public of the Exposition. The Moll de la muralla was a special section for the maritime demonstrations of the event, and it was properly restructured for this purpose.

According to Grau and Lopez<sup>76</sup>, from the recent perspective of the Ajuntament de Barcelona, the Exposición was part of a wider urban intervention on the whole city. The most relevant intervention concerned the building of the road network of the city, which was undoubtedly a necessary work of infrastructure. Then there was the restructuring and provision of parks and open spaces, as well as the less transcendent works of urban *make-up* that would only last during the months of the Exposición. The paving of many streets and avenues took place, including the carrer Princesa, la Rambla and the Passeig Colom next to the waterfront. Another innovation which insallation would be catalised by the opening of the Exposición was the electrification of lights in the streets, especially those adjacent to the Parc de la Ciutadella .

According to other authors such as Guardia and García Espuche Suarez<sup>77</sup> this was not the case, and the urban transformations had nothing to do with the Ajuntament's intentions of the Exposición. According to him the ajuntament only intended to use the space of the park and

adjacencies for the Exposición. On the other hand Guardia and García Espuche do admit the influence the Exposición had on the image of the city and the perspective of foreigners of it. He even calls the Exposición an instrument of propaganda.

The fact was that there was indeed an intention to prepare the city of Barcelona for the event of the Exposición with a series of contextual restructuring of the city. The Comisió Central Directiva was named to take care of these issues. The head of this commission was Duran I Bas. His task was to fulfil the following needs: to easy the accessibility to Tibidabo and prepare the embellishment of the Montjuic; to publish a guide of Catalunya and Barcelona and organise one stand in the Exposición for showing books and publications of Barcelona and Catalunya; to organise public conferences about the different 'branches of human knowledge'; to celebrate one scientific congress and to form a library with the material of contemporary Catalan writers. A more specific list of need was published by Duran I Bas later called '*Necesidades que Barcelona debe satisfacer con motivo de la Exposición Universal*'. These were the improvement of inner an outer streets and roads; the improvement of public transport; the correct provision of food for the fair and around it; the provision of enough hotels for visitors; the cleanliness and tidiness of the city and finally the ornamentation of the city. This last point included the incentive for construction of good quality, the finalisation of public works, the establishment of monuments, the improvement of gas illumination and the incorporation of electric ones, and the facilitations of access to monuments.

Another proof of the intention to intervene on the city at the time of the Exposición was the publishing of multiple guides of the city.

One of them, the one of Valero de Tornos<sup>78</sup> would even show a map of the whole city with different locations to visit.

Other cosmetic tranformations in Barcelona, following the example of other exhibitions, was the installation of monuments all over the city. The monuments to Prim, Josep Anselm Clavé and Güell were just some examples of these monuments. The event also allowed some buildings to be quickly finished for the time of the Exposición, such as three markets located in Barceloneta, the Eixample and Hostafrancs. Other significant buildings raised for the same year were the Hospital Clinic, the Palace of Justice and the Model Prison.

Another purpose on the Ajuntament for the time of the Exposición was to make the city attractive not only for the locals but also for the visitors that would expectedly flood the city during the months of the Fair. For this purpose a series of works were done such as the promoted access to the mountain of Tibidabo and the Montjuïc, both urbanised especially. These high perspectives are proposed to fix a synthetic image of the city on the visitor.

To what regards the Exposición itself there was a wide variety of facilities and activities in the Parc de la Ciutadella. As we noted before, the project of Serrano and the one that was finally designed and built had many differences. The buildings in the project of Serrano lacked architectural value. Nevertheless, most of the buildings proposed by Serrano did remain in the position proposed. The main building of the Exposición, the Palau de la Industria, placed as a half circle on the south eastern limit of the park was kept. The pavilions of Fine Arts and that of the Colonias Españolas placed symmetrically on the Passeig de la Duana were also kept in place.

A tower of 210 metres had been proposed by Serrano, to surpass the one that was being built in Paris for the 1889 Exposición, but this being such an ambitious project it did not get carried out.

In 1886 the project passed to the hands of Elias Rogent, and the perspective on architecture of the Exposición changed. One of the first conditions placed by Rogent was that all buildings should be designed by local architects and engineers, which gave a certain extent of homogeneity to the layout.

Most of the investment was spent for the construction of the Palau de la Industria, main building in the complex. The Palace of Industry was a cast iron and glass structure shaped as a semicircle that served as the main pavilion to what were supposed to be the world's wonders. The project of Fontseré of 1872 had previewed the possibility of a permanent building for the Exposición of industrial products, but for this he had assumed the demolition of all the buildings left from the Ciutadella. This was not the case, some buildings had been left and they could not be demolished, so Rogent had to keep the position of the Palau de la Industria as had been proposed by Serrano de Casanova. The Palace was designed by architects Alexandre Sallé and Jaume Gaustà. The model for the semicircular layout of the building had been inspired by the one in the Exhibition of Paris of 1867. The difference, and a significant one, was that the one in Paris was a full circle with a yard in the middle, and this one was a semi circle open to the rest of the park.

The central part of the park, that of the Plaça d'Armes, was hardly touched, and the four buildings remaining from the citadel were used as part of the Exposición. The ex house of the governor was used as main building of the Exposición and the Magic fountain illuminated

by electricity was placed in front of it. The magic fountain was said to be, together with the hot air balloon, one of the most popular entertainments of the Exposición.

**figure 2-42** - Cafe Restaurant - Domenech i Muntaner  
author photo: Josep Branguli  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotográfico. AHCB-AF - c116/105



**figures 2-43** - Monument a Colom  
author: Antoni Espulgas  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotográfico. ref. bcn000192 / ahcb-af / imatge suelta and ref. bcn001208 / ahcb-af / imatge suelta

<sup>76</sup> Grau, Ramón y Marina Lopez, *Exposició Universal de Barcelona: Llibre del Centenari, 1888-1988*, Barcelona, 1988. Biblioteca Archivo Histórico.

<sup>77</sup> Guardia, García Espuche, '1888, 1929, Dos Exposiciones, una sola ambición', Sanchez Suarez, Alejandro, *Barcelona, 1888-1929: Modernidad, Ambicion y Conflictos de una Ciudad Soñada* (Cervantes Completo), Barcelona, Alianza, 2001. pg.34

<sup>78</sup> Valero de Tornos, Juan, *Guía Ilustrada de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona en 1888, de la ciudad, de sus curiosidades y de sus alrededores*, G.de Grau y Compañía, Barcelona, 1888.

<sup>79</sup> Ricart i Giral, Jose, 'Las Instalaciones Maritimas de la Exposición', Ateneo Barcelones, *Conferencias públicas relativas a la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Litografía de Busquets y Vidal, 1889. pg313



**figure 2-44** -1888-Exposicion Universal de Barcelona-Arc de Triomf  
author: n/a  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotografico. ref. bcn001496 / ahcb-af / imatge suelta

The buildings of the Umbracle and Hivernacle, which were present in the project by Fontseré, were adapted for the Exposición and finally finished. The Palaces of Science, Agriculture and Fine Arts were temporary structures designed by Pere Falques, with a great display on the facades.

The Café-Restaurant of Domènech i Montaner (figure 2-42) was a revolutionary building for the architecture principles of Barcelona at the time. The main buildings attributed to *modernisme* in Barcelona's Eixample were built in brick but always covered in stucco. Domènech decided to leave his buildings facade clean and showing the material he was using to construct it. He stated that brick was a material to be explored and not to be disparaged. Iron is also present in the building, used in exterior as well as interior. Glazed ceramics were also used for the façade. Domènech was an exponent of Catalan *modernisme*.

The set up of the event was not as organised as would have been expected from a World Exhibition and this allowed a large amount of chaos in the layout of the exhibits. Most of the foreign nations did not even warn of what they would be exhibiting, so this brought many uncertainties and the need of improvisation. The Palace of Science showed the work of local scientists and inventors, but this was a collection of mainly useless objects that had to be turned into junk after the Exposición.

Foreign representation in the Fair was poor. It was of common knowledge that Paris would hold the Exposición for the centennial of the French Revolution in 1889 and this was the place where the main industrialised countries would show their latest advances in machinery, science and industry. Most of the space for the

Exposición was taken by Barcelona, with 9800 m<sup>2</sup> then came the province of Girona with 3000 m<sup>2</sup>. The rest of Spain counted with 4000 m<sup>2</sup> and France was the first in the International representatns with 6.600 m<sup>2</sup>. Austria-Hungary had a maximum of 3000 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibiting space and after it came Germany, Britain, the US and Russia. Italy only exhibited works of art and the objects shown by other European and South American countries occupied a very small amount of space.

The railroad engineering area of the fair was the only one that could really compete with the rest of the world, so it was there that foreign representatives did bring objects to exhibit that were worth of a Universal Exhibition.

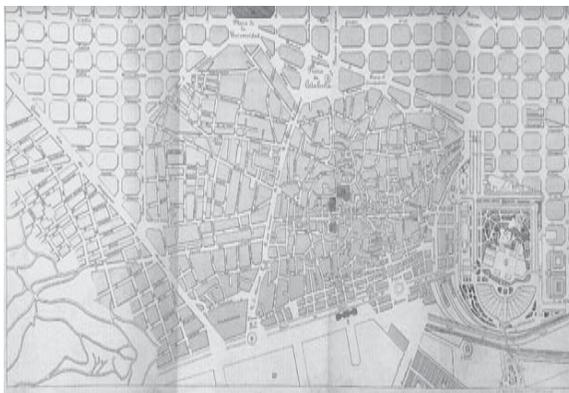
Outside of the Park other landmarks were representative of the Exposición. One of the main symbols of the Exposición was the monument to Christopher Columbus (figure 2-43), located in the end of the Ramblas next to the waterfront. The monument would be the point of intersection of three important avenues. The ramblas already existed and the projected streets of Avinguda del Paral·lel and Passeig de Colom made up the street crossing. This new layout transformed this waterfront area of the city. Passeig de Colom was widened and extended to the edge of the Citadel Park. This made the avenue count with 610 metres long and 42 metres wide. The avenue was decorated with Palm trees and orange trees and was completely refurbished with electric light.

There were two entrances to the Exposición. One of them was the Arc de Triomf (figure 2-44), built especially for the occasion by Josep Vilaseca located on the western end of the Park. The second entrance was the Maritime Section. This area was granted to the military and the pavilions that were built in it were those which themes related to the sea.

There are two represented versions of this area, one that can be found in the Archivo Histórico de Barcelona, which is a coloured floorplan (figure 2-45), which layout was copied in the guide by Valero de Tornos, published before the Exposición (figure 2-45b); and another version, which seems more complete and must have been the actual layout of the maritime section, which can be found in the Archivo Municipal (figure 2-46). This version has a detailed set of plans for each building.

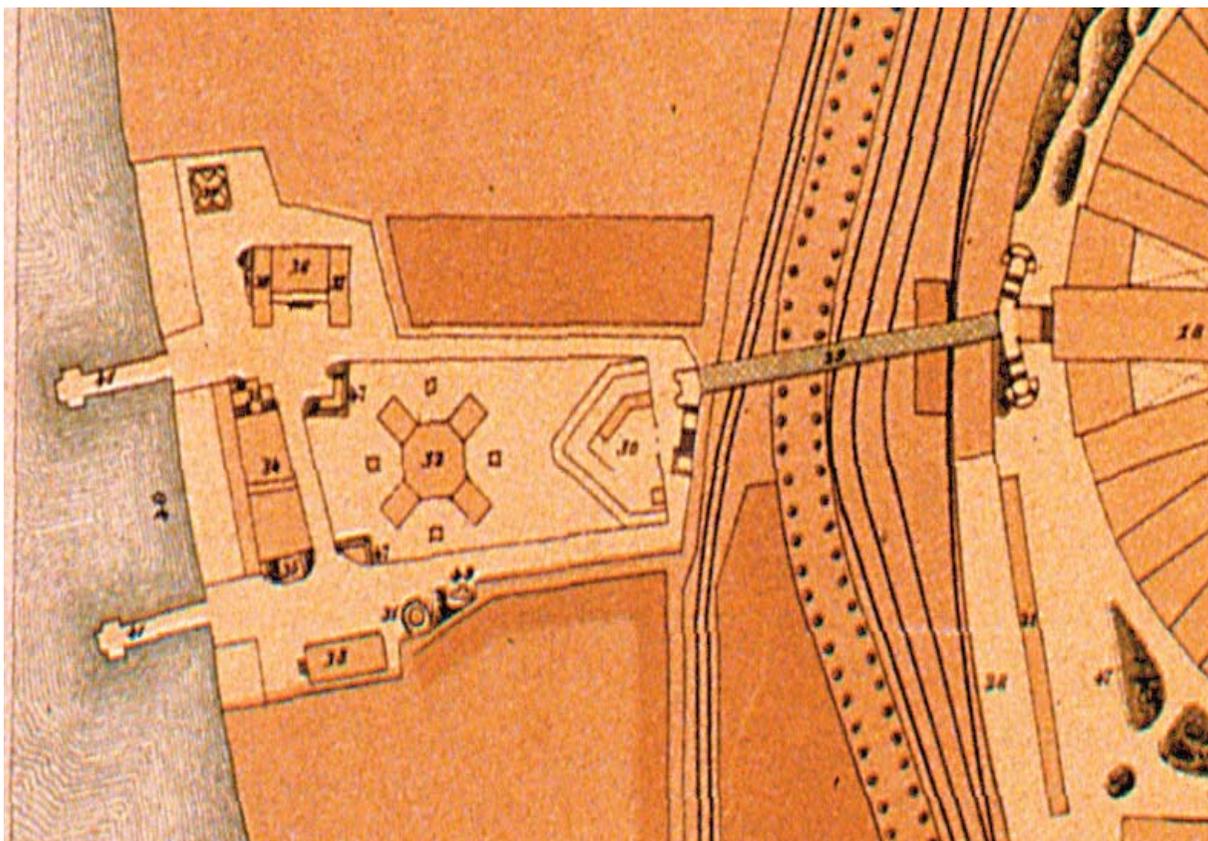
Both designs have an iron bridge, which crossed over the railroad. This bridge (figure 2-45(29) and 2-46(1) and 2-47-p-1888-puente.tif), designed for the Exposición by Gaietà Buïgas, had been part of the project by Fontseré of 1872-73. The fact that Rogent included it in his project is not surprising, for he had worked with Fontseré in the previous projects for the park. Another building that appears in both designs is the fort de Don Carlos (figure 2-45(30) and figure 2-46(2)) which had been recently restored.

The rest of the layout of the floorplan is very different in both plans. In the first plan (figure 2-45) there are four main buildings that are faced inwards, sharing a path between them, and two smaller buildings on the sides. The main pavilion was the site of exhibition of military engineering and war material. It was built in brick; it was elegant and well located (figure 2-45(32)). It was 56 metres long and 26 metres deep, with a surface of 1,372m<sup>2</sup>. This space was enough for all that was exhibited in it. The structure that faced the sea directly was the one of *piscicultura* or fish farming (figure 2-45(34)). On both sides of this pavilion there was a café restaurant with terraces that opened to the seafront.



**figure 2-45b-** 1888 -Exposicion Universal de Barcelona seccion maritima  
author: Valero de Tornos  
source: Valero de Tornos, Juan, *Guía Ilustrada de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona en 1888, de la ciudad, de sus curiosidades y de sus alrededores*, G.de Grau y Compañía, Barcelona, 1888.

**figure 2-45-** 1888 -Exposicion Universal de Barcelona seccion maritima  
author: Elies Rogent  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Code 3903



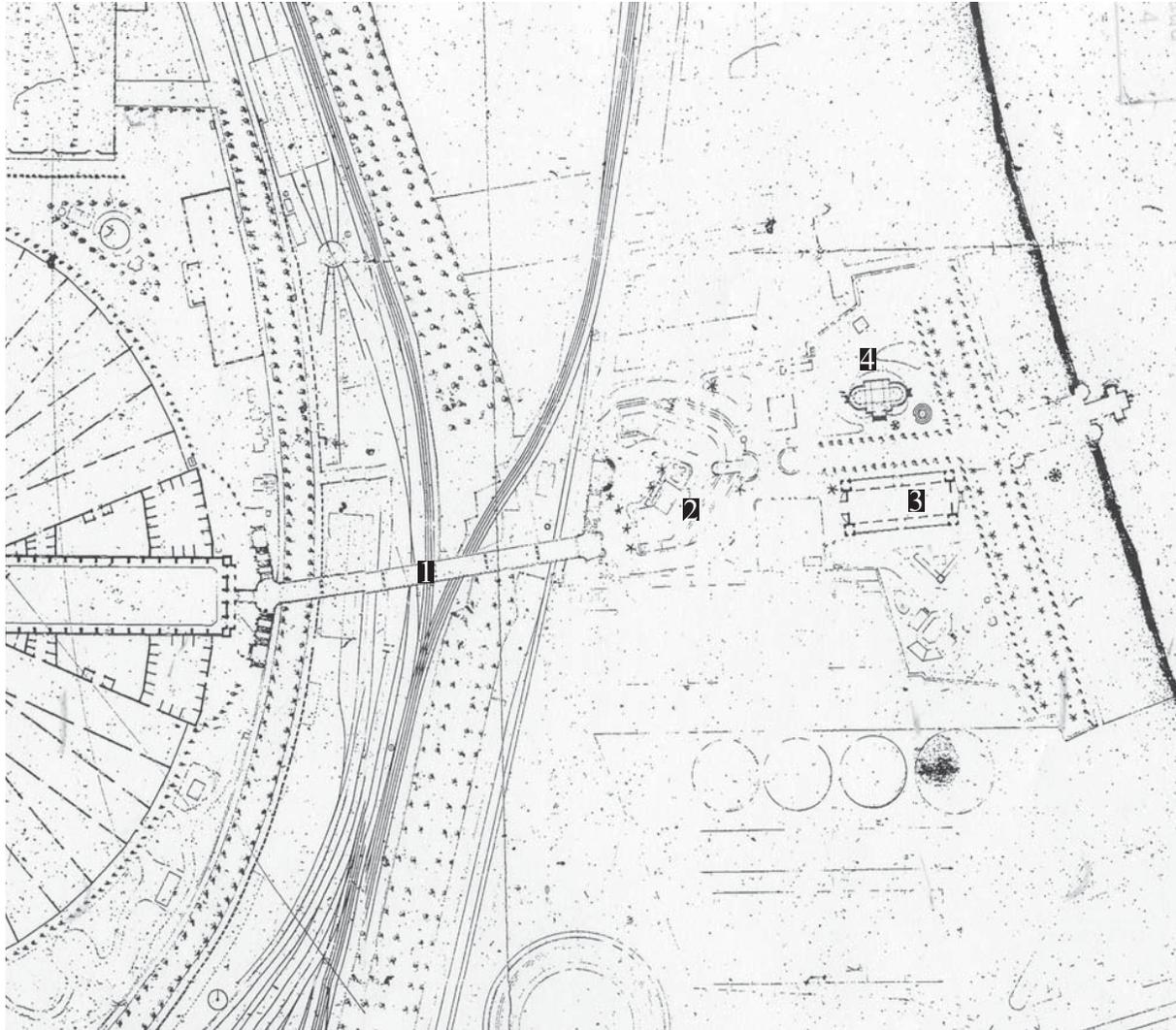


figure 2-46-1888 - Seccion Maritima

author:n/a

source:Archivo Municipal de Barcelona. microfilm 11780-11791 -

signatura 13/92/33 bis y 34

The buildings for navy constructions and the one of salvation and navigation material (figure 2-45(36)) were located on the sides of the fish farming pavilion. There were two wooden piers of 25 metres long built, but the beach under it was still being used as a bathing location. An electric light house (figure 2-45(31)) was also built in the location to sign the maritime entrance of the Exposición.

The layout of the second design (figure 2-46), which was actually built, consisted on two boulevards, one parallel to the seafront and one perpendicular to it. The last one ended on one single small pier that led to the sea. On both sides of this boulevard there were the two main buildings. Unfortunately there are no specifications in this map, but we can assume that the main buildings were: the one of the Compañía Transatlantica (figure 2-46(3) and figure 2-48) and the one from the Sociedad Española de Salvamento de Naufragos (figure 2-46(4) and figure 2-49). The pavilion of Compañía Transatlantica was a magnificent arab style pavilion. This was criticised for only having a couple of features that were maritime<sup>79</sup>. This structure held the ships scale models and was under the supervision of the Marques de Comillas. The pavilion of Sociedad Española de Salvamento de Naufragos was designed by the Catalan architects Bohigas and Bassegoda. The architecture of this pavilion related more to the architecture of the bath resorts and the harbour than to the metropolitan architecture of the period as well as the project for the *Desembarcadero en el lago*, located in the park area of the Exposición (figure 2-50).

The maritime section was supposed to receive visitors who came through the sea, but this was in practice not the case. The space was mainly used for the enjoyment of the view and the recreation in the esplanade and the bar on the

seafront

Also on the waterfront, but further south, out of the precinct of the Exposición, was the temporary building of the Hotel Internacional. This was placed on the Moll de la Fusta and could be reached through the Passeig de Colom (figure 2-51). Barcelona was short of hotels for the visitors expected for the Exposición, so the Hotel Internacional was planned and the project given to Domènech i Montaner in the beginning of 1888. The Hotel Internacional was an iron framed structure clad in brick and terracotta. As Freixa evaluated it:

“In these sumptuous buildings, both of Rogent’s collaborators would express their highest bet, that of the quality of artistic design and artisan execution. The non rethorical incorporation of the new building techniques and the sincerity of materials, a new synthesis of modernity and tradition”<sup>80</sup>

The construction of the Hotel only took three months and Barcelonese as well as international visitors praised it. The building had 150 metres long and 35 deep, with an area of 5,250 metres. This was realised on land claimed to the sea, on Passeig Colom. The main body of the building had five stories and the central area and the towers six. The ground floor had four entrances, two central ones for pedestrians and two lateral ones for vehicles. The building counted also with many services apart from the hotel, such as a post office, a library, a clothes shop, and even a shop for the sale of shows, theatre and cabaret tickets. Restaurants and banquet rooms were placed on the ground and first floors, but the kitchen was located in the attic. The hotel had 1600 rooms. It is remarkable that one of the issues specified in the text of Chichón<sup>81</sup> was that all the

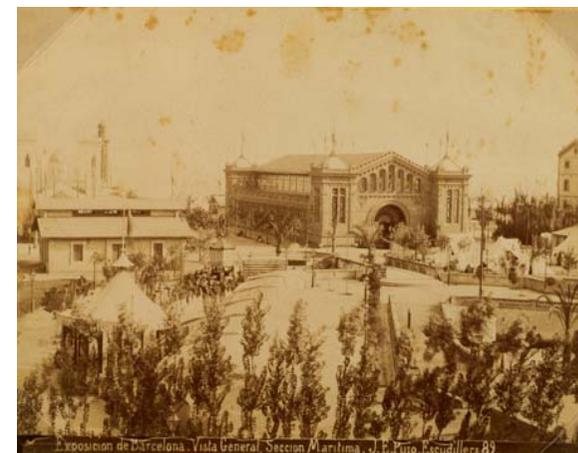
materials and manufactured items were local, all the architects and workers were so too.

This building had not been originally designed as an ephemeral structure, but it was nevertheless demolished. Unfortunately, due to property rights, it was torn down after the event was finished. A critic of the period had to say about the demolition of such a valuable building. “Property is burglary...to the rights of beauty and the interest of art”<sup>82</sup>.

### Realisation and repercussions

The Universal Exposition of Barcelona was initially supposed to open in September 1887, but it opened on April 9<sup>th</sup> 1888. As in many other exhibitions, the structures were not all finished for the time of the opening. Two of the main buildings were still in construction, the Café Restaurant and the Arc de Triompf. The Maritime Section was also under construction when the Exposición was inaugurated. The maritime section took months to be finally open, on the day of the opening the structure of this section was not even started. And that was not all, there was so much landfill needed around the fort of Don Carlos that citizens were paid for the collaboration of bringing debris to fill in the sea.

The inauguration celebrations were held anyway. Warships of nations across Europe received the regent María Cristina of Hapsburg-Lorena and her son, future Alfonso XIII, including the one from Great Britain with the Duke of Edinburgh in it. The opening ceremony was held in the Palace of Fine Arts and speeches were given by Rius i Taulet and by Manuel Girona.

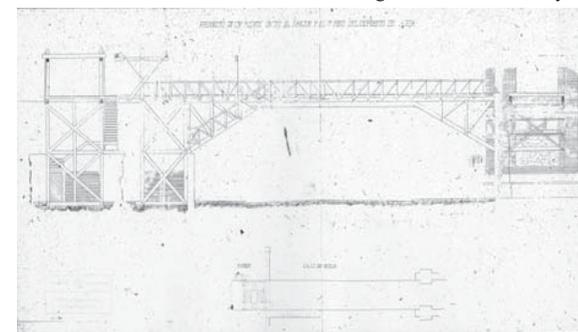


**figure 2-48** - 1888 - Seccion Maritima  
author photo: J. E. Puig

source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotografico. ref. bcn001212 / ahcb-af / imatge suelta

**figure 2-47** - 1888 - Proyecto de un puente entre el Parque y el  
Deposito de Agua

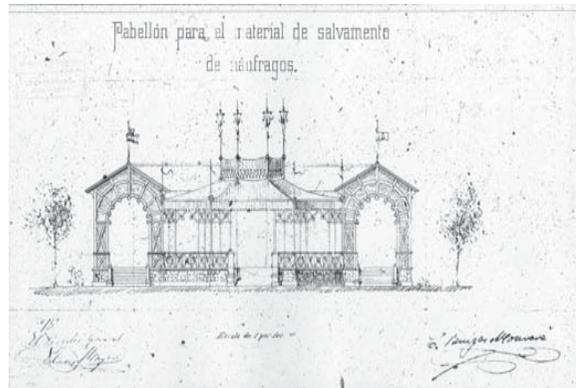
source: Archivo Municipal de Barcelona. microfilm 11780-11791  
- signatura 13/92/33 bis y 34



<sup>80</sup> Freixa, Mireia, ‘El protomodernisme a la arquitectura i a les artes plàstiques’ in Grau, Ramón y Marina Lopez, *Exposició Universal de Barcelona: Llibre del Centenari, 1888-1988*, Barcelona, 1988. pg.337.

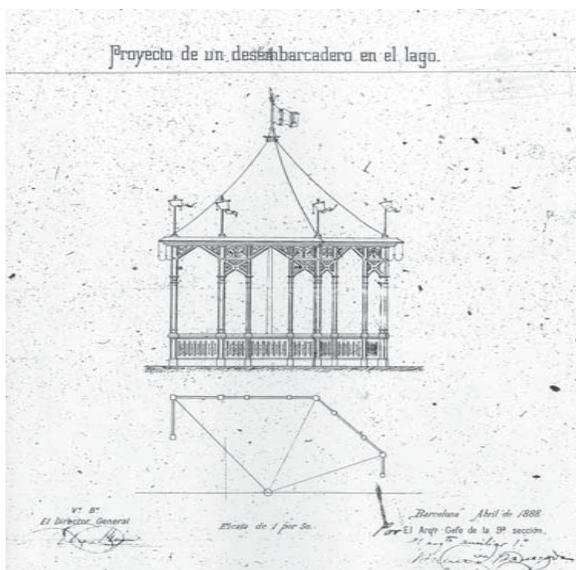
<sup>81</sup> Chichón, Rafael, *Barcelona y la Exposición Universal (Guía Económica)* Agencia Oficial de la exposición Universal, sres Farre y Fabregas, Barcelona, 1888.

<sup>82</sup> Sardà, Joan, ‘El Derribo del Hotel Internacional’, *La Vanguardia*, April 5 1889.



**figure 2-49-** 1888 -Pabellon para el material de Salvamento de Naufragos  
author: n/a  
source:Archivo Municipal de Barcelona. microfilm 11780-11791  
- signatura 13/92/33 bis y 34

**figure 2-50-** 1888 -Proyecto de un Desembarcadero en el lago  
author: n/a  
source:Archivo Municipal de Barcelona. microfilm 11780-11791  
- signatura 13/92/33 bis y 34



During the first months of the Exposición, in the summer, the shows and the sections of the Exposición in the Parc de la Ciutadella were not very popular. The situation changed in September when heat receded. This period after the summer was qualified by commentators of the time as the period in which the time of baths was finished so that foreigners and locals could visit the fair<sup>83</sup>. In this case the bathing and waterfront activities are put as contrary to those of the fair.

The Exposición Universal lasted thirty-five weeks and it received one million and a half visitors in that period of time, which gives an average of six thousand people a day. Another version<sup>84</sup> talks about the precise figure of 1,084,910 paying visitors, added to the almost 160,000 who came in with combined train-fair tickets and free tickets. It is hard to compare the scale of the Exposición with other events of the kind (table03).

This left the city with a deficit of six million pesetas, which was to be expected. Rius i Taulet had asked for financial help from Madrid but he did not get it, so followed to spend it anyway. It took ten years to the city to pay back the debt. But this was not the only debt that the city had; this was only one sixth of the whole debt.

Regarding the media there was a full publication of the events of the Exposición in the main newspapers of Barcelona. Besides this there was an official newspaper, *El Reporter*<sup>85</sup> (figure 2-52) dedicated exclusively to the Exposición which would give a daily account of the events in and around the Exposición. This publication had four pages and would dedicate in each number an article to the situation of the city, some others to the events in the Exposición and the last page would be dedicated to the advertising of particular events and stands in the Exposición.

The Reporter was given for free in the premises of the Exposición and sold in the rest of the city.

Regarding labour, the Exposición did palliate some of the lack of work that had been haunting the city since 1887, giving work to two thousand people in the preparation of the Exposición and three thousand during the show itself. The less extreme unions did support the Exposición. So much that when the works on the park had to be finished the workers had planned a strike for claiming the eight hour work day, they cancelled it to be able to finish the construction.

One of the most popular and visited shows in the Exposición had little to do with industrial technology and progress but more with the spectacular attraction of technological development, this was the hot air balloon (figure 2-53).

The great iron structures of the Agriculture Palace and the Bridge to the maritime section survived long after the Exposición was finished until 1940. They were so damaged by the bombings during the Civil War, between 1937 and 1939 that they finally had to be torn down.

The two buildings that did remain from the Exposición were the Arc de Triomf by Josep Vilaseca in the Passeig de Lluís Companys, and the Café Restaurant also by Domènec i Montaner. The other main buildings that did not survive the Exposición were the Palace of Industry, the Gallery of Machines, the Palace of Sciences, the Pavilion of Agriculture and the Palace of Fine Arts.

There were all kinds of comments on the Exposición. Those that came from its organisation were expectedly positive.

"Barcelona can show itself proud of having carried out the colossal idea

that was believed to be unrealisable and the most important and great work realised to this date, by the wit and activity in a civilising fight for labour”<sup>86</sup>

The praise went on to address the inauguration feasts that lasted eight days in which the formidable display of battleships from all over the world reunited in ‘the most beautiful harbour of Spain’.<sup>87</sup>

The critics on the Exposición were harsh and still a century later commentators criticise it as insignificant.

“A simple comparison with the great European Exhibitions shows the modesty of the Barcelonese event in foreign participation, in number of visitors, in its simple physical dimension, in the ambition, scale and interest of its architectures”<sup>88</sup>

The maritime section was strongly criticised in general but the one who was most articulate about this was Jose Ricart<sup>89</sup>. Ricart criticises mainly the lack of contribution of the maritime community of Barcelona to the Exposición. He remarks that as Barcelona was a Port city and having such a strong sea tradition there were no maritime specialists called in for the Exposición. Actually, Ricart compares the section of the Exposición with the maritime exhibition held in 1872<sup>90</sup>, and considers the one in 1888 much inferior to its predecessor. He attributes the fact to the decrease in Spanish manufacturing of ships, due to the monopoly of the market by the English production. Ricart does praise some installations adjacent to the maritime section on the waterfront, namely the beautiful *Paseo de las Palmeras* or Palm tree Boulevard and the wooden

pier that had turned into a traditional spot for the meeting of society in the hot summer evenings. This is also shown in his ambiguous comment about the pass form the maritime culture to that of leisure:

“Barcelona, it seems incredible it was the ancient capital of the Counts, the maritime queen of the Mediterranean, then the marine was its strength, now it is refractive to anything that smells like tar (...) And our suffered sea people emigrate, and as it is not renewed, our piers are left for the strollers”<sup>91</sup>

Others did not criticise the maritime section of the Exhibition as did some commentators of the period. Mercé Tatjer I Mir, an expert in the issues of the Barcelona waterfront and especially Barceloneta, considered the maritime section of the Exposición to be: “the last manifestation of the maritime Barcelona”<sup>92</sup>. With this she is affirming that after this event there was no real or institutional intervention in the urban landscape of the waterfront.

**Table 03**

World Exhibitions	visitors	exhibitors	duration	year
London	6.039.195	13,917	141	1857
Paris	5.162.330	23,954	200	1855
London	6.211.103	28,653	171	1862
Paris	10.200.000	50,226	210	1867
Vienna	7.254.687	42,584	186	1873
Philadel.	9.857.625	159	159	1876
Barcelona	1.244.910		245	1888

Source: Reverter Delmás, E. *Guía Catálogo y Memoria de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Imprenta Militar de Calzada e Jzbert, Barcelona, 1888. Biblioteca Archivo Histórico. Pg.8

**figure 2-52** - 1888 - *El Reporter*, *Diario de la Exposición*, Barcelona, 14 July 1888. source: Archivo Municipal de Barcelona.



<sup>83</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 16 Agosto 1888  
<sup>84</sup> *Las Exposiciones Universales de Barcelona 1888-1929*, Barcelona, 1937. Biblioteca Archivo Histórico. Pg.102  
<sup>85</sup> *El Reporter, Diario de la Exposición*, Barcelona, 1,3,6,11 and 14 July 1888.  
<sup>86</sup> Reverter Delmás, E. *Guía Catálogo y Memoria de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Imprenta Militar de Calzada e Jzbert, Barcelona, 1888. Biblioteca Archivo Histórico. Pg.98  
<sup>87</sup> Reverter Delmás, E. *Guía Catálogo y Memoria de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Imprenta Militar de Calzada e Jzbert, Barcelona, 1888. Biblioteca Archivo Histórico. Pg.99  
<sup>88</sup> Sanchez Suarez, Alejandro, Barcelona, 1888-1929: Modernidad, Ambicion y Conflictos de una Ciudad Sonada (Cervantes Completo), Barcelona, Alianza, 2001  
<sup>89</sup> Ricart i Giral, Jose, 'Las Instalaciones Maritimas de la Exposición', Ateneo Barcelones, *Conferencias públicas relativas a la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Litografía de Busquets y Vidal, 1889. pg309--324  
<sup>90</sup> Ricart i Giral, Jose, 'Las Instalaciones Maritimas de la Exposición', Ateneo Barcelones, *Conferencias públicas relativas a la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Litografía de Busquets y Vidal, 1889. pg318.



**figure 2-51** - 1888 - Passeig Colom  
author: Antoni Espulgas  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotográfico. ref. bcn000192 / ahcb-af / imatge suelta

**figure 2-53**- 1888 - Globus  
author: Antoni Espulgas  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotográfico. ref. bcn000143 / ahcb-af / imatge suelta



Many issues about the city were dealt with in the occasion of the Exposición. The aesthetics of the city were discussed of course, but also the solution of the problems of hygiene<sup>93</sup>. Gongora addresses this issue especially in the interdisciplinary scope, in the way physics, chemistry, natural history, law, economy, politics, engineering, architecture and government are all disciplines that should be involved in providing a healthy environment for the individual.

In the position of evaluating the success of an event such as the Universal Exhibition of Barcelona we have to think about the variables and values used for the judgement. As Grau explained, this was not a simple fair, which could be evaluated by the amount of commercial transactions done during the time of the Exposición. This event was a polyvalent phenomenon that had positive and negative consequences in the short and the long terms. Basically, and especially in the issues regarding urban development, this Exposición worked as a catalyst of projects that were already being developed, but that because of the event were more rapidly realised and changed the use and aspect of certain parts of the city as well as the improvement of the functional facilities of the city.

When it comes to the influence of the Exposición on the urban evolution of the city and the city's image we have to agree with both Grau and Guardia and García Espuche and believe the Exposición to be both an instrument of advertising and propaganda of the city as well as a catalyst of all the projects that were being thought of for the city and its modernisation.

When addressing the issue of the waterfront the story is a different one, the process of recovery of the waterfront for leisure use does not seem to be achieved by the Exposición. The harsh criticism on the installations of the maritime

section and the complete avoiding of the issue of the beach in the Exposición seems to have a detrimental influence in the development of the waterfront. The Exposición does not stop the industrial development of the area and neither does it provide a new qualified urban space on the seaside.

Therefore we can see the institutional approach of the city and its government towards the waterfront. This approach was evidently different to the one of the popular use of the coast. On one hand, the Ajuntament, while proposing an event that would give a new image to a traditionally provincial city did not advertise the area of the urban waterfront as a main space of leisure. In this theme it tended to advertise the Ramblas or Plaza Catalunya as places for promenade apart from the attractions of the Exposición. When it regarded the waterfront the attention gravitated to the development of the Passeig Colom, which waterfront was already being blocked by the construction of part of the harbour. The presence of the Monument to Colom and the Hotel Internacional give this area a character that has little to do with the use of the beaches of Barceloneta or Can Tunis. The lack of attention to the maritime section by all the organisers shows how the place was not considered as a space of prestige worth mentioning. Instead there was strong promotion of the seafront in the outskirts of the city, especially to the north, including bathhouses and places for restoration, relaxation and health.

Therefore, even if it was indirectly, the Exposición did have a small contribution to one of the aspects of the urban leisure waterfront at least, that of the view of the sea from a boulevard, almost continuing the tradition of the Muralla del Mar that had remained as an image of the city throughout the decades.

### 2.2.2 – 1890-1908 – Alsina Amils. Jaussely.

*In this chapter we will look at the projects of Ricard Alsina Amils and Leon Jaussely. These two planners make the first proposal of a waterfront avenue that would be part of a system of circulation and open spaces for Barcelona. The waterfront, used as leisure space on the northern side of the city, contrasts with the development of the southern section, dedicated exclusively to harbour activities.*

Barcelona in the 1890s went through a period of political and economical unrest. Urban transformations were carried out slowly and the periphery of the city was beginning to be considered as an area to intervene, as much as the central area.

In 1891 Pere Garcia Fària<sup>94</sup> formulates the Pla de Barcelona and in the same year the Ajuntament approves the implementation of the *Plano de Barcelona y sus alrededores en 1890* drawn by D.J.M. Serra. The new structure will dictate the areas addressed in the following plans. The structure included three differentiated elements: First there was the area of the old city and the Barceloneta as one element. The following one was the area of the Eixample proposed by Cerdà and the areas of Hortes and Sant Bertran adjacent to the Montjuïc. The third element was formed by the great suburban area around the city.

Regarding urban infrastructure 1891 was a relevant year for it was then that Garcia Faria presented his project for the new sewers of Barcelona. This could be considered a little late given that these projects for sanitation had already been carried out in London in the 1840s, Frankfurt in 1860, Paris in 1865 and even in Lisbon

in 1880.

The plan of Cerdà was being slowly carried out and the process of urbanisation followed the principles of the urbanist, though not very precisely, in a greater scale. It wouldn't be until the end of the nineteenth century that a new proposal for the whole of the city and for the waterfront in particular would appear.

The period is considered to be one in which the city still has a series of traditional strongly held uses at the same time as it develops new forms of living that belong to a more modern and expanding metropolis in which the proletarian population was growing.

Since the beginning of the century there was a period of transformation of municipal administration and the formulation of new tools of urbanisation. In 1897 finally the villages of Gracia, Sant Andreu, Sant Gervasi, Sant Marti and Les Corts were annexed to the city and created the new urban area. Horta and Sarria would be annexed later, in 1904 and 1921 respectively. This decision was not simply the consequence of an organic process of expansion; this was a purposeful action of the political sphere as well as that of the powerful Barcelonese classes.

Several events show this will for municipal control. In 1902 a new organisation of Municipal services is approved based on the Memoria signed by Cambó, Moles and Plaja. In 1903, the triumph of the Lliga Regionalista in the Municipal government transforms the set of interests and new urban initiatives are taken. This group will understand, from the beginning, the city of Barcelona as a great capital, as an instrument for economical regeneration and social modernisation. The alliance between the Lliga and the radicals would propose one of the most

relevant plans for the city of Barcelona and one to have the waterfront as a paramount section was the 'Pla de Enllaços'. The new necessities of the urban area are to be answered by the formulation of a competition.

The need of a structure for a city that was becoming more and more of a protagonist of the regional and national life is shown in the text written by Enric Prat de la Riba in *La Veu de Catalunya* in October 1905.

"Barcelona is not, for us Catalans, a city as any other of those that grow in different places of our land. Barcelona is for us the unique city, the city without comparison, the city by excellence, the capital. As Paris for the French, as London for the English, as Vienna for the Austrians, it is a centre of radiation of all the great currents of national life, from economy to politics, fundamental centre of the people and brains now of the race"

<sup>91</sup> Ricart i Giralt, Jose, 'Las Instalaciones Maritimas de la Exposición', Ateneo Barcelones, *Conferencias públicas relativas a la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Litografía de Busquets y Vidal, 1889. pg322.

<sup>92</sup> Tatjer i Mir, Merce, *La Barceloneta del siglo XVIII al Plan de la Ribera*, Barcelona, Saturno, 1973.

<sup>93</sup> Góngora, Luis, 'La Higiene', Ateneo Barcelones, *Conferencias públicas relativas a la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, Litografía de Busquets y Vidal, 1889. pg539-560.

<sup>94</sup> Among other publications Garcia Faria produced Garcia Faria, P, *Proyecto de Sanecamiento del subsuelo de Barcelona*, Imprenta de Heinrich, Barcelona 1893, Atlas de Laminas.

After the Exposición Universal, the use of the waterfront was developing in its leisure area on the northern part of the shore, while the southern part, closer to the centre of the city, was developed for harbour purposes. Most of these establishments for leisure came from private initiative, and the baths, as well as the water sports clubs, were isolated structures that cohabited with the developing industry without a proper planning of the area.

Not much information is available about the many proposals that existed for the establishment of the waterfront as a space of leisure and recreation and the counter projects that appeared subsequently. Some of the more extensive projects will be analysed in this section but it is relevant to mention some others that were not realised. One of them was the proposal that the Asociación de Propietarios de la Barceloneta did in 1902. The proposal was to extend the harbour towards the Besòs River, so that Barceloneta would become the neuralgic centre of harbour activity. This proposal was not far from what later happened with the sprawl of industry in this section of the city that depended on the harbour. Another proposal that was well received but later not built was the one made in 1905 by Antonio Canadell i Prats, he proposed a commercial area to be located on landfills between the streets of San Juan ad Bogatell. Those projects were exclusively harbour directed and did not provide any consideration of the waterfront as a leisure space. The projects of Ricard Alsina Amils and Bosch i Alsina in the following years would present a different picture.

These proposals were taking place at a time in which the industrial city created by the great industrial powers in charge of the municipal government was in conflict with the regional government, which sponsored the cultural and

tourist development of the city. Another conflict apart from the metropolitan and regional on the issues of tourism and the waterfront was also the social. While the more powerful classes were sponsoring the cultural, clean and tidy city of the seashore, reality showed a more negative side when the industrialisation had brought not only industrial contamination but also so much population that they were forced to build barracks on the beach and live in them.

Apart from the private initiatives for the installation of baths on the seafront there were also some institutional efforts that would enhance the image of seafront city that Barcelona was looking for. In 1908 the 'Sociedad de Atracción de Forasteros' was founded to promote tourism in Catalunya. This organisation had publications that insisted on the architectural and landscape qualities of the region and the city, qualifying Barcelona as the *Perla del Mediterraneo*<sup>95</sup>.

### 2.2.2.1-Alsina Amils

#### Ricard Alsina Amils - biographical facts and urban landscape principles

There is no biographical information about Ricard Alsina Amils to be found in any of the encyclopaedias of biographies of the Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. His life does not seem to be recorded in any of the local archives. Instead, it is his brother, who was a sculptor, which appears as a more relevant local figure. From his biography we can get some information about Ricard's life. Antoni Alsina Amils was born in 1863 in Tàrrrega. Their father was a *mestre d'obres* and had been in charge of the development of the tram in the region of Lleida. Ricard and Antoni were two of seven siblings, Ricard was the second oldest.

After this, the only part of the work of Ricard Alsina Amils that is recorded in the archives is his *Proyecto de Unificación de Barcelona con los pueblos de su llano*<sup>96</sup>, which we will proceed to analyse.

## Alsina Amils - project – 1900

*Ricard Alsina Amils was the first one to propose a waterfront avenue that would be part of a system of circulation in the city. His project is not specifically devoted to leisure space, but to circulation improvement. However, his proposal would set a precedent for a different use of the waterfront, and the inclusion of open spaces such as urban parks into this system of circulation.*

### Context and administration

Ricard Alsina Amils<sup>97</sup> presented his project for the unification of Barcelona in 1899 (figure 2-54). This project consisted in the tracing and designing of an avenue that would act as a ring around the city. Other diagonal avenues were added to the grid adopted from the project of Cerdà. Some of the features of the plan are the refurbishment of the city parks and particularly the waterfront avenue called *Paseo de la Marina al Besòs*. The ring avenue that circumscribed the city is strangely called in the plan *line of Consumption*.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

Alsina Amils proposed a general plan that would expand and complete the plan of Cerdà for the city of Barcelona. The main characteristic of this plan and what can be evidently seen in the drawings, as much as in its title is the solution of the communication paths in the city. The map is called by Alsina 'Proyecto de Unificación y Reforma de los pueblos del Llano a la Ciudad de Barcelona'<sup>98</sup>.

In general, the plan provides, apart from the grids already proposed by Cerdà 40 years

earlier, a supplementary system of circulation. The two main new elements are an avenue that crosses the city horizontally at the height of the limit of the old city, the Gran Vía and the second one is a ring avenue that surrounds the city joining the mountainside with the waterfront on the Besòs and the Montjuïc.

On the other hand there is a proposal of an urban expansion behind the Montjuïc and beyond the ring avenue, proposing the first suburban areas of the city of Barcelona. But what interests us here is the detail of the waterfront area.

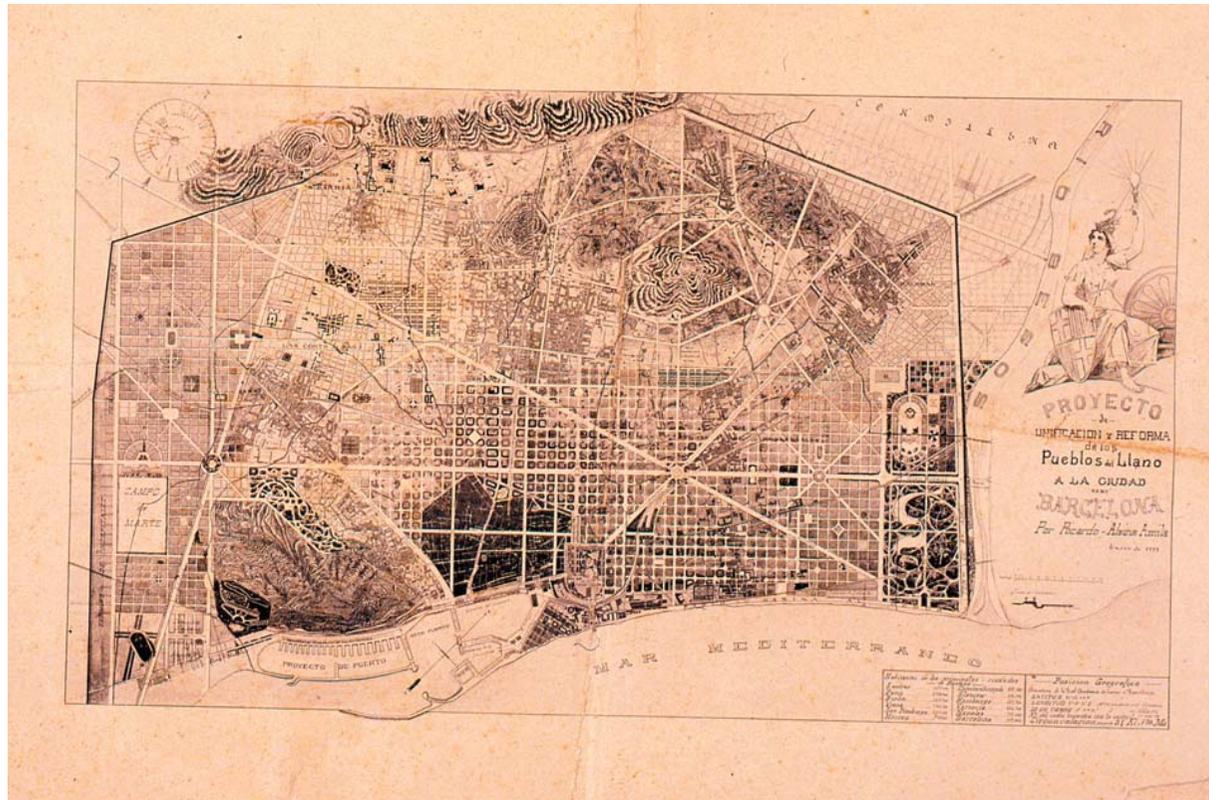
The project was to be located between the Marina Street, that stretched up to the coast and the Diagonal that opened to the sea, close to the recently recovered park of Besòs, projected by Cerdà in his plan for the Eixample. The other end of the Barcelona waterfront, on the foot of the Montjuïc and Can Tunis was to be reserved as harbour area, urbanising the area of Nuestra Señora del Puerto. In this location a great *Champ de Mars* would be placed. Barceloneta was kept as harbour area and would maintain its industrial activity. All avenues perpendicular to the sea are specified in the plan and new avenues that open to the waterfront are included. Starting from the south, one of the avenues that limit the Champs de Mars behind Montjuïc stretches all the way to the seafront. This is evidently an industrial area, but on the slope of the mountain it is possible to see the design of a new park, with view to the sea, probably also to the industrial activities of the harbour.

<sup>95</sup> 'Pearl of the Mediterranean' This title was used for a movie published by the organisation in 1913.

<sup>96</sup> Alsina Amils Ricardo, *Memoria Explicativa del Proyecto de Unificación de Barcelona con las poblaciones de su llano y reforma general del plano de la ciudad*, Barcelona-Gracia, 1900.

<sup>97</sup> Alsina Amils Ricardo, *Memoria Explicativa del Proyecto de Unificación de Barcelona con las poblaciones de su llano y reforma general del plano de la ciudad*, Barcelona-Gracia, 1900.

<sup>98</sup> 'Project of Unification and reform of the villages of the plains with the city of Barcelona'



**figure 2-54** - 1899 -proyecto de unificacion y reforma de los pueblos del llano.  
 author: Alsina Amils  
 source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. code 16421.

Right under the Montjuic and approaching the old city the whole new tracing of the harbour was proposed, with thousands of metres more of harbour perimeter, by the inclusion of twenty new piers and a protective wall, still far away from the old city and urban life. Approaching the city and in the old harbour Alsina also proposes a series of changes in the internal structure of the harbour, adding new stretches of landfill next to the already existing Molls. However, most of the waterfront perimeter in the southern and central zone is occupied by industrial facilities, not leaving space for the urban life to communicate and coexist with its seafront.

The case of the northern section, starting from the northern coast of Barceloneta and reaching the Besòs, is completely different.

As explained by Alsina Amils:

“In order to unite both extremes of the ring avenue, a waterfront avenue is indicated in the plan, which would have nothing to envy to the celebrated ones that embellish many other European cities”<sup>99</sup>

Despite the fact that the industries which already existed in the area are specified in the drawing, there is a breakthrough in the first design of an avenue that would take the whole waterfront from Barceloneta to Besòs. The area of Barceloneta does not show anything on the waterfront, just the plain finishing of the buildings and the start of the sea line. Besides this, it is very clear here how the Barceloneta was completely isolated from the rest of the city because of the presence of three railway lines.

It is not clear whether this waterfront avenue would take the morphology of the rest of the ring avenue proposed for the city. The main ring avenue proposed a pit on the outer

side of the district, to make the entrance more difficult. This section could not be applied for the waterfront part of the avenue. So following the line of the rest of the avenue, the waterfront part would have had 6 metres of fiscal line, 20 metres of *rambla* with path for railway line and 24 metres for buildings.

The area that used to be the maritime section of the Exposición Universal appear with a couple of buildings. (figure 2-54 detail 1) It is not clear if they are left from the Exposición or if they are new ones. In any case the bridge from the park to the seafront still appears in the map as well as a pier on the water. This one looks much bigger than those in the plans and maps of the Exposición, but it is still a project and not clear if it was built like that in reality or not. From then on the *Paseo de la Marina al Besòs* is drawn as an uninterrupted path up to the park in Besòs, next to the water with an insinuation of a beach adjacent to it. There are no specified further details on this project, so some of the facts and details will remain unsolved.

Particularly the park at Besòs is finally designed as a *parc publique* the way André would have proposed it. The location is actually the same as the one proposed by Cerdà in his projects of 1859 and 1861 but the tracing is here very clear. Even the name is the same given by Cerdà: *Gran Bosque*. The lower part of the park, closer to the water, despite the couple of straight roads that cross it, according to its scale, reminds us of the design of Central Park in New York or the Bois de Boulogne in Paris by Alphand. The purpose of this area is evidently the promenade and relaxation of the city dwellers. Located in the limit of the city, it provided a space for promenade and contemplative recreation that was to be expected of every urban park of the beginning of the twentieth century. It is true that the simplicity of

its tracing and the lack of detail of the plan do not allow a proper comparison with the parks before mentioned. However, the intentions seem to be there. There is still no hint of sports pavilions or tracks.

The upper part of the park, closer to the mountain has a completely different sort of design. This is definitely a geometrical park, a place to contemplate the gardens, species and composition of the area. There seems to be a stadium there, but looking closer it was only another tracing of the gardens with no program in it whatsoever.

Essentially, and if we have to look at what this project left for subsequent interventions, it showed how the areas of the city's waterfront were already disconnected and their functions were established and difficult to link.

The will for comparison with international cities is shown in the right lower angle of the drawing (figure 2-54 detail 2). There, the population of the main European cities is specified and compared with the one of Barcelona.

<sup>99</sup> Alsina Amils Ricardo, *Memoria Explicativa del Proyecto de Unificación de Barcelona con las poblaciones de su llano y reforma general del plano de la ciudad*, Barcelona-Gracia, 1900. pg.5

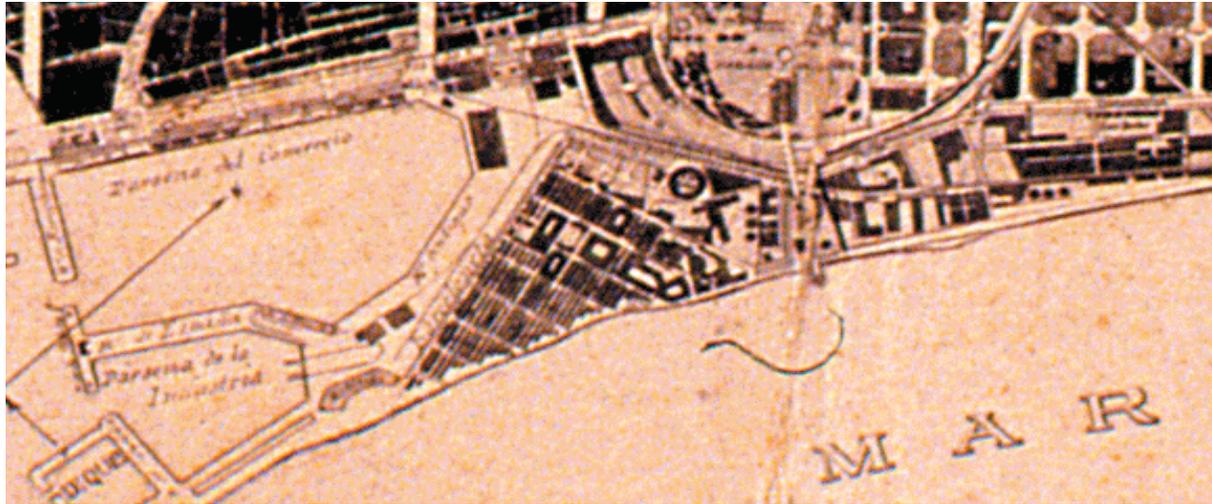


figure 2-54-detail - 1899 -proyecto de unificación y reforma de los pueblos del llano.  
author: Alsina Amils  
source:Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. code 16421.

figure 2-54-detail - 1899 -proyecto de unificación y reforma de los pueblos del llano.  
author: Alsina Amils  
source:Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. code 16421.

## Realisation

This project did not reach realisation but was a tool for understanding the problematic of certain areas of the waterfront and the need to establish communication and transform the uses of the area.

The project of Alsina Amils may have been especially useful for later projects in many ways; the restructuring of parks and open spaces, the proposal of new ones, the new system of circulation and transport, especially the ring avenue. However for the waterfront its only breakthrough idea was the proposal of the sea side avenue. This proposal was part of a new system and speed of circulation, and proposed, as had been done by the train system some decades before, a new way of perceiving the maritime landscape.

The differences of functions are expressed in the drawing of the different areas of the waterfront, the south, central and northern. Being the first two areas of industry and work and proposing the northern one to follow actually the use that was being given to it by the people: the space for leisure. Unfortunately the project was not realised and it would not be until the project of Jaussely that the idea of a waterfront avenue is revisited

Habitantes de las principales - ciudades de Europa		Posición Geográfica	
Londres	1,000,000	Constantinopla	100,000
París	1,000,000	Glasgow	100,000
Berlin	1,000,000	Hamburgo	200,000
Viena	1,000,000	Varsovia	400,000
San Petersburgo	1,000,000	Napoles	200,000
Moscú	1,000,000	Barcelona	100,000

Orientación de la Real Academia de Ciencias de Barcelona  
 LATITUD 41° 21' 44" N  
 LONGITUD 2° 11' 45" E  
 ID EN TIEMPO 12 h 11 m 12 s  
 Aº del radio terrestre con la vertical 21° 21' 45"  
 Circunvalación por el 3º Al. 170. Ma

### 2.2.2.2- Jaussely

#### Leon Jaussely – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

Leon Jaussely (1875-1933) (figure 2-55) was a French architect and urbanist who participated in urban plans, projects and buildings across Europe in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Jaussely was born in Toulouse in 1875 and attended the School of Beaux Arts of the same city since 1895. In 1897 he received the Prix des Beaux-Arts of Toulouse which allowed him to follow his studies in the workshop of Daumet Esquié. Throughout his career he received several prizes which made him stand out among other professionals of the period. He won the Prix Chaudesaigues, Labarre, Chanavard, and the Prix des Architectes Américains. In 1903 he was the recipient of the Prix de Rome, where he studied the forum of Pompeii. He was residing in Rome when he was called for the competition for the Plan de Enllaços de Barcelona.

In 1919 he showed his methodology as a whole in the plan of extension of the city of Paris with his project URBS. For this project he collaborated with Roger-Henri Expert and Louis Sollier. His principles of scientific urbanism were backed by the explicit quantification of every element. Every single part of his project was justified by a survey of the city before the plan, proposing accurate and durable solutions. The jury praised his project but it was never realised. However, Paris was not his only intervention in France, he showed his application of zoning strategies in the plans he proposed for Carcassonne, Pau, Vittel, Tarbes and Toulouse<sup>100</sup>.

Jaussely was, together with Albert Laprade, the designer of the Musée des Colonies

in 1928, which would later become The Musée Nationale des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie. Also, as many other architects of his generation involved in urban planning, he participated in national and international exhibitions. He was the head architect of the Exposition Coloniale at the Exhibition in Paris in 1931 and head architect in the Exposition de la huile blanche at Grenoble in 1925.

He also worked as head architect for the Ministry of Post, Telephone and Telegraphs (PTT) since 1914, for which he realised many buildings such as the head post office of Bordeaux St Jean and the building for regional direction of the PTT at Toulouse, as well as many smaller post offices in Paris. Jaussely died in 1932 after a trip to Germany on duty for the PTT.

Among his written works we can find the translation<sup>101</sup> and introduction to the book of Raymond Unwin *Town Planning in Practice*, which was first published in 1909. In 1915 Jaussely writes, with the collaboration of Alfred Agache, Jean-Marcel Auburtin and Edouard Redont *Comment reconstruire nos cités détruites* where he gives a practical programme so that a city can realise its plan of extension.

The first work in which Jaussely shows his interest in urban landscape and its organisation was on his project for the Prix Chenavard in 1902 entitled: *Projet d'une place pour le peuple dans la métropole d'un grand état démocratique*.<sup>102</sup> The competition was addressed to students and the subject was free, it was up to Jaussely and he decided to design an ideal square. The city he chose was Paris and he presented a plan that was on the scale of the city. In his memoir of the project he describes the use of science for the urban development.



**figure 2-55** - 1904 -Leon Jaussely  
source:Torres i Capell, Manuel, *Inicis de la urbanística municipal de Barcelona mostra dels fons municipals de plans i projectes d'urbanisme 1750-1930*, Barcelona Ajuntament Corporació Metropolitana DL 1985. Biblioteca ETSAB.

<sup>100</sup> Coustet Robert, *Bordeaux et l'Aquitaine 1920-1940: urbanisme et architecture*, Paris, Regirex France, 1988.

<sup>101</sup> Unwin Raymond, *L' Etude Pratique des Plans de Villes (Introduction a l' Art de Dessiner les Plans d' Aménagement et d' Extension)*, Translated to French by William Mosser & Léon Jaussely, Librairie Centrale des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1922

<sup>102</sup> Project for a square for the people in the metropolis of a great democratic country.

<sup>103</sup> Jaussely, Leon, *Rapport pour le Prix Chenavard*, Paris, 1902.

“The progress of science and modern mechanisation and their general application, modify the current conditions of social life (permitting man more independence and leisure time) driving humanity toward the realisation and liberation of the spirit for social education”<sup>103</sup>

Jaussely’s urban principles are reflected in the memoirs of his projects. He proposed mostly a scientific approach to urbanism but in his discourse he emphasised in the artistic face of this discipline:

“A new harmony has to be created in urban planning...it is in the way of laying out cities that art will exercise its influence on society. There is no art that is more in contact with the life of everybody, for it is precisely the means of life, of evolution and education of the city”<sup>104</sup>

The aesthetic qualities of the project presented by Jaussely remind us of the Beaux Arts compositions of the Universal Expositions. According to specialists<sup>105</sup> in the work of Jaussely, the innovation proposed by him in his first urban project did not have to do with the aesthetic qualities of it. Instead, it lay in the plan for the social layout for the legitimating of the position of the project and in the social dimension of the elements in the programme.

Some of the urban and landscape concepts that were present during the work of Jaussely as an urbanist were taken and transformed by him. In a certain way he criticises the concept of *Garden City* of Ebenezer Howard .

“No suburban developer, shameless speculator, should attempt to qualify his operation as the creation of the *cit -*

*jardin*, for this name is ideally evocative for the population and he is mistaken in this case.”<sup>106</sup>

In his memoria of the project for Barcelona he also clearly criticises the model of *Garden City*. He says that this model, though tightly related to the city by the railway services, will never be like a city for it would lack the main element that makes it a city: intellectual value. For Jaussely cities are brains, and the *Garden city* isolates and loses the intellectual value only providing tranquillity and peace, which, according to him, have never been valuable by themselves.<sup>107</sup>

Still, the British model is popularised in France, with a largely changed meaning, which will also be seen in the discourse of Henri Sellier<sup>108</sup>, mayor of Suresnes, and notably Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier, who would later work in Barcelona and Buenos Aires.

Another character who apparently inspired Jaussely was architect Albert Trofman, who defended the big metropolis in contrast with other opinions of the period. Here Jaussely defends the great metropolis as a “result of a superior culture” and the “intellectual, material and effective power of the people”.<sup>109</sup>

Apart from the *Garden City*, towards which Jaussely is explicitly critical, not many other influences are openly named by the French architect. Nevertheless it is relevant to say that during the years Jaussely was active as an architect and urbanist he belonged to the *Mus e Sociale* and the *Soci t  Francaise des Architectes et Urbanistes*. This organisation published many works on urban planning and architecture such as the work of Joseph St bben *Der St dttebau*, which was originally published in German in 1890 but would not be published in French until

1911. The work of Camillo Sitte *Der St dttebau nach seinen k nstlerischen Grunds tzen: Vermehrt um “Grossstadtgr n”* was also published in Paris in 1902. Jaussely must have also read these authors and some of the influences in his work are evident.

In his professional career he did not only formulate urban plans but he also worked on the legislation regarding such plans. One of these was the law Cornudet of 1919, which would force any city with more than 10,000 inhabitants to have an urban plan. He provided details on how these plans had to be made. They would be divided into two parts: the *Dossier des Cit s* was to be established by the cities themselves and the programme was to be defined by the *homme de l’art* in charge of the extension plan.

In his insistence on the scientific qualities of urbanism Jaussely proposed a methodology based on history, statistics and geography. The topics that were to be analysed by the urbanist were the following: demography, economical and social organisation, circulation and traffic, free spaces and parks, monuments and public buildings, hygiene, urban character, stages of realisation and finally the regulation of zoning. Based on this law, the city of Paris proposes a competition for the extension of the city based on the model of Berlin of 1910. Jaussely, Expert and Sollier won the first prize on the section regarding the study of the regional scale of Paris.

Jaussely was also a teacher between 1918 and 1925, working in the workshop of Daumet-Esqui  as interim professor. Compared to most of the great workshops in Paris that of Jaussely was rather marginal, he taught *town planning* and none of his students achieved the *prix de Rome*.

The plans of Jaussely were never realised as a whole, especially those in France were quickly

abandoned and not used subsequently. This does not mean that the analytical process of urban condition was useless. On the other hand his work in Barcelona, though not applied as a whole plan, did get a certain amount of realisation on the waterfront. This is what concerns our study and the following section of this chapter.

Jaussely – project – 1905-1907 – Proyecto Romulus

*Leon Jaussely is actually the first one to present a comprehensive and complete urban plan for Barcelona in which the issue of leisure, open space and landscape are connected and the waterfront becomes a predominant issue of development. The distinctive zoning of the southern area for technical harbour facilities and the northern one for leisure space shows a will to separate these two and achieve an organised distribution of space and its functions, especially on the waterfront. The program of open spaces became more complex, and its application to the zone of the waterfront observes new activities and a new spatial morphology.*

### Context and administration

As previously mentioned, by the beginning of the twentieth century the villages adjacent to Barcelona had been annexed to the city and a new plan was needed to create the necessary connections in the enlarged metropolitan area. For this purpose the Ajuntament called for a competition of ideas for the urban development of Barcelona. This was the *Concurso Internacional de anteproyecto de Enlace de la zona del Ensanche de Barcelona y los pueblos agregados, entre si y con el resto del término municipal de Sarriá y Horta*.

Leon Jaussely, at the time in Rome, was the winner of the competition and submitted a very detailed project for the whole city (figure 2-56), including the development of the waterfront.

On his first visit to Barcelona, Jaussely is surprised by the vital energy of the city, he

considers it a living organism, an organism that is modified according to the development of its people, therefore surpassing the simple logic of urbanisation.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The programme of the competition for the plan of Barcelona was specific about the need of a city that would include the peripheral villages. The proposal was to fill the voids left between the plan of Cerdà and the villages attached, and provide a system of communication between the different parts of the city.

Jaussely spent one year and a half working on the composition of the plan for Barcelona. His presentation<sup>110</sup> was organised in 29 plates and a series of written information referring to each item and each specific area of the plan. The complexity of the task of designing such a plan for the city is highlighted by Jaussely:

“Today the tracing of a city plan is no longer considered as a simple act of road system tracing, it obeys other ambitions. The mere geometry is insufficient for the art of urbanising and that is probably where the ancient cities have something to teach us.”<sup>111</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Jaussely, Leon, *Rapport pour le plan de Ankara*, 1922.

<sup>105</sup> ‘L’urbanisme comme science ou le dernier rêve de Léon Jaussely’. in *Toulouse. 1920-1940. La ville et ses architectes*, CAUE, École d’Architecture de Toulouse, Ed. Ombres Blanches, 264p. Ch. III, de p. 24 à 39. 1991.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted by Topalov, Christian (dir.), *Les divisions de la ville*. Paris : Unesco-MSH, 1999, pg.21

<sup>107</sup> Jaussely, Leon, *Proyecto de Enlaces de la zona de Ensanche de Barcelona y los pueblos agregados*, Barcelona, 1907.pg.3

<sup>108</sup> Sellier, Henri, *Une cité pour tous*, éditions du linteau, Paris, 1998, 1919.

<sup>109</sup> Jaussely, Leon, *Proyecto de Enlaces de la zona de Ensanche de Barcelona y los pueblos agregados*, Barcelona, 1907.pg.4



figure 2-56-1905-Proyecto Romulus

author: Leon Jaussely

technique:

source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. D.13.463 et ss.  
i-059-p-1905-Jaussely.jpg

It is in 1904 that Jaussely uses the term *urbanisme* for the first time, which he probably found in the treaty of Cerdà of 1867. In a way, in his plan Jaussely is synthesising elements from the planners and architects that had some influence on him: Herman Josef Stübben, Camillo Sitte, Patrick Geddes, and Idelfons Cerdà.

The introduction of his report for the plan of Barcelona deals initially with a series of observations about cities, their growth and their complexification. He observes the importance of the railroad in this development of cities and states how it was no longer possible to consider the city as a self-sustained entity, but as a series of agglomerations that expand and on which the area around them depend.

He defined the city as:

“In fact, they are not only centres of acquisition and consumption, but also great centres of production and exchange, true deposits of communication, circulation and transformation for the countries that are under its direct influence. They are the true centres of civilisation, education for the people, of spirit of initiative and enterprise”<sup>112</sup>

Jaussely proposed *urbanisation* as a response to the problem of big cities, providing solutions for the present and for the future. The functional value, as well as the artistic is present in his report:

“Despite all that has been said and is still said, all these elements contribute to give an artistic character; certain modern cities or recently growing cities present evident signs of true beauty”<sup>113</sup>

Art, materialised in open museums that are some of the multiple urban elements he discusses, is also treated as a means for the didactic development of the citizen as explained in page 14:

“In one word, there is the possibility of exteriorising, materialising all that tends to improve the masses, to favour the effort and the enthusiasm of the multitude, to perfect the individual, to instruct the citizen, to strengthen the body and the spirit.”<sup>114</sup>

The urbanist treated the city also as a factory and in his *Memoria* he also talks about the city as a place in which the economical organisation is a kind of *Taylorisation* like in a great workshop, where each thing has to be in charge of a specific function. In these terms he also talks about the main goal of planning to be the welfare of people, the organisation of collective life as the only solution to the contradictions of urban life.

In the plan for Barcelona, Jaussely defines a complex system of circulation that combines the grid of Cerdà with a series of diagonals on star shaped roundabouts and three great ring roads around the existing city. The roundabouts were all to be built around a monument or a public building. This whole system was not limited to the Eixample of Cerdà but reached the outer areas of Barcelona. The objectives of these connections are clear, they aim to connect the commercial, productive and inhabiting areas of the city as fast and effectively as possible. Each of these roads is divided by different criteria. Functionally, there would be economical, tourist and secondary roads. Topographically they would serve the different levels regarding the physical characteristics of the location.



**figure 2-57** - 1904 -Plano caracterizando las diversas zonas de construcciones  
author: Leon Jaussely  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Carpeta Jaussely. P.8

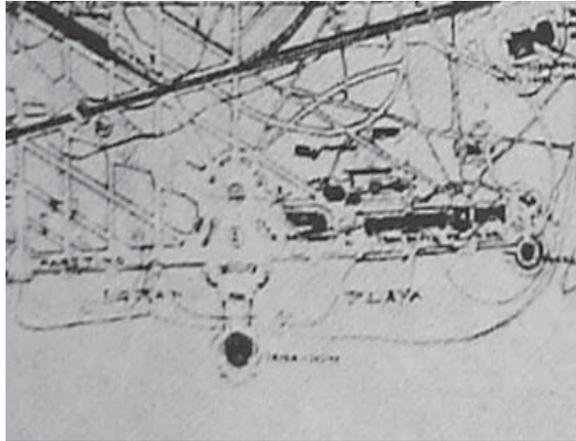
<sup>110</sup> The written account of the project done in 1907 can be found in the Archivo Administrativo Municipal de la Ciudad de Barcelona. The original graphic material has been damaged by a fire and has been restored by the Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Some of the plans used for this study are taken from *Inicis de la urbanística* and the *Atlas de Barcelona*. The main plan for the zone of Barceloneta is taken from the original Memoria from the Archivo Administrativo. The waterfront area ones are photos from the originals.

<sup>111</sup> Jaussely, Leon, *Proyecto de Enlacede la zona de Ensanche de Barcelona y los pueblos agregados*, Barcelona, 1907.pg.10

<sup>112</sup> idem.pg.2

<sup>113</sup> idem.pg.10

<sup>114</sup> idem.pg.14



**figure 2-59b**-1905-Proyecto Romulus  
author: Leon Jaussely  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. D.13.463 et ss.

Finally the dimensions by which they are organised transversally and longitudinally follow the examples of Stübben.

Apart from the circulatory organisation of roads there would be a restructured system for the railroads. For this purpose two scales of circulation were used. The stations in the centre would be eliminated and moved to the limits of the city extension of Cerdà, and the main railway line would cross the city and would be no longer treated as a terminus. The tramways would have two systems, a radial one and a circular one, thus providing an effective system of public transportation.

Hygiene was treated as an important part of the plan and was concentrated on the issue of lowering the population density in the centre and the Eixample. He proposes public baths, parks, sports areas and hospitals in strategic points of the city. One of the main issues that he proposed is

the project of treating the waters before throwing them back to the sea.

His interest in open space is evident in his text: “outdoor life is what shapes people.”<sup>115</sup> In this line of thought Jaussely considers art as the main aim in the use of leisure time, he talks about how people run to open spaces and spaces of art and culture to fill the time in which they are not working. In this sense, the idea of civic art coming from the *City Beautiful* movement seems to be one of his influences.

The park system proposed by Jaussely is based in some cases, as he notes on the work of JCN Forestier “Systemes de Parcs”. One of the main issues he addressed in the subjects of parks was the one of the park-avenue, avenues or boulevards with different systems of combination of road and green regarding their location and their function. The idea of a park system is admired by Jaussely, who is impressed not only by the artistic value of projects as those of Chicago, Boston or Vienna, but also about the amount of energy and money that those cities were giving to achieve such tasks. In this section of his report he mentions F.L. Olmsted<sup>116</sup> and his project for Buffalo as a breakthrough that had many followers in the United States and even in Europe. The theories of Stübben are also specifically addressed in the text of Jaussely. He also quotes Stübben in his report, providing the information that the German urbanist had given regarding the quantity of open space that was needed in urban centres, which was supposed to be a minimum of 10% of open space in the city.

In his report Jaussely does a comparative study of the parks in the cities of Paris, London and Barcelona taken from the study of Hénard of October 1903. Based on the fact that Paris had 10% of green areas and London 14,5%, he

proposed a 20% of park areas for Barcelona. He categorises open spaces as follows: woods, park, square and small square. For Motjuic he proposes the combination of allotments and park area creating thus a space with his conception of the *cit -jardin*.

His interest in the function of parks shows the diversity to which leisure activities were extending, and enhanced the differentiation of open spaces:

“As the exterior gardens will only be visited on Sundays or holidays, the ease to go to the interior ones will be a stimulus for sport and open air life, given that each park, as I have already said, will have a great space for play, gymnastics, bicycle, etc. and each square would need to have at least one space of play for children.”<sup>117</sup>

Regarding monumental compounds he proposes a civic centre in the same place where Cerdà had planned it: Plaça de Glories. He designed a monumental civic centre following the Beaux Arts principles, including a municipality, a post office, a great library, a palace of industry, a museum of fine arts, a theatre, a church and a subway station.

One of the peculiarities of his plan was the way in which the schedule of realisation was presented. This was to be realised in 4 phases, corresponding with the growth of population, between 1910, with 610 000 inhabitants and 1958 with 976 000 inhabitants. In this way he proposes an innovation that had not been present in previous urban plans.

Finally, another original point in the formulation of his plan was the ruling of the zoning of the city in the following way (figure 2-57): The commercial area would be placed in the centre of the city facing the harbour and the

sea. Two great parks would surround the centre. The industrial zone would follow outwards. The dwelling area would follow, further back, next to the mountains, would be the hospitals and cemeteries. The tracing of the city would follow the plan of Cerdà with the grid and the two main diagonals that crossed them, joining close to the commercial areas and the passenger train station. A ring avenue called the 'ronda' would surround the whole city. Finally, two train stations for merchandise would connect the harbour with the outskirts of the city.

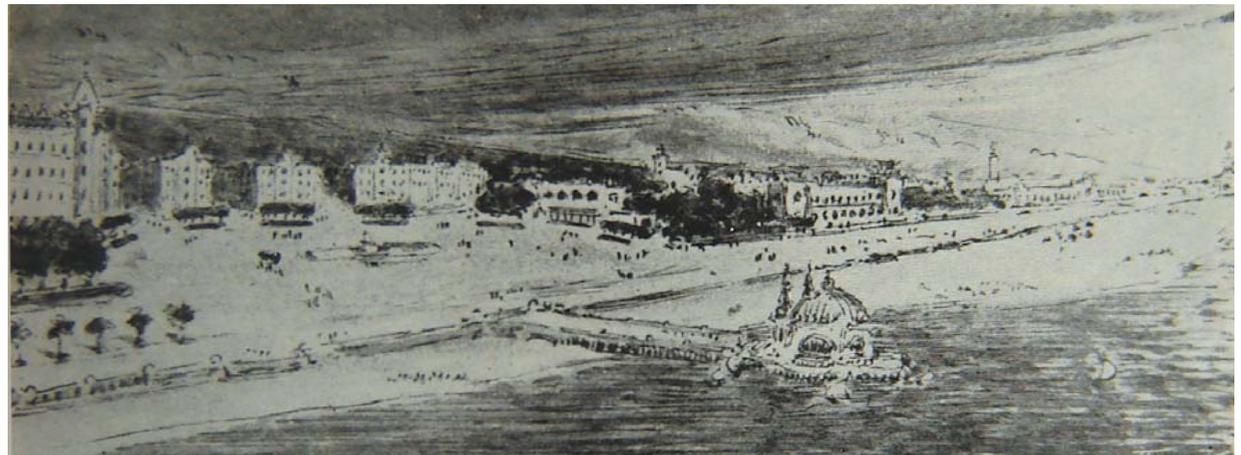
Once Jaussely had won the competition he was called to stay in Barcelona to be able to implement his plan. Jaussely worked on it for two years and the plan was finally approved in 1907.

Another issue in which this project was original had to do with the spirit behind it; Jaussely is articulate in the explanation of what the city is and how it should be lived. In this sense he deeply criticises the plan of Cerdà, for its lack of charm and composition, for the uniformity of its plan gives a uniformity of use, for which a hierarchy system is needed. He justifies this saying that a city is made of impressions, and that these are supposed to be different in different sections of the city. Jaussely gives the example of other cities such as Berlin, Mannheim, Torino and Buenos Aires as places in which this system of diagonals serves as an opening of urban space and as an aesthetic quality and benefit for the restructuring of the cities.

"Today it is observed that the great cities traced according to this principle<sup>118</sup>, such as Mannheim, Turin and Buenos Aires, abandon them in the new extensions and are concerned with crossing the great grids with diagonals. In Mannheim

plans are beginning to be formulated for the formation of an aesthetic centre of monumental composition, the Friedrich-Platz, on the east of the city, following a different system, responding to the immediate aim of leaving that nightmare, of that egalitarian uniformity of the grid"<sup>119</sup>

In the same line of criticism of the grid, Jaussely also criticises the solution given by North American cities, in which, instead of a system of diagonals for the solution of transportation problems, they opted for an intricate anti-aesthetic system of transport lines on many levels that according to him were "not artistic and far from our Greco-latin taste"<sup>120</sup>.



**figure 2-58-** 1905- Plan de enlases de la zona del ensanche de Barcelona con los pueblos agregados.

author: Leon Jaussely

source: Galera i Monegal, Montserrat, Francesc Roca, Salvador Tarragó presentació de Pau Vila, Atlas de Barcelona [segles XVI-XX], Barcelona Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya DL 1982.

Biblioteca ETSAB.

<sup>115</sup> Jaussely, Leon, *Proyecto de Enlases de la zona de Ensanche de Barcelona y los pueblos agregados*, Barcelona, 1907.pg.15

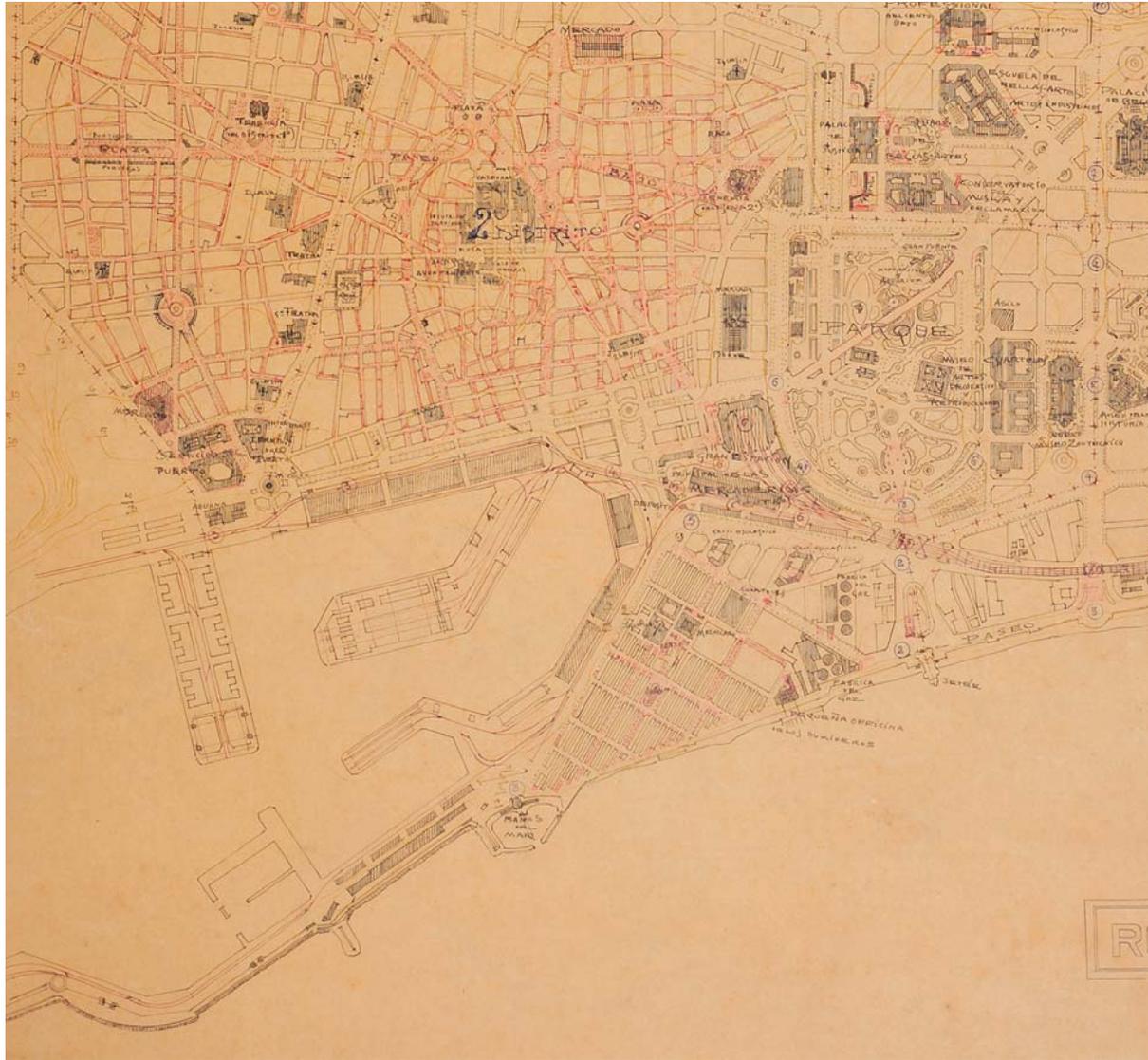
<sup>116</sup> idem.pg.58

<sup>117</sup> idem.pg.244

<sup>118</sup> Grid layout

<sup>119</sup> Jaussely, Leon, *Proyecto de Enlases de la zona de Ensanche de Barcelona y los pueblos agregados*, Barcelona, 1907.pg.110

<sup>120</sup> idem.pg.111



**figure 2-59a**-1905-Proyecto Romulus  
author: Leon Jaussely  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. D.13.463 et ss.

The waterfront section of Jaussely's plan was laid out as a strip of leisure space that stretched from the end of the Paseo Nacional to the Besós, where a great park would be placed. This waterfront avenue was one of monumental character (figure 2-57) and was equipped with buildings, civic centres and beaches destined to the practice of nautical sports.

There is no explicit detail on the layout of the area in the text, and each floor plan shows a different layout and some different elements, so we would have to conclude that this part of the project was one in continuous transformation. The element that appears in all the plans and Jaussely is clear about is the needed communication of the Parc de la Ciadella with the waterfront. For this purpose the plan provided in the memoir of 1907 is the most detailed one. This communication was based on a crossing over the railway viaduct and a great open space with gardens between the railroad and the water. This rectangular space was surrounded by four streets and was designed in geometrical lines, with two rows of trees surrounding it and a terrace in the middle. One of the streets parallel to the square would be prolonged over the sea with a massive pier with a pavilion on its end. On the geometrical floor plan the pier does not appear as such a present object, and there are no beaches to be seen. On the other hand, when we look at the perspective for the same location (figure 2-58) the pier is a very present element stretching some hundred metres away from the coast line and the beaches around it are also very present.

Regarding the rest of the waterfront avenue, again different drawings show different elements, the main drawings of the set of plans of 1905 do not show any sort of intervention in the coastline. A plan of 1905 does show some

intervention on the coastline, such as the pier from Parc de la Ciutadella (figure 2-59a) and a big pier - which could also be considered an esplanade - where the avenue meets the Parc del Besòs (figure 2-59b), and a beach surrounding the pier.

On the other hand, on a later plan of 1907 (figure 2-60) we can see a more detailed development of the waterfront avenue, where lines of trees are placed all along the avenue, the pier from Parc de la Ciutadella is connected by the esplanade. A series of smaller piers are placed to the north east forming a series of beaches and finally a great beach is designed where the avenue meets the Besòs River.

The areas of the project that concern the waterfront part belong to a different section of the city and of the plan. If we try to figure out the general idea behind all of his plans, we can conclude the following for each area. Starting from south to north we begin with the area around the Montjuïc. This area, including the Poble Sec has a completely different tracing to that of the Eixample of Cerdà. This grid is divided into two, the one closest to the sea, that would be completely materialised during the following 40 years and the one next to the Montjuïc, which would be transformed and retraced in the occasion of the 1929 *Exposició Internacional*. A structural element that will remain is the road to *Zona Franca*, which will later be an important link of the city with the harbour as it expands. On the other side of the harbour, the area of Poble Nou and Sant Martí were almost empty areas at the time of the formulation of the plan, but the tracing that remained was that of Cerdà. In the case of Jaussely the tracing of transport infrastructure, of roads as much as of rail tracks was completely different from that of Cerdà. The roads and the railroads form a system that acts more as a nexus than as a division.

Following undoubtedly the project of Alsina Amils the section of the waterfront that corresponded with *Nuestra Señora del Puerto* and *Can Tunis* was to be urbanised with an industrial neighbourhood character. The concept of *ciudad-jardín* that was being developed in the scene of the *Ecole de Beaux Arts* in France was to be the ordering idea for this new neighbourhood.

Nadia Fava discusses the contradiction of Jaussely in his proposal for the waterfront, for he confronts two different elements of the area and they collide. She considers the fact that Jaussely is combining the use of the coastline as space for the technical uses of the harbour and of leisure space as conflictive. Actually, this does not seem to be the case. In Jaussely's proposal the space of the harbour is that of the south-western area and that of the north-eastern is destined to leisure activities. It is true, as Fava notes, that the aesthetics of the perspectives of Jaussely do remind us of the northern European bath resorts of England and northern France.

developed in the waterfront, which were the baths and beaches that to this point in time, had not yet been addressed in an urban plan.

The project of Jaussely was the first one in this period in which the designer was completely aware of the leisure needs of the population and the subsequent use of the waterfront as a space for these activities. The inclusion of park and open areas in his project, following many other urbanists of the time is paramount for the city of his conception.

**figure 2-60**-1907-Plan de enlases de la zona del ensanche de Barcelona con los pueblos agregados.  
author: Leon Jaussely  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. D.13.463 et ss.



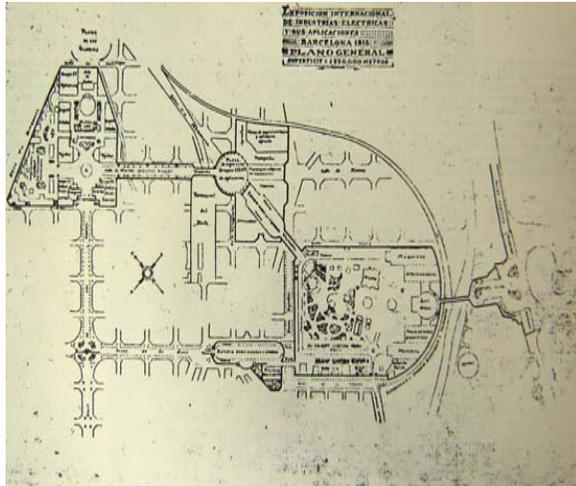
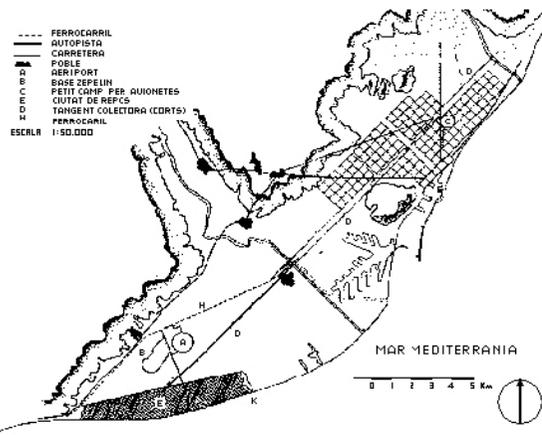


figure 2-61 - 1913 - Exposition Internationale de Industries Electricas y sus aplicaciones. Plano General  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Code 24.351

figure 2-62 - 1933 - Plan Macia  
author: Le Corbusier  
source: Sistema Integrat per l'Estudi del Territori Metropolità de l'Institut d'Estudis Territorials



## Realisation

The plan of Jaussely for Barcelona was discussed for about ten years after it was finished, then it was abandoned.

The project of the waterfront boulevard went through a different process. It was not forgotten as most of the rest of his plan was. The *Plano de Industrias Eléctricas de 1915* was the one to take over the proposal of Jaussely to make a connection between the Parc de la Ciutadella and the waterfront using the maritime area of the Universal exposition for the practicing of nautical sports. In 1917 his project for a connecting boulevard was also taken into account in the *Plano General de la Urbanizacion de Barcelona* of Romeu, Falqués and Porcel, considering this avenue one of the most important ways of circulation of the city.

Even though his project was not carried out, the mark left by Jaussely's work appears in the projects of the following period. The *Exposición de Industrias Eléctricas* of 1917 (figure 2-61) uses part of Jaussely's project for an esplanade, as the connection of the Parc de la Ciutadella with the waterfront.

Despite the later appearance of hints of the projects of Jaussely for the waterfront, there would be no actual realisation of the Waterfront Boulevard or piers. Even with the project of Ortega of 1918, and the 'Ley de Costas' the complete transformation of the area would have to wait almost a whole century.

According to Guardia and García Espuche, the proposal of Jaussely had a long term reach:

"This global proposal, of great richness and quality, though unrealised, will be left as a reference that rests over a series of

interventions of a more local and limited character, but that are thought of in the context of an urban whole"<sup>121</sup>

Other authors<sup>122</sup> also qualify it as one of the most important influences for future plans of the city of Barcelona, namely the Pla Macia by Le Corbusier of 1932 and later the GATCPAC in 1934 (figure 2-62). The plan of Jaussely is said to be innovative especially for the fact of solving the problems of spatial organisation before they are presented.

### 2.2.3 – 1908-1930 –Ley de Costas. Ortega.

*In this chapter we will analyse an institutional instrument: the ley de Costas, and the project for the waterfront avenue by José Ortega. This period will be one of institutionalisation of urban entities and the adoption of international ideas for the intervention in the urban landscape. In this period Barcelona will adopt the condition of metropolitan city, but, at the same time it will lose the use of the waterfront as leisure space despite of the intentions to regain it.*

The First World War brought certain consequences to Barcelona. The fact that Spain was neutral in the conflict seemed to give Barcelona a potential for growth that was unprecedented. In spite of this advantage the Bank of Spain did not manage the situation in a way that was profitable for Catalan entrepreneurs. Therefore, wages dropped in Barcelona while immigration from poorer parts of the country made the labour situation in Barcelona worsen.

One of the most significant urban interventions that took place in Barcelona in this period was the finalisation of the works for Via Laitena in 1908, an avenue that crossed the barrió Gòtic from North East to South west communicating Plaza Catalunya with the harbour. This transformation took place thanks to the Royal Order of July of 1907 that had approved the project for the reform of the *Ciutat Vella* or Old City. The reform had taken over some of the proposals of Jaussely in his Plan de Enllaços. The new avenues proposed and realised in this reform of the old city had many different objectives. Among them was the one of “bringing to the heart of the Ciutat Vella the benefic influence of the

port in the mercantile and economic aspect” for this old structure of the city, without the needed new avenues was an obstacle that threatened the Barcelonese life<sup>123</sup>.

In July 1912 the *Societat Cívica* was established under the authority of the *Museu Social de Barcelona*. This society was greatly supported by Cebrià de Montoliu (1873-1923) who was said<sup>124</sup> to be a faithful follower of the ideas of Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin. From them he interpreted the ideas of urbanism in which the network of roads and the zoning were essential issues.

The year 1914 signed the alliance between the Lliga and the radical government into the municipal administration. This permits the revision of the Pla de Enllaços. In the dwelling problem this led to the final materialisation of the project of Cases Barates (cheap housing). It is also in this year when the newspapers start talking about Great Barcelona and the regional scope of urbanism starts to take place in the city. The year 1918 was a time of harsh criticism to the plan of Cerdà and this created clashes in all political spheres such as the Ajuntament and the Cambra de la Propietat. Regarding public transportation we cannot talk about a real network until the end of the 1920s, when the city had developed enough and was being transformed into a metropolis.

During these years very little was done regarding the leisure waterfront apart from the individual private developments of the sea baths or resorts, which were already turning into a tradition on the Barcelonese waterfront. As mentioned in the introduction, most of the clubs located on the waterfront had been inaugurated before 1908 (figure 2-63 through 2-66), except for the Club Natació Atlètic (figure 2-67) created in 1913. However it was during the decades



**figure 2-63** - 1916 -Platja de la Barceloneta  
author: Frederic Ballell

technique: black and white photograph  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotográfico. ref. bcn001798 / ahcb-af / imatge suelta

<sup>121</sup> Guardia, García Espuche, ‘1888, 1929, Dos Exposiciones, una sola ambición’, Sanchez Suarez, Alejandro, Barcelona, *1888-1929: Modernidad, Ambición y Conflictos de una Ciudad Soñada* (Cervantes Completo), Barcelona, Alianza, 2001. pg.38

<sup>122</sup> Sobrequés i Callico, Jaume, *Historia de Barcelona, El Segle XX, I. De les annexions a la fi de la guerra civil*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1995.pg. 50

<sup>123</sup> Sobrequés i Callico, Jaume, *Historia de Barcelona, El Segle XX, I. De les annexions a la fi de la guerra civil*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1995.pg. 21

<sup>124</sup> Inmaculada, Julian, *L’urbanisme a Barcelona entre dues Exposicions (1888-1929) (Coneguem Catalunya)*, Barcelona, Els Llibres de la Frontera, 1988



**figure 2-65** - 1916 -Platja de la Barceloneta  
author: Frederic Ballell  
technique: black and white photograph  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotografico. ref.  
bcn001548 / ahcb-af / imatge suelta

**figure 2-64** - 1916 -Descans i converses a la platja de la Barceloneta  
author: Ballell, Frederic  
source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotografico. ref.  
bcn003581 / ahcb-af / imatge suelta



By the end of the nineteenth century in England, a movement was developing which impulse the building of outdoor schools, called New Schools. This was adopted by the Comisión de Cultura del Ajuntament de Barcelona and they built the first New School in Montjuïc in 1914. The one in Barceloneta followed four years later following the principles of hygiene and benefits of the seaside weather that was sought for in this system of education. The baths of *Deliciosa* and later those of *Sant Sebastià* (figure 2-68) and the *Club de Natación de Barcelona* followed the same principles.

In fact, the use of the baths in the waterfront of Barceloneta was so popular by 1910 that a guide book of Barcelona of that year stated: “in the summer Barceloneta is transformed into the wash room of Barcelona”.

An important step in the institutional recovery of the coast for the public use as leisure space was the ‘*Ley de Paseos Marítimos*’ written on July 24<sup>th</sup> 1918<sup>125</sup>. The law permitted the Ajuntament de Barcelona to acquire and expropriate lands of the waterfront for the construction of a waterfront promenade or *Paseo Marítimo*. This law considered that the lands were to be of exclusive public municipal use for purposes of the promenade and did not allow the sale of the totality or part of the land for any other uses. This law considered the area from the Llobregat River to the Besós River taking over all the land that was not being used for harbour purposes. With this law, as in other cases of waterfront cities, the conflict between the state and the municipality is, at least temporarily solved.

Following the *Ley de Paseos Marítimos*, came the project of José Ortega for the waterfront boulevard which we will be dealing with in the following pages.

The coup d’état of 1923 and the following dictatorship of Primo de Rivera made the municipal and regional governments of Barcelona and Catalunya collapse. This fact brought an end to the autonomy of the region and the city and made all municipal decisions depend on the central government of Madrid. The growth of the city since the beginning of the dictatorship was protagonised by the construction of dwellings, following the grid of Cerdà but not his hygiene and infrastructure principles. The industrial development, especially located on the waterfront, brought in many more immigrants and made the sprawl of housing even larger.

The end of the period we are addressing would have to be marked by the 1929 International Exhibition. This time it was located on the hill of Montjuïc and the conditions were extremely different to those of the 1888 Exposición. The Exposición was organised in conjunction with the one of Sevilla. The park design was made by the French landscape architect Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier. He was in charge of the design of the great steps, fountains and terraces of the Exposición, located on the west of the city in an effort that would provide a new great park to the city. This time the waterfront had no role in the Exposición, except for the view of the sea from the cable railway that would give the view of the city and seafront. This cable railway, though it was planned for the Exposición was not prepared to be used until 1931, when the Exposición was already over.

The end of the Exposición, together with the political and economical transformation and lack of independence of Barcelona from the central government in Madrid mark finally the end of the period we are dealing with. These changes led to the subsequent abandonment of the waterfront baths and clubs and gave way to

the industrial development of most of the city's waterfront and the contamination of the sea to the point of not being able to use the area as a leisure space any more.



**figure 2-67** - 1920s - Club de Natacion

author:

technique: black and white photograph. Postcard

source: Museu Maritim. Postal 257

i-061-f-1920-club natacion.jpg

**figure 2-66** - 1917 - Escena de platja

author: Merletti, Alexandre

source: Archivo Histórico de Barcelona. Archivo Fotografico. ref. bcn000452 / ahcb-af / imatge suelta



**figure 2-68** - 1920s - Balneario Casino Sant Sebastia

technique: black and white photograph. Postcard

source: Museu Maritim. Postal 257

i-060i-f-1920-santsebastia01.jpg



<sup>125</sup> As quoted in Fava, Nadia, *Progetti e processi in conflitto: il fronte marittimo de Barcelona*, phd thesis, UPC Barcelona, 2003.

España, *Dirección General de Paseos y Costas: legislación vigente el 1 de Enero de 1982*. Madrid: Servicio de publicaciones del Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo 1982, pg.84.

Ley 24-07-1918

Art.1.0

Se Autoriza al Gobierno de Su Majestad para que, a propuesta del Ministro de Fomento, previo informe del de Guerra y del de Marina, pueda aprobar un proyecto de paseo marítimo que formule el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, y autorizar a dicha Corporación para que lo construyera a sus expensas y declararlo de utilidad pública a los efectos de la Ley de Expropiación forzosa de 10 de Enero de 1879 para su aplicación.

Art.2.0

Dicho paseo marítimo, una vez construido, pasara a ser de uso publico municipal.

Los terrenos que se ganen al mar, asi como los de la actual zona marítima terrestre comprendidos dentro del proyecto que se apruebe, y que pierdan esta condicion a consecuencia de la construcción del paseo, se cederán al Ayuntamiento de Barcelona como bienes patrimoniales del mismo, con la condición de que no podrá enajenar ni ceder parte alguna de dichos terrenos hasta la completa terminación del paseo marítimo.

Si el Gobierno autoriza la construcción del paseo marítimo por Secciones, se entenderá cumplida la anterior condición para cada una de ellas, en cuanto quede terminada y abierta la circulación pública.

Los terrenos adquiridos por el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona en virtud de esta ley, quedarán siempre sujetos a toda servidumbre legal.

### 2.2.3.1- Ortega

#### José Ortega – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

As with Alsina Amils we were unable to find biographical data about engineer José Ortega. There are no records of his projects or his education. The only remaining record is his project for the Barcelona waterfront that we will proceed to analyse.

#### Ortega - project – 1918

*The project of Jose Ortega was an evolution of the previous projects presented for the waterfront. Ortega gave a more realistic picture of the reality of the seafront and presented the project accordingly. He considers the existence of the bath houses on the shore and gives a plausible project of dimensions and tracing of the waterfront avenue, while proposing a new set of leisure activities such as nautical sports.*

#### Context and administration

As mentioned before, the project was commended to José Ortega by the Ajuntament of Barcelona without a previous competition. Ortega's project, presented on April 30<sup>th</sup> 1918, is the first one to propose a precise and detailed development of the Barcelona's waterfront as one single project. His work was not only detailed in the design and the consideration of the local problems and possible solutions, Ortega was also aware of the technological changes that would have served for the accurate and up to date solution of the project. The intentions of Ortega in the proposal of his project are very clear:

*"Barcelona, waterfront city, empire of industry, of commerce and art, and with legitimate aspiration to capital of the Mediterranean, does not have a waterfront boulevard, as the ones other towns without the titles of this one actually have realised here and in foreign countries for the leisure of their inhabitants and impulse to the adoption of sports and nautical exercises, that so much contribute to*

*the hygiene and transcend the public morality of great urbis"<sup>126</sup>*

The new concept of leisure as a crucial part of life, especially when it comes to active leisure is present throughout the whole document. Sports and nautical activities will appear as a primordial part of the project for the waterfront boulevard.

Ortega, already very familiar with the problems of the waterfront, attributes them neither to the lack of interest or attention of the public nor to the fault of the administration. Instead he blames the problem on two very clear facts. One of them is the difficulty given by the geographical location of the city and the problems the strengths of the sea give for the realisation of projects on the waterfront. On the other hand there is the blame on the sprawling of industry that is required by the market. However, it seems that the administration would have been able to do things different when it came to the issue of the industries, providing a plan that would not allow the development of industry close to the waterfront.

When it comes to comparing with other cities Ortega brings up Boston or Manila, for their geographical benefits and Villanueva or Sitges, for their lack of industries. And this is actually remarkable for it strengthens the idea of the thesis we are developing here. The examples given for great cities are in the new world, and the ones for the European continent are not industrialised cities but actually leisure cities, those we addressed earlier (see introduction).

The project proposed by Ortega in this stage plans only a waterfront avenue, but the intentions go further than that. Ortega mentions the possibility of continuing the avenue bordering the rivers Llobregat and Besòs, so that there would be a semi-ring avenue of 30km long.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The project of Ortega (figure 2-69) is extremely more accurate about the real urban situation of the city and its waterfront than any of the previous designers studied. There seems to be a more realistic approach to the subject, by someone who was not basing his intervention on ideals and utopic solutions. Instead, he was proposing logical and organised practical solutions to specific problems that had more to do with the physical characteristics of the waterfront than with a generalising strategy or idea.

The topographic complexity and the lack of homogeneity of the conditions of the waterfront forced Ortega to propose a project of promenade divided into two: one of them the northern or Besós area, and the southern or Llobregat area.

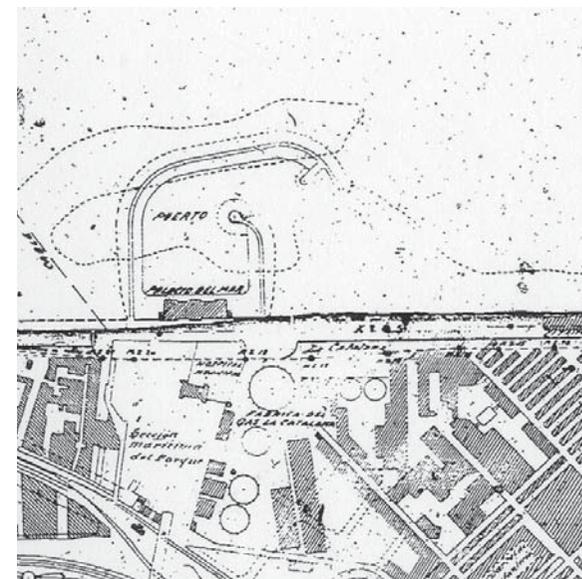
The avenue was to follow the actual trace made by the previous project of Enllaços proposed to the Municipality in the previous decades. This, according to Ortega would be attractive to the automobile drivers. This is the first time in the proposal of the studied projects that the new means of transportation is mentioned. This provides a new way of perceiving the panoramas, especially that of the sea front.

In general, Ortega proposed an avenue that, through the inclusion of viewports and roundhouses would allow the resting of the visitors and the contemplation of the *beauties of the sea*.

The first issue addressed by Ortega in his text for the project was the impossibility of the practicing of nautical sports in the existing harbour. The protective jetty would make sailors have to sweep great distances to be able to leave the harbour. For this reason he proposes the building of a new harbour with the only purpose of nautical sports on the maritime section of the

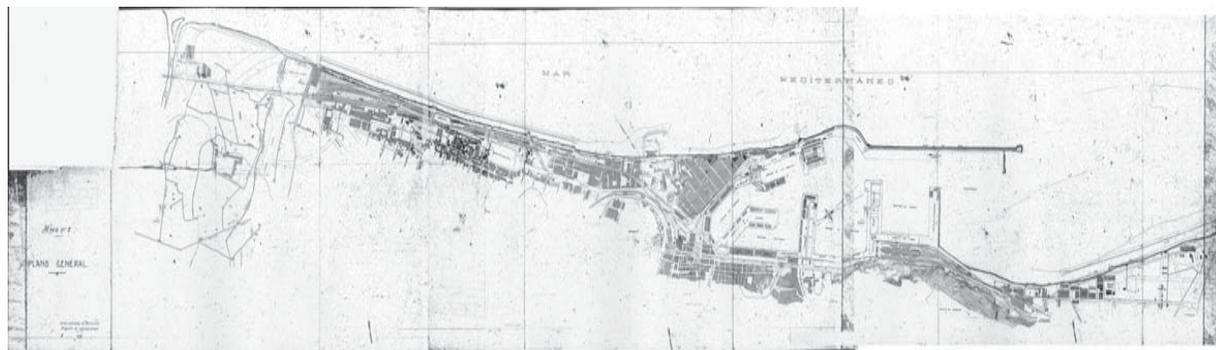
park. This is where he proposes a great building, the Palacio del Mar (figure 2-70), where all the activities related to the regatta and swimming clubs would be held.

The state of the actual bath houses is hardly criticised by Ortega, and when he compares them with the architecture of the rest of the city he declares the extreme poverty of those buildings. This is why he proposes the building of one main palace for the purpose of bathing and the building of a Hotel for the reception of visitors from central Spain, to make Barcelona a bathing village as part of a cosmopolitan city.

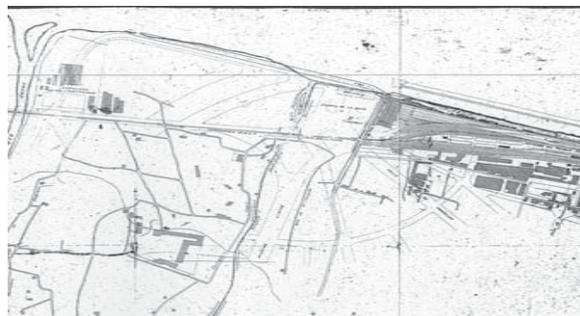


**figure 2-70** - 1918 - Paseo Marítimo de Barcelona. Proyecto de Emplazamiento. Detall Barceloneta  
author: Jose Ortega  
source: Archivo Municipal. microfilm 20376 a 20379 - caja 25  
carpeta 1-2

**figure 2-69** - 1918 - Paseo Marítimo de Barcelona. Proyecto de Emplazamiento  
author: Jose Ortega  
source: Archivo Municipal. microfilm 20376 a 20379 - caja 25  
carpeta 1-2

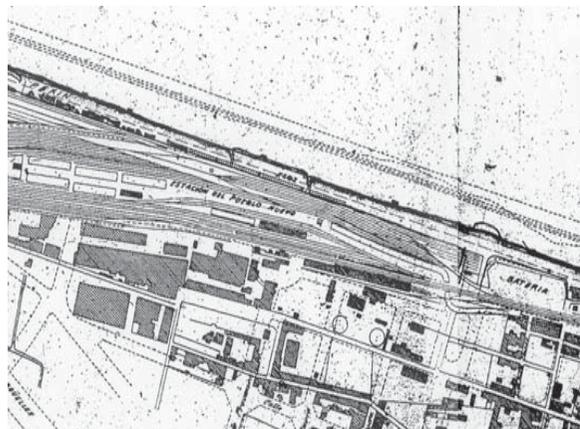


<sup>126</sup> Ortega, José, *Proyecto de Emplazamiento del Paseo Marítimo de Barcelona, Memoria*, Barcelona, Abril de 1918.



**figure 2-71** - 1918 - Paseo Marítimo de Barcelona. Proyecto de Emplazamiento  
author: Jose Ortega  
source: Archivo Municipal. microfilm 20376 a 20379 - caja 25 carpeta 1-2

**figure 2-72** - 1918 - Paseo Marítimo de Barcelona. Proyecto de Emplazamiento  
author: Jose Ortega  
technique:  
source: Archivo Municipal. microfilm 20376 a 20379 - caja 25 carpeta 1-2



The oriental section, or of Besòs (figure 2-71), is dedicated mainly to the traditional and already existing activities of the area, basically the relocation of the already existing baths into buildings that were homogeneous. Starting from Besòs there is no park and the place is depicted as it actually was: barren land with a waterfront that would not be visited by anyone for there was not even a road that would lead visitors to the end of it. Then at the height of Pueblo Nuevo we can see the station of this neighbourhood and a great amount of land taken by the battery of rail tracks of the station. Right in front of the station there is a beach called Pekin on the map (figure 2-72), with a series of shadows that look like buildings on it. On the sea there is the dashed drawing of a jetty that would apparently protect the beach from tides. This jetty was to be located 60 metres away from the beach, so that it would not provide a block for the view of the bathers and the people who would stroll through the boulevard.

The whole of the boulevard next to the beach at the height of Poble Nou would have a line of porticoes so that the avenue would also serve for the winter season. This line of porticoes (figure 2-73) and the avenue as a whole would have a set of equidistant staircases leading to the beach for the easy access for bathers.

Another building to be proposed was an aquarium, adjacent to the station of Bogatell, the first train station next to the Palacio del Mar, where there would be enough space.

The western area, that of Llobregat, was destined to a section of 2,5 km between the Hortas de San Beltrán and Can Tunis. There he proposed a higher path to be able to avoid the harbour traffic. This road connected the Passeig de Colom with the cemetery at Montjuic. This section of the project had to be checked by the

Ministry of War for the road was placed on an area adjacent to the defence castle of Montjuic. The rest of the project up to the Llobregat was not very clearly defined. This was due to the fact that in that area the developments for the port in Zona Franca were being carried out. The amount of factories and industrial establishments made it very difficult to precise how to build the avenue without interfering with the relation between the factories and the sea.

Finally, the link between the two sections of the avenue would be the already existing Passeig Nacional and Passeig de Colom, so as to make a continuous avenue. In total, without counting the already existing avenues, the boulevard would have had a length of 9,957 metres. The part corresponding to the section to Besòs with 6,358 metres and the one to Llobregat 3,599 metres.

Despite the intention to have a wide avenue comparable to other waterfront boulevards, as that in Manila, of 72 metres, the project has to be adapted to the needs of the location. Therefore the buildings of multiple dimensions adjacent to the area to be occupied by the avenue would force the width to be of only 32 metres. This would be the normal width but in some locations it would have to be reduced to 24, where the buildings around it would not permit the normal dimensions. In the nodes with the wide avenues of the Pla de enllaços the avenue would become wider, with a width of 52 metres to allow the monumental scale needed for such a location.

As had been done by many other architects<sup>127</sup> since a couple of decades before, the project of Ortega was explicit about the dimension and distribution of the avenue in paths (figure 2-74). Starting from the limit of the beach or sea there would be a first path of five metres

for pedestrians, then a 10 metres wide asphalt road for vehicles, followed by a sidewalk of four metres wide with a row of trees. The following road would be a stone surface for vehicles and tramways, followed by another sidewalk of seven metres that would be covered in some passages by gardens and in other by porticoes. The sections in which the avenue would become narrower or wider would follow similar sequences.

Ortega's project was one of the most, if not the most complete and accurate done for the harbour in the period studied. Ortega paid much attention to the actual situation, considering the requirements and dimensions of every single part of the project he was to develop. He might not have been the holder of a developed theory of landscape or an expert on the aesthetics of the waterfront, but his project presented a plausible materialisation. Most important of all, his project did not only address the physical obstructions that did not allow the convenience of the plan. More than that, he considered the reality of the use of the waterfront. He managed to combine the traditional use of the beaches with the promenade or boulevard that had always been in the agenda of the city's administration. His techniques of design are not innovative and he does not revolutionise the treatment of the waterfront, but he provides with his project what the population seemed to need.

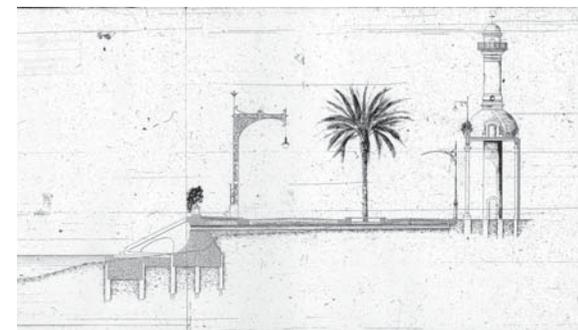
### Realisation and repercussions

Despite the detailed information given regarding all aspects of the construction of the avenue and buildings for the project this was not realised. The project was supposed to be materialised in eight years and many details regarding the materials, time terms and conditions

were studied and specified. This was not enough to have the project done, and the problems detected by Ortega for the materialisation of such a project were indeed those that interfered in the materialisation.

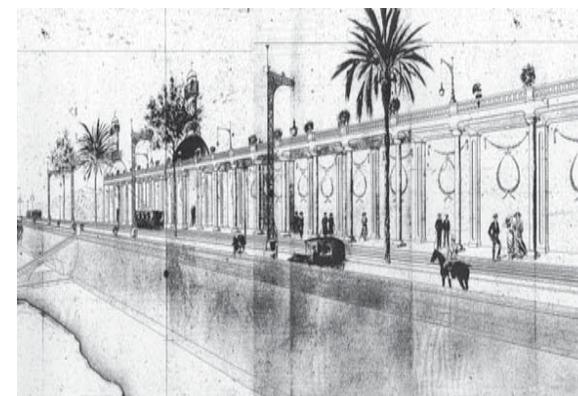
The continuity in the projects for the waterfront is seen when we observe that part of the plan was proposing the expropriation of a 60 metre wide strip of land. This idea had been proposed by the Plan de Enllaços of Porcel in 1918, which had been a reinterpretation of the plan by Jaussely 12 years earlier. The response of the locals was not positive. The association of owners of Barceloneta complained and opposed to the project. The reason was that this project affected more than one thousand families and implied a complete re-functionalising of the area and those who profited from the project were not the dwellers but those private entities that were in charge of the baths and sports clubs.

A representative building that was being proposed with the whole Paseo Marítimo was that of the Instituto Oceanográfico de Catalunya, which was sponsored by the Mancomunidad and the Ajuntament de Barcelona. The idea behind the inclusion of such an institution was to become, as many other Mediterranean cities, a place for the development of science and culture related to the sea.



**figure 2-74** - 1918 - Paseo Marítimo de Barcelona. Proyecto de Emplazamiento. Sección.  
author: Jose Ortega  
source: Archivo Municipal. microfilm 20376 a 20379 - caja 25 carpeta 1-2

**figure 2-73** - 1918 - Paseo Marítimo de Barcelona. perspectiva de los Porticos  
author: Jose Ortega  
source: Archivo Municipal. microfilm 20376 a 20379 - caja 25 carpeta 1-2



<sup>127</sup> Publications such as those of Stübgen, Hegemann or Burnham had proposed this distribution of transportation paths.

## Conclusions on Chapter 2 – Barcelona

What happened to the urban waterfront of Barcelona over the 60 year period we have analysed? We have to necessarily go back to the title of this chapter and to the issues addressed in the introduction: *The struggle for the leisure waterfront*. In this chapter we have looked closely at the development of the waterfront between 1870 and 1930, the relationship between leisure spaces and industrial facilities and the context in which this relationship took place. In the environment of an industrialising city, where the social structure was in transformation, the waterfront was put to the test, as the metropolitan and waterfront situation all three cities have in common. The combination of the forces of industry, administration and public and private needs determined the morphology and the uses of the coast. In the case of Barcelona, this phenomenon led particularly to the pre-eminence of industry over leisure on the waterfront; a situation that would not change until the last decade of the twentieth century.

Prior to the period we have been concentrating in, the municipal and national tools for restructuring the urban tissue of Barcelona and the functions of the city were proposed and developed. The plan of Cerdà set the new morphology, concept and development of the city and the standard for the following

plans to be proposed. While Paris was changing its urban landscape with the redesign of Bois de Boulogne and New York was getting its first urban park with the design of Frederick Law Olmsted, the urbanism of the city of Barcelona was concentrating on demographic growth and distribution. Even if Cerdà presented a series of parks and squares for the city in his project, these were not considered as a priority when it came to materialising them.

In the same way, the timid proposals for some sort of leisure waterfront were not considered. By then, the waterfront of Barcelona was relegated to traditional uses, the central part of the waterfront was occupied by the already growing harbour; the northern and southern sections were dedicated to the traditional activities of fishing and bathing in the summer. During those decades the planning of the city and that of the harbour began to become independent issues dealt with by different administrations and following different principles. This development led to the inevitable separation of both urban areas. This was not only the case of Barcelona. While the beginning of the nineteenth century had seen the development of leisure sea- and riverfronts in London with the Vauxhall, New York with the promenade of Battery Park, Munich with the riverside gardens of Friedrich Ludwig von Sckell, industrialising cities after 1850 were suffering the division of city and waterfront, especially due to

the development of industrial harbour facilities. Already by the 1840s harbours in cities such as New York, Liverpool, London or Hamburg were taking over the waterfront, leaving little space for any other function and blocking the relationship between the city and its water.

## Seafront Parks an urban principles

In Barcelona, during the first period studied, between 1870 and 1890 we see the first initiatives to take over the waterfront, or at least a section of it, for the use of new types of leisure. Even though the projects for the Parc de la Ciutadella and the Universal Exhibition were not gravitating around the waterfront there was evidently a will to use this space. The parks followed a set of landscape principles that responded to the period. A combination of formal and informal park supported by a didactic programme, signed the morphology and use of these two projects.

During this period the waterfronts of North and South American cities were beginning to be transformed and to be planned and used for raising leisure purposes. The Emerald Necklace of Boston was being developed by Olmsted in 1879, taking over part of the city's waterfront; the landfills of Battery Park in New York had provided a renewed park next to the city that was restored as leisure space in 1872; in Buenos



Aires the waterfront was being turned into the park area of the city in 1874 and the waterfront of Rio de Janeiro was also being transformed in a conflict between the harbour and leisure space. These events took place in developing American metropolises while most bath resorts of Europe were being transformed into popular places of tourism and summer resorts, with the architectural and spatial reconfiguration of the waterfront. Tourism was still relegated to small organised groups, and mass holidays were still not popularised for there were still no labour laws to permit it. The transformations that were taking place in the northern countries such as the new legislations of the Factories Act (1847) the public health act (1848) and the education act (1870) did not reach Barcelona at the time. It would take a while for this sort of social reform to take place.

Many texts on garden and landscape theories were published during these two decades that would be especially influential in the landscape design of the period. Articles and treaties of Herman Josef Stübben<sup>128</sup>, Camillo Sitte<sup>129</sup>, Adolphe Alphand and Edouard André<sup>130</sup> were published in the 1880s, and though their translations were carried out later, they began to form a network of knowledge that would see its fruits in the following decades.

The project of Fontserè for the park offers very different approaches between the treatment

of the park itself and the treatment of the waterfront. The park follows many contemporary ideas, surely adapted and translated, the use of the park as the lungs of the city, the morphology combining the geometric gardens inherited from the French tradition with the urban garden of the picturesque that was being spread all over the continent and the world. All these issues added to the building program of the park provided a new type of open area for the city. The idea of open space for the provision of health and leisure as an activity, combined with the didactic support of scientific buildings showed the concern in providing the city with a new and different space. When it came to the section of the waterfront, due to its morphology and the enormous effort to build a bridge over the railways to reach the small Fort de Don Carlos, it shows a contemplative attitude towards the sea.

The case of the Exposición Universal of 1888 is not very different from that of the park by Fontserè. However, the priorities of intentions did shift. The main intention for the use of leisure, as most of these international events had been in the previous decades, was that of providing a space of didactic leisure. This would not only be an open space for strolling or resting, for breathing and getting away from the ills of the city. According to the organisers, following the steps of previous organisers of exhibitions as Frederic Le Play,

this would also be a space to learn. It would be an open space, where science became the main attraction, where all industrial artefacts produced locally and internationally would be set up in a way that the visitors would not only understand their functioning but also feel proud of the national production. The response of the public was as usual not exactly the one expected by the organisers and it was actually the entertainment and spectacle venues that were most popular.

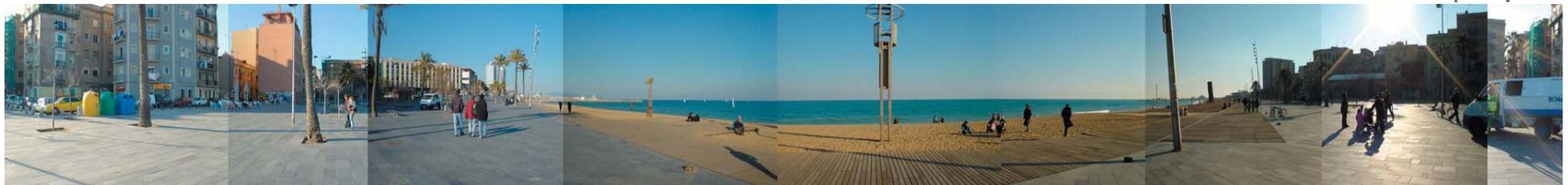
<sup>128</sup> Stübben, Josef, *Handbuch des Städtebaue*, Berlin, 1890,1907,1924.

<sup>129</sup> Sitte, Camillo, *Der Städtebau nach seinen Künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, Birkhäuser, reprint, 2002, 1889

<sup>130</sup> André, Edouard, *L'art des jardins*. Traite General de la composition des parcs et jardins. Ouvrage accompagne de Onze planches en chromolithographie et de 520 figures dans le texte , G. Masson editeur, Paris, 1879.

**figure 2-75** - 2005 - panoramic view. Plaza del Portal de la Pau  
source: photo by author

**figure 2-76** - 2005 - panoramic view. Playa de la Barceloneta  
source: photo by author



The maritime section of the Exposición showed an interest in the scientific face of sailing but according to commentators did not achieve its goal and was more of a spectacle for entertainment than a display of knowledge. The presence of the sea appealed more as a landscape contemplation space and a place for passive entertainment with the café, than as a source of scientific curiosity. Nevertheless, this Exposición, as many others of the period, implicitly had the will of breaking the constraints of class and gender.

As the heat receded, and the use of the beach for bathing was reduced, the Exposición became more popular, but the expectations of bridging the gap between classes were far from being achieved. Another event within the Exposición that established the spectacle as one of the most popular faces of it was the inauguration with the battleships from all over Europe. In the daytime showing their entire arsenal and lit during the evening to show a spectacle with no precedents in the city. This continued to be one of the most admired parts of the Exposición even though the location was outside of the premises of the park.

The labour situation in the city was affected by the Exposición, and as well as providing labour for a certain amount of workers within the Exposición, the fair opened the eyes of many professionals of different disciplines though the international and national specialist

conferences.

The following period, 1890-1908, saw the development of a different approach to the planning of the waterfront. This was the proposal of the ring avenue and the waterfront avenue as a section of this system. Together with the system of circulation, a system of open spaces was introduced. As the harbour was growing to unexpected dimensions under the projects of the Junta d'Obres del Port, the use of the northern waterfront of the city for bathing facilities was being developed by private initiatives. Meanwhile, a series of plans were proposed by the Municipal government to give a structure to the steadily growing city. During these two decades most of the cities of the western world were being subject to urban plans and projects in the context of a growing discipline that regarded urban issues as much as landscape ones. The City Beautiful movement was developing its influence on urban planning in the United States, South America and Europe since the World Exhibition in Chicago of 1893. By the end of the nineteenth century Ebenezer Howard coins the term *garden city* and developed a theory and an association related to it. His ideas would be eventually borrowed, especially by the French School of Urbanism and transformed to resemble very little to the original idea. The first decade of the twentieth century sees the development of urban

theories coming from all countries and schools in Europe: counting with the work of Tony Garnier and Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier<sup>131</sup> in France, the latter specialising in park design who would later work in Barcelona; T.H Mawson<sup>132</sup> and Raymond Unwin<sup>133</sup> in Britain introducing the concept of town planning and a new perspective in park design; and Leberecht Migge and Werner Hegemann<sup>134</sup> in Germany, the first proposing a new model for open spaces in the city and Hegemann following the model of *Civic Art* and the *City Beautiful* movement.

The last decade of the nineteenth century saw a great amount of changes in work legislation due to the strikes and riots of the previous decade. This brought also the foundation of a series of associations for the *rational recreation* of youth world wide. Given the increasing free time achieved by the first manifestations against the excess of labour, the control of that free time had to be secured. The situation in Barcelona was not comparable to that of the Anglo Saxon world; apart from the movement of *Excursionisme* there were no associations yet to compare to the YMCA or to the boy scouts. The leisure activities of Barcelona dwellers were still related to the traditional uses of the city. By the end of the period in 1908 the *Sociedad de Atracción de Forasteros* was used as a tool for the attraction of foreigners to the city.



Regarding the projects, the one of Alsina Amils shows two main qualities that can be related to the global situation of urban design. One of them is the design of a ring avenue and a set of other transportation paths throughout the city. The other main issue was the more detailed design of a network of parks and squares for the city. These two elements are tightly related to the waterfront. The park, which is not especially innovative, does develop the idea of previous parks already planned for the area. The only waterfront park present in his project is the one of Besós. The location and extension of the park is very similar to that in the project of Cerdà, however its tracing is different. While the one of Cerdà was a series of separated areas with geometrical designs, the one of Alsina Amils is more informal and picturesque, responding to more recent urban and landscape principles. The tracing of the park follows, as previously mentioned, the lines of the *Parc Publique*. This is a great scale park, located almost in the outskirts of the city and meant for long stays during Sundays, not a place for daily visit. The relation between the park and the waterfront is almost absent. The waterfront avenue provides the limit between the park and the water and there is not one single element that relates these two areas.

The project of Jaussely is a much more elaborated and complicated one. In the period between 1904, when the project of Jaussely won

the competition and 1907, when he presented the last plans, the characteristics of the waterfront area of the plan suffered various transformations. However, all in all, the intentions of Jaussely in his proposal for the whole city are clear. The scientific development of an urban plan, considering all the variables of it, including aesthetics, health and transportation were to have as a main objective the wellbeing of the city dweller. His insistence on the scientific project as the structuring system of urban design is present in every part of his texts on Barcelona and other urban plans he formulated. As mentioned in the chapter on Jaussely's project, the architect was in full contact with the international network of urban design and landscape representatives and this showed as much in his project for the city as in his discourse. When it comes to the waterfront, though, these ideas seem to appear more ambiguously. The presence of sport in general and specifically water sports show an interest in the transformations of the use of leisure time. This reminds us of the movement of *rational recreation* and the transformation of this to sport, considering sports activities to be able to control the morals urban dwellers, especially the younger ones. In this case then Jaussely is completely aware of the reality and the influences that are affecting the urban population of Barcelona. The park of Besos in Jaussely's plan only appears designed in the last set of plans, those that date from 1907. This park

is detailedly designed, with an area in the centre that is geometrical and controlled and a wider area around it that is informal and picturesque.

<sup>131</sup> Forestier, JCN *Grandes Villes et Systemes des Parcs*, Hachette, Paris, 1906.

<sup>132</sup> Redesign of Lord Street Gardens. Southport, marine lake, promenade, adjoining park areas

<sup>133</sup> Unwin, Raymond, *Town Planning in Practice*, London, 1909

<sup>134</sup> In 1910 Hegemann organises the City Planning Exhibition in Berlin.



figure 2-77 - 2005 - Plaza de Pau Vila  
source: photo by author

figure 2-78 - 2005 - panoramic view. Moll de la Fusta  
source: photo by author

figure 2-79 - 2005 - panoramic view. Playa de la Barceloneta  
source: photo by author



However, the park does not reach the waterfront entirely. The section that reaches the waterfront is once more separated from the waterfront by the avenue. In the final versions of the project there is especially a circulation connection between the city and the waterfront that provide access from the city to the waterfront, but the parks are not part of this system.

The last period studied, between 1908 and 1930 can be considered the one in which the clashes between the public use of the waterfront and the development of industry arise and then eliminate the possibility of solutions. The private development of baths on the northern shore reaches its highest point, while the factories and warehouses are struggling for space and contaminating the waters. Meanwhile, the municipal government makes efforts to give a structure to this combination of uses of the waterfront, but there is no success in this quest: neither the *Ley de Paseos Marítimos* nor the project for the Paseo Marítimo of Ortega reaches the proper legislation or design of the area. However, Ortega's project is the first one to treat the situation of every section of the shore with detail and reality, considering every physical and conceptual aspect of every area.

The international situation shows us the development of new urban concepts. The Exhibition of Berlin in 1910 provides new perspectives on urbanism and while it establishes

the idea of Civic Art and City Planning it opens doors for new proposals. By the end of the period the waterfront parkways in the United States and parks such as those of Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier and Jens Jensen would propose a completely different set of ideas.

The project of Jose Ortega finally gives a detailed description of the actual morphology of the shore and a plausible project for the waterfront boulevard. His project can be accused of lacking special aesthetic qualities or lacking the theoretical background that many other architects that intervened in the area had. However, the proposed solutions for the problems seem to follow the scientific path that Jaussely had originally proposed, even more than Jaussely himself. The inclusion of all the popular uses of the seafront, such as bathing and practicing sports, and the combination of it with a circulatory structure that accompanies it is revealing. Unfortunately the project would not be materialised and this would mean finally the last of institutional intentions to establish the waterfront as a space of leisure in the period studied.

### Seafront avenues and boulevards

In previous periods we had seen projects for a waterfront boulevard such as the one of Fontserè and Garriga i Roca. Their idea of the waterfront boulevard was very different from

what would be proposed later as a waterfront avenue. Fontserè and Garriga had proposed a street, limited by rows of trees that would only limit the old area of the city and would replace the city walls, as well as the waterfront wall.

The idea of the seafront avenue as a continuous connection between the northern and southern area of the city only appeared only in 1900 with the project of Ricard Alsina Amils. The ring avenue that surrounded the whole city had its main arm on the limit of the seafront, and though there are no specifications on the precise morphology of this avenue the presence of it on the waterfront allows the interpretation that this was a place for promenade as well as for the convenient circulation of vehicles. However, the whole plan of Alsina Amils does not provide information of the use or the relationship between the avenue and the sea, or how these would be related to the rest of the city. Considering the way it appears in the drawing it could even be a freeway that seems not to have any contact with the rest of the streets directed to the seafront. Once again in this project we see the lack of regard to the actual use of the waterfront, to the conflict between industry and leisure use. The waterfront avenue on the plan of Alsina has different sections, with different relation between the city and the sea. On the southern side, up to the western coast of Barceloneta, the avenue gives a determined limit between the city and the



harbour. On the area of Barceloneta, the actual relation between the built housing grid is kept, having no especially traced avenue to provide this limit. The area of the maritime section of the Exposición is the only one in which the avenue is interrupted by the esplanade and pier that give access to the sea. From there up to the park in Besos the avenue once again separates the city from the water, disregarding any access through or over the avenue.

The next project for a waterfront avenue was that of Jaussely. In his report he gives specific dimensions to this avenue, again as part of the ring avenue that would surround the whole city. There are specific conditions given for each part of this avenue. As in the project of Alsina, but in more detail, the southern area of the avenue ran parallel to the railway and was definitely a limit between the harbour and the city, segregating public and private space. The northern section of the avenue was much more elaborated, and apart from the distribution of lanes for vehicles, trees and pedestrians Jaussely insists on the importance of aesthetics in the right distribution of trees, foliage and especially the view of the sea. The main elements to provide this relation between the avenue and the waterfront were the esplanades or plazas he proposed extending certain avenues from the city up to the limit of the sea. These would be placed: in the tip of

Barceloneta, where both waterfront avenues met; then on the maritime section of the Park, where a pier would be built and the area would be redesigned; another of these nodes would be located close to the maritime section on the continuation of avenida Marina, one more node would be placed in the continuation of the avenue from Plaza de las Glorias. A long stretch of avenue would continue between the last mentioned esplanade up to the area of Besos, where the greatest of these nodes was designed. This was the centre of a fan of diagonal avenues that met in a great plaza, in front of the sea where a big pier would crown this open space. All of these nodes or open spaces had a monumental character and provided especially a link between the city and the seafront for each was connected through a viaduct over the railways.

The project of Ortega was less elaborate and theoretical than the one of Jaussely, but it was also a more realistic one, especially when it came to the representation of the project. The floor plan drawn by Ortega shows exactly what the actual situation of the waterfront area was, giving specifications of the industries and the built space adjacent to the shore. The southern area, as in all the previous projects, was exclusively used for harbour and industries, so the stretch of avenue in front of the old city, Paseo Colon, was a limit between the city and the water. The same situation

was that of the Paseo Nacional, the western limit of Barceloneta.



figure 2-80 - 2005 - Playa de la Barceloneta  
source: photo by author

figure 2-81 - 2005 - panoramic view. Port Olímpic  
source: photo by author

figure 2-82 - 2005 - panoramic view. carrer de la Marina  
source: photo by author



On the eastern shore of Barceloneta the avenue provides an access to the beaches and bath houses and the area of the avenue of the *seccion maritima del parque* gives an access to Palacio del Mar and the sporting harbour in front of it. The rest of the avenue up to the Besos River was a straight line and no relation or connection to the actual perpendicular avenues was specified. This avenue, as we explained previously was detailedly specified in the sections that would correspond to pedestrians, vehicles, tramways and lines of trees.

## Piers

The piers in the waterfront projects for Barcelona did not have the predominance they had in other waterfront cities, except for the project of Jaussely.

The first time that a leisure pier appears in a project for Barcelona was in the first plan for the maritime section of the Exposición. There, two piers were proposed, even though in the final project for the area there was only one of them built. All the access we have to these designs are the floor plans of the area. In the first project the piers seem to be light structures, probably made of wood, while the second and definitive project shows a heavier structure, probably made of stone. The project of Alsina Amils shows no other leisure piers apart from the one that was left form

the Exposición.

Jaussely did give great importance to the piers, probably not in his texts but indeed he did on his plans. Even though each version of his plan shows a different morphology, configuration and location of the piers, they are present in all his projects. The main two piers that appear in all versions are the one of the *sección maritima* and the one of the park of Besós. The one in *sección maritima* was smaller and the shape was that of a straight stretch with a semi circular end. The one in the area of Besós was much bigger and had an important building in its centre. Both piers were heavy structures probably made of stone or concrete, even though the illustrations give a different character to them. All of these piers were part of a system where the waterfront avenue turned into a node, where an esplanade or plaza was designed and the connection between the circulatory system and the one of open spaces met.

The best representation of a pier in the project of Jaussely is given by an illustration of one of them. It is not clear where this pier was located but given its dimensions it must have been the one in the Besós area. Its morphology is reminiscent of the piers in spas and sea resorts of England and France. A great domed structure, probably made of iron and glass gives the pier a seafront resort character.

On the project of Ortega the idea of the pier as a space for strolling disappears and a new sort of pier is proposed. The consideration of nautical sports reaches here its height, and the proposal of a small harbour, exclusively dedicated for nautical sports is proposed where the maritime section of the park was placed.

## Seafront Buildings

The buildings proposed in each of the projects are scarce and different in character. In both the project of Fonstere and the Exposicion the buildings were meant both for aesthetic and didactic aims. The buildings of the Umbracle and Hivernacle in the project of Fontserè have to do with the instruction of the science of horticulture and the building meant for exhibition had similar aims for the instruction of the citizens. Leisure was meant for passive and didactic aims. Waterfront buildings in the Exposicion were meant for nautical exhibition and also for a passive contemplation of the sight of the sea.

In the case of Jaussely the buildings are part of the mentioned systems of circulation and open spaces. These buildings gave a frame to open spaces, and open space, the waterfront and the streets are tightly related in an urban system. Jaussely names the kind of program that was supposed to be included in the waterfront such as



an avenue, spaces for nautical sports, beaches for bathing, but he is not clear about the architecture provided for it or the principles that would lay behind it.

In the case of Ortega the only building he is actually proposing for the waterfront was the Palacio del mar related to the nautical harbour adjacent to it. The morphology of this building is also not specified in his plan.

### Beaches

In the project of Fontserè, as well as in that for the Exposición, we can already observe a conflict between the planned use of the waterfront and its actual use. While people would freely bathe in the sea, the concept coming from an educated man was that of the passive admiration of landscape. This idea can be related to the oldest tradition coming from the Enlightenment and Romanticism, as mentioned by Bollerey<sup>135</sup> to be one of the reasons for the appeal to the seafront. Here we see closely one of the first examples of the contrast between the conceptual design of the waterfront area and the actual use of it by the population. This also reminds us of the old idea analysed by Corbin<sup>136</sup>, that the bathing in the sea was an activity relegated to the *ill mannered* lower classes. As Cross<sup>137</sup> evaluates, in any case, the traditional structure and habits of society did tend to remain, and the tradition of bathing

remained a habit of the lower classes until the following period.

During the summer of 1888, while the Exposición was taking place, once again the situation of an organised venue and the real social situation were different. During the summer the Exposición was not extremely popular; the population would rather bathe in the sea practicing the traditional use of the seafront, where these habits and the differences of class were quite evident.

In the period between 1890 and 1908, the Baños Orientales and Baños de Poble Nou were inaugurated with precarious wooden structures, allowing the expansion of the habit of bathing to the middle classes.

In the waterfront avenue project of Ortega the baths of the eastern shore of Barceloneta are for the first time specified in the plan. They are assumed already as a structural part of the waterfront, despite the fact that they would later become impossible to use given the contamination of the sea waters because of the development of industry in the area of Barceloneta and northwards.

<sup>135</sup> Bollerey, Franziska, 'The Urbanisation of the shore. From Fishing Village to Sea-side Resort', in *Daidalos 20, On the waterfront: Town and Harbour*, Berlin, 15Juni 1986.

<sup>136</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, 1988.p.14

<sup>137</sup> Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990.p.124

figure 2-83 - 2005 - panoramic view. Playa de la Nova  
source: photo by author

figure 2-84 - 2005 - panoramic view. Playa de San Miquel  
source: photo by author



## Epilogue

Many years would pass until these projects for the waterfront would see any completion or even any kind of realisation. It would only be in 1959 that the first section of the Paseo Marítimo began to be built in the area of Barceloneta. The only area that was developed before the 1960s was the one of Passeig de Colom. There, some buildings such as the one of Correos y Telégrafos, the headquarters of the Compañía Transmediterránea and the building of the Capitanía from the military government were restored and revalued.

Due to the new *Ley de Costas* proposed in 1969 in the context of the military government, in 1975 another project for the waterfront was proposed, the *Plan de Ordenación de la Costa del Levante de Barcelona*. This project proposed four main transformations to the waterfront. The first and most radical one would have been to eliminate the presence of vehicles on the Paseo Marítimo, leaving it exclusively for pedestrians. The second one would be the elimination of the rail ways parallel to the seafront to allow an easy circulation and access to the beaches. Then there would be the inclusion of gardens and parks on the shore and finally the cleaning and proper canalisation of the waste waters of the factories so that they would not contaminate the waters. This would have allowed the building of beaches and baths for the use of the population of Barcelona. This project was not realised at the time but it undoubtedly set precedent to the project that would be later proposed for the Olympic Games of Barcelona of 1992.

Evidently the project for the Olympic Games was not an out of the blue project brought forward only because of the Games. Instead, it was the compendium of a series of projects that

had been on the table for decades and there and been no possibility of materialisation. Therefore, the Olympic Games became a catalyser of these projects.

The projects for the waterfront in the last decade of the twentieth century are considered to be<sup>138</sup> the most important and highly transforming of the whole city. The project that won the competition for the restructuring of the city for the Olympic games was that of the collaboration of Josep Martorell, Oriol Bohigas, David Mackay and Albert Puigdomenech. They presented a project for one of the four required areas of the city that needed restructuring, in this case the waterfront, what would be the Villa Olímpica. When the group took over the project they found that the area they were dealing with was a beach that was a dumping ground for the dwelling area and the factories adjacent. There were two railway lines that blocked completely the relation between the city and the sea. For the solution of this problems a combination of a plan and project and the combination of private and public forces managed to materialize a project that has been an asset for the city ever since.

From Barceloneta to Poble Nou and La Mar Bella five kilometres of urban coastline were recovered, and were adapted for swimming and leisure activities with the building of a seaside promenade, the Olympic port and the establishment of restaurants and bars. This area of the city is now visited by thousands of people daily in the summer and winter and the waterfront is finally used with the traditional purposes, this time structured by a proper urban plan.

The Old harbour, on the other hand, was recovered with a completely different and current use of leisure. The commercial harbour was finally moved south of the city and apart from the promenade built next to Passeig de

Colom a whole new commercial district with a mall and an aquarium were placed on one of the quays. Even though this section of the waterfront is frequently as popular and visited as the beach area the quality of space there is completely different. It has almost no relation to the waterfront environment, there is no perspective of the horizon and the mall, which is an inner structure, drawn to its inside has little relation with the environment.

It is not intended here to give a judgement of value of the current development of the waterfront of Barcelona, but to give an insight into what variables were used in the past for the possibility of questioning these areas and finding out how we can provide spaces that will enhance our leisure time and follow certain traditions and issues that give identity to our urban spaces.

In the period studied, the relationship between the public use of the waterfront, the legislation and plans provided by the administration and the force of industry had the tendency of becoming increasingly differentiated. This led to the inevitable deterioration of the waterfront and the annulations of the waterfront as leisure space.

The cases in North and South America followed a different path and result in this period, Chicago and Buenos Aires will be studied in the following sections to understand the different mechanisms of urban development of the waterfront.

<sup>138</sup> This work is not analysing the current state of the waterfront, for the latest projects for Barcelona the following literature has been used.  
Marshall, Tim (ed) *Transforming Barcelona*, Routledge, London and New York, 2004  
Capel Horacio, *El Modelo Barcelona: un examen critico*, Ediciones del Cerbal, 2005  
Martorell, Bohigas, Mackay, Puig Domenech, *La Villa Olímpica, Barcelona 92*, Editorial Gustavo Gili SA, Barcelona, 1991.

**Chapter 3**  
**Chicago 1870-1930**  
**The waterfront park as a leisure experiment**



### Chapter 3 – Chicago 1870-1930 – The waterfront park as a leisure experiment

*Beautiful Lake Michigan! Thy body is sapphire and thy robes are emerald and gold. The brooch at thy throat is set with a million sunbeams and thy bosom is as the bosom of an innocent maiden in the arms of her lover. Two generations of men have exhausted their energies designing and constructing decorations for thee, and thy limbs are weighted with the glories of their handiwork. And chiefest of these is Chicago.*

Charles Eugene Banks<sup>1</sup>

Lake Michigan has been the source of all kinds of inspirations for the city of Chicago. It has also been the site of a great part of the city's urban parks. Since its foundation in the 1830s, Chicago has been, at least in the will of its dwellers, an *Urbs in Horto*. The local government adopted this motto at the eve of the village's birth, even though the land was very far from being a garden. The marsh land was deprived of vegetation, but the government and inhabitants of the city pushed thoroughly for the provision of public parks for the city throughout the following two centuries. Incidentally, the park system of Chicago is now constituted, as park regulations stated in 1869, of one third of inland parks and two thirds of waterfront parks.

The case of Chicago is extremely peculiar, for it was not only the urban and architectural trend setter of North America, but also of many cities throughout the western world. Many authors have remarked the outstanding position of Chicago compared to other cities, with its positive and negative aspects:

"No large city, not even Peter the Great's Saint Petersburg, had grown so fast, and nowhere else could there be found in more dramatic display such a combination of wealth and squalor, beauty and ugliness, corruption and reform."<sup>2</sup>

According to Donald Miller there has been a long standing discussion whether the impressive development of Chicago was due to its geography or to its inhabitants. He explains this collaboration of forces as:

"But the city, in turn, reshapes human nature. This two-way process of people making Chicago and Chicago making people is the dominating theme of this urban story"<sup>3</sup>

On the *History of the World's Columbian Exposition*, Johnson also defines this process as a combination of the two influences:

"That such a city should come into existence there at some time, was inevitable from the general tendencies of civilisation; that it came so swiftly, was the result of circumstances peculiar to our age"<sup>4</sup>

Cronon shares the opinion of how influential Chicago was on the rest of North America:

"No city played a more important role in shaping the landscape and economy of the mid-continent during the second half of the nineteenth century than Chicago"<sup>5</sup>

The period studied (1870-1930) was particularly strong in all aspects of the development of the city. The great demographic growth,

industrialisation and cultural development of Chicago were remarkable in this period. This was due to the great meat and grain production in the hinterland of the city. The collaboration between city government and businessmen signed the evolution of the city and its rapid growth. But this growth was not all positive. The extremely fast development of industry brought a great amount of immigrants, and no comprehensive plan for housing was provided in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The living conditions in great parts of the city were extremely poor and undesirable, the lack of proper water and sewerage infrastructure led to the spread of diseases and an extremely unhealthy conditions of great part of the population. Meanwhile, the real estate developers were constructing the great skyscrapers that housed the most powerful companies in the city and country.

<sup>1</sup> Banks, Charles Eugene, *The artistic guide to Chicago and the World's Columbian exposition*, Chicago, R.S. Peale co., 1893. R 1832 .075. pg.101

<sup>2</sup> Miller, Donald L., *City of the Century, the Epic of Chicago and the Making of America*, Simon and Shuster paperbacks, New York, 1996. pg.17

<sup>3</sup> idem. pg.19

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, Rossiter, ed. *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition Held in Chicago in 1893*. New York: Appleton, 1897-1898. pg.3

<sup>5</sup> Cronon, William, *Nature's Metropolis, Chicago and the Great West*, New York, WW Norton & Company, 1991.pg.xiii

Chicago, in contrast with harbour cities of Europe such as Barcelona, followed a parallel development of leisure waterfront and harbour waterfront, giving definite priority to leisure spaces throughout its history. The city was not only the host of pioneering landscape designers but also established a peculiar and innovative relation of the city and the water. This relation would be quoted incessantly in the planning of many waterfront cities.

The development of the parks on the lakefront was reinforced by the location of the World Columbian Exposition of 1893. The international and renowned success of the Exposition was added to the fame Chicago was achieving with the Chicago School of architecture and the skyscraper development. The peculiarities of Chicago regarding the comparison with the other two case studies (Barcelona and Buenos Aires) have to do with many aspects of the development of waterfront projects. First of all, the funding for the construction of waterfront parks was provided both by the government of state and city and by private developers. This would set a standard for this kind of activities in the whole country during the twentieth century. Secondly, the formation of the Park Commissions allowed the proper development and construction of parks in short periods of time. Then, similar to Buenos Aires but differing from Barcelona, waterfront parks were considered also a tool for real estate development, an urban element that would raise the prices of adjacent property and therefore benefit real-estate developers as well as the public. The presence of the rational recreation movement and the park movement in Chicago was much stronger than in Barcelona and Buenos Aires, even though Buenos Aires did decidedly receive an influence of these movements in the 1870s.

Books on the history of Chicago are numerous, and every step of the development of its waterfront parks has been analysed by one author or another. Apart from the study of these secondary sources, we have consulted primary sources at the archives of the Chicago Park District, where the National Register of Historical Places gives a full view of the history of each park, including texts, images, maps and plans. Primary sources were also used for the history of the World Columbian Exposition and for texts of landscape designers, where their position towards leisure and recreation is expressed. Secondary sources have been very useful for the interpretation of these historical developments and the understanding of the urban and social processes that were cause and consequence of the parks' development.

*In this chapter we will show how the forces within the city were successful in providing proper leisure space for the general public, and the struggles that had to be overcome for achieving this goal. The development of leisure ideas and activities was reflected in each one of the projects for the waterfront. Chicagoans in charge of the development of the waterfront were extremely aware of the presence of the lake and the importance of it for providing open space for the citizens.*

### 3.1 – Introduction – urban, political, economical and social contexts

*In the following section we will be presenting the extremely influential context of the city of Chicago on the shaping of its waterfront between 1870 and 1930. It is not the intention to give a detailed history of Chicago but a general insight into the processes that the city went through. The conflicts that took place in the city, be them social or economical made the waterfront what it is today, and social principles were reflected in the programme and formal characteristics of each project. These political, social and economical contexts made the development of the waterfront projects possible, their design and their realisation. Those who are familiar with the history of Chicago can skip the first part of this chapter and proceed to the section on leisure, where we introduce leisure activities and policies that existed in Chicago in the period studied.*

#### 3.1.1 – History

##### The origins of the city

One of the main reasons why Chicago became the city that it has developed to be was its geographical and geological situation. Apart from its convenient location, practically in the middle of the continent, two natural elements gave the site the potentiality of growth. There was the extended agricultural hinterland, a vast fertile land that could be easily exploited; and there was the Great Lake Michigan, a vast extension of water that had remained from the latest advance and retreat of the ancient ice sheets. This lake allowed the communication with the lumber lands of the north, with the ports of the east and from there to the rest of the world.

However, it was not only geography or the natural environment that allowed Chicago to become the metropolis it is, it was also, as Louis Sullivan suggested, the product of a “supremely human art”.

The first Europeans to arrive to the site were the French explorer Louis Joliet and the missionary Jacques Marquette in 1673. These pioneers were sent by the *intendant* of New France, Jean Talon, to claim the area for Jean-Baptiste Colbert on the name of the Sun King Louis XIV. The town of Quebec was the central government of France in North America and the land around them was yet to be ‘discovered’ and occupied. Despite their different disciplines, the roles of Joliet and Marquette were not so different, Marquette’s condition as a Jesuit missionary was, as those of his generation, that of scientific exploration. The interest of both men was set on the scientific analysis of the locations and environments they encountered.

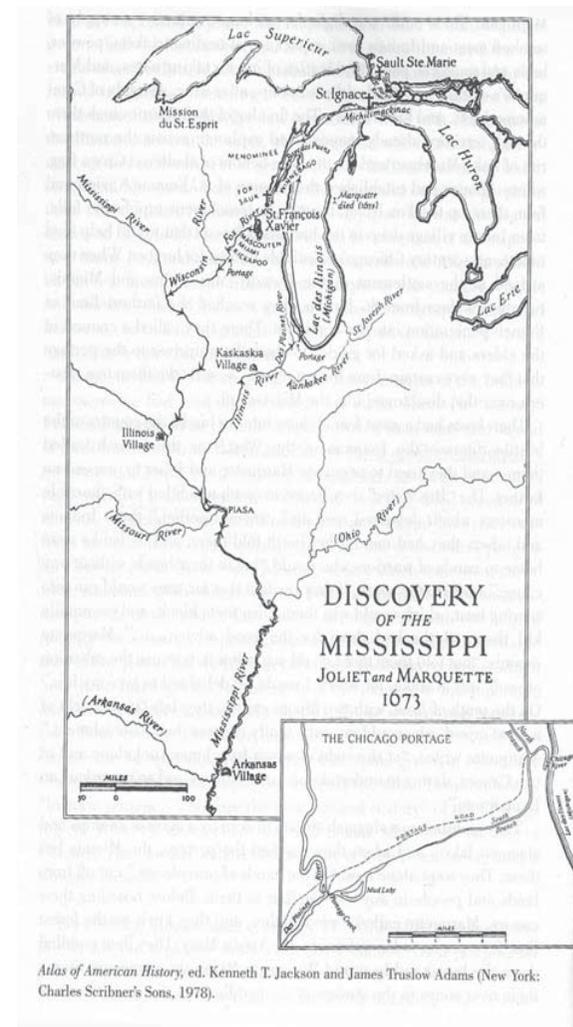


figure 3-01 - 1673 - Discovery of the Missisipi. Joliet and Marquette  
source: Miller, Donald L., City of the Century, the Epic of Chicago and the Making of America, Simon and Shuster paperbacks, New York, 1996. page 32



figure 3-02 - 1830 - the sandbar on the lakefront  
author: Dennis McClendon  
source: Encyclopedia of Chicago - Chicago History. <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/>

They were interested in the plant and animal life, in the climatic conditions and in the native peoples of the place.

The group of explorers was only made up of five people, who left for Illinois country in May 1673, from a small settlement in the north east of Lake Michigan (figure 3-01). They followed a long journey down the border of the lake and then up the Fox River, up to the Mississippi and into the Chicago River, then called Des Plaines River. During the trip they went further than the territory occupied by the French and had to deal with some tribes of local Indians. With this trip the explorers assured the land for the French monarchy. However this would not last long, for after one more visit of Marquette to the site and the Seven Years' War, the land that had been taken by the French was ceded to the English as part of the peace treaty. Later, after the revolution, it became part of the United States. In 1803 Fort Dearborn, the first landmark of the city, was built for protection of the site of Chicago.

### Fur trade and the rising town

During the first decades of the nineteenth century the only trade known in Chicago was the fur trade. People who inhabited the small village were traders, French Canadians and Anglo-Americans, Indians and the troops that guarded the fort. During this period there were two main architectural structures on the site: Fort Dearborn and Wolf Point, in the centre of early Chicago.

For trade and transportation, the settlers used the Illinois River to go south, but a connection to the east was missing. In 1825 the Erie Canal was planned and established to connect the towns of Chicago and Ottawa. In 1830 the state canal commissioners made the survey of the two towns – the one of Chicago was done by James

Thompson – legalising the occupation of the settlers and making them rightful owners of their land. Until then, the distribution of land had been chaotic and settlers were practically squatting the land.

By 1835 the fur trade vanished as the American Fur company closed its business in Chicago. This meant the need for a transformation in economy and therefore also in the physical conditions of the city. At the time the town was isolated, it depended on other towns even for food and the access through the lake to the river was extremely difficult due to the sand beds in the mouth of the river (figure 3-02). In 1834 improvements on the harbour were developed and this attracted a number of traders on the expectation that Chicago would become part of a trade route to the Eastern harbours.

The Erie Canal commission was then reopened and plots of land were sold to finance the building of the canal. By June that year enough money had been raised to begin the construction, supported by New York capital raised by William Butler Ogden (1805-1877) (figure 3-03), Charles Butler and Bronson, who had recently settled in the promising new town. In 1836 Ogden was elected mayor of the town. His aim was to turn the small village into a metropolis, and it took him a little more than thirty years to achieve his goal. As mentioned by Miller<sup>6</sup>, Chicago, as many other cities in its geographical situation, such as Paris or London, began as an exchange centre dealing goods neither produced nor processed nor consumed there. The combination of this situation and the versatile risk-taking businessmen made possible the development of the city.

The year 1837 brought an economic recession that would last for five years. This was lightly palliated by the construction of the canal, but by 1841 the state was almost in bankruptcy

and most of the workers of the canal were left unemployed. Meanwhile, despite the rational layout of the city, this was not built the way it was represented in the maps, only a few buildings filled the grid and in a few minutes walk it was possible to reach the vast prairie. The city was organised in two areas, a small business centre on the south side of the river and a residential area on the north side.

During the following years, communication with the rest of the country improved, and by 1840 it was possible to go to New York in only six days by steamboat and railway. This communication allowed the establishment of the elite that was raised in the New York area and settled for good in Chicago. These elite not only dominated politics and business but later also became the intellectual and philanthropic founders of associations such as the Chicago Historical Society, the Academy of Sciences and the Chicago Musical Union. However, most of these powerful characters started up in real estate and then branched to other trades.

### Agriculture, industrialisation and the rail road

In 1845 the city began to recover from the depression and a flood of commerce started taking over the city. The waterways brought trade from all over the country. With the resurgence of trade people started arriving to the city and also to the hinterland starting up farms that would provide goods for the area and later a surplus for trade. By 1846 the population of Chicago had already reached the 14,000 inhabitants. Once the canal was finished in 1847 and the trade routes of waterways were finally settled, a new form of transportation was being set in the area that would revolutionise the trade and movement of passengers: the rail track. While before 1847 there

was not one single rail line that arrived to Chicago, ten years later it was the rail centre of America. This was a product of the work of William Ogden, and neither the federal government nor the state invested anything on it. It was, well until the twentieth century, an exclusively private campaign.

Apart from the railways, during 1848 many events determined the change of the city of Chicago. The first telegraph line reached the city; the Illinois and Michigan Canal was opened and the first ocean going steam ship arrived to the harbour. For the first time, the city had a Board of Trade led by the city's merchants and commission men. The first cattle stockyard was established with a steam powered grain elevator.

The communication and transportation network was settled; the waterways that linked Chicago with New York and the rail roads that connected the Midwestern city with the rest of the country would guarantee economic and commercial growth for the following decades. The rail roads had no legislation, and no control from city or national government, which gave a free establishment of the network all over the country.

Socially the situation was far from egalitarian. Between 1848 and 1849, 74% of the heads of families had neither land nor commercial wealth. The richest 1% owned 52% of the city's wealth, and the richest 10% owned 94% of the wealth<sup>7</sup>. Immigrants were distributed in limited areas of the city, which continued to be the case until well into the twentieth century. The Irish settled in Bridgeport, the Swedes and Norwegians on the north side by the river, and the Germans just further north in what was later called the Old Town.



figure 3-03 - 1850s - William Butler Ogden - first mayor of Chicago  
source: Miller, City of the Century, page 192

figure 3-04 - 1882 - McCormick's harvesting Machine Co.  
source: <http://www.lestracteursrouges.com>



<sup>6</sup> Miller, Donald L., *City of the Century, the Epic of Chicago and the Making of America*, Simon and Shuster paperbacks, New York, 1996. pg.75

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Miller, Donald L., *City of the Century, the Epic of Chicago and the Making of America*, Simon and Shuster paperbacks, New York, 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Cronon, William, *Nature's Metropolis, Chicago and the Great West*, New York, WW Norton & Company, 1991.



figure 3-05 - 1870s - Cyrus Hall McCormick  
source: www.wikipedia.org

Several versions of the story of Chicago give different opinions about the relation between Chicago as a city and its geography, but many agree with historian William Cronon<sup>8</sup> in the idea that Chicago and its hinterland were *one*, an integrated country-city system.

One of the technological developments that allowed the growth of agricultural production in the hinterland of Chicago was the harvester (figure 3-04) produced by Cyrus Hall McCormick (1809-1884) (figure 3-05), a partner of William Ogden and owner of the brick factory that employed the greatest amount of workers of the time. Wheat acreage doubled where the harvesters were used and this stimulated investment in farming machinery. In 1848 the wheat centre of production was located close to New York. Ten years later it had moved to in the Mississippi valley, close to Chicago and due to the production of machinery; for this reason Chicago was then called the *Great Reaper City*.

The increase in production of wheat was also given a boost by the expansion of the railway network; grain no longer needed to be stacked in sacks for it was quickly transported in trains from farm to warehouses that were multiplying in the city of Chicago. This change allowed the production of grain to increase from 2 million bushels in 1850, to 50 million in 1861.

Wheat and other grains were not the only products exchanged in Chicago, lumber was another product that would be an important part of the city's trade, and William Ogden was also the one in charge of the greatest part of this trade. The dealing with timber also permitted the high rate of construction in the city and also the industry of furniture and pianos, wagon and shipbuilding.

In 1865 another trade became paramount

in the Chicago economy: cattle and pork slaughtering and packing. The Union Stock yards and later Hough House were established in the town of Lake, six kilometres south of the centre of Chicago.

### Sanitary problems and the reversal of the Chicago River

The economic and commercial expansion also brought with it a demographic explosion and the health problems that the city would have to confront in the following decades. In 1854 cholera hit the city affecting a great part of the population. Chicago, as most of the cities in North America and Europe, had no sewage system and the new intake pipes that were used for the drinking water of the city were being reached by the sewage through the river, therefore contaminating the drinking water. Mistakenly, the problems of sewage and water distribution were solved separately. In 1855 the Board of Sewerage commission was appointed with William Ogden as one of its three members. The sewers were constructed above ground and a whole system was provided for disposal in the river. This construction forced the city to be raised up to three metre high. This system allowed the city to be drier and healthier and later permitted the further growth of the city.

At the same time a system for the circulation of drinking water was established. A new tunnel dragging water from the lake would take water to the tower for the provision of the whole city. The tunnel never worked as expected and there was a need for keeping the lake water clean and free of sewage disposal. This was the first attempt to reverse the flow of the Chicago River, proposed by Ellis Sylvester Chesbrough. He was the engineer that first planned the

water provision and sewage system in Chicago. By making the river run backward, the sewage would be taken to the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, where the waters would be deodorised, according to its designer. The project was carried out on a bond issue of 3 million dollars.

The works for the canal were finished in 1871, but they were not to last long, for the excessive sewage material and the waste of companies such as those of William Ogden and John Wentworth (1815-1888) would be too much for the canal to take. Eventually, a year later, the current stopped and the river became its old pestilent self.

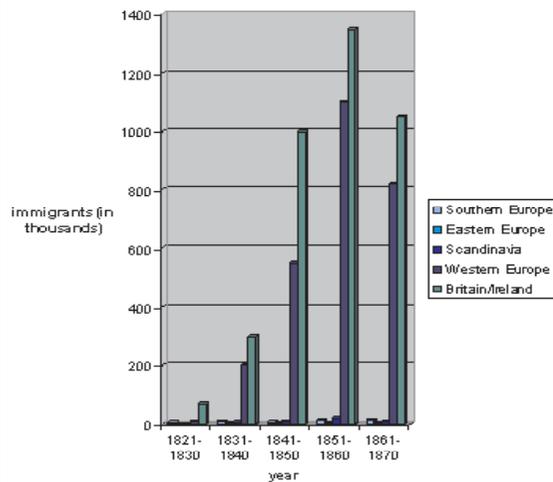
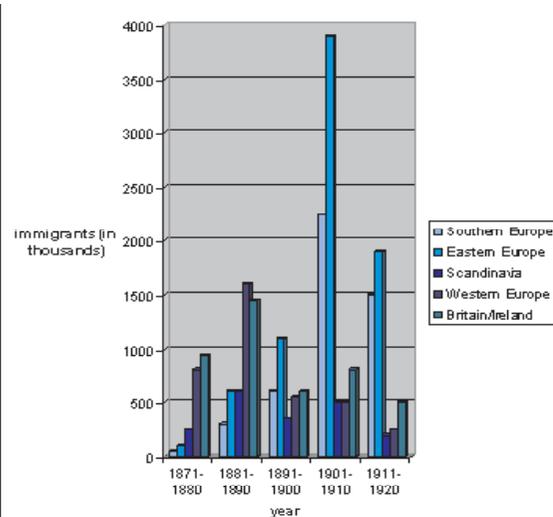


chart 3-01a - immigration to the US by country of origin from 1821 to 1870  
source: www.wikipedia.org

chart 3-01b - immigration to the US by country of origin from 1870 to 1920  
source: www.wikipedia.org



### 3.1.2- Social, Economical and political context – 1870-1930

#### United States' economical, social and political situation

The situation of the United States towards the world was still, despite the fast industrialisation process and the incommensurable demographic explosion, behind most European countries, and definitely behind Europe as a continent. Industrial production was still much higher in France, Germany and especially Britain, than in the United States. Culturally the circumstances were similar, European countries had developed a compendium of high culture shown in literature, music, art and theatre that could not be compared to the still developing American culture, which would only achieve further reach well into the twentieth century. However, the United States were developing fast and promising great evolution, especially in technology for the following decades.

The population of the US grew from 50 million to 92 million between 1870 and 1914, growth similar to that of Germany. This happened in a period in which Britain relatively lost economical power and the US and Germany gained in industry, economy and trade.

There were few representative democracies in the world in this period, Switzerland, France and most of the South American states had this political system. The United States was also a representative democracy. This made the political situation very different between the US and most European powers, which were monarchies.

The rise in production and consumption of grain and agricultural products as a whole in the decades of the 1870s and 1880s caused

depression in the prices and it was to have a heavy influence in US politics, having populism rising in 1890s in the wheat lands of Kansas and Nebraska. This caused the labour movement to reach a point in which by 1900 there were 1600 cooperatives manufacturing dairy products in the USA.

Despite labour movements and the rise of unions and protection of workers, in practice the working conditions before 1914 were still awful. Despite the fact that children's labour was banned, children did work in mines and factories; there were no compensations for working accidents and no unemployment protection.

The United States, as great part of the rest of the Americas, was a magnet for the extremely mobilised society of the last decades of the nineteenth century. Millions of Europeans entered the harbours of the United States looking for a better life than what they left in the depressing Europe. This great immigration to the US caused problems of xenophobia, as observed by Hobsbawm<sup>9</sup>, especially between the already resident Anglo-Saxon Protestants and any new immigration group. This problem did not see a great class difference, middle as well as lower classes were able to set a system of segregation that was only surpassed by the urge of factory owners to hire cheap labour. This was a way to force the old Americans to accept the new ones. The process of immigration in the US throughout the period studied was an independent one. There were no nationally sponsored immigration policies and the great majority of immigrants came to the US through independent means. This fact affected the distribution of immigrants within the country.<sup>10</sup>

The more able bodied and wealthier

immigrants would be able to spread throughout the country, instead, the most indigent ones, that had found enough means to only pay their ship-fare would stay wherever the ship would leave them, mainly the greatest cities of the eastern coast.

### Immigration and population growth in Chicago

Chicago was, at least for its first hundred years of existence, a city of immigrants. The national census of 1860 revealed that Chicago was one among the cities<sup>11</sup> that had a proportion of more than 50% of foreign born population.

The first immigrants to arrive to Chicago were the Irish in the 1830s (chart 02) for the first works on the canal, occupying the land called Bridgeport. This was the first slum of Chicago, and the confrontation of the Irish with the power of the established Anglo-Saxons did not allow great change in the following decades. The Irish were attacked by most political parties in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the Irish did not settle in ghettos like other international communities later did. They tended to live in mixed communities, but kept their convictions clear, being in charge of the Catholic Church of Chicago in different districts of the city.

A great tide of Scandinavian immigrants arrived to Chicago in 1890, forming a group of approximately seventy-two thousand. Different to the Irish, they were portrayed by the local press as a model ethnic group. The 1890s brought a new generation of immigrants from a different precedence, and this was also conditioned by the labour requirements. The factories that used to only employ workers with a certain experience and skill were transformed by new machinery and now needed only cheap unskilled labour.

This allowed the integration of a new generation of immigrants from Poland, Italy and Russia.

The situation of the Catholic Church would change in the 1890s with the arrival of a greater group of Polish immigrants, who wished to separate their church from the ones of the Italians and Irish. So, they founded the Polish Catholic Church.

Religion also suffered transformations within specific communities in the US. The case of the Czechs in Chicago is representative of this phenomenon. The Czechs, who were traditionally Catholic, became Protestants or freethinkers in the new continent, especially lead by Joseph Pastor and F.B. Zdrubek who edited freethinking journals of wide circulation. The Polish on the other hand became more practicing Catholics than they had been in their own country<sup>12</sup>.

The issue of immigration and adaptation was always a complicated one, and Chicago was not an exception. To name just an example, the Jews in Chicago went through a process that shows the way adaptation was different for each community and even within the same communities. Most of the first generation of Jews who arrived to Chicago before 1880 were well educated German-speaking Jews. Many of them were well positioned in the Chicago society and lead philanthropic societies in south Chicago by the end of the nineteenth century. Among them were well known characters such as businessman Alvah Curtis Roebuck (1864-1948), architect Dankmar Adler (1844-1900), and many trade businessmen as the founders of Florsheim Shoes, or B. Kuppenheimer and Company.

However, the Jews that established in Chicago after 1880 were mainly Polish Jews and formed a very different kind of society than the German Jews. They established mainly in the area of Hull House<sup>13</sup>, they spoke Yiddish and

were coarse and uneducated. Their modus of settling was similar to that of the Italians; they would settle in America grouped practically as the village they had left in the Old Continent. They would establish in one tenement house as a group and set segregated areas of the city for themselves.

The proportion of black immigrants in Chicago was very low, in 1890 they conformed only less than one percent of the population of the city, and they settled in the south side of the city.

<sup>9</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, Vintage books, New York, 1987. pg.152-53

<sup>10</sup> Allen Jones, Maldwyn, *American immigration*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1992.

<sup>11</sup> Others were New York, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Detroit and San Francisco. Allen Jones, Maldwyn, *American immigration*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1992. pg.191

<sup>12</sup> Allen Jones, Maldwyn, *American immigration*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1992. pg.194

<sup>13</sup> Located in the Near West side of Chicago. Used to be one of the poorest areas of the city.



figure 3-06 - 1880s - George Pullman and the town of Pullman

source: Miller, City of the Century.

figure 3-07 - 1880s - Philip D Armour

source: www.wikipedia.org



### Chicago's economical, social and political situation

As in the previous period, commercial and economical activity in the city was much more powerful than governmental decisions about the urban growth of the city. Politics were greatly managed and controlled by businessmen, rather than by politicians. During the mid-nineteenth century the rapid growth of the city had led some to fear the social situation of Chicago to become one in which trade was more important than culture. Characters like William Ogden and his north side neighbours insisted that Chicago needed to develop

“culture, taste, beauty, art and literature, or there is a danger that it will become a town of mere traders and money getters; crude, unlettered, sharp and grasping.”<sup>14</sup>

The years after the Chicago fire of 1871 were signed by commercial and industrial development. The elements that allowed such an incredible growth had to do with changes in hinterland cattle and grain production, which led to revolutionary changes in meatpacking business. According to Miller<sup>15</sup>, the causes of these changes were two. On the one hand meat production was boosting all over the area of the Mississippi having a surplus of production that had no precedent. On the other there was the invention of the refrigerated train car by Andrew Chase. The engineer was hired by Gustavus F. Swift (1839-1903), a powerful Chicago great meat packing businessman, to solve the problem of meat transportation. Chase designed a car that was suitably engineered to keep both ice and meat apart from each other, which allowed the long distance travelling of the meat without

being spoiled. This system not only permitted the transportation by train but was later used also in ships that would export the North American meat all over the world.

By the 1880s the business was growing at unexpected rates. This meat packing and transport revolution had great consequences in the city of Chicago, the urban development caused by a market and production that became a year-round business made the city grow as it had never before.

The commercial and industrial activity of the city was the main magnet for immigration to Chicago, but also the elements that allowed the devastating living conditions of those who transferred to work in the Chicago industry. The meat packing industry brought serious social problems to the city of Chicago. The conditions in which the workers had to perform their jobs were extremely bad, the constant dealing with blood and the temperature in the warehouses lead to accidents and health problems. This condition is crudely depicted in the book *The Jungle*<sup>16</sup>, by Upton Sinclair, where a Lithuanian immigrant and his family have to suffer the crude situation of the poorer classes in Chicago. By 1893 over thirty-five thousand people lived in the meat packing district close to Union stock yards, in the south of Chicago.

The transportation industry had also provided a great boost to economy with the Pullman Palace Car Company on the lead. George Pullman (1831-1897) (figure 3-06) was the head of the greatest transportation industry in the area and he did not only have a great production of trains, he also tried to solve the labour problems for his employees. To solve the problem of labour and its conditions George Pullman, a pioneer of his age, planned a company town next to Chicago,

Pullman. This town serviced one of the greatest companies of the turn of the century: the Pullman Palace Car Company. In the company town, the living conditions were actually much better than in the neighbouring Packingtown next to Lake Calumet. Since the town was created in 1881 not one single case of cholera, typhoid or yellow fever was reported.

Another industry that depended on transport and consumption was the steel industry. It had begun in the mid 1860s but the industry would not be important in Chicago until the 1880s.

Politics and the social situation became tightly linked in the last decades of the nineteenth century with the popularisation of political ideas such as socialism and anarchism. By the early 1880s Chicago had become the centre of socialist and anarchist movements and labour organisations. In 1886 Chicago was the most politically charged city in the United States. It had the greatest anarchist movement, which had already over twenty-five hundred affiliates, as well as the biggest number of affiliates to labour unions, twenty-five percent of the city's work forces in the same year. Irish and Germans were significantly represented in these groups.

1886 is also considered the year of the great uprising, not only for Chicago but also for the rest of the country. Almost all of the demonstrations and strikes held in that year had as a purpose the fighting for the eight hour day. In Chicago, Carter Harrison was a supporter of the eight hour day, which made of Chicago a centre for the crusade. This unveiled the May 1<sup>st</sup> strike, where thousands of labourers demonstrated across the city. There were no major incidents that day, but two days later the Haymarket Affair took place and it became a tragic day for labourers in Chicago and

an internationally well known event. This event would create such antipathies between factory owners, managers and workers that a growing racism and ethnic segregation took place in the city, being followed by hatred to anarchism and to political distress. The event of Haymarket did not break the labour movement in Chicago but it did destroy the eight hour day plea and made the anarchist movement fall apart.

In 1890, with a population of 1,098,576 inhabitants, Chicago had become not only the main exchange capital of the country but also the second manufacturer, employing 170,000 workers with a turn out of 500 million dollars a year. By 1893 the meat industrial production had expanded to unprecedented numbers, having a production of packing house products that counted more than 14 million animals a year, mounting to a value of 200 million dollars, an expansion of over 900 percent in the previous twenty years.

Another industry that flourished especially after the 1890s was the retail industry; characters such as Montgomery Ward (1844-1913), Marshall Field (1834-1906) and Richard Warren Sears (1863-1914) were the promoters of catalogue sales and continued their business by building department stores in the centre of Chicago.

The missionary will of some of the lords of meat packing was personified in the figure of Philip Armour (1832-1901) (figure 3-07). He was one of the richest men in Chicago by the 1890s and his didactic intentions were clear. He was a generous giver to charities and he was in charge of one of the most important charities of the period, the Armour mission. This mission included the Armour Institute for talented and

needy boys, a nursery, a kindergarten, a library and a free medical dispensary. However, this did not solve the problems of the employees.

The numbers that started to come up in surveys of the first years of the twentieth century show how not only the work conditions were poor, but also the wages were. The weekly salary of a factory worker in the meat business was not even half of what was needed for a basic family expense.

Politics had not been a great problem for the city until the 1890's, when the growing complexity of the social environment began to complicate the situation. Before this there had been little differences between politicians and the powerful elite of the business lords of meat packing, transport and steel.

<sup>14</sup> York, Byron, "The pursuit of culture: Founding the Chicago Historical Society, 1856" *Chicago History*, fall, 1981, pg.141.

<sup>15</sup> Miller, Donald L., *City of the Century, the Epic of Chicago and the Making of America*, Simon and Shuster paperbacks, New York, 1996. pg.207-209

<sup>16</sup> Sinclair, Upton, *The Jungle*, New York, Bantam classics, 1906, 1981.



figure 3-08 - 1880s - Carter H Harrison  
source: Miller, Donald L., *City of the Century, the Epic of Chicago and the Making of America*, Simon and Shuster paperbacks, New York, 1996. page 32



figure 3-09 - 1880s - Bertha Honore Palmer  
source: Miller, Donald L., *City of the Century, the Epic of Chicago and the Making of America*, Simon and Shuster paperbacks, New York, 1996. page 192

However, by the 1890s the political ideas of the liberal mayor Carter Henry Harrison (1825-1893) (figure 3-08) were disturbing some high class conservatives who supported the alternative candidate Samuel W. Allerton. The main issue the elite disagreed with was Harrison's policies on vice, prostitution and gambling. Harrison had had good ties with Michael Cassius McDonald, a lord of Chicago's vice empire, this way he had allowed prostitution and gambling to be segregated and limited to one location in the city, but not eliminated.

Carter Harrison was an extremely popular mayor in Chicago, workers strongly supported him, and so did some socialists. He defended strikes and permitted demonstrations sometimes even banning police from acting against them. Harrison understood the city as a mixture of races and cultures and acted accordingly. This way Harrison was the protagonist of a struggle between Protestants and Catholics. Protestants were willing to ban all type of vice in the city and save the citizens' souls and on the other hand Catholics and German Lutherans were convinced that the government was not to interfere and people should choose to do what they will.

The position of Harrison towards the requests of the different classes was a difficult one, especially when this regarded the problems of vice and liquor policies. Harrison supported the establishment of saloons and tolerated the development of a vice district in the limits of the loop, where the area could be controlled by the police and minors were kept away from gambling and prostitution. The licence fees for these establishments were used to support the urban transformation plans that were required by the middle classes, so, in a certain way Harrison was trying to please all sides of the social spectrum.

With the death of Mayor Harrison in

1893, three days before the closure of the World Columbian Exposition, and the change of administration of the city to more conservative hands, the days of the gambling area were counted. This by no means diminished the amount of gambling or prostitution, instead, vice spread all over the city and became much more difficult to control.

Politics had great influence in the social and even racial situation of Chicago. After the 1890s, as it appeared in the studies of Jane Addams and Florence Kelley, the Irish aldermen were taking over the guidance of the city. Despite the fact that in numbers they were not the majority, they controlled the city's Democratic Party, and they had twenty-four out of the twenty-eight most important ward bosses in the city.

An important role in the politics of Chicago was taken by the aldermen. These were members of the council that did not come from the high classes as were most mayors of the city, but were instead common citizens that had some kind of power in their districts because of their business and very frequently because they were the owners of the so popular saloons.

### Women and labour in Chicago

The role of women until the 1880s had been as in most of the world that of housekeepers. But in Chicago that role was changed in most of the social classes. Women of the lower classes were forced to work, for the wages were too low for only one in the family to work. However, the class that pioneered the female movement in Chicago was the middle class, which since the invention of the type machine became an important character in the uprising business of the city. Despite the moralist remarks of some, especially Victorian conservatives, the number

of office working women started to increase and by 1890 there were thirty three thousand stenographer typists in the country.

In general, women of high culture in Chicago were drawn to reformist ideas but there was one special character among them. Bertha Honoré Palmer (1849-1918) (figure 3-09), wife of Potter Palmer (1826-1902), powerful Chicago businessman, had gotten tired of the tight life of Prairie Avenue, and when she and her husband moved to the northern lakeside new settlement she opened her house to all kinds of people from different classes: artists, politicians, labour movement activists and journalists alike. Among other activities she was the founder of the Woman's class, which by the mid-1880s had more than five hundred members. This club was meant to help woman labourers and their families, defending their rights and protecting them from the exploitive work market.

Another of these reformers was Jane Addams (1860-1935) (figure 3-10), but from another position and perspective. Addams not only founded and directed the Hull-House as a refuge for women in danger but also conducted the surveys that would finally show an accurate account of the labour situation in Chicago by the beginning of the twentieth century. The surveys also gave an account of the poor sanitary conditions of most of the city, showing the need for new proper sanitation and health measures. The first surveys that were impressively useful for the knowledge of the working situation of women in Chicago were those made by Florence Kelley (1859-1932). She was an outspoken socialist who had ties with Friedrich Engels, and made a survey of living conditions in the area of Hull House (figure 3-11) in 1893, as a part of a study in four American cities lead by the US Commissioner of Labour. As a result of this study it was known that

3 to 4 hundred thousand inhabitants in Chicago - about twenty percent of the population - lived in appalling poor and unhealthy conditions.



figure 3-10 - 1880s - Jane Addams  
source: www.wikipedia.org



figure 3-11 - 1930- Hull House  
source: <http://louisville.edu/a-s/english/haymarket/stanton/hullhouse2.jpg>

### 3.1.3 – Leisure Precedents - Leisure as social manifestation

#### Leisure in the North American countryside

The habits and customs of the countryside throughout the United States in the nineteenth century were diverse and depended on geographical location as well as on social class. Just some hints of the life in the countryside can describe how different it was from that in the growing urban centres.

New England gave a generally sombre picture when it came to leisure activities, for the origin of the immigrants was protestant and puritan. However, there was also a different picture. This was embodied by the festivities of the Merry Mount, depicted by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his story *The Maypole of Merry Mount*. These festivities were lively and relaxed. To the consternation of “the precise separatists that lived at New Plymouth,”<sup>17</sup> the followers of adventurer Thomas Morton would bring out wine and strong waters, and invited the Indians to join them.

At the opening of the nineteenth century, travellers in Ohio brought home vivid accounts of the “dram-drinking, jockeying, and gambling” that characterized the frontier. They told tales of barbecues and backwoods balls where home-distilled whisky stood ready at hand in an open tub, a drinking-gourd beside it.

The situation of the up and rising middle classes was different. According to Thomas A. Chambers<sup>18</sup>, a new leisure class was created due to the rise of spas such Saratoga Springs and the Virginia springs. It was an “effort to create a coherent upper class” built on “leisure activities, class consciousness, and the temporary unity

developed for a few weeks at the springs”<sup>19</sup>. The conspicuous consumption of those at the springs and their social display led to cosmopolitan sophistication. Newport, Rhode Island, for example, was by the 1760s attracting wealthy southerners for the summer.

It was not until the 1820s that increasing numbers of the elite left home for trips that had some of the characteristics of a vacation. Wealthy Americans began to frequent the watering places, spas, and seaside resorts that were being established during these years.

In the decades after the Civil War people led quiet, hard-working lives on their farms or in their villages, their normal routine relieved only by occasional visits to the larger towns.

During this same period, as the industrialized cities became more congested and polluted, people began to look to the countryside for relief from the stress of urban life. Americans were able to act on this desire to retreat to the country, and estates were built on the outskirts of cities from New York to Seattle. These estates usually featured a cultivated landscape and meticulously cared for gardens, a modest country home or mansion and accompanying guest residences, and a variety of support facilities such as greenhouses, cutting gardens and stables.

Southern planters took their families to the springs, leaving their plantations in the hands of overseers. Wealthy merchants arranged their affairs in order to spend time at Newport or Saratoga. Those involved in literary pursuits - often in those days, people of independent wealth - took their work with them to summer spots. The types of resorts that became popular after the Civil War suggest that many Americans felt that vacations should be used for more than mere recreation. Indeed, religion apparently motivated some to found, develop, and visit resorts. Since

the early nineteenth century Methodists had been holding revival camp meetings, and some of these sites were becoming permanent fixtures. In the summer of 1857, for example, over 250 families lived in tents and participated in a revival at Wesleyan Grove on Martha’s Vineyard off the coast of Massachusetts. By the 1870s Wesleyan Grove and its neighbouring town of Oak Bluffs were growing resort communities.

#### Leisure in Chicago until 1870

Entertainment and leisure in the simple society of Chicago in the 1840s and 1850s was a matter open to all classes and ages. People would get together at balls and square dances where home made refreshments were served. These parties would continue till eleven or twelve o’clock at night. However, a higher social class was developing, and these people would meet in the North Side residence of William Butler Ogden.

Most of the population was composed of males. It is said that the men would flock the harbour each time a passenger ship arrived, to receive the girls that were coming in them. The first recorded leisure activities of the poor were necessarily related to gambling and prostitution, and were located in what was called the ‘patches’, area in the banks of the Chicago River. Further activities such as cock fights, dog races and rat killings were also common in those neighbourhoods.

### Leisure in Chicago – 1870-1930

As in many other cities, leisure after 1870 had become a class differentiated activity. The high, middle and poor classes had different types of leisure time and usage and carried them out in different parts of the city.

One of the activities of the men of the elite was the race horse watching. This took place next to Washington Park in the Park Race Club. This was a very exclusive club, which members included such renowned names as Pullman, Palmer and Field. But this was not the only activity carried out in the club. The premises also provided sleeping quarters, a billiard room, and big sitting rooms with stone fire places. The location was not the only entertainment; also the horse and carriage ride from Michigan Avenue to the Club was part of the activities, not only for men, but also for their families.

The people of the middle classes had different types of entertainment in the city. Sundays were the exclusive leisure day and the city had much to offer. Street car riding and strolling through the parks were common activities. Other amusements would be visiting the amazing cycloramas, which showed wraparound floor to ceiling images of memorable historical events – an ancestor of the cinema; the Eden Musée, where waxworks were shown; or concerts on the north side in Turner's Hall. There were also lectures in the city's theatres, music halls and independent churches.

The work of Potter Palmer also had great influence in the leisure activities of the city of Chicago. With the opening of his store in State Street he envisioned to transform the necessary weekly chore of shopping into an entertainment event, something he had observed in Paris' *Au*

*Bon Marché*. One of the main forms of urban entertainment in the last decade of the nineteenth century became the activity of shopping.

The work of the previously mentioned George Pullman in his town also comprised leisure activities. He was a great believer in the therapeutic value of sports and recreation for workers. He had the Athletic Island built in Lake Calumet for the recreation of his labourers. This island contained a boat house, a cinder track, an ice skating rink, a rowing course and two impressive grandstands. But Pullman was not the only one to encourage the practicing of sports activities. The people were already practicing certain sports form early on. Cycling had been imported from England in the 1870s, and was practised by men as well as women.

Leisure in Chicago was also signed by the difference of religious and profane activities of the ethnic groups. Leisure was not only divided by class and gender in Chicago but also by race. The guesthouses of the German neighbourhoods on the North Side were brightly lit and the shows that were performed there were family directed having some shows being exclusively for children. Germans would gather in festive beer gardens and have picnics in the edges of the city. The saloons of the Irish on the other hand were bleak and severe. Polish, Ukrainian and Slovak communities would meet in the back rooms of the saloons on Sundays to celebrate polka parties. Jews on Maxwell Street on the other hand, would meet in coffee houses. In the south side was the only entertainment establishment for blacks, the 'Chateau de Plaisance', with dancing, roller skating, food and drink. Some counted establishments received men and women of different class and race, which was the Baum's pavilion, a popular dance hall where there were Saturday and Sunday night dances.



figure 3-12 - 1880s - architect Dankmar Adler  
source: www.wikipedia.org

<sup>17</sup> Foster Rhea Dulles, *A History of Recreation: America Learns to Play*. 1965. pg.3

<sup>18</sup> Chambers, Thomas A., 'Tourism and the Market Revolution', *Reviews in American History*. Volume 30, Number 4, December 2002, pp. 555-563.

<sup>19</sup> idem. pg. xvii



figure 3-13 - 1890s - architect Louis Sullivan  
source: www.wikipedia.org

Ferdinand Peck, one of the powerful entrepreneurs of Chicago was convinced that buildings could change not just the image of a city but also the behaviour of its city dwellers, and that was his intention when he hired a group of architects to design the Auditorium. The firm hired for this job was the one of Dankmar Adler (figure 3-12 ) and Louis Sullivan (figure 3-13). Their intentions to build a music palace for the people were carried out between 1887 and 1889. The building was divided into three pavilions and was financed by the commission which built it, being there no support from the State for these kinds of projects. This is why the building also included a hotel and a complex of rental offices to help finance the building.

One of the first cultural institutions to be opened to the public in Chicago was the Art Institute, founded in 1892 by Charles L. Hutchinson. Hutchinson's agenda in the provision of the opportunity of art contemplation for the masses was clear in his discourse. He believed the city of Chicago to be a barren city, where men were in state of slavery to the machine devoted to business. He found art to be a good element for providing balance to the life of men which had been transformed by the factory and the business. The museum at its beginning barely had a collection, but Hutchinson was determined to expand it and sent some of the most recognised Chicago characters to scout for art pieces in Europe. And they did, by the 1890s, in the building of Burnham and Root, not only a great collection of renaissance art was exhibited but the system of entrance permitted free tickets three times a week, including Sundays, the only free day for the labourer.

One of the institutions that dictated the behaviour of Chicago's citizens and was extremely influenced by it was the University of

Chicago. This Baptist institution was the second university of the city founded by William Rainey Harper in 1887. What made this institution special were its social reach and especially its tolerance, allowing the publication of such an attack to the conspicuous behaviour as *The Leisure Class* of Thorsten Veblen<sup>20</sup>. The University of Chicago was founded almost at the same time as the White city of the World's Columbian Exposition, giving the city of Chicago two similar models to follow as an urban centre. Or at least that was what the makers of both the White city and the Grey were intending to achieve.

One of the most recognised characters of the University of Chicago, and one that was definitely on a different field than Veblen was Amos Alonzo Stagg. He was not actually a professor but a football trainer. Stagg was a reformer, and believed in the power of sports to improve the morals of young people. He was gifted at lobby making and achieved the conviction of many of the most powerful characters of Chicago. He got Marshall Field to give land for a practice ground, called Marshalls field, and the sport and the team became known nationwide. This university which started with doubtful projects and much to work on turned out to be in a couple of decades one of the most renowned of the country.

Sports as a mass entertainment also began to become popularised in the 1880s due to the local team of baseball, which won five National League pennants in seven years. In 1893 the National League introduced Sunday baseball, this event made the sport yet more popular.

On the other hand, apart from institutions that were meant for the development of the masses, such as the Art Institute and the University of Chicago, other institutions meant for the elite were being founded by the more conservative

members of the Chicago society. The Newberry Library opened one year after the University of Chicago with the donation of the late Walter Newberry, who had left two million dollars for the building of a public library. The building was designed by Henry Cobb (1859-1931), but was not really public, for it would close on Sundays and would encourage the access of the “better and cleaner classes”<sup>21</sup>. Another institution meant for leisure reserved to the richer classes was the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, founded also in 1890 by Theodore Thomas.

The working class saloon was one of the main neighbourhood institutions, together with the family and the parish church. There was a great proportion of population in the city that was illiterate, and the saloon worked as a place of information for those citizens, providing information about events, jobs and lodging. Most immigrants that would arrive to the city would address the saloon owner for his first information on the city and the neighbourhood.

When it came to entertainment for foreigners or visitors to the city they had to rely on publications such as *Chicago by Day and Night*<sup>22</sup> or *Sporting and Club House Directory*. In those publications gentlemen could find dance clubs, massage parlours and theatres. One of the aims of these publications was to provide information about the ‘safe’ places to visit.

**Press and Literature** - reflection of the local culture according to leisure

Chicago was a literate city, in 1891 the *Chicago Guide* listed 24 daily newspapers, 200 weeklies, 36 semi monthlies, 5 bimonthlies and 14 quarterlies. This included also many publications in foreign languages.<sup>23</sup>

The main authors of this period reflected the different realities of a city that was going through an unprecedented growth and development. Writers such as Theodore Dreiser, in his novel *Sister Carrie*, describes the life of a young woman, who is identified with the city in her search for material wealth as well as for the improvement of the self. *Sister Carrie* arrives to Chicago in 1889, at eighteen years old. She finds her way up the social scale by being protected and kept. She ends up in New York as an actress, despising the *second rate city* of Chicago, but finds herself still unhappy and unfulfilled.

Another story of a woman that made it to literature despite it was not fiction was the work of Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*. In the book she describes the way in which she and Ellen Gates Starr founded the institution and did the unthinkable to help immigrants adapt to the city of Chicago, while trying not to lose their roots and traditions.

Other writers, like Rudyard Kipling described the city as ‘a great horror’ where people were packed in layers one over the other in tall buildings, a filthy city. Both views reflected the reality of Chicago, a city of contradiction, where millionaires and the poorest of classes cohabited, where parks and boulevards were designed and built while the worst slums of the country were being developed by and for low paid day workers.

Max Weber made a graphic description of the city of Chicago, saying that

“the whole powerful city, more extensive than London resembles, except for the better residential areas, a human being with its skin removed, and in which all the physiological process can be seen going on.”<sup>24</sup>

Robert Welch Herrick (1868 - 1938) was a novelist who was part of a new generation of American realists. His novels deal with the turbulence of industrialized society and the turmoil it can create in sensitive, isolated people. In 1904 he wrote *The Common Lot*, which concerns a corrupt young architect whose greed leads him to design unsafe houses.

Henry Blake Fuller wrote *With the Procession in 1895*. His novel treats the economic boom times in Chicago after the fire of 1871 and shows what happens to those who refuse to “keep up with the procession” of progress and prosperity. The novel deals with ordinary people and chronicles the commonplace events of their lives.

<sup>20</sup> Veblen, Thorsten. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1899

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Finkelman, Paul, “Class and Culture in Late Nineteenth Century Chicago: The Founding of the Newberry Library” *American Studies* 16, no.1, 1975, pg.19

<sup>22</sup> Yynne, Harold Richard, *Chicago by Day and Night: The Pleasure Seekers guide to the Paris of America*, 1892, pg.1-56.

<sup>23</sup> Karlen, Harvey M., *Chicago's Great White City : a postal history panorama of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition*, Oak Park, Ill, Berk-Hill Publishers, 2003. folio T500.L1 K37 2003

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Shils, Edward, “The University, the City and the World: Chicago and the University of Chicago” in Thomas Bender, *The University and the City*, New York, Oxford University Press 1988, pg.219

One more and crucial reality of the city was depicted by H.G. Wells (1866-1946), who visited Chicago within a tour of the United States. He considered Chicago as a “hoarse cry for discipline” and the “most perfect presentation of nineteenth century individualist industrialism”<sup>25</sup>. However, he did not consider this an exclusively American quality, for he had seen cities like Manchester, which, as Chicago, were more guided by trade, commerce and business than by a city government, which made of these cities chaotic centres in continuous growth.

Probably one of the novels that best describe the situation of the meat packing industry of Chicago was *The Jungle*, by Upton Sinclair. Sinclair did an undercover study of the meatpacking factories in Chicago before writing a book that denounced the labour situation as an inhuman and destroying one. Jurgis Rudkus, the protagonist, is a Lithuanian immigrant who comes to Chicago with his family only to find that the situation in the city is yet worse than the one they were suffering in Europe. He and his family go through all kinds of difficulties, including sicknesses and death in the family, having children working in the streets and describing crudely how devastating the working conditions in the meat packing industry were.

Commentators and historians of the nineteenth century were also very influential on the image of the city. *Boosterism*<sup>26</sup>, a literary movement of the second half of the nineteenth century, was represented by various authors. Among them was historian Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1932), who delineated one standard version of Chicago’s destiny. He argued that the frontier was the source of American energy, individualism and political democracy, in contrast with the cities of the East that were influenced by the ideas of the older European Continent. Turner

showed his theory in a long speech given in the context of the World’s Columbian Exposition of Chicago in 1893.

“The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin.”<sup>27</sup>

The *boosters* developed serious theories of economic growth that dominated nineteenth century thinking about frontier development. They considered that there were a series of natural advantages that would allow Chicago to become a future metropolis.

Another booster and editor of the Chicago Tribune, William Bross wrote in 1880:

“Nature, it is believed, or, to speak more reverently, He who is the Author of Nature, selected the site of this great city...and hence her future will not be subject to those causes which have paralysed or destroyed many cities of the past ages”<sup>28</sup>

For all boosters, cities had their roots in natural phenomena but eventually grew because people chose to migrate to them. But there were different types of boosters, there were those such as Jesup W. Scott, Logan Reavis and Gilpin, who looked forward to an urban future, where there was no reason to fear. On the other hand Jackson Turner did have his doubts about an urban core that would overcome the countryside. All in all, they did believe in a system where urban centres and hinterland would be interdependent and necessary for each other.

### 3.1.4 – Urban context – the city and the waterfront

#### City limits

As Miller affirmed, “when the surveyor James Thompson filled his half-square mile plat for Chicago in 1830, he determined for centuries the physical shape of the city”<sup>29</sup> (figure 3-14). One of the models followed by Thompson for the design of Chicago was based on the plans by William Penn for Philadelphia in the seventeenth century. As many other cities westward, Chicago used this pattern, but during the nineteenth century it became the instrument of a speculative real estate project that would continue well into the twentieth century. The lack of public space during these first decades of Chicago lead way to the use of cemeteries as parks, but they were at the time private, charging picnickers an entrance fee.

The grid of Chicago was one of the elements that conditioned and limited the structure of the city. The flat surface the city was located in gave a good base for the plan, but geographical accidents such as the river would create very difficult circulation problems; some streets would end on the river and start again on the other side without a bridge to cross it. But it was not only the grid that provoked the problems of the growing metropolis, it was also the land speculation that conditioned the way it grew. Sam Bass Warner<sup>30</sup> called this phenomenon ‘privatism’. He blames this phenomenon on the forces of the markets, provoking both successes and failures in the American cities.

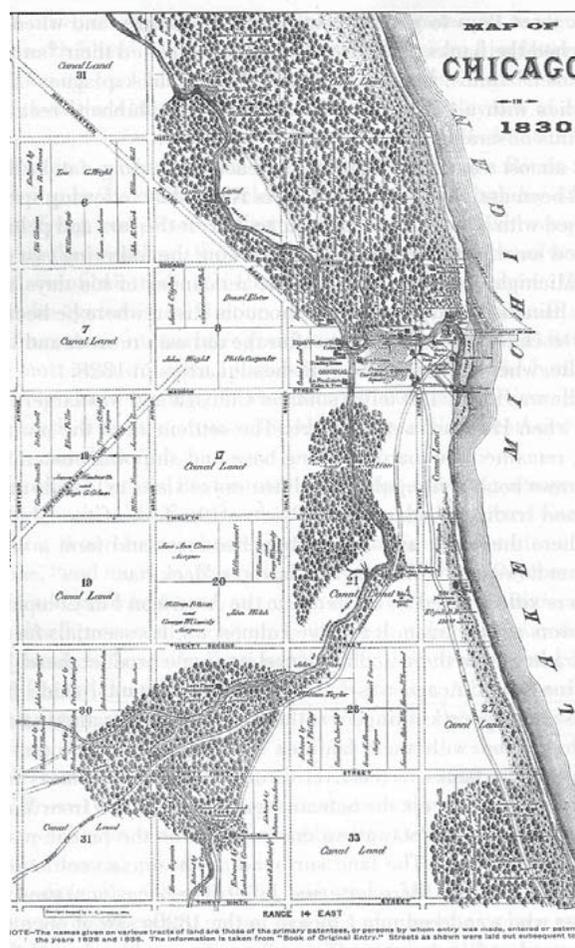


figure 3- 14 - 1830 - Map of Chicago  
source: Miller, City of the Century, from A.T. Andreas, History of Chicago, 1884.

<sup>25</sup> Wells, H.G, *The future in America: A search after realities*, New York, Chapman and Hall, 1906.

<sup>26</sup> Boosterism is the act of “boosting,” or promoting, one’s town, city, or organization, with the goal of improving public perception of it. An editorial by Sinclair Lewis published in 1920 stated: “The booster’s enthusiasm is the motive force which builds up our American cities. Granted. But the hated knocker’s jibes are the check necessary to guide that force. In summary then, we do not wish to knock the booster, but we certainly do wish to boost the knocker.” Quoted in Schorer, M.: *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life*, McGraw-Hill, 1961. page 142.

<sup>27</sup> Turner, Frederick Jackson, *The Significance Of The Frontier In American History*. A paper read at the meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago, July 12, 1893. It first appeared in the Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, December 14, 1893.

<sup>28</sup> Bross, William, *Chicago And The Sources Of Her Past And Future Growth*, Chicago, 1880.

<sup>29</sup> Miller, Donald L., *City of the Century, the Epic of Chicago and the Making of America*, Simon and Shuster paperbacks, New York, 1996. pg.81

<sup>30</sup> Bass Warner, Sam, jr., *The private city: Philadelphia in three periods of growth*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1987.

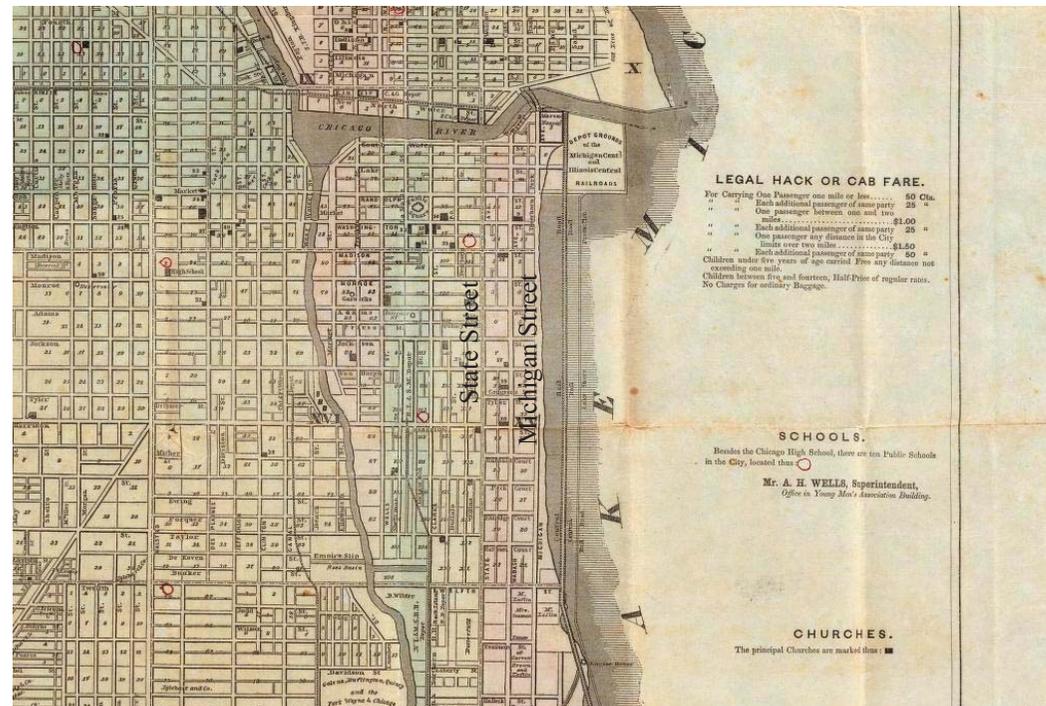


figure 3- 15 - 1857 - Map of Chicago-detail  
 author: Rufus Blanchard  
 source: The David Rumsay Collection. Image No: 0079A

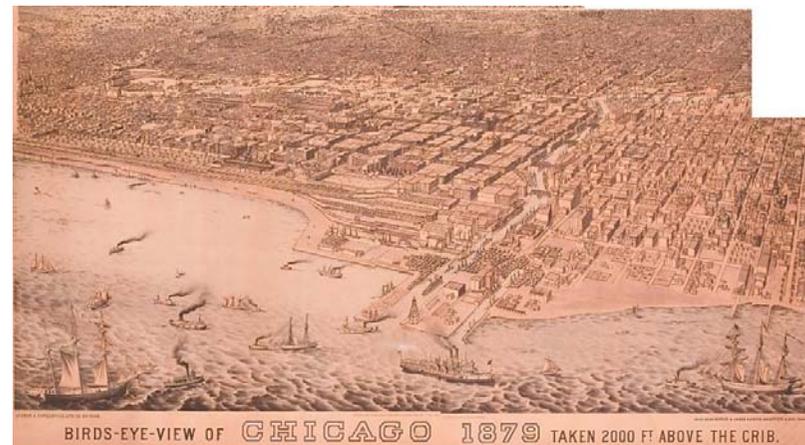


figure 3- 16 - 1879 - Birds-eye-view of Chicago  
 source: Encyclopedia of Chicago - Chicago History. <http://www.encyclopedia.chicago-history.org/>

## Land speculation and city growth

Another phenomenon that allowed the impressively rapid growth of the city was the technology of the balloon frame as a structure, especially for dwelling. This construction technique, that consisted in the building of a timber frame that would be assembled on the ground and then lifted to its vertical position, allowed the fast and simple erection of most of Chicago's buildings before the great fire in 1871.

Commentators such as John M. Van Osdel, who would be the architect of William Ogden's house, saw the architecture of Chicago as a real estate lottery rather than a permanent settlement.

By the 1860s this situation was already changing. Michigan Street (figure 3-15) was still an elegant boulevard, but new areas of the city were developing as the city expanded. The access to some of the central places was becoming difficult because of the crossing of the river, so many families of the elite moved over to the south side and started building mansions near Union Park and Washington Street. Still, before the fire of 1871 class segregation by neighbourhoods was not yet established.

One of the greatest urban changes made before the fire was that done by Potter Palmer, who bought a mile of frontage of State Street, with the intention of widening it and converting it into the main commercial street in the city, which was until then Lake Street (figure 3- 15). The project was carried out slowly and with little support from the inhabitants of the area. Finally, in 1858 Palmer opened the largest dry goods establishment in the West of the United States.

After the civil war the city set up to build parks and boulevards in the limits of the city, which would allow anyone with a carriage easy

access.

Just before the fire of 1871 the city counted already with several landmarks that could be observed at bird eye view (figure 3-16).

The lakefront and the two branches of the Chicago River going north and south, busy with commercial traffic; the ten rail roads that converge on Chicago; the seventeen grain elevators; the more than 1100 factories; commercial exchanges such as the Board of Trade; commercial buildings such as the Field and Leiter department store. Further south there were the Union Stock Yards, where three million heads were slaughtered and packed over the year of the fire.

It was not only the city that was growing. A new phenomenon, the suburban neighbourhood, was appearing in Chicago due to the development of the railway. One of the first of these developments was Evanston, founded in 1850 and located at about twenty kilometres from the city, on the line Chicago –Milwaukee. Twelve kilometres further north of Evanston, in 1856 Lake Forest was built. This was a high class suburban site, provided with a park and great lots for single family houses. It was designed by Jed Hotchkiss, hired by Frederick Law Olmsted's company. To the west of Chicago another series of suburbs were founded: Oak Park, River Forest and Maywood. And to the south Washington Heights, Blue Island and Hyde Park were built in the same period. One of the most famous of these suburban developments was Riverside (figure 3-17), designed by F.L. Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, built for the Riverside Improvement Company in 1868.

Another phenomenon was contemporarily happening in the outskirts of the city: the sprawl of extremely poor residential areas, where very cheap and bad quality housing was being built to house the expanding population.

### The fire of 1871 and the reconstruction of the city

On October 8<sup>th</sup> 1871 the Chicago Fire broke out, to change for ever the city's life and morphology. The origin and circumstances of the fire are not completely accurate, but the bad quality of the city's buildings and the absolute lack of prevention put Chicago in an extreme risk of fire, that would have happened one day or another. As Alfred T. Andreas<sup>31</sup> put it "Nature had withheld her accustomed measure of prevention, and man had added to the peril by recklessness." Some prevention measures had been suggested by the fire department, as changes in building typology and the provision of better equipment and personnel for the fire department. The city government rejected all these recommendations claiming that this would bring higher taxes that the citizens would not agree to pay. The conditions of the city were dangerous. With 28 square kilometres and a population of 334,000, it had a fire department of only 185 fire-fighters, which was evidently too few.

The fire was first noticed from the Courthouse tower, who saw flames rising on the west side of the city. From there, due to the dry winds, the fire spread rapidly. The fire took an area of more than 809 hectares of land, including 45 kilometres of streets (figure 3-18). Eighteen thousand buildings and almost two hundred million dollars in property were lost in the fire, leaving one hundred Chicagoans homeless and a great part of them and others unemployed. It was indeed a great loss for the city, but also an opportunity of restructuring the city and its construction typology, paying some more attention to safety measures. Among the great buildings destroyed was the courthouse, the post office, the Chamber of Commerce building,

the major banks and train stations, the city's churches, all of its newspaper offices and most of its theatres, music halls and hotels.

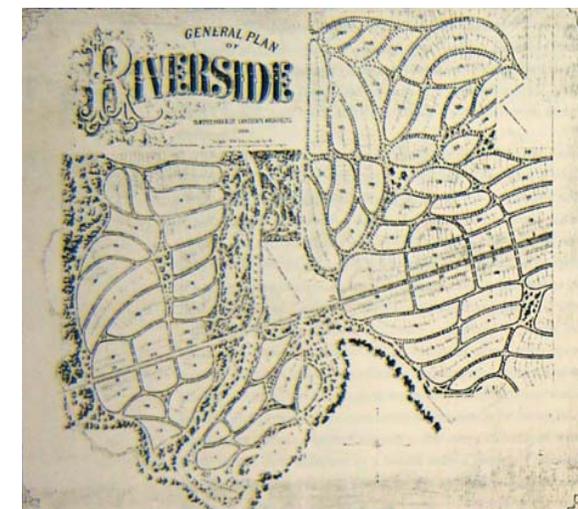


figure 3-17 - 1869 - Project for Riverside - F.L.Olmsted  
author: Frederick Law Olmsted  
source: Olmsted, F.L., Report of the project for Riverside Estate, Chicago, 1869.

<sup>31</sup> Andreas, Alfred, *History of Chicago from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, Chicago, 1884-1886.

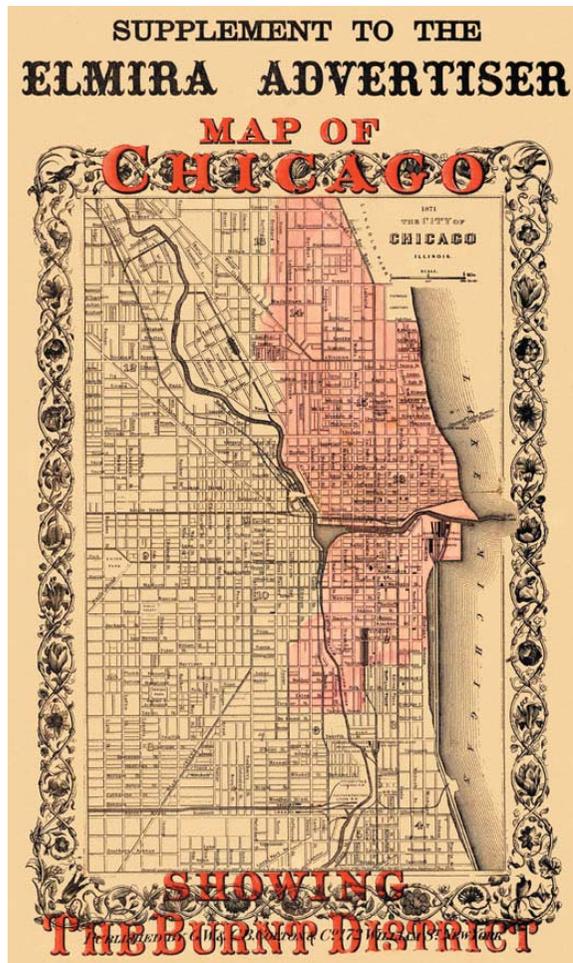


figure 3-18 - 1871 - Supplement to the Elmira Advertiser. Map of Chicago showing the burnt district  
source: [http://historicmapsrestored.com/estore/images/chicago\\_fire\\_il\\_1871\\_b.jpg](http://historicmapsrestored.com/estore/images/chicago_fire_il_1871_b.jpg)

The campaign for aid and rebuilding of Chicago started just the day after the fire, when the flames were still blazing. Aid arrived from all over the country and also from more than twenty five foreign nations. Schools and churches in the un-burnt part of Chicago were open to victims. However, the first structure to be recovered had to be the waterworks, which had collapsed. With the waterworks out of function Chicago would have been left defenceless against another fire. In only some weeks the waterworks was functioning and much of the city was supplied with gas and street cars.

The attitude of Chicagoans after the fire was judged by Frederick Law Olmsted<sup>32</sup> as “unreasonable and hopeful”. He commented that this first period had passed and that sternness had taken over. It was a period of physical and psychological distress. The most damaged by the fire were the poor, who had to look for daily shelter in dry and safe places. The reconstruction of the city did take place, though this happened in stages and in different areas of the city. Potter Palmer set up to rebuild his stores at State Street; Cyrus McCormick rebuilt his reaper factory. Even before the rebuilding of the city began, William Bross was in New York buying new equipment for the *Chicago Tribune*.

The reconstruction of Chicago was supported by an elite that wanted a new image of their city, one that would have culture and knowledge as their pillars, not just commerce and material wealth. Isaac Arnold, one of the founders of the Chicago Historical Society said that if Chicago was to become a great city “she must encourage and honour men of culture, letters and science” and that the merchant princes of the city should take as models not Amsterdam or Liverpool but also Athens and Florence.

Apart from the reconstruction it is important to remember what was not destroyed by the fire, these were the heavy industries and stockyards that were placed south and west of the area destroyed by the fire.

The period of the Great Rebuilding came to a close with the Panic of 1873, which proved to be a more serious deterrent to the local economy than the fire. By December of that year the unemployed were chanting “Bread or death” outside the offices of the Relief and Aid Society, which once again refused to comply to demands of turning the balance of its funds over to the city. Not long after, in July of 1874, another fire struck the city. It started in the 400 block of South Clark Street and advanced in the same north-easterly direction as the 1871 conflagration, to Michigan Avenue and Van Buren Street, destroying about twenty hectares and over eight hundred buildings. Following this disaster, a threatened boycott by insurers compelled the city to adopt stricter safety rules and improve the fire department.

Chicago’s reconstruction was a two stage process. The first phase lasted two years and resulted in the rebuilding of the burned out area and a boost in the economy. The second phase began in 1880 and lasted until the closing of the World Columbian Exposition in 1893. During both periods a boost of economic, commercial and urban development took place.

### The second reconstruction, the vertical city

The transportation system of the city was also revolutionary in solving the structural problems of Chicago. In January 1882 the first city train was inaugurated, five years later the urban transport system had arrived to Hyde Park, located further south. In 1892 the electrification of the cable cars reached Chicago. By 1893, the year of the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago had the largest cable car system in the world. The one to develop the transportation system was Charles Yerkes (1837-1905). He not only provided the electrification of the cable cars but also expanded the network all over the city, establishing also the elevated cable cars in the loop in 1897, which lightened the chaotic traffic of the city centre (figure 3-19)

As many other cities in the world, the process of growth of Chicago included the annexation of peripheral towns. These were Packingtown, Pullman and the fashionable village of Hyde Park, which were annexed to Chicago in the summer of 1889, adding 220,000 to its population and 200 square kilometres to its existing 69 (figure 3- 20).

The commercial development of the city forced the transformation and zoning of the areas of Chicago. By 1880 there were almost no dwellings left in the city centre due to the expansion of the commercial and entertainment facilities in the area. All industry also moved outside the centre to look for cheaper tracts of land in the south and west sides of the city. The poorer areas surrounded the city, where immigrants in despair arrived looking for work in the meat and transport industries. The following ring around the city was composed by high rated suburbs,

where the middle and richer classes established from Lake Forest on the North shore to Hyde Park in the southern.

figure 3- 20 - 1886 - Map showing the boulevards and park system and twelve miles of lake frontage of the city of Chicago  
author: Rand McNally  
source: Chicago Historical Society (ICHi-31337)

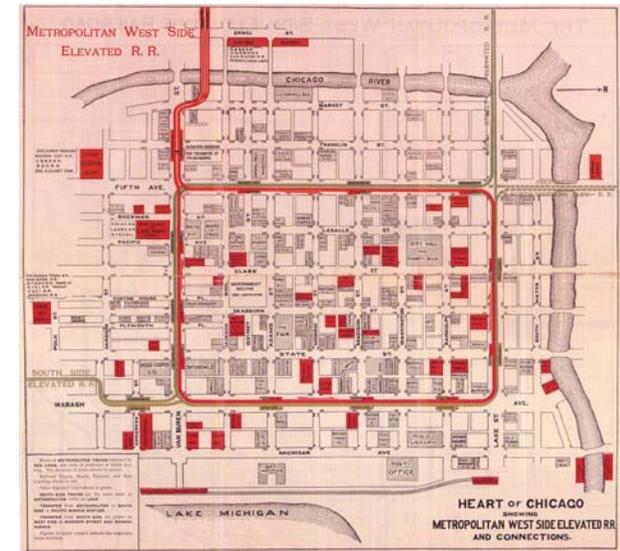
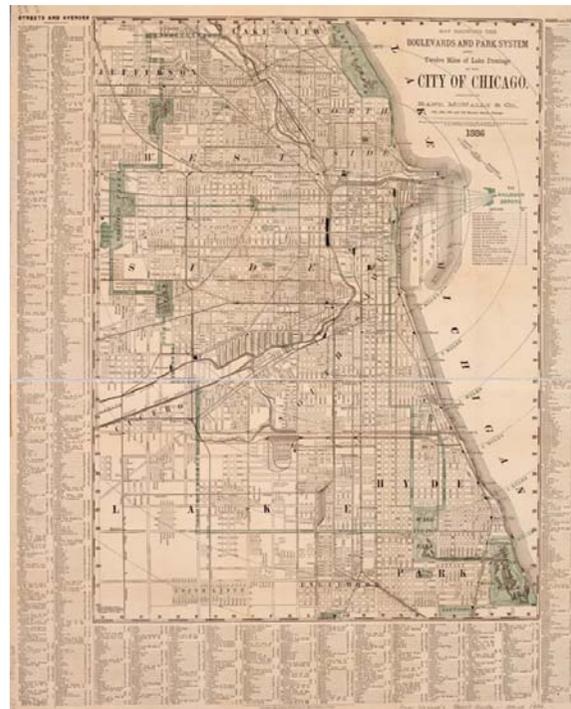


figure 3- 19 - 1898 - Heart of Chicago showing Metropolitan west side elevated RR and connections lines of Chicago  
source: Encyclopedia of Chicago - Chicago History. <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/>

<sup>32</sup> Olmsted, F.L., "Chicago in Distress", *The Nation*, 13, November 9, 1871



figure 3-21 - 1891- Second Leiter Building - William Le Baron Jenney  
source: Great Buildings of Chicago knowledge cards, Chicago Historical Society. Pomergranate communications.

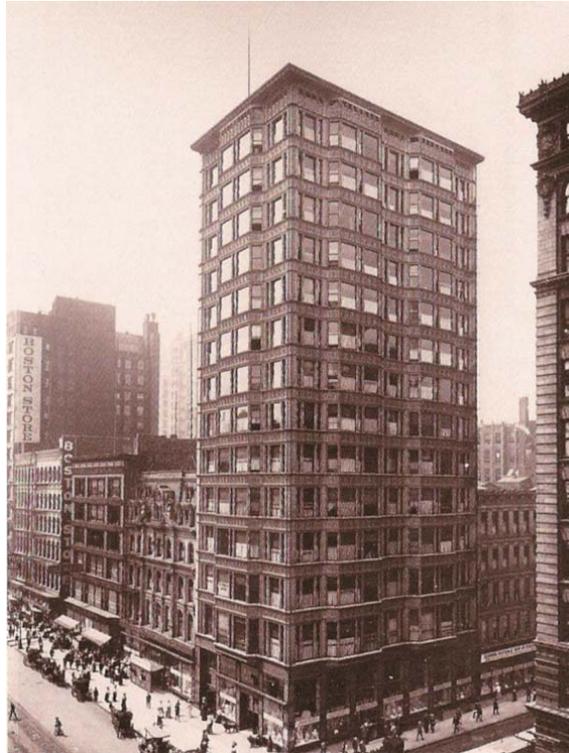


figure 3-22 - 1891 - Reliance Building - Burnham and Root  
source: Great Buildings of Chicago knowledge cards, Chicago Historical Society. Pomergranate communications.



figure 3-23 - 1886 - Auditorium - Louis Sullivan  
source: <http://icar.poliba.it/storiacontemporanea/seminari/delconte/delconte05/immagini/07.jpg>

Architecturally one of the most internationally recognised typologies that was actually created in Chicago was the skyscraper. Technological developments such as the elevator permitted higher buildings and new construction technologies allowed the year round construction. This would set a standard for construction in the loop and the image of the Chicago skyline would later become part of the city's patrimony. Architects such as William le Baron Jenney (1832-1907) (figure 3-21), Daniel Burnham (1846-1912) (figure 3-22) and Louis H Sullivan (1856-1924) (figure 3- 23) would set a trademark in the buildings of Chicago between the 1880s and the World Columbian Exposition.

Despite the great growth and transformation of the city, and the development of the loop and central district, the sanitation problems of the city were still great during the 1880s. As previously mentioned, finally in 1889 the city government created the Sanitary District of Chicago, which was to take care of both sewage and water provision for the city. The flow of the Chicago River was completely reversed and there would be no more risk of contamination of the river to Lake Michigan.

## Public space and public parks

Even though we will be analysing the details of the waterfront parks in the next chapters it is worth mentioning that the first impulse to provide park areas for the city was held as early as 1849, when John S. Wright, real estate operator that predicted:

“I foresee a time, not very distant, when Chicago will need for its fast-increasing population a park, or parks, in each division. Of these parks I have a vision. They are all improved and connected with a wide avenue, extending to and along the Lake Shore on the north and the south, and so surround the city with a magnificent chain of superb parks and parkways that have not their equals in the world”<sup>33</sup>.

The realisation of these parks was carried out, and a couple of decades after Wright’s prediction, there were many parks being developed in the borders of the city. These were, as most of the property development of Chicago in the nineteenth century, a product of land speculation. Reformers did campaign for parks for health and recreational reasons but the main reason for the creation of parks was the rise in value of the lands adjacent to them.

An example of these was the area of Hyde Park, which was bought and developed since 1853 by Paul Cornell (1822-1904). These types of areas were developed almost exclusively with the purpose of profit. The marshland was developed into a park and the surroundings developed and sold for private property, which made the area an exclusive and fashionable neighbourhood in the 1890s, some years after the railway had reached the area.

On the other hand, reformers such as John H Rauch<sup>34</sup> set themselves to convince city officials that the value of park construction was to become very profitable. In this way his principles of health and morals could be applied by convincing the investors that this could prove a good business for them too.

This process led to the final writing of the park bill law in 1869<sup>35</sup>, which created the independently chartered park commissions, who started buying land for public use. These commissions were formed by great real estate developers of Chicago and they hired the most renowned architects and planners for designing the park. The West Parks were first in charge of William Le Baron Jenney, the South Parks by Fredrick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Swain Nelson and Olaf Benson, Swedish landscape gardeners, were in charge of Lincoln Park on the north side.

Members of the park commissions such as Horace Cleveland<sup>36</sup> (1814-1900) were clear in communicating that the parks to be built in Chicago would be a lot more costly than those in Boston or New York, for the lands chosen for this purpose in Chicago were completely barren, with no inhabitants or vegetation whatsoever.

By 1900 nearly three-quarters of a million people lived in the central part of the city, more than two kilometres away from any of the existing parks. Social reformers launched a playground movement for the creation of additional parks. The first sandlot opened in Boston in 1886. Later, the influence of the playground movement would be extended to several American cities including Chicago. The reformers that encouraged the construction of playgrounds did not only believe in the physical benefit of the playgrounds for children, but also the mental and moral benefits

they could bring. By the beginning of the twentieth century these ideas were also extended to adult recreation and a series of projects were made for the active recreation of city dwellers, young and old. One of the organisations in charge of this development was the Municipal Science Club, which in 1898 began studying Chicago’s need for additional *breathing spaces*. The mayor created the Special Park Commission in 1899 which would be in charge of the municipal playgrounds in collaboration with the Board of Education.

<sup>33</sup> Wright, John S., *Chicago: Past, Present, Future relations to the Great Interior and to the Continent*, Horton and Leonard Printers 1868.

<sup>34</sup> Rauch, John, *Public Parks: Their Effects Upon the Moral, Physical and Sanitary Condition of the Inhabitants of Large Cities; with special reference to the city of Chicago*, Chicago, SC Griggs, 1869.

<sup>35</sup> The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District. Section E: 4:6, FII:3-7, FIII:3-10.

<sup>36</sup> Cleveland, Horace, *The Public Grounds of Chicago: how to give them character and expression*, Chicago, CD Lackey, 1869.

### Hygiene and the Public Bath movement

As previously described, the subject of hygiene had been an important one in the development of the city. However, hygiene did not only depend on the good water and sewage provision, but also on the habits of the city dwellers. The education of the inhabitants on cleanliness turned into a campaign, which, as the Park Movement, spread across the cities of the U.S., and especially in Chicago.

The demand for public baths began in the 1840s, as the population of the cities of the East Coast was growing rapidly due to immigration and the living conditions were worsening.

The European tradition of bathing had some influence in the Public Bath campaign of the nineteenth century reformers of the United States. Southern Europe and northern Africa had a long tradition of bath houses. By the end of the middle ages most of the cities of Europe were equipped with bath houses for the hygiene of the inhabitants. These bath houses were also places of leisure, where food, drink, music were provided and men and women would share the baths. In the sixteenth century, due to the reform and counter reform in Europe, these baths were perceived as places of nakedness, immorality and sin, so most of them were closed. By the late seventeenth century a revival of enthusiasm for bathing appeared in France and so was followed by the movements which advised bathing for health purposes. The rise of the spas and bathing towns such as Bath was an example of this rising.

The Public Bath Movement as it is known today was born in England in the 1820s, but it took over the European Continent in the 1840s.

The phenomenon in the United States followed a different path. In Europe public baths were built for everyone, for there was no tradition of having bathrooms in the homes. Instead, in the new American towns and cities, wealthy enough citizens would already build bathrooms in their houses. This left the public baths only for the poor.

The case before the civil war was different, though. As municipal water systems were constructed and produced plentiful and cheap water, commercial bath houses became common in American Cities. These first bath houses were provided for the wealthier classes.

The apparition of the water cure or hydrotherapy, invented by Vincent Priessnitz in Silesia became extremely popular in the United States in the 1840s and 50s. This was called the water craze and extended through the country making water springs and bathing an extremely popular habit.

Public baths would become an instrument of health and morality for the poorer classes later into the nineteenth century. Reformer Jacob A. Riis (1849-1914) would say:

“Soap and water have worked a visible cure already that goes more than skin deep. They are moral agents of the first value in the slum.”<sup>37</sup>

Even in the classroom of the mid nineteenth century the students would be taught how to use soap and water to clean themselves, and they were made to repeat the following verse:

“I must keep my skin clean,  
Wear clean clothes  
Breathe pure air  
And live in the sunlight”<sup>38</sup>

Of course the repetition of these phrases did not change the fact that for immigrant children who lived in the tenement houses of Chicago or New York, the poor living conditions did not even allow the cleanliness and light that was needed.

Chicago, being the second city in population of the country in 1900, had the greatest percentage of foreign born citizens in the country. For this expanding metropolis, where the slums were sprawling just as fast, a great amount of baths were built in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Chicago was also the second city in the country to build public baths, in 1894, after the small town of Milwaukee, which had been a pioneer having built the first one in 1890. The baths in Chicago were managed by the municipality and had free access. By 1920 Chicago already had 21 economical baths spread throughout the city. The intention of these bath houses that were made possible by the work of women reformers such as Jane Addams were not made for the purpose of leisure but of health. The Department of Health asserted:

“These baths have not been established as places of diversion or pleasure, but to promote habits of personal cleanliness by enabling those who are not provided with bathing facilities...to observe the fundamental rules of health and sanitation.”<sup>39</sup>

Chicago’s municipal bath movement began with the organisation in 1892 of the Municipal Order League by a group of Chicago women and some men, to improve the sanitary conditions of the city. Among the organisers of this movement were Dr. Gertrude Gail Wellington, a doctor who moved to Chicago in 1892; Carroll Wright (1840-1909), from the Federal Bureau

of Labour investigation and Sarah Hackett Stevenson, also a traditional physician with studies in homeopathic cures.

The administration that made the building of the first public baths possible was the one of Carter Harrison, who, in 1893 ordered the building of a bathhouse in Chicago’s near West Side and assigned 12 thousand dollars for the building. The bath house was finally located one block north of Hull House, and facilities for bathing as tubs and showers were built in it. A swimming pool was also provided, but it was not successful, for people would be reluctant to sharing such a small body of water with each other. So it was torn down in 1898 and replaced by seventeen more showers.

In 1895 the Municipal Order league left the administration of bath houses to the Free Bath and sanitary League guided by Wellington. There were conflicts of interest as the aldermen of different parts of the city were claiming for bath houses in their own districts. The north and south sides of the city were in urgent need of public baths. Chicago’s second municipal bath, Martin B. Madden bath was opened in April 1897. This was the last one in which the Bath and Sanitary League had a very important role in. The subsequent nineteen bath houses built until 1920 were a product of municipal policy. All of these bath houses were located in the slums of the city, as they were in New York and Boston and other smaller cities of the U.S. The building and maintenance of the bath houses was completely independent from that of the summer beaches and swimming pools that began sprawling in the city in the first decades of the twentieth century. Therefore, there was a certain competition between these establishments and especially in the summer the bath houses would be underutilised because of the use of the beaches.

### Waterfront traditional uses

During the 1850s there was little public space in the city of Chicago, but for one reason or another they were all located on the lakefront. One of them was a public promenade along the lake that the federal government carved out of the Fort Dearborn reservation. The other was a long stretch of lakefront created by the canal commissioners in 1836.

One of the most remarkable cessions of land for public use was that established in 1836, setting a standard for the waterfront area. This was formulated by the commissioners charged by the state of Illinois, who supervised the sale of canal lands.

The commissioners set aside a strip of land on the lakefront with the famous words: ‘Public Ground – A Common to Remain Forever Open, Clear, Free of Any Buildings, or Other Obstruction Whatever’<sup>40</sup>. (this legend would be slightly modified as “public ground forever to remain vacant of buildings” in the plan of Fort Dearborn of 1839 (figure 3- 24)

By the 1850s the south side of Chicago, in front of Michigan Avenue, where the elite had built many of their mansions, was occupied by the lakefront park. However, this park was already in ruins and a great risk to loose the waterfront was reached when, in 1852 the city council granted the Illinois Central’s request to establish its rail lines on the lakefront.

<sup>37</sup> Jacob Riis quoted in Williams, Marilyn, *Washing “the great unwashed”: public baths in urban America, 1840-1920*, Columbus, Ohio State University Press, c1991. pg. 22

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Williams, *Washing “the great unwashed”*. pg.5

<sup>39</sup> Quotation from Chicago, Department of Health, *Biennial Report, 1904-1905*, Chicago, 1906, 217.

<sup>40</sup> Wille, Lois, *Forever Open, Clear and Free: The historic struggle for Chicago’s Lakefront*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1972.

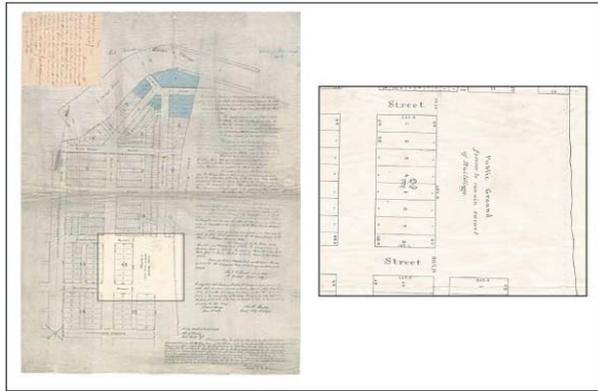
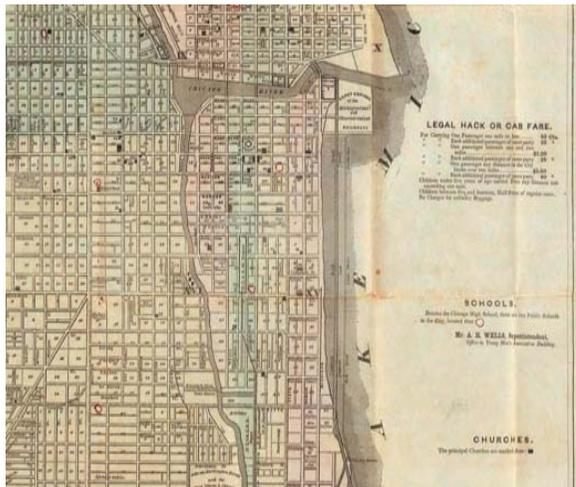


figure 3- 24 - 1839 - Map of Chicago for The Secretary of War  
 “public ground forever to remain free of buildings  
 author: Asa Bradley  
 source: Chicago Historical Society (ICHi-37336)

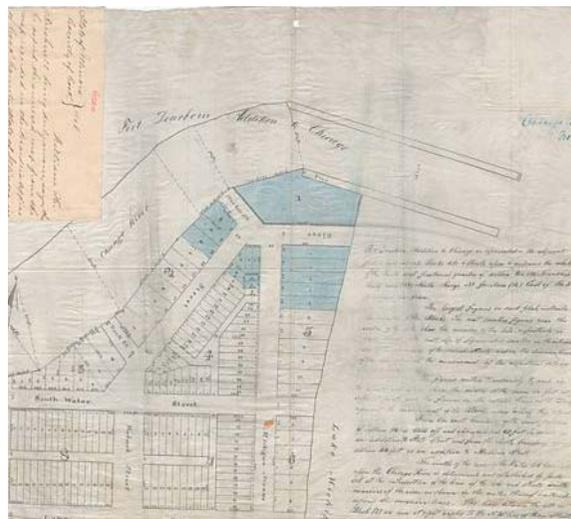
figure 3- 25 - 1857 - Map of Chicago-detail  
 author: Rufus Blanchard  
 source: The David Rumsey Collection. Image No: 0079A



A new tax system had been established so that those that received private benefits from public works would have to pay higher taxes. The inhabitants of Michigan Avenue did not agree with this deal, and the city council was forced to cede the land to the Illinois Central, who had recently purchased the land that used to be occupied by Fort Dearborn to have the terminal and freight complex that would stay at its site for at least one more century (figure 3-25).

Fortunately for the future of the city, the land given to the railway company was not on the shore but in the lake, which made the company build a defence that would protect the shore from the tides of the lake and the damage they could have caused.

figure 3- 26 - 1839 - Map of Chicago for The Secretary of War  
 author: Asa Bradley  
 source: Chicago Historical Society (ICHi-37336)



The whole deal between the Illinois Central and the City Council did not finish there; the city had claimed the railroad company to be in charge of the transformations needed for the creation of a Park between its rail lines and Michigan Avenue. For this they received a determined *no* as an answer<sup>41</sup>, saying that the railway was not in charge of the design, beautification or reform of cities. The result though was more positive than expected, and the project for the railroad provided a basin of water that was, according to Joseph Kirkland<sup>42</sup>, later used for sailing, skating, swimming and rowing.

This situation did not last for a long time. The Illinois Central took over the whole lakefront expanding the lines and freight area next to the river mouth transforming the waterfront into an industrial heavy duty area and eliminating the communication of the city with the lake for leisure purposes.

By 1871 the city was already attracting tourism, visitors were curious about the city full of contradictions. The harbour had become the busiest in the country, surpassing New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and more combined, making it the “Marseilles of the Mediterranean”, according to Parton<sup>43</sup>.

As mentioned before, the *patches* were places of lowlife and violence, with the practicing of leisure activities of doubtful values for the moralist elite. One of these areas, on the lakefront was eventually bought by William Ogden. The eviction of the squatters that occupied the land was a rough business. The dwellers had not agreed to the compensation offered by Ogden to leave the premises and mayor John Wentworth intervened with fire brigades and officials to evict the people who had occupied the land.

## The Harbour – growth and development

In 1832, the United States Government began construction of a lighthouse on Lake Michigan. But it would not be until 1833 that the first works of the harbour would take place in Chicago. An opening of a straight outlet from the river to the lake was built. This works were done because the wave action driven by northeast winds would drive sand into the southern shore, keeping the waters shallow at the river's entrance. Schooners<sup>44</sup> bound for Chicago were thus forced to anchor one kilometre offshore, with their cargoes transferred to lighters, which would make the trip through the shallows to the docks at the river mouth. Responding to this problem, the Federal Government appropriated \$25,000 for improvements to the harbour in 1833. The Bureau of Topographical engineers began work on the dredging of the channel at the mouth of the river.

By 1837, a southern pier, extending a total distance of 564 metres, had been completed from a point opposite Fort Dearborn across the old river channel and out to Lake Michigan (figure 3-26). The north pier was pushed out into the lake by 365 metres, and only a small amount of the old sandbar remained between the river and the lake. In September of 1839 works on the harbour were interrupted for lack of additional funds from the Federal Government. Finally in 1843, Congress made an additional appropriation of \$25,000 to the project, and assigned Captain George B. McClellan to oversee the project.

Once the Indiana and Michigan Canal was completed in 1848 the city finally became a shipping point that connected most of the continent. By the end of the year Chicago was the busiest port in the United States. In 1852, with the completion of an extension to the north pier,

a new lighthouse was constructed at the pier's end, and the old 1832 structure standing by Fort Dearborn was decommissioned.

Since 1871, the work of forming an outer harbour has been carried steadily forward. Besides the north and south piers and the new light-house, the improvements include over eight kilometres of substantial breakwater and two pier lights. 1871, the year of the Chicago Fire compared favourably with all preceding years, as also with those succeeding, there having been, down to 1885, only one year when a larger number of vessels was owned in the district, and two years in which the tonnage has been larger. The Chicago dredging and dock company was incorporated in 1877. The company did general business as contractors, in dredging, building docks, piers and bridges, in the lakes and rivers of the north and west.

During the 1880s the harbour continued to expand and the fright that passed through it gave a positive balance throughout the decade.

By 1893, at the time of the Columbian Exposition the harbour was not receiving as much freight as it was before, for the growth of the railway network was taking over the trade routes. However, the harbour proper covered an area of 109 hectares with communicating slips along the lakefront covering about 80 hectares more, making in all 189 hectares (figure 3-27). A great breakwater ran parallel with the shore at a distance of one kilometre. Other piers in the north and south were being built, but they were mainly done as boating facilities rather than industrial infrastructure.

With a 1917 renovation of the breakwater off the harbour, it was determined that a light was needed on the structure to guide vessels around its southern extremity into the harbour. To avoid the expense of building a completely

new structure, Congress appropriated \$88,000 in June of that year to fund the relocation of the 1893 river mouth tower onto the breakwater.

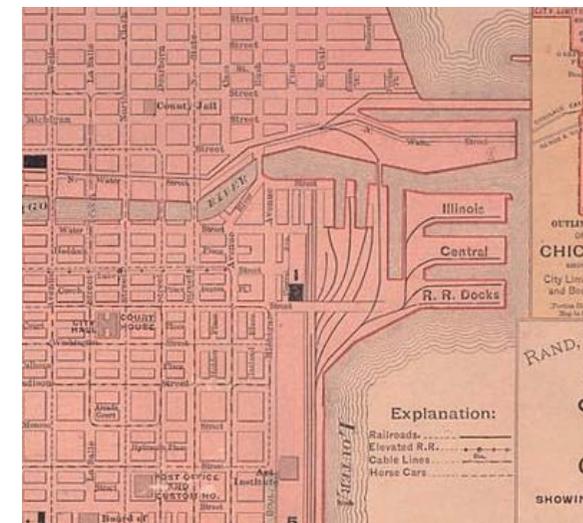


figure 3- 27 - 1895 - Map of the central part of Chicago  
- detail harbour  
author: Rand, McNally & Co.  
Source: Chicago Historical Society (ICHi-37302)

<sup>41</sup> Einhorn, Robin, "A taxing dilemma: early lakeshore protection", *Chicago History* 18, Chicago Fall, 1989.

<sup>42</sup> Kirkland, Joseph, *The story of Chicago*, Vol.1, Dibble Publishing Co, Chicago, 1892-94.

<sup>43</sup> Parton, James, "Chicago", *Atlantic Monthly*, 19, March 1867, pg.330

<sup>44</sup> A schooner is a type of sailing vessel characterized by the use of fore-and-aft sails on two or more masts. Schooners were first used by the Dutch in the 16th or 17th century, and further developed in North America from the time of the American Revolution.

### 3.2 – The Projects

#### 3.2.1 – 1870-1890 – Olmsted and Vaux. Nelson and Benson.

*In this section we will analyse the projects of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, Swain Nelson and Olaf Benson. All four designers, developing their projects in this period, shared basic principles of landscape and leisure. Through the form and function of their projects we can observe an appeal for nature and the picturesque, beginning with the first projects of Nelson and Benson, inspired in the cemetery parks of their predecessors. Leisure activities were mainly passive, with contemplative characteristics, however, some spaces for active leisure were proposed by Olmsted and Vaux. A short biography of each character will be given basically for understanding what their position was towards landscape and urban development.*

This period was signed by the fire of 1871 and the two periods of reconstruction that followed. Chicago was transformed and so was its waterfront. One of the most radical transformations of the waterfront was done in 1872 when a great amount of debris from the fire was dumped on the lake, in what had been called the *basin*, between Michigan Street and the Illinois Central Railroad.

The Rational Recreation Movement and the Park Movement were developing in the country. The Rational Recreation Movement emerged in Victorian Britain in the 1850s as a response to the conditions of cities in the

highly industrialising country. The poor health conditions and the supposed immoral behaviour of the lower social classes led the ruling classes to provide organised leisure. This would consist on healthy, mind-improving, and orderly recreations like organised games, athletics, and gardening. Children and young people were seen as being easily corrupted in their spare time. The need to supervise and direct youth leisure led to the insertion of approved recreational forms into public schools, scouting and Sunday school. The movement developed during the whole second half of the nineteenth century. The explicit aim of the movement was to bring about a reformation of morals and manners, to instil a new cultural order, and to instruct the lower classes on the duties appropriate to their place in it. As Cunningham<sup>45</sup> described it, Rational Recreation was a movement to restrain and control leisure, stressing the improvement factor, although some reformers sought not to suppress or moralise popular leisure but to transform it. The movement quickly expanded to North America and, though it developed in a slightly different manner than in Britain, it followed the same principles. This movement also brought new urban services such as libraries, museums and specially parks. In the 1850's it is Fredrick Law Olmsted that brings parks as a main fragment of urban development, materialising what is called the Park Movement. Olmsted designed parks "large enough to completely shut out the city". These were meant to inspire the "urban man to new standards of courtesy, self control and temperance."<sup>46</sup>

In the city of Chicago the Rational Recreation Movement had a very important representative: the previously mentioned John H. Rauch (1828-1894). He was a medical doctor and a member of the board of health, sanitary

superintendent and registrar of vital statistics of Chicago. His concept of the functionality of urban parks was clear in his discourse:

*"The people's gardens, the place to which the over tasked labourer and mechanic of the overcrowded city can resort to breathe the breath of God's pure air, inhale the odours of fresh blooming flowers, and enjoy the pleasures of a rural retreat"<sup>47</sup>*

One of the main works related to park development in this period was the Lakeshore Drive. It began in the North Side waterworks on Pine Street and bounded with the lake. Through this period the lakeshore drive would expand only northwards in Lincoln Park. Decades later the drive would continue to be a limit and a link for the whole city.

Besides particular projects for public parks, the landmark of this period and what permitted the later development of the great park system of Chicago was the park bill of 1869, which put together the park commissions. These commissions were formed by businessmen and politicians, as well as park designers and were in charge of the design and maintenance of each park area. This bill set up this first period of park development in which the South Park and Lincoln Park were first conceived.

### 3.2.1.1- Olmsted and Vaux

#### Fredrick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) (figure 3- 28) is one of the most famous United States landscape architects worldwide. He was born in Hartford, Connecticut. His father was a dry goods merchant. His mother was the descendent of old settlers of Connecticut and had moved to Hartford at a young age. Unfortunately, Olmsted's mother died when he was three years old and he was sent to rural boarding schools until he was seventeen. These experiences marked him deeply and according to Kalfus<sup>48</sup>, were reflected in his later creative work. He was a tortured man, he was a bachelor until he was thirty-seven and he married the widow of his younger brother. He went through a series of illnesses and accidents and he suffered long periods of insomnia.

Olmsted never graduated from grammar school or high school. Most of his education was provided by family and friends, travel and his own curiosity and interest. Olmsted's first job was an apprenticeship at a New York dry goods importing firm near Wall Street. He then moved on to work on a ship, where he had a terrible experience with sickness and paralysis of the arm. Later he worked as an apprentice at his uncle's farm in Cheshire.

In 1848 he moved to Staten Island, where his father helped him to purchase a farm, Tosomok Farm. While working on the farm he attended Yale as a *special student*. His experience in Yale, where he did scientific farming, was crucial for his future as a landscape designer, not just because of his work but of his connections with the New Haven group. This was a group of young people

that Olmsted used to frequent while in Staten Island, which was influenced by ideas of Carlyle, Ralph Waldo Emerson and James Russell Lowell and was charged with Romantic Idealism.

Olmsted travelled to Britain in 1850, where he was greatly impressed by Joseph Paxton's Birkenhead Park. On his return to the U.S. he made his first attempt on publishing his work with the book *Talks and Walks of an American Farmer in England*. This book, published in 1852 would be the first one to drive Olmsted away from farming and into literature. He continued to write in newspapers and journals, especially a series on slavery, for which he travelled the south of the U.S. and Texas from 1852 to 1857. In his texts he condemned slavery as immoral and also considered it economically inefficient. He published three volumes that would be influential in the anti slavery movement. In his works as a journalist Olmsted also co-founded the magazine *The Nation* in 1865.

In 1857 Olmsted met a commissioner of Central Park who told him the position of superintendent of the park was being opened. The Park was then being developed by engineer Egbert Viele (1825-1902). Olmsted worked on his proposal for the park and was later in the year assigned the position as Superintendent. Olmsted met Calvert Vaux through their common friend and mentor Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852). Olmsted and Vaux presented a plan to the competition for Central Park. With the selection of their Greensward project Olmsted became architect in Chief of the Park and Vaux his consulting architect (figure 3-29). They would work together on its layout and construction for years.

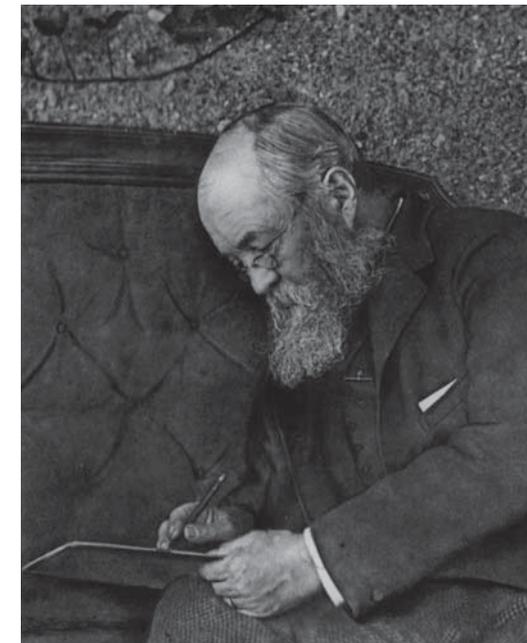


figure 3-28 - 1890s - Frederick Law Olmsted  
source: [http://www.ket.org/pressroom/2000/09/Olmsted\\_One\\_2960](http://www.ket.org/pressroom/2000/09/Olmsted_One_2960)

<sup>45</sup> Cunningham, H., *leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 1980, p.78

<sup>46</sup> Olmsted, F.L., "Public Parks and the enlargement of towns", Boston 1870, in SB Sutton, ed. *Civilising american cities: A selection of Fredrick Law Olmsted's Writing of city landscapes*, Cambridge, MA, 1971.

<sup>47</sup> Rauch John Henry, *Public Parks, their effects upon the moral physical and sanitary condition of the inhabitants of large cities. With special reference to the city of Chicago* Chicago, SC Griggs, 1869.

Rauch, John Henry, *Intramural interments in populous cities, and their influence upon health and epidemics*. Chicago, Tribune Company, book and job printers, 1866.

<sup>48</sup> Kalfus, Melvin, *Frederick Law Olmsted, the Passion of a Public Artist*, New York University Press, London and New York, 1990. pg.4

However, according to Vaux, it was Olmsted who had a vision and saw Central Park “as a finished thing...as an oasis, an arcadia in the desert of brick and mortar vibrant with happy life from morning to night.”<sup>49</sup> In the design of Central Park, Olmsted reflected his ideas of the possibility of social reform through the design of parks for all citizens. Before the project designed by Olmsted there was a generalised idea among the intellectuals of New York of the need of such spaces. Editorials by William Cullen Bryant in the *New York Post* and Walt Whitman in the *Brooklyn Eagle* had called for the creation of a grand park in Manhattan and Brooklyn to alleviate some of the “deleterious effects of the city in its inhabitants”<sup>50</sup>. These commentators believed that such green spaces could be restorative, reflecting the Transcendentalist ideas articulated by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

In 1861 Olmsted had lost much of his administrative power in Central Park, and presented his demission. This was not accepted by the Board, but as the Civil War approached the situation would change. The work of Olmsted and Vaux was temporarily interrupted by the Civil War. Olmsted took leave as director of Central Park to work as Executive Secretary of the U.S. Sanitary Commission in Washington D.C. which tended to the wounded during the American Civil War. In 1862, during Union General George B. McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign, a failed attempt to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, he headed the medical effort for the sick and wounded at White House in New Kent County, where there was a ship landing on the Pamunkey River.

In 1863 Olmsted was offered the superintendence of the Mariposa Mining Estate in California, seeing that his work in the Sanitary

Commission was failing he decided to take the job in California and moved there in September. By the end of the war Vaux wrote some letters to Olmsted to convince him of going back to New York, and so he did.

After the war, in 1865, Olmsted and Vaux associated and formed the firm Olmsted, Vaux and Company. They worked together on the projects for Prospect Park, Brooklyn (figure 3-30) Morningside Park and Fort Greene. In Chicago they worked on the South Parks and on the suburb of Riverside. They designed a major park in Buffalo, New York. The Parade, The Park and The Front were all included in the project. They also worked on the projects for Wisconsin’s grand necklace of parks and the Niagara Reservation at Niagara Falls. Olmsted and Vaux would work together until 1872.

In 1883 Olmsted founded the first landscape architecture firm in Brookline Massachusetts. That is where he designed the Emerald Necklace of Boston (figure 3- 31) , the campus of Stanford University and the project for the grounds of the Chicago World Columbian Exposition of 1893. In 1895 he was forced to retire for health problems and lived there until his death in 1903.

Olmsted lived intensely in the fastest developing decades of the United States. This period of demographic and urban growth also saw the rapid development of communication and transportation connections that would lead to the industrialised county the U.S. were by the end of the nineteenth century. This development conditioned Olmsted’s thoughts, ideas, concepts and creativity. These influences were also reflected in his designs. Unlike other important characters of the period such as Henry Adams, Olmsted was never to turn his back on the process of modernisation the country was going through.

He would write about this on a letter to Brace in 1887, where he commented on the *amazing progress* New England had made since his youth, in spite of the growth of a *wretched leisure class* and the *spread of anarchism*.

According to Olmsted’s biographer Melvin Kalfus the greatest ideal influence on Olmsted coming from England was that of John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). “Mills idealism was a modification, an enlargement of Utilitarianism – a wedding of the Romantic dissent from the capitalistic materialism with the practical spirit of Utilitarianism.”<sup>51</sup> Despite the influences of English thinkers, Olmsted and his generation did frame these ideas in the forming of an American identity.

Authors such as Geoffrey Blodgett<sup>52</sup>, Albert Fein<sup>53</sup> or Jon Teaford<sup>54</sup> have criticised the work of Olmsted. They have affirmed that the search of passive recreation and the pastoral landscape were only significant for his time. They also remark that Olmsted was basically an elitist landscape designer that began the segregation of suburban neighbourhoods, and that his projects were only short reaching. Kalfus deeply disagrees with these views, saying that now is actually the time in which the landscape principles of Olmsted should be re-studied and applied to new projects in our continuously growing cities.

Following the generation he belonged to, Olmsted was one of those who felt responsible for the civilisation of the social order. During his stay in Bear Valley, California in 1864, Olmsted wrote letters to his wife and his father in which he explained the frontier conditions of the *immature state of society*<sup>55</sup> in that location. He also wrote the unfinished paper “The Pioneer Condition and the Drift of Civilization in America”. In it he described in a scientific way the steps through

which the men of America changed their character and habits:

“The first is characterized by barbaric impetuosity, improvidence & caprice.

The second by the development of self respect and domestic virtues.

The third by development of communistic virtues, local public spirit and respect for law.

The fourth by nationalism & a commercial enlargement of ideas & plans, the benevolent propensities being still satisfied in a narrow way, domestic & local.

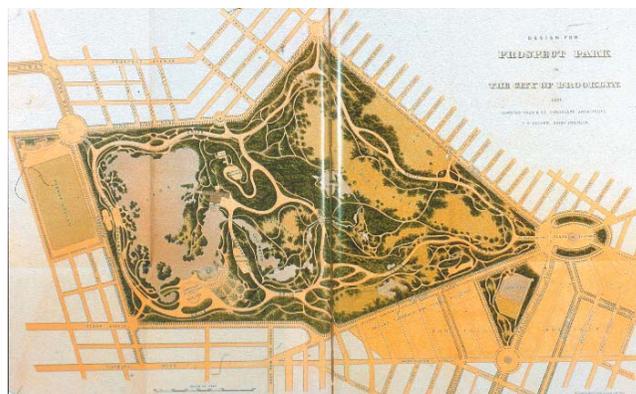
The fifth by a general enlargement of benevolent propensities and Christian Catholicism.”<sup>56</sup>

Some conclusions can be drawn from this scaled progression to civilisation described by Olmsted. The civilisation of men depended first on themselves and then progressively on community, nation, and finally on the Church. These ideas were also finally reflected in his park designs.



figure 3-29 - 1858 - Central Park  
authors: Olmsted and Vaux  
source: Olmsted and Vaux Landscape Architecture Firm.  
New York, NY, United States

figure 3-30 - 1871 - Design for Prospect Park in the city of Brooklyn  
authors: Olmsted & Vaux  
source: Olmsted and Vaux Landscape Architecture Firm. Brooklyn, NY, United States



<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Kalfus, Melvin, *Frederick Law Olmsted, the Passion of a Public Artist*, New York University Press, London and New York, 1990. pg.7

<sup>50</sup> Kelly, Bruce, Gail Travis Guillet, Mary Ellen W. Hern, *Art of the Olmsted landscape*, New York : New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission : Arts Publisher, c1981. pg.6

<sup>51</sup> Kalfus, Melvin, *Frederick Law Olmsted, the Passion of a Public Artist*, New York University Press, London and New York, 1990. pg.17

<sup>52</sup> Geoffrey Blodgett, “Landscape Architecture As Conservative Reform,” *Journal of American History* 62 (March, 1976) 869-89

<sup>53</sup> Fein, Albert, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Tradition*. New York, 1972.

<sup>54</sup> Teaford, Jon C. *Sleuthing the Urban Mystery*, Reviews in American History - Volume 23, Number 4, December 1995, pp. 675-680

<sup>55</sup> Olmsted, F.L. “The Pioneer Condition and the Drift of Civilization in America”, unfinished paper, Bear Valley, 1864

<sup>56</sup> idem.

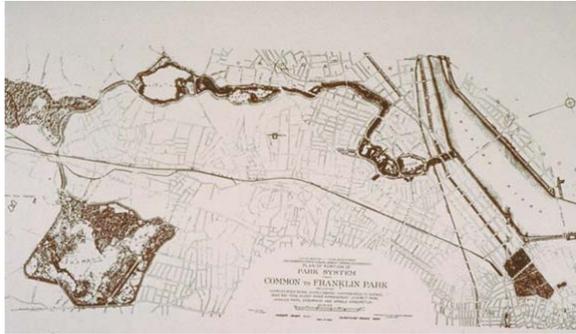


figure 3- 31 - 1883- Park System for the Common of Franklin Park authors: Olmsted & Vaux  
source: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

figure 3- 32 - 1870s - Calvert Vaux  
source: <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/98winter/images/parsons/vaux.jpg>



Olmsted's interest in public parks was present from his first texts:

"Probably there is no object of art that Americans of cultivated taste more generally long to see in Europe than an English park. What artist so noble, has often been my thought, as he who, with far reaching conception of beauty and designing power, sketches the outline, writes the colours and directs the shadows of a picture so great that Nature shall be employed upon it for generations before the work he has arranged for her shall realize his intentions"<sup>57</sup>

Olmsted believed that it was the purpose of his art to affect the emotions. This was especially evident in his park design, where he created passages of scenery in which the visitor would become immersed; experiencing the restorative action of the landscape by what Olmsted termed an "unconscious" process. To achieve this result, he subordinated all elements of the design to the single purpose of making the landscape experience most profound. Olmsted always sought to look beyond current taste and fashion and to base his designs on fundamental principles of human psychology.

"As Olmsted expressed it, the term *scenery* does not apply to any field of vision in which all that is to be seen is clear and well defined in outline. It must contain either "considerable complexity of light and shadow near the eye, or obscurity of detail further away." These qualities were essential for the unconscious action of scenery on the psyche."<sup>58</sup>

Concerning their projects the vast amount

of text left by Olmsted allows us to get a further view into his intentions. For example, Olmsted and Vaux's vision of Riverside is defined by specific goals. They intended to create a *Suburban Village* by blending the countryside with the urban environments and developing an organization of open space and views.

"all this magnificent pleasure ground is entirely, unreservedly, and for ever, the people's own"<sup>59</sup>

Public access to open space contributed to the value of a suburban development—not only for the residents of a place, but also for the developers seeking to create attractive suburbs.

"In the highways, celerity will be of less importance than comfort and convenience of movement, and as the ordinary directness of line in town streets, with its resultant regularity of plan, would suggest eagerness to press forward, without looking to the right or the left, we should recommend the general adoption, in the design of your roads, of gracefully curved lines, generous spaces, and the absence of sharp corners, the idea being to suggest and imply leisure, contemplativeness, and happy tranquillity"<sup>60</sup>

Daniel Burnham, who worked tightly with Olmsted in the World Columbian Exposition described his work:

"An artist, he paints with lakes and wooded slopes; with lawns and banks and forest covered hills; with mountain sides and ocean views."<sup>61</sup>

Middlesex Fells Association vice

president Wilson Flagg, a Naturalist himself, mentioned F.L. Olmsted in an essay written about the Fells:

“But in eastern Massachusetts, within six miles of Boston, is a region created by Nature herself, in comparison with which Central Park and every other park in the known world sinks into insignificance in respect to natural sublimity and beauty. Mr. Olmsted has seen this region, and was as enthusiastic in his admiration of it as any of our cultured women who have seen it. Perhaps his services might be obtained in superintending the great work that ought to be done. His experience and judgment would be a guarantee that nothing impracticable would be attempted. His ideas are in perfect harmony with those expressed in this essay.”<sup>62</sup>

Finally, to understand the whole idea of Olmsted of public parks the categorisation done by Kelly<sup>63</sup> comes handy. He distils the following fifteen elements in Olmsted's parks: 1-they are man made works of art; 2-they have their roots in the English Romantic style; 3-they reflect a Victorian influence; 4-they provide a strong contrast with the city; 5-they are characterised by the use of bold land forms; 6- they provide a balance between the elements of turf wood and water; 7- they use vistas as an aesthetic organising element; 8- they contain a series of planned sequential experiences; 9-they provide for the separation of traffic; 10- they provide visitor services; 11-they contain artistically composed plantings; 12-they integrate the architecture into the landscape; 13- each has provision for a formal element; 14-they were characterised by variety; 15- they were built to provide for recreation.

Referring specifically to recreation we

can say that Olmsted's ideal form of recreation was that in which the person is in communion with nature. It is sometimes implied that Olmsted's proposal of recreation was exclusively passive. Even though the predominant activity in Olmsted's parks was the strolling, he did provide spaces and buildings for active recreation such as boating and skating in the winter. In any case the intention of Olmsted in the provision of leisure space was one of democratic qualities. Each visitor could use the park as they wished as long as no area of the park, or other visitors, were damaged in this process.

Calvert Vaux (1824-1895), (figure 3-32) was an architect and landscape designer. He was born in London in 1824, and his father was a doctor. Due to this social standing, his father was able to provide a comfortable income for his family.

Vaux attended a private primary school until the age of nine. He then trained as an apprentice under London architect Lewis Nockalls Cottingham. Cottingham was a leader of the Gothic Revival movement. He trained Vaux until the age of twenty-six. Through his work in those years Vaux became a very skilled draftsman. His first connection with the United States, where he would later become a landscaped designer, was his meeting with Andrew Jackson Downing. Downing was impressed by an exhibition of watercolours that Vaux did in London and contacted him. Downing was looking for an architect that would share his ideas on visually integrated landscape and architecture, and offered Vaux a job in his office in the US. Vaux worked with Downing for two years and among their projects were the grounds of the White House and the Smithsonian Institute

in Washington D.C. Downing died in 1852 and Vaux took over the office.

In 1856 he joined the National Academy of Design and the Century Club, after acquiring citizenship in the US. One year later he became one of the founding members of the American Institute of Architects. In the same year he published his first text: *Villas and Cottages*, where he acknowledged the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Ruskin on his work.

<sup>57</sup> Olmsted, F.L. *Talks and Walks of an American Farmer in England*, 1852, second edition, Columbus Ohio, Jos. H. Riley, 1859.

<sup>58</sup> Beveridge, Charles E., and Paul Rocheleau. Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape. New York: Rizzoli International, 1995

<sup>59</sup> Olmsted, F.L., *Report of the project for Riverside Estate*, Chicago, 1869. pg.54

<sup>60</sup> idem.

<sup>61</sup> Line by Daniel Burnham, quoted from Larson, Erik, *The Devil and the White City, murder, magic and madness at the fair that changed America*, Vintage, New York, 2003.

<sup>62</sup> Flagg, Wilson, *the Boston Evening Transcript*, Boston, November 1880.

<sup>63</sup> Kelly, Bruce, Gail Travis Guillet, Mary Ellen W. Hern, *Art of the Olmsted landscape*, New York : New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission : Arts Publisher, c1981. pg.7

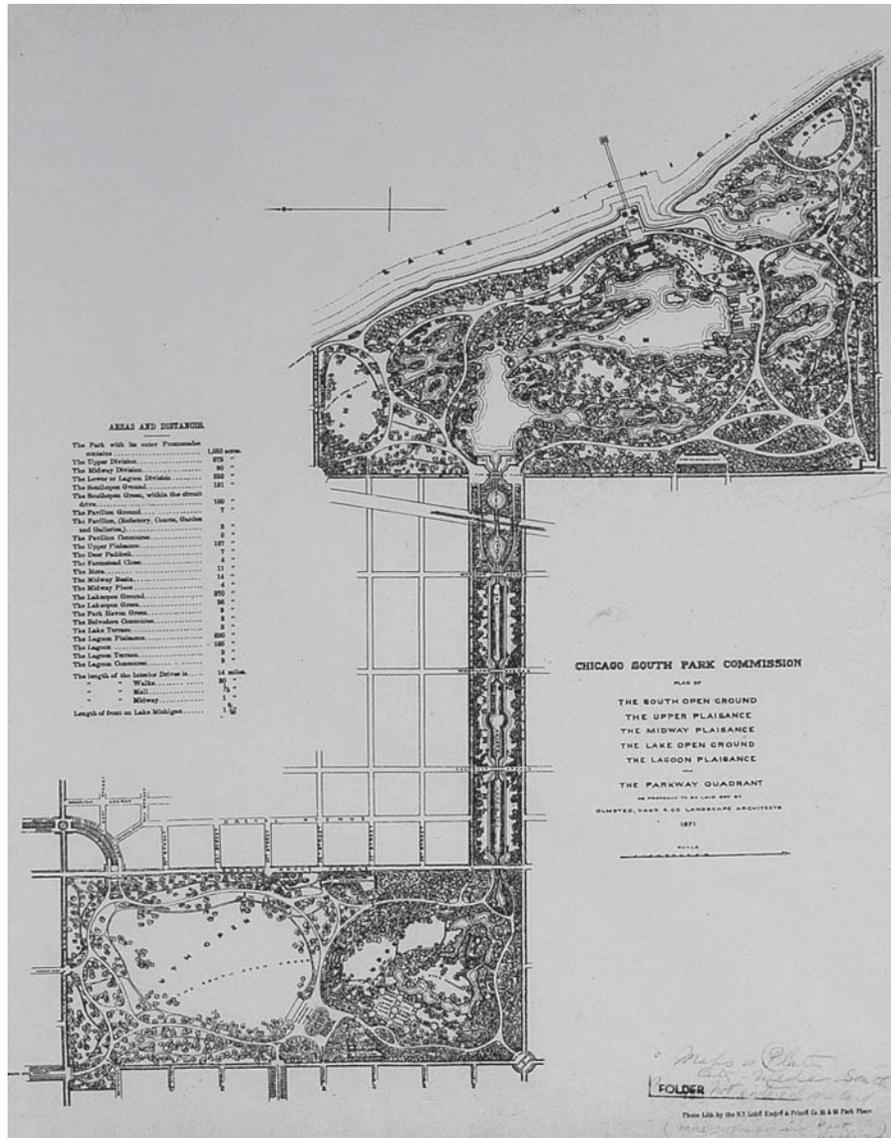


figure 3- 33 - 1871 - Chicago South Park Commission Plan of the South Open Ground, the Upper Plaisance, the Midway Plaisance, the Lake Open Ground, the Lagoon Plaisance and Parkway Quadrant.  
 author: Olmsted & Vaux  
 source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive.

In 1857, when, together with Olmsted he presented the Greensward project for Central Park, Vaux was responsible for the drawings in which he showed his great talent for sketching in his before-and-after drawings. Both architects continued to work together in the before mentioned projects but it was in the project for a major park in Buffalo, New York, where the design was greatly in the hands of Vaux. The Parade, The Park and The Front were all included in the project.

After having worked with Olmsted until 1872 Vaux dissolved the partnership and joined John Kent Redford and Samuel Parsons Jr (1844-1923). He worked with them as a partner until his death in 1895.

Vaux worked on numerous parks in the U.S.; he favoured naturalistic, rustic and curvilinear lines in his designs, to give a contrast to the industrialised cities. In this way he tried to integrate architecture such as buildings and bridges in his natural landscapes.

F.L.Olmsted and Calvert Vaux – project – 1871  
– First Project for South Park

*Olmsted and Vaux project for the South Parks was one of definite picturesque and naturalistic characteristics. The designers, given their experience in the profession were not only garden designers, but were also very aware of the social needs of the population, and designed their parks accordingly. Winding paths, streams and bridges, lagoons, wood and scattered trees showed an attitude that encouraged passive leisure and contemplative recreation. Some elements begin to introduce active recreation, such as boating and the practice of some sports. The relation of the park with its waterfront was a natural one, without a street or avenue. The pier and buildings were meant for strolling and enjoying nature, landscape and open space. This park would be constantly transformed in the following 40 years.*

### Context and administration

The design of the South Parks was commended to Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux by the Chicago South Park Commission in 1871. The cost to the city of the ground which was covered by Jackson and Washington Parks was of \$3,208,000<sup>64</sup>.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The South Parks were located in the south of Chicago, just south of the new area of Hyde Park, previously bought by Paul Cornell for development. The Lower division, later called

Jackson Park was located in an area of 237 hectares about thirteen km south of the courthouse. It was bounded by Lake Michigan on the East; Stony Island Avenue on the west; Fifty-Sixth Street on the north and Sixty-Seventh Street on the south. The Upper Division, later called Washington Park, on the other hand was located west of Jackson Park; it took an area of 150 hectares. It was bounded on the east by Kanakakee Avenue, on the west by Cottage Grove Avenue, on the north by Fifty-First Street and on the south by Sixtieth Street (figure 3-33).

The choice of that specific tract of land for parks is not completely clear. However, a text Olmsted wrote in the occasion of the World Exposition of 1893<sup>65</sup> sheds some light in the possible reason for the choice. Olmsted assumes that the government authorities had chosen these lands for public parks for they were not suitable to be sold for real estate development. Olmsted gives the examples of other parks which location was chosen because of the lack of commercial potential. He names parks such as Central Park, Morningside Park, Mount Morris Park and other locations in New York City.

In the design of the Chicago South Parks, Olmsted and Vaux were focusing on the main features of the natural environment of the Chicago area: The treeless prairie and the limitless expanse of the lake. The land was a marshland, barren and muddy, and a lot of effort would be needed for the creation of a real park. The area was not even urbanised at the time, but there was a prediction – and an accurate one – that the city would eventually expand up to the parks.

As a general interest in the report<sup>66</sup> for the South Park Commission, Olmsted and Vaux described the principles of a park in an urban context:

“The element of interest which undoubtedly should be placed first, if possible, in the park of any great city, is that of an antithesis to its bustling, paved, rectangular, walled-in streets; this requirement would be best met by a large meadowy ground of an open, free, tranquil character.”<sup>67</sup>

The first issue that Olmsted and Vaux raised in the report, referred to the need of classification of the type of parks that Jackson and Washington parks would be. The first definition given is the difference between the roaming grounds and the garden like enclosures. The report continues to describe the site as a far away land, separated from the city. In this section, the growth of Chicago is underestimated by its authors, who say that even if the city grew as so many others did, the park would still be placed “in the midst of a rural district”. An important issue remarked by the authors was the need for drainage of the area, as the type of dwelling outside the city was becoming increasingly luxurious and improved in construction quality. The area around the park was considered unsuited for commercial development and therefore only used for dwelling.

The main features of the area of the park were described by Olmsted and Vaux as follows:

<sup>64</sup> Flinn, John Joseph, 1851-1929, *Chicago, the marvellous city of the West. A history, an encyclopaedia, and a guide* 1892. Chicago, Standard Guide Co. 1892. G 8962 .3. pg 70

<sup>65</sup> Olmsted, Frederick Law, “the landscape architecture of the World’s Columbian Exposition” *Inland Architect and New Record*, vol.22, no.2 (September 1893) p.19

<sup>66</sup> Olmsted, Vaux & Co., “Report Accompanying Plan for laying out the South Park.” Chicago South Park Commission, March 1871.

<sup>67</sup> idem.

<sup>68</sup> idem.

<sup>69</sup> idem.

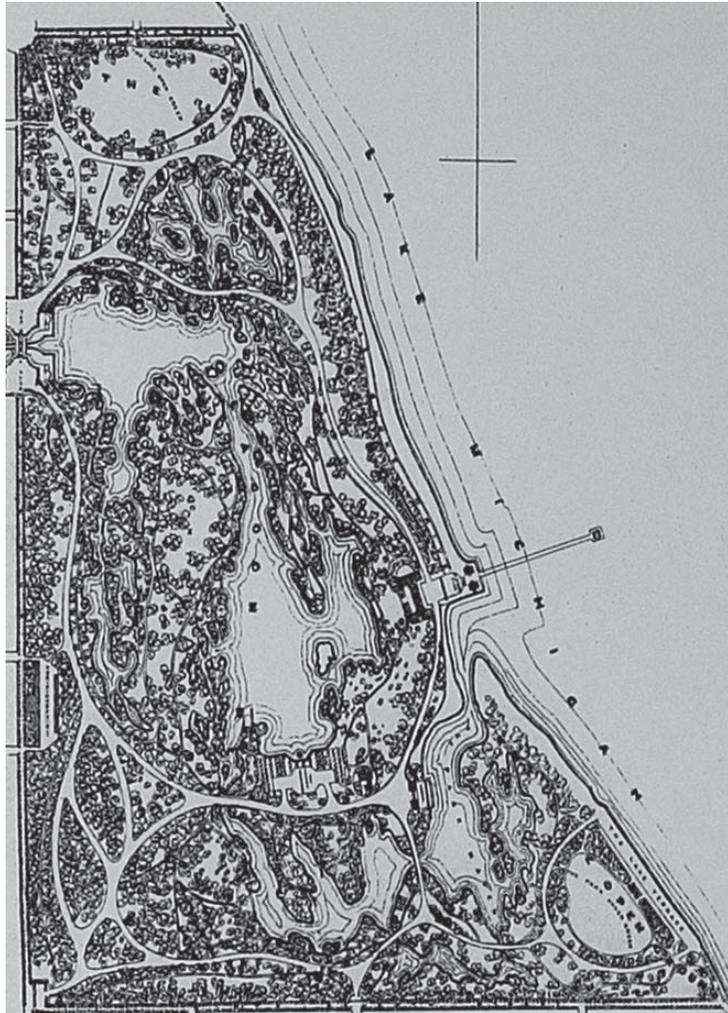


figure 3- 33a -1871 - Chicago South Park Commission Plan. Jackson Park  
author: Olmsted & Vaux  
source: Chicago Park District.Historical Archive.

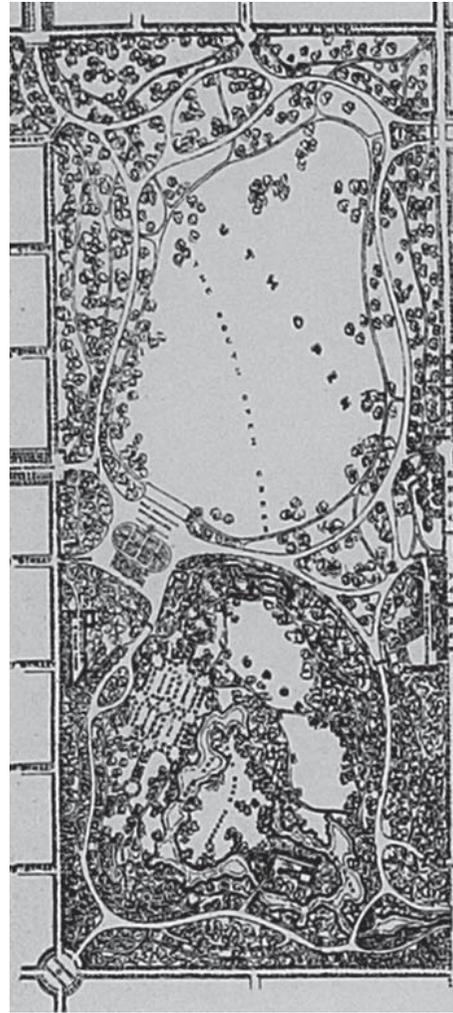


figure 3- 33b -1871 - Chicago South Park Commission Plan. Washington Park  
author: Olmsted & Vaux  
source: Chicago Park District.Historical Archive.

"The marked circumstances of the South Park site when compared with the others are, first, the groves of comparatively large trees which it contains; second, the greater spaciousness of two of its divisions; and third, the longer frontage and greater depth of that division of it which looks upon the Lake." <sup>68</sup>

Olmsted and Vaux then place the South Park in the character of Hyde Park in London and Alphand's Bois de Boulogne in Paris.

Concerning the site, the main defect observed was the flatness of it. This defect could be overcome by the artificial moving of soil to achieve a more irregular surface, but in this case the designers consider more suited an irregular border formed by massive bodies of foliage. This way it would become a considerable district of a highly picturesque character.

Referring to the main feature of the park the designers affirmed:

"There is but one object of scenery near Chicago of special grandeur or sublimity, and that, the lake, can be made by artificial means no more grander or sublime. The lake may, indeed, be accepted as fully compensating for the absence of sublime or picturesque elevations of land" <sup>69</sup>

The lakeshore is then treated in detail by the authors and it is regarded also as a part of the whole waterway system that was provided for the park. The issue of the need to make these waterways appear natural appears paramount in the text. The problem of the winds and tides of the lake is one of the first to be addressed. Therefore firm barriers are proposed, making the shore as intricate and as densely overhung with foliage as possible. As conclusions on this subject, on the one hand, the land was supposed to be

divided by canals into much smaller pieces, and the shoreline should be put to value by the access to it from the city centre through the water. This way the most beautiful feature of the park would be properly valued and give pride to the citizens of Chicago.

The main feature of the park was evidently water (see figure 3-33). The contrasting features of the lakefront and the inner waterways were insisted by the authors. The exterior front was described as a “necessarily simple, storm-lashed foreground”, while the inner lagoon scenery was to be “intricate, sylvan and rich in variety of colour and play of light and shade”. The access proposed by the designers was by water, having boats that would leave from Chicago downtown area and land at the pier in the south park.

Jackson Park (figure 3-33a), adjacent to Lake Michigan was planned as an aquatic park, with lagoons, peninsulas and wooded islands. One of the main features of the park was a thousand foot long pier that would receive the visitors from Chicago and lead them to the pleasure grounds of both Jackson and Washington Parks. The pier and the inlet were to be treated as the most important elements of the design, according to the report.

A canal would lead to Washington Park where pleasure boats would slowly descend from the lake to a lagoon created specially for the arrival. The state of the land of Washington Park (figure 3-33b) was not too different from that of Jackson Park; it was a bleak field of wind stripped trees. For this park Olmsted envisioned grass meadows kept with short grass by unfenced sheep and scattered groups of trees that would create a good environment for passive recreation. Washington Park became famous for different features than those of Jackson and Lincoln parks.

Not having the lakefront as a landmark it had other types of program that made it attractive. The *Meadow*, a stretch of land of 40 hectares of lawn and the five hectare *Mere* of water were the main features. A conservatory was also placed in Washington Park, as well as a series of stables. Another structure was the *Retreat*, where ‘man and beast’ could get refreshments.

However, it was commented that the most attractive feature of the park were the flower gardens, which would be changed by garden designers every year and have the most innovative techniques for the display of flowers and shrubs.

One innovation in the programme settled by Olmsted and Vaux was related to sports activities in the park. An arena for sports such as athletics, baseball, football, cricket and running games was proposed in the park. Another programme element for the transforming leisure of city dwellers was the ground for parades, reviews, drills, processions and public meetings and ceremonies in which large spaces were required. For this purpose a great turf lawn was planned.

Regarding the financing of the project, Olmsted and Vaux were convinced that the work of the Park Commission would be effective and justified the high expenses of the moving of soil and building the lagoons by the eventual rise of prices in real estate in the area, which would finally end up covering the price of the parks.

figure 3- 34 - 1890 - Map of Chicago -detail  
author: Rand McNally  
source: Newberry Library. map 4f G4104.C6 1890.R3  
location of rail stations close to Jackson Park

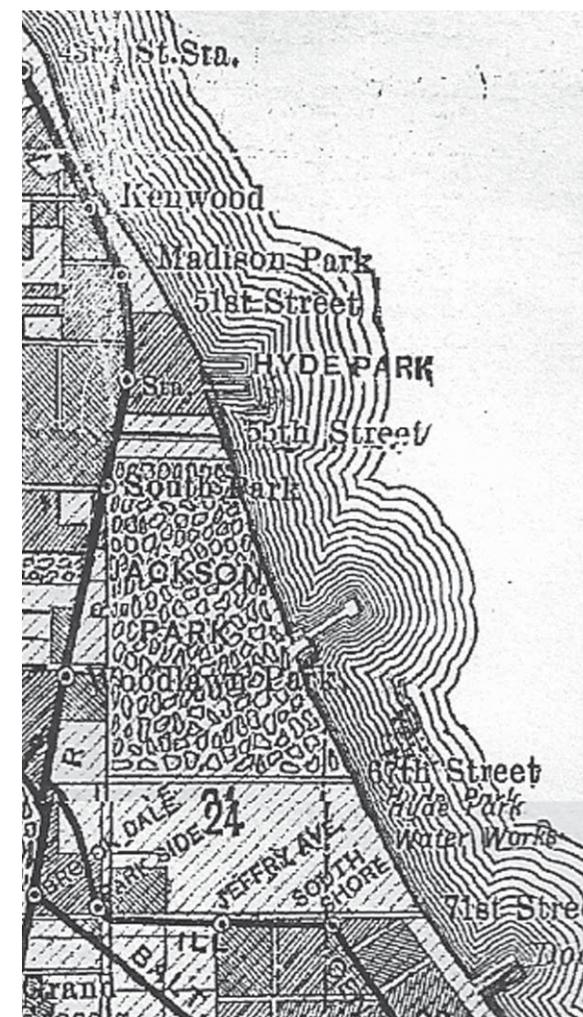




figure 3- 35 - 1904 - Jackson Park. Boats on the lagoon.  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive -1527

## Realisation

The main access pier to the park proposed by Olmsted was not built, but indeed were the main boulevards that lead to the park, guiding carriages through them and then into the meandering pathways in the park that would give a completely different environment than the already contaminated city.

According to Olmsted, by the time the place was selected to be the site for the World Columbian Exposition none of the elements of Jackson Park designed by Olmsted had been built. Washington Park, on the other hand had been sufficiently built, but not following Olmsted's main instructions of providing a space that would show masses of foliage and perspectives, instead of giving prevalence to details.

Despite Olmsted's observations, the South Park Commission was in charge of the materialisation of much work done on the park and waterfront. Between 1872 and 1879 only a small section of the park between 56<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup>

street was developed. The construction of this area made sense for it was the closest to where the city was expanding and where people lived.

The North pond and the 'Twin Lakes' were developed in this period. During the 1880s the water of the lake was polluted, so the lake was not considered for bathing. The Twin Lakes were intended then for bathing and recreation; boating and picnicking were popular during the 1880s. In 1875 the first stone pier, which extended 60 metres into the lake, was built on the park on 59<sup>th</sup> street. The first purpose of the pier was to protect from lake erosion, but it would later be used as dock for the steamer that went downtown.

In 1877 the first large scale protection project for the lakefront was built. It consisted on a submerged 670 metre long lumber and limestone breakwater. Sand was used to fill the shore, as a permanent beach, but it did not last long for the current made the sand disappear.

1880 brought an important change to the area. The new Illinois Central Station of 57<sup>th</sup> street (figure 3-34) facilitated the access from the downtown area and began to bring greater amount of people to the park. In 1881 the waterfront section of the South Park was renamed Jackson Park, in honour to Andrew Jackson, the 7<sup>th</sup> US president. Washington Park was the name given to the inland park.

Even though the lakeshore was not used for bathing the presence of the lake was exploited by the park commissioners as a spectacle for passive recreation more than for active one. For this purpose, in the early 1880s a stone paved beach and a breakwater were built between 56<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> streets. These were meant as a *strolling promenade*. The paving was extended in 1888 up to 63<sup>rd</sup> street and then to 67<sup>th</sup>. The paved beach

was a seven-foot wide strip filled with cedar bark and limestone bricks. It was bordered by two rows of oak piles and stakes in a line under water that hugged the curved shore. Behind the wave-breaker, the second section of 5 to 12-inch oblong granite blocks were laid (up to one foot thick) on a base to form an average 40-foot-wide beach. This sloped gradually upward. Sand dredged from the lagoons and transported on tracks formed the base and in some cases poured over the lain stones. Benches were set at regular intervals at the upper edge of the beach. Promenading became very popular and led to a partial reorientation of facilities, comfort and recreational, from the interior to the beach. There was as yet no drive along the beach. To continue the infrastructure for recreation, in 1887 a stone Ladies Comfort Station was constructed at 58<sup>th</sup> street. Another comfort station was built at the edge of the paved beach south of 57<sup>th</sup> street. This building was eventually torn down before the World Columbian Exposition.

## Repercussions

Only part of Olmsted's plan was carried out, and it took a long time to do so. This fact did not impede the actual use of the park, especially Washington Park, which was subsequently used as pleasure grounds. Jackson Park, as we have described, was also used. Despite the pollution of the waters the waterfront strolling promenade became popular, especially after the reach of the railway to 57<sup>th</sup> street. Comfort Stations were also popular and the practice of rowing in the twin lakes was one of reflection of the beginning of active leisure and recreation (figure 3-35).

### 3.2.1.2- Swain Nelson and Olaf Benson

#### Swain Nelson and Olaf Benson – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

Swain Nelson (1828-1917) (figure 3-36) was born and raised in the countryside of Årastöf near Christianstad in Sweden<sup>70</sup>. He began his practice as a horticulturist in his home area. At the age of 23 he moved to North America. The trip was done with a group of 20 young men from his village, including Olaf Benson, who would be Nelson's protégée, for he was younger. The fact that Nelson spoke no English made the adaptation for him difficult. At arrival in New York he and the rest of the Swedish group took a train and then a ship westward. Nelson and Benson both set out to look for jobs; Benson was luckier from the start, for he found a job in farming that paid well and gave him also schooling. Nelson on the other hand drifted from job to job until he finally found a job in a farm in Defiance, along the Miami River. This job did not last long, but after being sick with the auge and working in a tobacco store he found work as a house assistant of a doctor. This contact finally led him to work in the farm of a certain Mr. Sheffield. In Sheffield's farm he solved the problem of the growth of apple trees.

After working in the farm, Nelson moved to Chicago, where he did his first job as a gardener for F.A. Bryan, the most well known drugstore owner in town. The title of *landscape gardener* was an idea of Bryan. He suggested Nelson to make cards with his name on them and the title *landscape gardener*, so that he would lay them out in his drugstore. In the following months he continued to get small jobs until he needed to get help to make a profit. By the summer of 1857 Nelson was already getting larger jobs and he managed to rent a place and get married.

His first proper job as a landscape designer was the layout of the gardens of James Waller. For this project he placed the house on an elevated plain in the terrain and designed an entrance pathway and gardens around it. His following job was the design of the Graceland Cemetery, which was commended by Thomas B. Bryan. Nelson worked for this project for almost three years. Once the war was over the economy started to grow faster and there was more work available. The municipality made public that they were in need of plans for Union Park and Lincoln Park. Nelson immediately proposed a plan for Union Park. Despite the fact that Lincoln Park had an engineer already assigned for the design, once the Commission saw the plans of Nelson for Union Park they also called him to make a proposal for Lincoln Park. Both projects were assigned to Swain Nelson. For this work he hired Olaf Benson as his assistant.

Nelson later worked also on Douglas Park for the West Park Commission. Olaf Benson would continue to work as his assistant until he took over the office and later worked as superintendent on the project of Lincoln Park since 1875.

Nelson went back to work in the extension of Graceland Cemetery working as an assistant of the renowned cemetery designer William Shaler Cleveland.



figure 3-36 - 1880s - Swain Nelson (sitting, in the middle) and the Nelson-Gylenhall family  
Source: <http://www.gyllenhaal.org/SwainNelsonAutobio.html>

<sup>70</sup>The biographical data of Nelson was not available in traditional formats. Even the archive of the Chicago Park District had very little information about him. However, an internet site was found: [www.gyllenhaal.org/SwainNelsonAutobio.html](http://www.gyllenhaal.org/SwainNelsonAutobio.html), where an autobiography dictated by Nelson to his granddaughter is published. This turned out to be very useful information to find out about his origins and the process he went through to reach his task of landscape gardener of Lincoln Park.

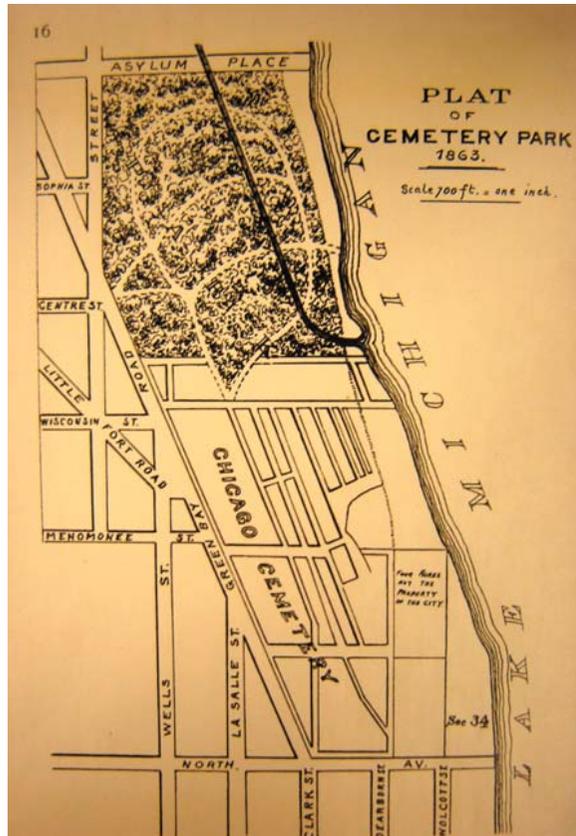


figure 3- 37 - 1863 - Plat of Cemetery Park  
author: unknown  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive.

### Nelson and Benson – 1870- 1887 - Lincoln Park

*The project of Nelson and Benson for Lincoln Park went through great transformations in the 20 years they were in charge of it. The formal characteristics of Lincoln Park were definitely naturalistic. There is an exclusive priority of passive recreation activities and contemplative leisure. In contrast to Olmsted and Vaux, Nelson and Benson were more concentrated on the garden qualities of the park and gave less importance to the programmatic characteristics of the park. The first waterfront avenue is presented in this project, but its realisation would be difficult, for the technical problems brought by the changes of tides.*

### Context and administration

Lincoln Park was first planned in the site of the old cemetery of Chicago, which had been used since 1837 as the only burial grounds of the city (figure 3-37). The epidemics of Cholera and Smallpox made it unhealthy to bury the dead so close to the lakefront, where the drinking water was taken. In the 1860s the before mentioned Dr. Rauch recommended that the bodies were relocated.

The first park project was convoked by the Common Council. The Council convoked the city to develop a plan for a new park founded in the following principles:

“The ground is of an uneven surface, covered with a fine growth of trees and has a running stream of water passing entirely through it, from which fish ponds may be made and on which boats may be used in the summer, and in the winter make admirable places

for skating. A full view of the entire shipping of the lake, as it enters the harbour can be had from the park.”<sup>71</sup>

From this quotation we can already draw certain conclusions. Apart from the needs for hygiene and open spaces there was already a vision of the use of public space as a space of passive, contemplative and active recreation. The view of the lake was also valued here, not as naturalistic contemplation, but as an observation of the spectacle of the technology of the harbour area.

In 1865, the Alderman of the area Lawrence Proudfoot would request that the name of the Lake Park were changed to Lincoln Park, due or the recent assassination of the president. This was immediately carried out and the news brought to the park a renewed attention<sup>72</sup>. By 1869 the Park Commission was already in charge of all the projects for Lincoln Park.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility and realisation

#### The 1865 project

The first project for Lincoln Park was a 10 hectare park designed in 1865 by landscape gardener Swain Nelson (figure 3-38). The plan presented by Nelson was proposed on a strip of land limited by Lake Michigan on the east, two diagonal streets on the west, the cemetery on the south and a swampy area on the north that the Common Council had purchased as quarantine lands.

Nelson’s plan emphasised the naturally rolling topography of the site. The design of the park followed the lines of the geography of the place, and according to the National Register of Historic Places the park was divided into two systems of circulation, an outer one for carriages

and an inner one for pedestrians. In the plans for the park this is not very clear. There is a system of wider paths and one of narrower ones, but in all of these there are representations of people standing, no carriages or any means of transportation are to be seen in the drawings of Nelson (figure 3- 38a) . All these characters depicted in the drawing are in couples, and seem to be strolling through the paths and contemplating the waters.

Nelson's design had a system of lagoons and streams. Crossing these was a series of eight bridges that were the only built structures in the park. Many of the characters in the drawing stand next to the water of the lagoons, but there are no people shown in the lakefront, which seems neglected and treated as any other border of the park, except for its sinuous limit. The park's purpose was mainly that of strolling, riding and picnicking, but also concerts were held in the park. It took about two years to build the park, and once it was finished it became a popular place of leisure, especially on Sundays.

By 1868 the park had been improved and refurbished by approximately sixty thousand dollars of work which had been carried out. However, the cemetery was still placed next to it. In the same year the Lincoln Public Zoo was founded with the purchase of a couple of swans for the lagoons, brought from the zoological gardens of New York.

The 1869 Lincoln Park Act was formulated and Ezra B. McCagg was named president. This act settled the northern boundary of the park at Diversey Avenue, later called Diversey Parkway, which was supposed to be the boulevard that would link Lincoln Park with the West Side Parks.

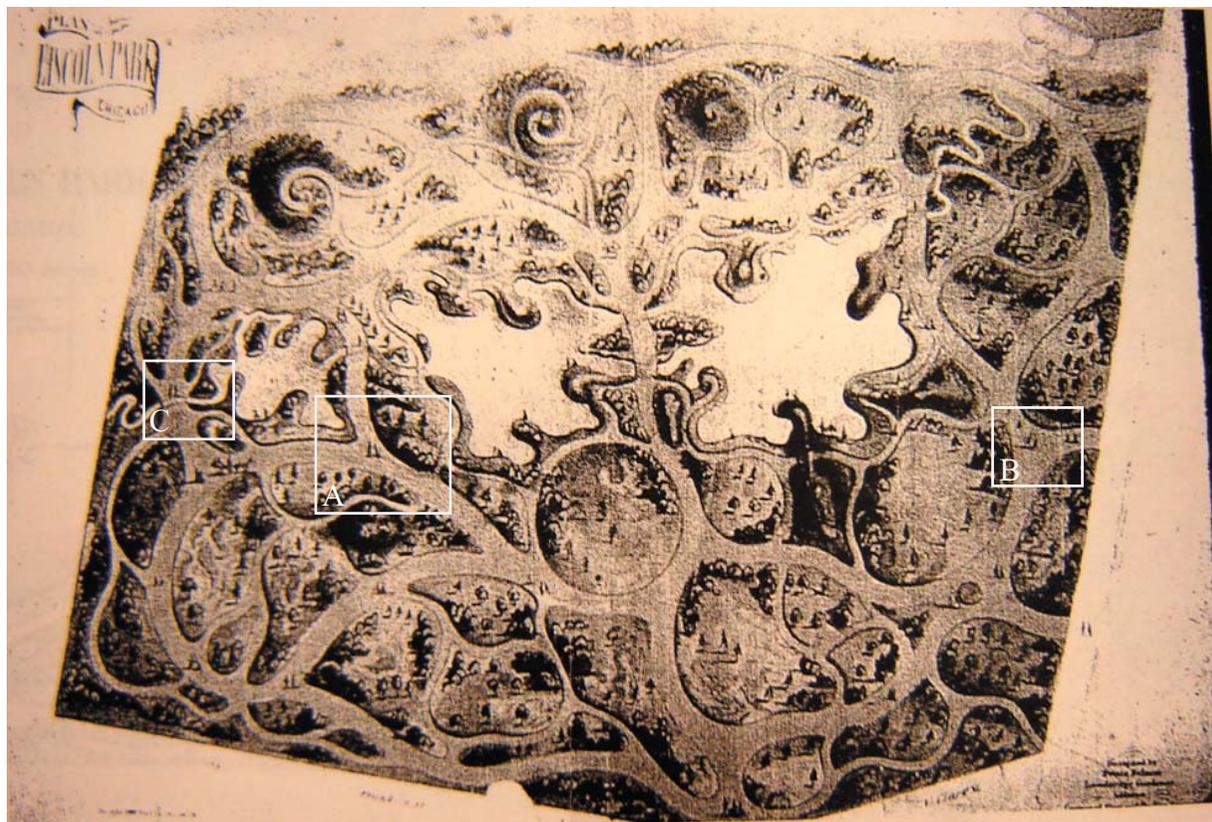


figure 3- 38 - 1865- Lincoln park  
author: Swain Nelson  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive.

- <sup>71</sup> Chicago Common Council, June 13 1864, pg.4  
<sup>72</sup> Bryan, I.J., *History of Lincoln Park and the Annual Report of the Commissioners*, Chicago, Lincoln Park Commissioners, 1889.  
<sup>73</sup> Lincoln Park Commission Proceedings, Chicago, 1869, 1:6.



figure 3- 39 - 1873 - Plan of Lincoln Park designed by Nelson and Benson. Published with Peltzer's Atlas of Chicago  
author: Olaf Benson and Swain Nelson  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive.

In 1869 the Lincoln Park Commission was becoming enthusiastic about the redesigning of the park, so they decided to hire Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux of New York for a new design<sup>73</sup>. However, due to legal battles regarding tax payers and jurisdiction limits they had to be contented with a lower profile designer. So, the one in charge of the maintenance of the park until 1875 was Swain Nelson.

After great pressure from the population, in 1869 the cemetery was finally moved and the bodies were taken elsewhere. This allowed the first expansion of the park to approximately one hundred hectares. This expansion was achieved not only through the acquisition of the cemetery, but also through the purchase of private property. These additions consolidated the public space, but due to acquisition problems the whole expansion would not be materialised until the late 1870s. The intentions of the expansion were not limited to the park itself but also to form a system of boulevards that would eventually become an urban park system. The success of the park had led the park movement to expand all over the city and the West and South Park Commissions were formed for the rest of the city. The first Board of Commissioners was appointed in 1869, and since that moment it was under state supervision.

In 1870 Nelson and Benson were asked to continue the Lakeshore Drive (now Cannon Drive) up to Diversey Drive, but this was no easy task, for the currents and erosion were destroying the southern part of the Drive already. For this purpose the commission hired A.H. Burley to build a pier at Diversey Drive to protect the lakeshore from eroding.

In 1873 the towns of North Chicago and Lake View made an agreement to appoint a large sum of money for the acquisition of land for the

park and the maintenance of it. This was not approved by the State Supreme Court considered the assessment invalid. The proposal was finally accepted in June 1875 (figure 3- 39).

### The 1877 project

In 1876 Olaf Benson was appointed as superintendent of Lincoln Park. Between 1877 and 1879 he developed a new plan for the extended park. Benson's design followed quite strictly the lines of its predecessor's (see figure 3-39). The winding paths and lakes and the naturalistic character of the area were kept and expanded.

The area of the park was of one hundred hectares, a longitudinal strip of lakeshore land, one kilometre wide by two kilometres in length. It was bounded by Lake Michigan on the east; Clark street on the west; North Avenue on the south; and Diversey Street on the north.

The transformations of the park included the addition of one new lake to the already existing three. This lake was placed in the southern section of the park and was named the South Pond. A wooded island was placed in the southern side of this lake. A northern lake was planned too, but this was never realised.

One of the features of Benson's plan was a French formal garden, located north of the south pond. This garden does not appear in the plans of 1873, but it does in the ones of 1887 (figure 3- 40 (A)), which leads to suppose that it was already built by then. Since the early 1890s a perennial garden was located next to the French garden. This one was of a completely different quality, the naturalistic quality gave it the name of Old English garden and was composed by a long centre lawn framed by undulating perennials.

The only other formal element in the plan of Benson was the Mall. This was a straight alley

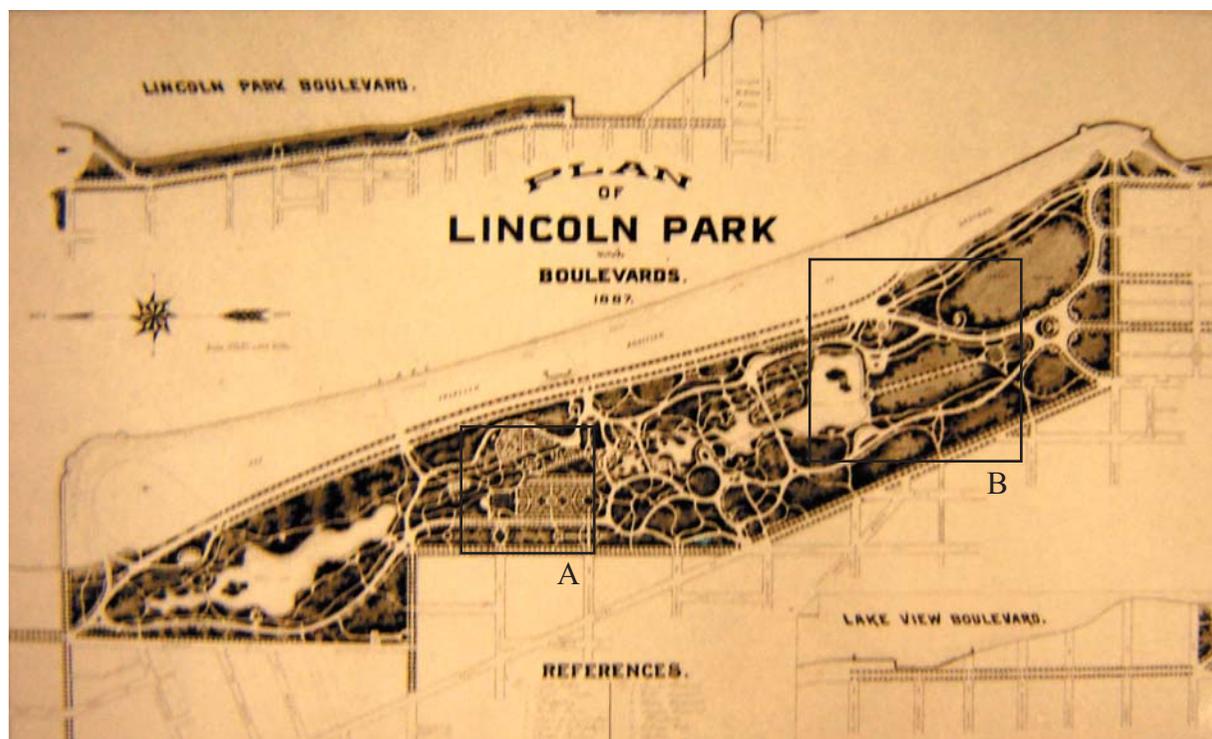
between two ancient lake ridges flanked by elms and rustic baskets of flowers. It starts at the south pond and extends southwards (figure 3-40(B)).

The lakefront in Benson's plan was formed by what was then called Lakeshore Drive. It was conceived as a viewing place and contemplative scenery. At the end of Lakeshore drive Benson's project provided a meandering lagoon, with small streams branching out into the meadows. Lakeshore Drive was extended as early as the 1870s between Oak Street and Pine Street, but it suffered constant damage from storms and lakeshore erosion until a more ambitious breakwater system was built in the late 1880s.

<sup>74</sup> Lincoln Park Commission Proceedings, Annual Report 1879, pg10.

<sup>75</sup> Lincoln Park Commission Proceedings, Annual Report 1879, pg11.

figure 3- 40 - 1887 - Plan of Lincoln Park and Boulevards  
author: Olaf Benson  
source: Chicago Park District.Historical Archive.



The project was formulated in 1878, when the Chicago Park Commission decided to undertake a more ambitious project to insure better protection of the shore. The method used was imported from the Netherlands and consisted on laying a series of brush mattresses and paving the surface with stone<sup>74</sup>. By then there was one single pier stretching from North Drive into the Lake, which had been used earlier as protection for the lake tides. In 1879 there was a project to convert this pier into a children's hospital to provide sick children with a sheltered *resort* on which they could enjoy the "refreshing breezes of the lake"<sup>75</sup>. The Ridge Drive was one of the main circulatory elements in Benson's plan. The first portion was constructed in 1877 through the original section of the park. The following year it was extended to Fullerton parkway.

Circulation in the paths of the park was not regulated, and horses, pedestrians and bicycles would ride freely. This led to accidents, which were judged by the Board in 1879, which forbid the presence of bicycles and horses in the drives. By the beginning of the 1880s the prohibition laws were especially reinforced. Nevertheless, given the increasing enthusiasm in bicycle riding, and the pressure from the Chicago bicycle riders, the Board finally decided to lift the ban and permit the circulation of horses and bicycles as well as carriages.

The erosion of the shore continued to be a problem into the mid 1880s. The Dutch solution had not been efficient enough and many of the lakeshore structures were being destroyed by natural causes as well as by the sand dredged on the river by construction companies<sup>76</sup>. In 1885 the Park commission consulted the U.S. Army for the solution of the waterfront problem.

In 1887 the State legislature gave the Lincoln Park Commissioners the right to issue bonds for \$300,000 with which to defend the shore line against encroachments of storm-tossed lake Michigan. With that sum the Commissioners designed and began work on a system of improvements. The work was commenced in 1888 at the foot of the North Avenue. The works went on for more than 6 years to achieve a paved beach that would extend for more than five kilometres long and a parallel boulevard six metre wide.

"There is nothing rigid in the lines of the promenade or boulevard. Without detracting from the attractiveness of the sweeping crescent derived from Jackson Park, it must be said that the sinuous curves making the contour of the Lincoln Park beach, promenade, boulevard and canal, are more artistic and pleasing."<sup>77</sup>

The problem of the lakeshore was persistent. Another of the intentions of controlling this edge of the city was done in 1886, when landowners of Pine Street (currently N. Michigan St.) claimed for landfill in front of their properties. A bill was approved by the state after meetings with the Lincoln Park Commission, in which the land owners committed to pay for the works if they were given deeds on the new land in return.

In 1889, while the landfill works were being realised there was a petition by boating enthusiasts to build a "straight away protected course for rowing races"<sup>78</sup>. Rowing had gained popularity since the end of the civil war and was gaining adepts in Chicago. The Commission responded, and destined a section of the new beach for yachting, which was completed approximately four years later.

The northern area of the park had also

gone through conversations between owners and officials for the proposal of land fill and extension of the lakeshore drive up to Lake View Avenue. This was a much longer process, which had started already in the early 1870s and was finally finished with an avenue and a breakwater system completed in 1897. The Sheridan Drive extension included a bicycle path from Cornelia Street to Grace Street.

Apart from the greatest effort of the Commission for the lakefront protection during the 1880s and 1890s the park also underwent improvements. These can be seen in the plan of 1887, whose author is unknown.

### The buildings in the park

Some of the main attractions of Lincoln Park were related to winter activities. The park had three pavilions or conservatories for the winter, the greenhouse, the propagating house and the palm house. During the last decade of the nineteenth century, all of these structures were in the care of John A. Pettigrew, superintendent from 1889 to 1894 and Carl Stromback, the park's chief gardener. The greenhouse structures contained strange species of plants as water lilies and palms, which needed very special care. The flowers and plants had to be watered with warm water, so a whole system for heating was installed to keep the water at over 90 degrees Fahrenheit<sup>79</sup>.

One of the oldest structures in the park was the Rustic Pavilion designed by M.E. Bell in 1883. It was composed of rough hewn wooden posts with wooden cross braces and had a metal roof. The palm house was built later, in 1892, designed by architect Joseph Silsbee (1848-1913) (figure 3-41). It was a structure of steel and glass,

eighteen metre high and resting upon a boulder foundation of split granite. The palm house or conservatory was located in the north of the south pond. The entire extension of the structure was of 72 metres. Silsbee was also the designer of one of the oldest structures of the park, the Men's and Ladies' comfort station, later called Carlson's station. The picturesque cottage was a one floor masonry and brick structure.

The Chicago Academy of Sciences was built in 1893 by Patton and Fisher to provide a home for the natural history museum which had been founded in 1857. The neo classical building had a Corinthian portico with limestone columns. In 1898 the Maintenance building, later known as the Fullerton Shops was built by Warren H. Milner to provide stables for work horses and storage wagons.

Amongst the structures added to the park there were those of the zoological gardens, which was constantly transformed since its inauguration in 1868 until the 1920s. The oldest structure of the zoo was the powerhouse, designed by Theodore Karls in 1887. It was located in the eastern edge of the zoo, and was a two story structure made of red pressed brick laid in a stretcher bond.

Concerning monuments one of the first ones placed in Lincoln Park was the sculpture of Hans Christian Andersen, designed by John Gelert and placed in a lawn at the centre of the original plan of Nelson. The bronze sculpture rests on a granite base and shows Andersen seated on a tree stump with an open book. Another monument which stands out is the bronze statue of William Shakespeare, located in the English garden; it was completed in 1894 by William Ordway Partridge. Probably the most visited sculpture in the park is the Abraham Lincoln Monument, completed in 1887. The sculpture is simple and shows a dignified standing figure of

Lincoln. One of the major sculpture installations of the early 1890s commemorated the eighteenth U.S. president, Ulysses H. Grant. The competition for the monument was won by Italian immigrant Louis T. Rebisso, who made an equestrian bronze figure located between Ridge Drive and old Lakeshore Drive.



figure 3- 41 - 1895 - Palm House - Lincoln Park  
source: <http://www.alsgh.com/conservatories/lincoln.jpg>

<sup>76</sup> Bryan, I.J., *History of Lincoln and the Annual Report of the Commissioners*, Chicago, Lincoln Park Commissioners, 1899. pg.104.

<sup>77</sup> Flinn, John Joseph, *1851-1929. Chicago, the marvellous city of the West. A history, an encyclopaedia, and a guide 1892*. Chicago, Standard Guide Co. 1892. G 8962 .3. pg. 74

<sup>78</sup> Bryan, I.J., *History of Lincoln and the Annual Report of the Commissioners*, Chicago, Lincoln Park Commissioners, 1899. pg.54

<sup>79</sup> Flinn, John Joseph, *Chicago, the marvellous city of the West. A history, an encyclopaedia, and a guide 1892*. Chicago, Standard Guide Co. 1892. G 8962 .3. pg. 68



figure 3- 44 - 1900s - Lincoln Park gardens  
source: Chicago Park District. Image Database. 1530



figure 3- 45 - 1900s- Lincoln park lagoon  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive. 1-III-93

figure 3- 47a - 1908 - The lakefront at Lincoln Park  
author: O.Benum  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive. negXI-38-33



figure 3- 46 - 1865- Lincoln park skating pond  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive. n48.



## Repercussions

Many activities were practised in the park as well as special events. Hundreds of park permits were issued in the 1880s and early 1890s for events including concerts, parades, weekly military drills, fireworks displays, boats exhibits, horseless carriages contests, baseball competitions, turner club exhibitions and bicycle and foot races<sup>80</sup>. Still, until the beginning of the twentieth century, the main activity was strolling through the pathways of the park (figure 3-44).

Other sort of leisure facilities were provided by concessions. These establishments provided horses for rent, swings of various sizes for adults and children and in both ponds there were swan boats available for rent which would take up to twelve passengers (figure 3-45). The lakes would freeze in the winter and provide ice skating rinks. (figure 3-46) Additional concessions included fruit stands and photographers.

Lincoln Park featured all the elements that were considered necessary in a park of the period. The picturesque quality of the park was evident throughout its program. There were:

*“beautiful lakes, handsome bridges, splendid foliage, magnificent statuary, gorgeous banks, beds and avenues of the choicest flowers, the rare and wonderful shrubbery, the pretty little dells, knolls and nooks, that lie half concealed between the noble trees, and last, though not least the zoological collection”<sup>81</sup>*

One main feature of Lincoln Park was the Regatta Course, qualified as unique in the world. More facilities that had to do with water sports were available, such as the boat house where boats could be rented for 25 cents an hour. The zoological gardens also became extremely popular in the last decades of the nineteenth

century having by the 1880s more than ten thousand visitors per year.

While the floral department was successful and famous throughout the 1890s problems began emerging in almost every department of the Lincoln Park Commission. In 1894, shifting political tides led to the empowerment of the patronage system. Considered a reorganisation plan by the Board, all of Lincoln Park's executive level staff members were forced to resign<sup>82</sup>.

By the time of the World Fair of 1893 Lincoln Park was considered "the most attractive park in the city"<sup>83</sup>.

One of the issues that rose before the World Columbian Exposition was the idea and problem of linking the North Boulevard or Lake Shore Drive with the southern one, this fact was mentioned in many guides of the city. This problem would not be solved until decades later. However the already existing part of the Lake Shore Drive on Lincoln park was praised as:

"...pleasing beyond expression. Rows of large, graceful elms cast their shadows over it from either side. On one hand stretches the lake, dotted with white sails; its dancing waves bright with sunbeams, or showing green and cool under drifting clouds."<sup>84</sup>

In 1895, the before mentioned Free Bath and Sanitary league recommended that the park commission open a summer bathing beach in Lincoln Park on the shores of Lake Michigan. The Park Commission complied almost immediately and the beach opened in July 1895 (figure 3-47a-b-c). In Chicago, unlike other American cities, the opening of the year round municipal baths preceded the opening of municipally supported summer bathing facilities. Wellington and the

League also supported the Medical Women's Club in its petition for the appointment of two women physicians to the park Commission.



figure 3- 47b - 1908 - The beach at Lincoln Park  
author: O.Benum  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive. n92

figure 3- 47c - 1902 - Lincoln Park - beach  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive.1176



figure 3- 47d - 1908 - The beach at Lincoln Park  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive. slide7-19-40

<sup>80</sup> Lincoln Park Commission Proceedings. 1880-1890 v.2, 1891-1896 v.3

<sup>81</sup> Flinn, John Joseph, *1851-1929, Chicago, the marvellous city of the West. A history, an encyclopaedia, and a guide 1892*. Chicago, Standard Guide Co. 1892. G 8962 .3. pg. 75

<sup>82</sup> Lincoln Park Commission Proceedings. 1894. v.3 pg195-196.

<sup>83</sup> Banks, Charles Eugene, *The artistic guide to Chicago and the World's Columbian exposition*, Chicago, R.S. Peale co., 1893. R 1832 .075. pg.48

<sup>84</sup> idem. pg.65

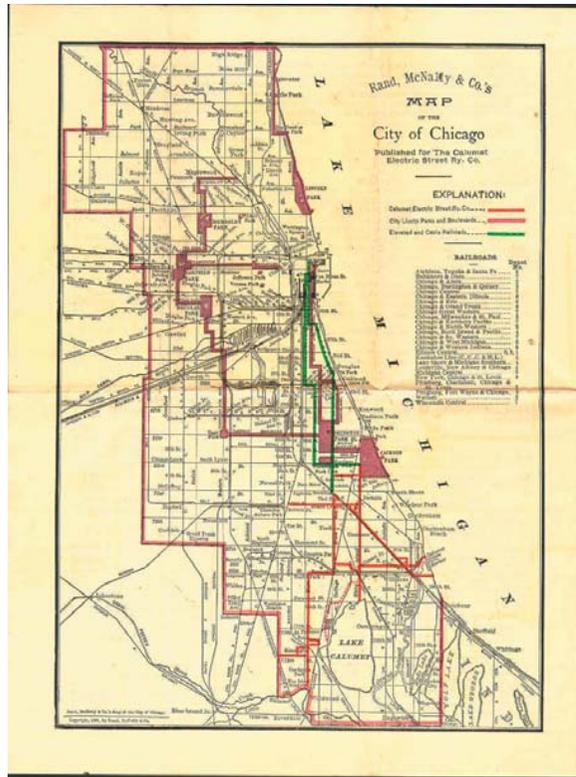


figure 3- 48 - 1892 - Map of the City of Chicago Published for the Calumet Electric Street Ry Co.  
author: Rand McNally  
source: 1800s Ephemera. <http://home.att.net/~mforder/>

### 3.2.2 – 1890-1905 – World Columbian Exposition. Olmsted brothers.

*In this section we will analyse the projects of the World's Columbian Exposition and the Olmsted's Brothers projects for Jackson and Grant Parks. Even though these projects belong to the same period, they have extremely different formal qualities. However, the approach the designers had towards leisure was rather similar in all of them. There was a new attitude that encouraged the didactic development of the population, together with the development of spaces of representation. Architecture began to be an important part of the parks and these spaces were no longer only used as places of passive recreation but also as learning grounds for the civilisation of the citizens.*

Population growth in Chicago was remarkable. By the autumn of 1891 the population of Chicago was estimated in 1,250,000 inhabitants, and a growing rate increase equal to that of London, of 1000 persons weekly. Most of the population was of foreign birth. Only a quarter of the population was born in the United States and most of them had foreign parents.

Even though the health conditions in the city, as we explained in the introduction, were very poor, some were of the opposite opinion. The London Times of 1891 stated that:

*"The excellent health of Chicago is shown by an annual mortality of less than 19 per 1000 of population, so that the sanitation is well cared for. The drainage is diverted away from the lake because thence comes the city's water supply."*<sup>85</sup>

This was the period of most of the park developments in the city of Chicago. As much as the city was growing vertically, the Park Commissions were in charge of public space and developed public parks in an unprecedented way, pioneering the design of a park system worldwide.

According to one of the most popular guides<sup>86</sup> of Chicago of 1892 the parks of Chicago already covered 799 hectares. (see figure 3-48) The three boards in charge of the parks were the South Park Commission, The West Park Commission and the North Park Commission. The parks under these authorities were financed by direct tax. Some other squares and plazas were financed directly by city funds, but these were only exceptions. A couple of decades before, there were complaints that the parks of Chicago were too far from the reach of the citizens that needed them. By 1890 this was not the case any more; the parks were being surrounded by neighbourhoods, which population was growing steadily. The parks were now included in the city, and except for the west parks they were mostly connected to the waterfront. The South side had Jackson Park and Washington Park, the west side Douglas Park, Garfield Park and Humboldt Park, and the north side had the long waterfront Lincoln Park. All of these parks were reachable through the then already far reaching cable car network.

To what concerns the waterfront all three parks – Jackson, Lincoln and Grant – were redeveloped and redesigned in this period. Apart from these public parks some private developments took place, such as the 67<sup>th</sup> street South Shore Country Club, designed by Benjamin Marshall in 1906 (figure 3- 49).

The parks of Chicago had a great impact in the image of the city. In the Artistic Guide

to Chicago<sup>87</sup> published in 1893 for the World Exposition the parks were described as follows:

“As the glory of woman is in her hair – so is the glory of Chicago in her parks and boulevards. Here are gleams and glints of beauty; shifting light and shade; the profusion of prodigal wealth combined with unassuming gentleness and unobtrusive modesty. Miles of meadow, mead and dale have been converted into acres of emerald lawn, smooth shaven as a priest. Undulating plats of rare and beautiful flowers on every hand charm the eye with their infinite variety of colours, harmoniously blended. (...) The city’s parks are the citizen’s property and as much to be enjoyed by the humble toiler at the counter, in the factory or upon the high ascending wall, as by the rich man, whose proud steeds spurn the gravel of the smooth boulevards themselves.”<sup>88</sup>

This quotation shows two main points regarding the parks in Chicago, on the one hand, given the explanation, the parks have a picturesque quality to them and on the other they are aimed at the public, whatever their social class.

The importance of the lake in the city as a whole and in the image of the city’s park was prominent, described in a guide of Chicago:

“There can be nothing finer than a view of this city on a clear day from the deck of a steamer a few miles out from shore. For nearly thirty miles it sweeps a beautiful crescent about the lake, its hundreds of lofty spires flashing in the sunlight; its grand piles of parti-coloured granite structures cooling their brows in the drifting clouds.”<sup>89</sup>

The same guide sheds light in one of the processes that would be crucial for the later development of the lakefront as leisure space. Until the 1880s most of the trade was done through water, and used the harbour of the Chicago River next to the lake as its main trade station. The process of development and growth of the rail network transformed the means of transportation and lightened the traffic through the water. This process allowed the liberation of the lakefront of many industrial facilities, as well as harbour infrastructure, which permitted the use of this land for leisure purposes.

Many other improvements, apart from park development were made in the city during this period. The waterworks was one of the most relevant ones, which also permitted the faster development of the city and the growth in population. Despite the fact that a great part of the city was still not properly provided of water and sewage services, the projects for these issues were being carried out. By 1892 a series of pumping works were located in different parts of the city. One was located on the foot of Chicago Avenue, on the North Side; another on the corner of Blue Island avenue and Twenty-Second Street; and the central pumping station on West Harrison Street. All these structures, as well as the pumping stations in the lake were advertised as tourist attractions in the guides of the city of Chicago.



figure 3- 48b - 1890- Rand, McNally & Co.'s New City Limits. Map of Chicago. Source: Newberry Library. map 4F G4104.C6 1890.R3

<sup>85</sup> “The Great City of the Lakes”, *London Times*, September 21, 1891.

<sup>86</sup> Flinn, John Joseph, *Chicago, the marvellous city of the West. A history, an encyclopaedia, and a guide 1892*. Chicago, Standard Guide Co. 1892. G 8962 .3.

<sup>87</sup> Banks, Charles Eugene, *The artistic guide to Chicago and the World's Columbian exposition*, Chicago, R.S. Peale co., 1893. R 1832 .075

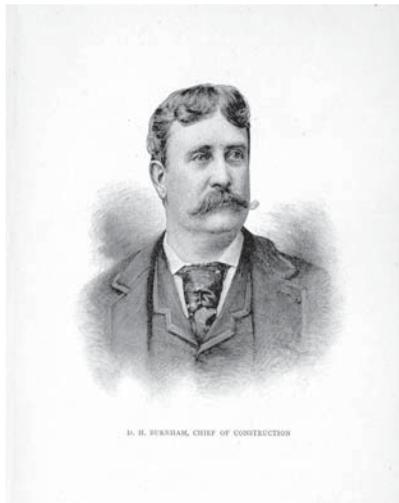
<sup>88</sup> *idem*. pg.44

<sup>89</sup> *idem*. pg.102



figure 3- 49 - 1908-South Side Country Club  
source: Chicago Park District.Historical Archive.

figure 3-50 - 1893 - Daniel Burnham  
source: Copyright, Paul V. Galvin Library  
Digital History Collection



### 3.2.2.1-World Columbian Exposition

#### Burnham, Root, Olmsted - biographical facts and urban landscape principles

Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846-1912) (figure 3-50) is known as the greatest builder in Chicago. He was born in Henderson, New York State, but his family, in search of a brighter future, transferred to Chicago in 1855, when he was aged nine. His father's business had failed in New York, but in Chicago he had managed to succeed in the drug wholesale business and became the first president of the city's mercantile association. Daniel Burnham was sent to Harvard to finish his studies, although he was a gifted athlete and a talented designer he was not interested in studying which made him fail his exams in Harvard and had to transfer back to Chicago in 1867.

Back in the city, Burnham took a job as a draftsman's apprentice in William la Baron Jenney's office. He was not too successful in his job with Jenney and he quit his job. After this failure he worked as a salesman of plate glass and even as a druggist, but he finally found his place working for Peter B Wight as a draftsman. Under the tutelage of Wight he developed his drawing skills and learned about the architectural practice. It is said that Burnham found his calling, for he said then that he wanted to become "the greatest architect in the city or country"<sup>90</sup>.

Burnham married Margaret Sherman, the daughter of a well off businessman of Chicago in 1876. This tie provided Burnham with a yet greater network of acquaintances that permitted the easier rise of his office and the projects they were dealing with.

One of Burnham's most well known phrases regarding the waterfront said that:

Chicago's most valuable lands "by right belonged to the people" "their one great unobstructed view, stretching away to the horizon, where water and clouds seem to meet"<sup>91</sup>. This would be a signature on all the urban projects Burnham participated in, including the World Columbian Exposition and the Plan of Chicago of 1909.

John Wellborn Root (1850-1891) (figure 3- 51 ) was born in Lumpkin Georgia. He was a musical prodigy and a success in almost everything he set himself to. When the civil war reached Atlanta, Root's father decided to send him to England, where he studied temporarily at Clare Mount School in Liverpool, but he soon returned to the United States. He started studying engineering at New York University in 1866, for though his interest was in architecture, there were no architecture schools in the whole of the United States at the time. He graduated with honours and worked as an apprentice of James Renwick Jr., the architect of saint Patrick's Cathedral. At the age of twenty Root became superintendent of construction firm of Manhattan which built the Grand Central Terminal.

John Root moved to Chicago in 1871, after the great fire, to help reconstruct the destroyed city. Later, together with Burnham, Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan, Root founded the Western Association of Architects, to set some kind of competition against the eastern architects that were achieving more power nationally. This association, which had Root as a president in 1886 was a product of the Chicago School of Architecture. Root's principles matched mostly with those of Sullivan, and this can be observed in an article he wrote in 1888: "a new spirit of beauty springs out of the past, but is not tied to it, it studies tradition, but is not enslaved by them"<sup>92</sup>. This principle was supposed to be used for the

architecture of the World Columbian Exposition. But it turned to be one of the most polemic issues in and after the Exposition.

Burnham and Root founded an architecture firm in 1873, which started up by building a house for John B Sherman in Prairie Avenue, the street occupied by the elite that had been guided by Potter Palmer to the neighbourhood. Later they built houses for Sidney A Kent, and James Walker, all related by business to the Union Stock Yards.

Later, the office designed and built more complex buildings such as the Grannis Block, a seven-story office building in Dearborn Street. In 1881 Peter Chardon Brooks III hired both young architects to build the tallest building yet in Chicago: the Montauk block. Brooks wanted a specific aesthetic for his building and specified: "The building throughout is to be for use and not for ornament. Its beauty will be in its all adaptation to use"<sup>93</sup>. The structure was borrowed from a system invented by German engineer Frederick H Baumann, and façade designed by Peter B Wight. Another relevant building Burnham and Root worked on was the Rookery (figure 3-52) , probably the most famous of them all, a dark formidable exterior with fanciful Islamic minarets.



figure 3-51 - 1890 - John Wellborn Root  
source: <http://library.thinkquest.org/C006928/media/Root.gif>



figure 3-52 - 1890s - Rookery building  
Source: Great Buildings of Chicago knowledge cards, Chicago Historical Society. Pomergranate communications.

<sup>90</sup> Hines, Thomas S., *Burnham of Chicago*, Oxford University Press, 1974.p.12

<sup>91</sup> Burnham Daniel H., and Bennett, Edward H. *The Plan of Chicago*. Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.

<sup>92</sup> Root, "Broad Art Criticism", *Inland Architect* 11, February 1888, 3-5

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Moore, Charles, *Daniel H. Burnham, architect, planner of cities*. Vols 1 and 2. Houghton Mifflin, 1921.

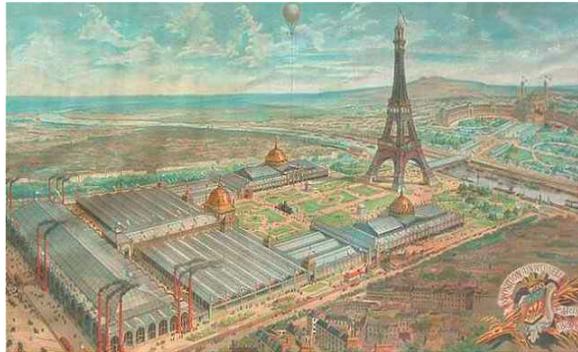
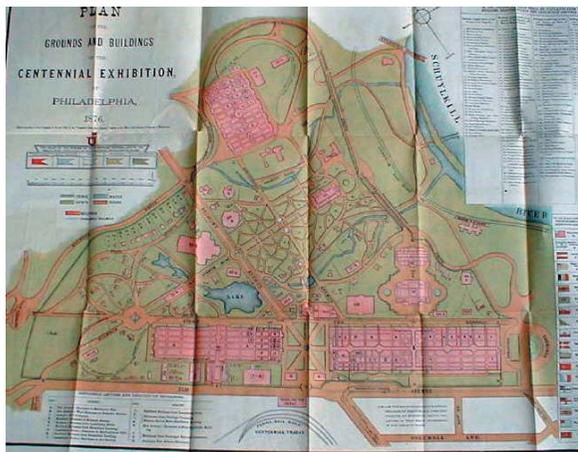


figure 3- 53 - 1889- Expo Paris  
source: <http://www.francebalade.com/paris/toureffel7.htm>

figure 3- 53b - 1876 - Expo Philadelphia  
source: *Visitors Guide to the Centennial Exhibition and Philadelphia*, JB Lippincott and Co. Philadelphia, 1876.



### World Columbian Exposition – project – 1893

*The project of the World's Columbian Exposition was the product of the collaboration of different actors, but it was mainly the responsibility of two architects, Burnham and Olmsted. Both architects designed a space of harmony between architecture and landscape, despite their differences in design principles and priorities. The fair had an important influence in the development of labour laws, being the first institutional development in which the eight hour work day was a rule. The fair therefore affected the transformation of leisure time as well as activities. The main leisure principle in the fair was the didactic element, even though passive recreation was also part of the event, with the strolling and contemplative attitude of the visitors. All kinds of innovations, technological and behavioural, were seen in the exhibition.*

### Context and administration

The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 is one of the most published events in Chicago history, but we agree with Miller<sup>94</sup> that the preparations for it were more relevant for the city than the fair itself.

The idea for the fair did not rise out of the blue. The possibility of having a fourth centennial celebration of the discovery of America, combined with the success that previous International Exhibitions had had, gave enough reason for the will to organise one in the United States. The Exhibition of Paris of 1889 (figure 3-53) had been an international success and the 1876 Exposition of Philadelphia (figure 3-53b) showed

that it was possible to organise such an event in the country. The first formal proposal to make a Columbian Exposition was held in Washington DC in 1888. Through this a budget of five million dollars was assigned for the construction of the US participation and a Board of Promotion was formed for the organisation. This commission proposed a Fair that would include representation from the three Americas, convoking governments of Central and South America to participate. The fact that Washington was chosen as the site of the Fair disturbed the authorities of other cities and a heated competition began to host the Fair. Many cities were competing for holding the Exhibition which was planned for 1892. However, by 1889 only two cities remained on the table: New York and Chicago.

Chicago, its ruling class and its citizens seemed to be convinced that the Fair had to be held in their city. In June 1889, while discussions for the location were still being held Mayor De Witt C. Criegee appointed a citizens committee and passed the resolution: "the men who have helped build Chicago want the fair, and having a just and well sustained claim, they intend to have it"<sup>95</sup>

According to novelist Erik Larson:

"Nowhere was civic pride a more powerful force than in Chicago, where men spoke of the 'Chicago spirit' as if it were a tangible force and prided themselves on the speed with which they had rebuilt the city after the great fire of 1871. They had not merely restored it; they had turned it into the nation's leader in commerce manufacturing and architecture"<sup>96</sup>

The international press also considered the spectacle of the fair as interesting as the one

of the city itself. The *London Times* expressed:

“The remarkable city of Chicago itself, which is the greatest marvel of rapid and substantial growth in the United States, and will be found by the visitor as much of a curiosity as any the Exhibition can show”<sup>97</sup>

In contrast with the Exposition in Barcelona, which was the idea of one man and carried out practically by one other person, the one of Chicago was the product of a whole generation of men and women from all kinds of disciplines.

“The exposition is not the conception of any single mind; it is not the result of any single effort; but it is the grandest conception of all minds and the best obtainable result of all the efforts put forth by all the people who have in any manner contributed to its creation.”<sup>98</sup>

The quest of gaining the appointment for the Fair was difficult competition between New York and Chicago, but Chicago managed to raise enough votes and investment in the fair as to gain the commission. Lyman Gage, president of the First National Bank, was responsible for great part of this campaign. He managed to convince more than thirty wealthy businessmen of Chicago to invest in the campaign and the realisation of the Exposition.

In April 1890 the decision was made, and the congress finally decided in favour of Chicago, due to the fact that it was extremely well communicated, it was able to carry out great municipal projects and offered a greater investment package for the realisation. When

the commission was back to Chicago to celebrate the appointment for the Fair the location had not been yet decided.

The budget for the fair had to at least start at five million, and once again, as in most of the public works made in Chicago, the money was raised from private corporations and investors. This would only make one third of the total needed for the construction of the fair. The rest of the expenses were covered by city bonds and even one third by the sales of tickets for the Fair.

Lyman Gage addressed the investors in 1891 saying:

“The fairgoer will see beautiful buildings radiate with colour and flashing the sunlight from their gilded pinnacles and domes. And beyond all, will behold the boundless waters of lake Michigan, linking the beautiful with the sublime, the present with the past, the finite with the infinite”<sup>99</sup>

Frederick Law Olmsted was named to choose the location of the Fair, and he accepted reluctantly. After the experience he had had in Central Park of New York he considered the work on public urban parks as a struggle against abuse and vandalism.

After Olmsted was named, the Commission also hired Burnham and Root to be in charge of the whole architectural design of the Fair.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility and realisation<sup>100</sup>

As Olmsted explained in his article on *the Inland Architect*<sup>101</sup> the choice of Jackson Park was not the first one. Olmsted’s idea of having the fair in the lakefront was paramount, for the lake gave scenery that was irreplaceable. However, he had preferred the northern parks, which already had grown vegetation and tall enough trees to provide a good environment for the coming buildings (for location of parks see figure 3-48b). The northern parks also had a spectacular view of the harbour activity, which Olmsted found appealing and suitable for the Fair. One committee in the directory of the Exposition advised not to place the exposition in the northern parks, for the transportation companies would not agree with extending their railway lines further north. On the other hand the south park would be a good location, they advised, for the railway lines were already there.

<sup>94</sup> Miller, Donald L., *City of the Century, the Epic of Chicago and the Making of America*, Simon and Shuster paperbacks, New York, 1996. pg.378

<sup>95</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, August 2, 1889

<sup>96</sup> Larson, Erik, *The Devil and the White City, murder, magic and madness at the fair that changed America*, Vintage, New York, 2003

<sup>97</sup> “The Great City of the Lakes”, *London Times*, September 21, 1891.

<sup>98</sup> Johnson, Rossiter, ed. *A History of the World’s Columbian Exposition Held in Chicago in 1893*. New York: Appleton, 1897-1898. pg.347

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in Rydell, Robert. *All the World’s A Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984. pg.43

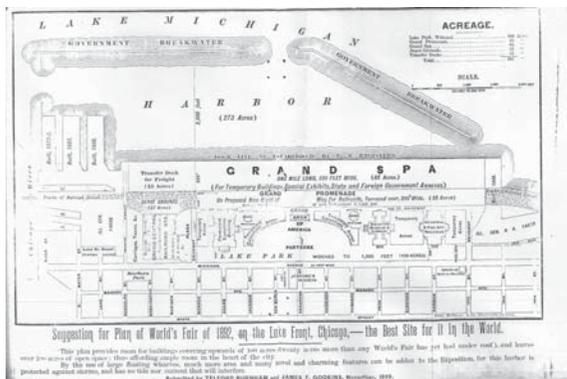
<sup>100</sup> Note that in this section of the chapter we are including the realisation as part of the project. This is due to the fact that the exposition was completely realised according to planned.

<sup>101</sup> Olmsted, Frederick Law, “the landscape architecture of the World’s Columbian Exposition” *Inland Architect and New Record*, vol.22, no.2 (September 1893) p.19



figure 3- 54a - 1889- Chicago. The site of the World's Fair author: Telford Burnham and James Gookins source: Newberry Library.

figure 3- 54b - 1889- Suggestion for Plan of World's Fair of 1892, on the Lakefront, Chicago - The Best Site for it in the World author: Telford Burnham and James Gookins source: Newberry Library.



Even before Olmsted would propose Jackson Park as the site of the fair, Telford Burnham, a Chicago lawyer, who formulated the plan for the town of Burnham in the south of Chicago, wrote a pamphlet defending the lakefront site of the fair. But this lakefront was neither the northern nor the southern parks. It was actually Grant Park (figure 3-54a and 4-54b). Many of the justifications given by Telford Burnham for the location in Grant park refer to the geographical location and the relation to the city. However, his justifications related to the waterfront are revealing of the general appeal to the site.

“The mile of protected deep waterfront, open to the world, affords opportunity for the display of marine architecture, improvements and inventions, and aquatic features of every kind requiring navigable water. And as the pure, deep water of Lake Michigan is always cold, its immediate presence, as we all know, will give a temperature and quality to the atmosphere, through the hot summer months, that will lend a special charm to this World’s Fair”<sup>102</sup>

The choice of the location was finally set in Jackson Park, ten kilometres south of the centre of Chicago and extended throughout about 243 hectares. Olmsted was quite familiar with the area, for he had been the first to present a project for Jackson and Washington parks in 1871. Olmsted was doubtlessly appealed by the lake, to him Chicago had “but one natural object at all distinctively local, which can be regarded as object of much grandeur, beauty or interest. This is the lake.”<sup>103</sup> In spite of his appeal to the lakefront Olmsted had his reservations about the choice of the location:

“Jackson Park was one square mile of desolation, mostly treeless, save for pockets of various kinds of oak – burr, pin, black and scarlet – rising from a tangled undergrowth of elder, wild plum, and willow. In the most exposed portions there was only sand tufted with marine and prairie grasses. One writer called the park “remote and repulsive”; another “a sandy waste of unredeemed desert land.”<sup>104</sup>

Daniel Burnham was named chief of construction of the Exposition. For this job he collaborated with John Wellborn Root, with whom they shared one of the most successful architecture firms in Chicago. The role of Burnham in the fair was paramount; he took the lead of the fair up to every extent. Burnham’s men called him *Commander in Chief*.

The first project for the fair, which had taken almost a year to prepare, was presented to the Fair Committee in December 1890, by John Root. The plan considered a hundred hectare piece of land. The drawing envisioned a mile-square plain on the lakeshore, sculpted by dredges into a wonderland of lagoons and canals. The exposition would have hundreds of buildings, but in the drawing they sketched the most important, among them the five immense palaces around the Grand Court. (figure 3- 55)

After the approval of the first project the search for the architects who would be in charge of the architecture of the Fair began. These were finally: George B. Post, Charles McKim, Richard M. Hunt of New York, Robert Peabody of Boston and Henry van Brunt of Kansas City. In this first selection there were no architects from Chicago. The architectural style of the chosen architects was homogeneous; Hunt, McKim and Peabody

had been educated in the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, which dictated their design tendencies clearly. Burnham was convinced that the Fair should be a monument to architecture, unlike any other before it. After some discussions Root and Burnham did choose five Chicago firms for the rest of the Fair's buildings. Among them were Adler and Louis Sullivan.

The proposal, project and realisation went further than the mere objective of the fair as a space of promotion of technology and international recognition. In the case of Chicago the use of architecture, especially neo-classical one, was a way of settling that Chicago was a city of culture, not just of commercial development. And this aim was supported by the business lords as well as politicians and the developing cultural elite. The desire to impose moral order through culture was clear throughout the fair and further on with events and institutions.

“the most obtuse observer cannot fail to perceive that the path of humanity has been upward from the beginning; that every century has been better than that which preceded; that man has advanced further and more rapidly in the last fifty years, than in the previous fifty centuries; and that we are living in the best age of history and the most favoured portion of the globe. We stand on the summit of time.”<sup>105</sup>

By mid winter 1891, Burnham, Olmsted and Hunt met to present the drawings of the Fair's main structures to the Grounds and Buildings Committee. Olmsted was also present at the meeting and though he was pleased with great part of the plan he did perceive that the project was too sober and monumental for his taste. Besides, he thought fairs should be fun, and this one had

no hints of being so. This is why in the meeting he suggested the enlivening of the grounds with lagoons and canals traversed by boats. The boats would eventually become an obsession for him. Olmsted had 26 months to transform the dump that Jackson Park was into a prairie Venice, yet the palaces to be made by the architects were so immense that their construction was likely to consume nearly all the remaining time.

The struggle for profit in the fair project appeared in all segments of its realisation. There was a caustic battle between electricity companies to illuminate the fair. The lease was finally given to Westinghouse, whose AC system was cheaper and more efficient than the rest, with a bid of almost four hundred thousand dollars. Electricity was one of the main innovations in the Chicago Fair, not as an outbreak but especially in quantity. The Fair used ten times the electrical power used in the Exposition of Paris of 1889 and three times as much energy as was used in the whole city of Chicago at the time.

Officials worried about a couple of threats to the success of the fair. These were crime and health security. To prevent the problem of crime Burnham insisted on the creation of a large police force, the Columbian guard. On the issue of health the project for the fair included a whole section of purified water and a sewage system that largely surpassed that of the city of Chicago.

Regarding the relation between the fair and the workers movements, the role of the fair was pioneering and advanced compared to the local and international situation of workers and unions. On February 13<sup>th</sup> 1891 the city's unions met with the officers of the Exposition to demand the limit of their workday to eight hours, pay

union scale wages and hire union workers before others. After a couple of weeks of deliberation the fair officials accepted the eight hour day but not the rest of the claims.

<sup>102</sup> Burnham, Telford, *Chicago the site of the World's Fair of 1892 : the main exposition on the lake front, and special exhibitions at the principal parks, connected by a railroad circuit with all other lines of transportation, and the heart of the city*, Chicago, Rand, McNally & Co., 1889. R 1832 .134. pg.13

<sup>103</sup> Olmsted, Frederick Law, “the landscape architecture of the World's Columbian Exposition” *Inland Architect and New Record*, vol.22, no.2 (September 1893) p.18

<sup>104</sup> Olmsted F.L., “A report upon the landscape”, 8, *Olmsted Papers*, reel 41.

<sup>105</sup> Ingalls, John J., “Lessons of the Fair” *Cosmopolitan* 16, December 1893. pg.141

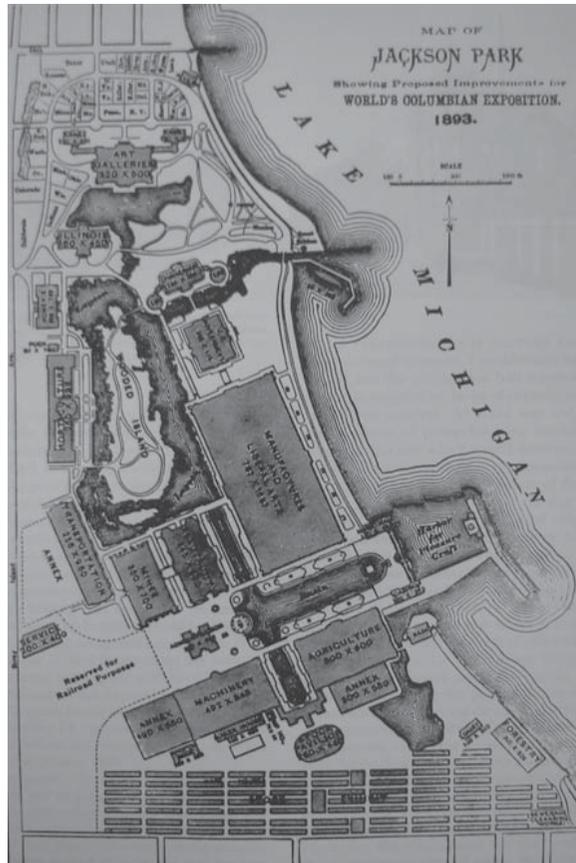


figure 3- 55- 1893- Map of Jackson Park showing Improvements for the World's Columbian Exposition  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," *Chicago History*, 12 (Fall 1983), 11-27.  
This was a preliminary design of the Fair. Note the differences between this and figure 3-58, published during the Exposition.

### Olmsted's vision

Olmsted's complaints on the location of the fair were numerous and justified. The land where the Fair was to be built was:

"forbidden. At different periods in the past sandbars had been formed in the lake a few hundred feet from and parallel with the shore."<sup>106</sup>

He described the predictions of a geologist who had calculated that in 1893 the water would rise to 1.2 metre higher than the level in 1891. However, he accepted to design the landscape in this unpredictable environment.

One of Olmsted's main ideas for the layout of the Fair had to do with the lagoon character of it. The lagoon and canals were not to be as he had planned them for Jackson Park twenty years earlier. Instead they would have a more formal character, with built banks and buildings surrounding them. Once the project was already in development Olmsted quoted Burnham's address to the president of the Exposition in October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1892.

"There should be a formal canal leading northwards from this court to a series of broader waters of a lagoon character, by which nearly the entire site would be penetrated, so that the principal exposition buildings would each have water as well as land frontage, and would be approachable by boats; that near the middle of the lagoon system there should be an island, about six hectares in area, in which there would be clusters of the largest trees growing up on the site"<sup>107</sup>

Burnham continued his speech stating that the island had to be empty of buildings.

This would finally not be the case, but the speech reflected that though the plan was still sketchy, the ideas that were finally realised were already there. Olmsted remarked that the whole project for the relation between the water and the land was present from the beginning. That the provision of plants which could live under and over water was one of the first objectives, that the inclusion of pleasure boats was to be one of the main issues of the plan and that the construction of bridges and their reflection would be constantly part of the project.

In September 1893, Olmsted published an article in *The Inland architect and News Record*<sup>108</sup>, in which he not only made a thorough description of his intentions in the design of the landscape of the Exposition, but also made an accurate description of the definition of the term *landscape architect*. The term that had been commonly used until then for the discipline Olmsted practised was landscape gardener. Olmsted quotes Sir Walter Scott in his disapproval of the term, for he considered it contradictory. The garden, as other words with the same root such as girdle or girth, implied the concept of a limited space, controlled, selective and separated from others. Meanwhile, the word landscape as well as scenery, according to Olmsted, referred to the mass that prevailed over the detail. Proportions, perspective and composition would be more relevant than detail. He continues by defining the term *landscape architect* as one that is not limited to the works of building but whose role is wider in sense and application.

Olmsted visited Europe during the last months of the preparation of the fair, because of health problems and left his assistant Harry Codman in charge of his work at the fair. During

his stay in Paris he observed the Parisian gardens and was critical about their shape and feeling, he said they were not pleasant to the eye nor to the foot and set to produce a different design for the Fairs gardens where: “simplicity and reserve will be practised and petty effects and frippery avoided.”<sup>109</sup> Olmsted was doubtful about the architecture of the Fair and used the comparison with Paris buildings as an example:

“[The Paris buildings] have much more colour and much more ornament in colour, but much less in moulding and sculpture than I had supposed. I question if ours are not at fault at this respect and if they are not going to look too assuming of architectural stateliness and to be over bonded with sculptural and other efforts for grandeur and grandiloquent pomp.”<sup>110</sup>

Burnham was touched by Olmsted’s comments and decided thus on the colour of the buildings:

“We talked about the colours, and finally the thought came, ‘let us make it all perfectly white’. I don’t remember who made the suggestion. It might have been one of those things that reached all minds at once. At any rate, I decided it”<sup>111</sup>

Olmsted found the white city overpowering and found it necessary to provide a counterbalance of dense, broad, luxuriant green bodies of foliage. While he was away in Europe Harry Codman, his assistant, died and there was an urgent need to replace him. For this role Olmsted chose his superintendent Rudolf Ulrich, whom he did not fully trust. Therefore he had to be explicit about the design and realisation of the landscape project. Olmsted wrote to Ulrich:

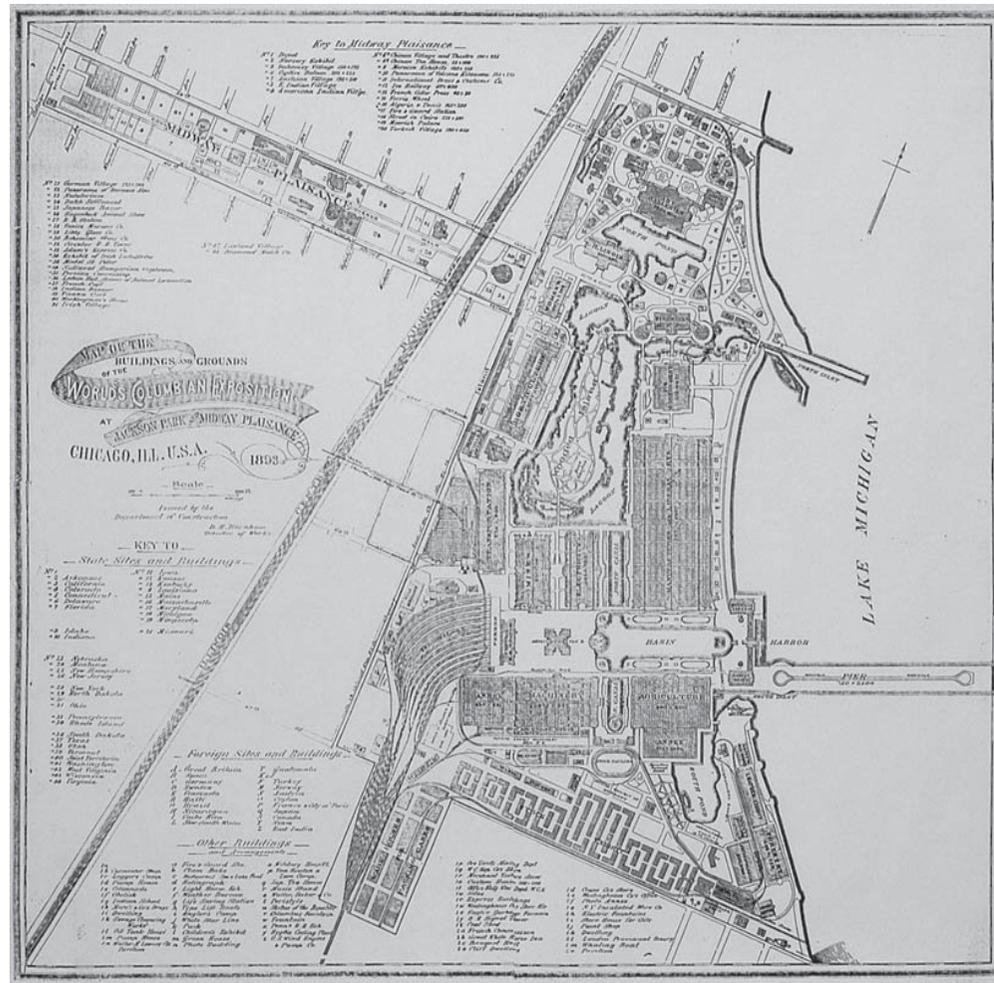


figure 3-56 - 1908 - Map of the Buildings and Grounds of the World’s Columbian Exposition at Jackson Park and Midway Plaisance.

author: Department of Construction. Daniel H Burnham  
source: Newberry Library. SC map 1F G4104 C6 2W6

<sup>106</sup> Olmsted, Frederick Law, “the landscape architecture of the World’s Columbian Exposition” *Inland Architect and New Record*, vol.22, no.2 (September 1893) p.19

<sup>107</sup> idem. p.20

<sup>108</sup> idem.

<sup>109</sup> Olmsted, FL, *letter to John*, May 15 1892, Olmsted’s papers, reel 22.

<sup>110</sup> Olmsted, FL, “*Report by F.L.O.*” April 1892, Olmsted’s papers, reel 41.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Hines, Thomas S., *Burnham of Chicago*, Oxford University Press, 1974, p.101.



figure 3-57 - 1893 - Exposition bird eye view  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive.

figure 3-58- 1892 - Illinois building  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," Chicago History, 12 (Fall 1983), 1figure



"Never loose sight of the fact that our special responsibility as landscape artists applies primarily to the broad comprehensive scenery of the exposition. This duty is not to make a garden, or to produce garden effects, but relates to the scenery of the exposition as a whole; first of all and most essentially the scenery, in a broad and comprehensive way... If for lack of time and means, or of good weather, we come short in matters of detailed decoration, our failure will be excusable, if we fall short in matters of affecting broad landscape effects we shall fail in our primary and essential duty."<sup>112</sup>

Olmsted had complaints on many issues of the fair. As we noted earlier he complained about the fact that the Wooded Island was not used as a natural landscape of contemplation and relaxation but was instead used also for the Japanese pavilion and some exhibits of the horticultural exhibition. This bothered Olmsted, but was not such a negative issue as what he found of the added small pavilions. He affirmed that these were located without consulting him or his firm and that these structures damaged the landscape of the fair.

Another issue criticised by Olmsted was the conflicts with the Illinois railway company, which caused one main problems. It was the fact that they changed the layout of their rail tracks short before the opening of the Fair, which caused the need for a transformation of the horticultural building and the reduction of one of the lagoons. According to Olmsted this was very damaging for the landscape.

Finally, Olmsted described the landscape conditions of the shore in his project as: "Clean, graceful, intricate, picturesque, green drapery, varied in tints and pleasing in its shadows and reflections."<sup>113</sup> For this purpose he chose two

types of forestation, a large variety of willows and herbaceous bog and waterside plants.

### The buildings of the Fair

Just before the opening ceremony of the Fair the elections result gave Carter Henry Harrison another term as a city mayor. The opening day was attended by the mayor and by most of the relevant business and political characters of Chicago, including the committee of the fair and the architects responsible for the buildings. The carriages left the centre of town from Michigan Avenue up to Midway Plaisance and then went into the Avenue of the Nations.

The Daily Inter Ocean stated in May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1893: "As the whole of Greek life was symbolised in the Acropolis, so in the drama at Jackson Park yesterday the whole life of America and of other civilised nations was portrayed".

The White City was impressive, (figure 3-57) and opposed to the black city that Chicago had become. The White City had clean public bathrooms, pure water, ambulance service, electric streetlights, sewage processing system, and even a day-care for children.

The most impressive way to access the fair was by the lake as described by Johnson:

"The common verdict during the summer of the exposition was that the best way to approach the grounds for the first time was by the water route. It was held that the first impression, if not always the most lasting, was of great importance as affecting the subsequent point of view. The sail up the lake from the city gave ample opportunity to gain the proper frame of mind without serious interruption. The boats landed at the long pier, facing the Peristyle. At first

one saw the whole of this, its splendid proportions, harmony and symmetry and then, as he came nearer, its details rose impressively before him”<sup>114</sup>

Most of the grounds of the Exposition were, as mentioned before, occupied by the white architecture proposed by Burnham. The northern portion of the grounds was taken by the buildings sponsored by the states and territories. The Midwestern states were located at the Fair’s entrance on 57<sup>th</sup> street and formed a semi circle around the northern edge of the grounds. The lakefront was occupied by the New England States. The buildings of the southern states were grouped toward the centre. The most noticeable buildings of the lakeshore area were those of California, designed following a Moorish style, and the Illinois Building (figure 3-58), which could rank amongst the Great Buildings.

The northern buildings surrounded the North Pond (figure 3-59), a body of water that was limited by one of the greatest buildings of the Fair, the Fine Arts Building (figure 3-60), or ‘Palace of Fine Arts’. This building was designed by Charles B. Atwood in a ‘Roman Style’. In the centre of the building there was a dome topped by a great sculpture. This was one of the few buildings that was made fireproof, to protect the objects held inside it. The construction was made of brick, covered with staff, a hard drying coating of cement, plaster and fibre used on most of the buildings of the fair. This coating gave the buildings an appearance of white stone tiling. The structure of the galleries, roof and floors was made of iron and glass.

The southern part of the northern grounds on the lakefront (figure 3-61) was occupied by the Foreign Buildings. These were smaller structures surrounded by lawns, walks and beds of flowers.

The main buildings in this area were those of France, Ceylon, Norway, Germany, Spain, Canada and Great Britain. Just next to the British pavilion one of the lakefront structures was placed, the Naval Pier. There, a replica of the battleship *Illinois* was moored on the pier. Westward inland from the Naval Pier, was the greatest extension of the Main Lagoon. The wooded Isle was a six and a half hectare stretch of land located in the lagoon and was an important part of the horticultural exhibition. Olmsted had wanted it to remain completely empty of buildings, giving a natural image to it. However, because of pressure from the Committee the Japanese pavilion was placed in the island.

To the east of the main lagoon was the Fisheries Building, one of the smallest Great Buildings. It was designed by Henry Yves Cobb of Chicago and it included a 162 foot by 362 foot building and had a curved arcade and a polygonal pavilion on each end. The exhibition included submarine plants and animals. Ten huge aquariums were located in the building, most of them with salt water from the Atlantic.

On the west side of the lagoon was the Woman’s Building. This was an Italian renaissance building designed by Sophia Hayden of Boston, who had recently graduated from the MIT. The work of women was exhibited in this pavilion, but there was no competition in the building. Artefacts invented by women would participate and compete against males in the other Great Buildings.

South of the entrance to the Midway, opposite of the wooded island was the Horticultural Building (figure 3-62). This building was designed by William le Baron Jenney and Mundie. The building’s main characteristic was a glass dome and roof. Under it a great collection of horticultural products was in exhibition.



figure 3- 59 - 1893-North Pond  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, “The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World’s Columbian Exposition,” *Chicago History*, 12 (Fall 1983)

<sup>112</sup> Olmsted, FL, *letter to Ulrich*, March 3, 1893, Olmsted Papers, reel 41

<sup>113</sup> Olmsted, Frederick Law, “the landscape architecture of the World’s Columbian Exposition” *Inland Architect and New Record*, vol.22, no.2 (September 1893) p.21

<sup>114</sup> Johnson, Rossiter, ed. *A History of the World’s Columbian Exposition Held in Chicago in 1893*. New York: Appleton, 1897-1898. pg.493



figure 3- 60 - 1893 - Art Palace  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," Chicago History, 12 (Fall 1983)

figure 3- 61 - 1890 - Lakefront  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," Chicago History, 12 (Fall 1983)



Further on southwards, next to the Fisheries building, there was the US Government Building. This iron and glass structure had an imposing central dome and housed exhibits from the US Post Office, War, Treasury, Fisheries, Agriculture and Interior Departments. East of this building there were some satellite pavilions, including a gun battery, a lifesaving station, a lighthouse, war balloons and the battleship *Illinois*.

The largest building in the Exposition, the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, was located just south of the US Government Building. It was almost 518 metre long and 243 metre wide and covered more than 12 hectares. The building was designed by George B. Post of New York. Inside the Corinthian ornamented building there was an avenue that covered its whole length and twenty six smaller galleries. As in most of the other buildings the roof was built in iron and glass and the façade was made of plaster that imitated marble.

To the west of the Manufactures building there were the Electricity and Mines and Mining Buildings (figure 3-63) . The façade of the Electricity Building was made of a series of Corinthian pilasters and pavilions at each corner were topped by 50 metre high towers. One of the simplest buildings in the site was the Hall of Mines and Mining. It was approximately 213 metres long by 106 metre wide and its façade was arched and embellished with sculptures representing mining and allied industries.

The only building in the White City that was not white was the Transportation Building designed by Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan. The architectural design of the building was bolder than all others. It was a much simpler building than the rest and the spectacular entrance

was reminiscent of Islamic architecture, with its *Golden Doorway* was painted red and decorated in colourful motifs. The building was divided in three sections, with the mid section holding a great cupola. Elevators were provided to reach the top of the building and have the magnificent view of the lake and the rest of the city. This was the first time an international exhibition was giving so much space and importance to transportation. The building was flanked by annexes in which rail locomotives and cars were exposed. A train station was also located just next to the Transportation Building, where trains from Chicago and beyond would arrive to the Fair.

The steamer that took visitors from downtown Chicago to the Fair would finally stop at its destination, the Casino Pier. The pier was 2,500 foot long and had a Movable Sidewalk that would transport passengers to the shore for only ten cents.

At the end of the movable sidewalk there was the harbour and immediately next the most monumental compound of the fair, the Court of Honour. The Court of Honour was made of a Great Basin and Great buildings around it (figure 3-64). The Peristyle (figure 3-65) was the first structure to be seen, a series of columns that connected the Music Hall with the Casino. At the centre of the Peristyle there was a grand archway dedicated to Columbus. The basin had the Statue of the Republic in the middle drawing the view of visitors to the symmetrical layout.

On the north of the Great Basin there was the Manufactures Building and on the southern side the Agricultural building. This building was designed by McKim, Mead and White. It occupied almost fifty thousand square metres and included a central dome of 40 metres of diameter. Connected to the agricultural building there was the Machinery Hall, comparable in size to the

Agricultural one, but with a Spanish Renaissance style.

One of the most impressive buildings in the site was the Administration Building. This was an imposing building, because of its dimensions and location. The building was placed on the head of the Basin and it was 80 metres wide by 70 metres long. The building was designed by Richard M.Hunt, and its dome was an imposing 67 metre high structure. Inside this building the main meetings of the officials of the fair were carried out.

South east of the Agricultural Building, on the shores of the Lake were the Forestry and Anthropology Buildings. The forestry Building, which followed the model of the one exhibited in Paris in 1889, was three times larger than the original. Its design was austere, practically all made of wood. The Anthropology Building was built to accommodate the overflow exhibits of the liberal arts section of the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building. A series of elements belonging to this pavilion were located forcefully in the water. These were the replicas of the Niña, Pinta and Santa Maria, which had been sent by the Spanish government, and the reproduction of an antique Viking ship from Norway.

The building that must have held the most valuable items in the whole fair was the monastery of La Rabida. This was a reproduction of the building in which Columbus had finalised his plans to sail across the Atlantic for the first time.

The only area that was not part of the monumental style of the rest of the fair was the one dedicated to livestock displays. However, it was a popular exhibit, showing species from the US and guest countries.

The exhibits and attractions of the Fair were numerous and diverse, we will not dwell in

each of these but will stop on the ones that are directly related to the ideas of leisure, which were filled with didactic principles and concepts of scientific development. As well as these ideas the idea of active leisure and sport was present also in the fair. The Agricultural building was filled with all types of grains coming from different parts of the world, as well as tobacco, farm products and breweries. The Anthropology Building had an impressive *collection* of dwellers from different parts of the world, including Bolivian and Native American Indians. The Electricity building was a spectacle of light and communications, showing telegraph messages, a Kinetoscope and an earthquake laboratory. The Palace of Fine Arts displayed pieces of American, foreign and even Japanese art pieces. The Horticultural building had a great collection of flower gardens and fruit exhibits. The greatest building, the Manufactures and Liberal Arts housed all kinds of exhibits including musical instruments, Remington typewriters, University exhibits and the Yerkes telescope.

The Transportation Building did not only show warships, wagons, steamships and locomotives but also a bicycle exhibit, which demonstrated the way bicycles could enhance health, beauty and entertainment in the parks of Chicago and other great cities. Amongst the auxiliary buildings the ones that stood out were the Casino, which featured a great restaurant as well as sitting parlours with lavatories, smoking rooms and easy chairs.

Children were given a special space in the Fair, the Children's Building. This was a quite innovative idea, for children did not yet have a space of their own in the developing cities of the nineteenth century.



figure 3- 62- Horticultural Building  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," Chicago History, 12 (Fall 1983),

figure 3- 63- Mining Building  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," Chicago History, 12 (Fall 1983),





figure 3- 64- East View  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," Chicago History, 12 (Fall 1983),

figure 3- 65- The Peristyle  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," Chicago History, 12 (Fall 1983),



The inside of the building was filled with murals depicting Grimm's fairy tales and all the toys that were being produced at the time were in exhibition. The active purposes of the fair were also extended to the children. The Building had a complete gymnasium in the centre of the main floor. In the building a kitchen garden and a Swedish workshop were prepared for girls and boys respectively. The building even offered day-care for children, where a much greater amount of babies than expected were left for an hourly fee.

Despite the investment put in the Jackson Park area of the fair, it was not limited to the grounds of the park, where the whole organised, civic and ordered Exposition was. There was another section of the fair, a private initiative catered by Sol Bloom which was supposed to provide education about alien cultures. The Midway Plaisance was far from providing an educative and didactic environment, it was a fun place, a great lawn of pleasure stretching one and a half kilometres from Jackson Park to the border of Washington Park, a showcase of entertainment and curious exhibition of world races and populations. One of the main attractions of the Midway was the Ferris wheel (figure 3-66). The wheel was invented by George Washington Gale Ferris, who was dared to build an engineering project which would surpass the Eiffel Tower of the Paris Exhibition. His project was qualified as too ambitious by the organisers of the fair, but Ferris insisted and carried on his project, building finally the most popular attraction of the Fair. Another popular attraction was the captive balloon, which, as in the Barcelona exhibition of 1888 it provided a general view of the grounds of the fair and the city next to it.

The Midway also provided the

reproduction of a series of villages from different parts of the World. Algerian, Tunisian, Chinese, German, Dutch Indies, German and Irish villages were in exhibit, showing a prejudiced and static image of foreign peoples. Other strange structures were erected at the midway, such as a reproduction of Saint Peter's Cathedral of Rome in a one-sixteenth scale, the ice railway – a sort of roller coaster – a Moorish palace and a street in Cairo. The presence of the natatorium showed once again the way swimming, as other sports were entering everyday life.

The most visited sites throughout the Exposition were the Captive balloon in the Midway Plaisance and the Ferris wheel. However there was one event that attracted the greatest amount of people in one day to the Fair, this was the burning of the Cold Storage Building on July 9<sup>th</sup> 1893. A great storm approached the city and the sky turned grey, there was a powerful wind and the cupola of the Cold Storage Building caught fire. The fire was extinguished but the building was still smoking the next day. The news provoked the attendance of the next day to rise to over 100,000 visitors. The following week the arrest of Burnham was ordered for the risk that had been taken by the burning of the building, and because of the excess of expenses in the Fir. Burnham was finally not arrested but a Retrenchment Committee was named for cutting costs of the fair.

### Repercussions

The popularity of the event was clear from the beginning. Even while the construction was going on there were thousands of people who would pay a ticket only to see the building site, for it was the most impressive construction site ever witnessed. Later, since its opening, the

World's Columbian Exposition had the greatest number of visitors any international event in the United States ever had. There were 27 million visitors estimated, including 14 million from outside the US (figure 3-67).

The final appreciation of Olmsted of the fair and the events in turned out to be quite positive. He appreciated the work of Burnham and admired his capacity of dealing with the organisation and the different architects. However he was still not satisfied by the predominance buildings had over the landscape. He believed that buildings: "intercepted vistas and disturbed spaces intended to serve for the relief of the eye." Apart from the formal aspect of the fair, Olmsted found that one of the most pernicious elements were the high prices of the restaurants. Cleanliness did not reach the standards of European fairs, according to Olmsted. His tendency to the natural aspect of human behaviour led him to find the events proposed in the exposition to be too prepared; he would have wished "minor incidents...of a less evidently prepared character; less formal, more apparently spontaneous and incidental".

As in most of these events, there were positive and negative qualifications of its results. The praise on the fair was generalised in the local and national press. Remarks such as that of Mary Hartwell Catherwood: "What shall we do when this wonderland is closed?- when it disappears – when the enchantment comes to an end?"<sup>115</sup>. Or the article in the Chicago Tribune: "Chicago has disappointed her enemies and astonished the world."<sup>116</sup>

Other positive impacts of the fair, such as the one of boosting trade and commerce were remarked some years after its closing by

Ferdinand Peck, for example, who said that:

"It is a well known fact that more American firms have been able to form connections abroad and extend their foreign trade since 1893 than ever before, and to the Columbian Exposition might easily be traced the beginning of negotiations which have led to the closing of many recent large orders for American goods"<sup>117</sup>

The fair not only hosted a new concept of urbanism architecture and art, it also was a showcase of the latest technological developments. These innovations did not only belong to the heavy industry but also to the transformations of everyday life. This was the first time live music in New York was heard through a telephone in Chicago; the first moving pictures were shown in Edison's Kinetoscope; the first all electric kitchen was used. And even more trivial inventions were shown such as the first zipper, the chewing gum called Wrigley's Juicy Fruit, the new cereal called shredded wheat and the new beer Pabst Blue Ribbon.

Amongst the criticisms of the Exposition was the inconsistency and lack of coherence of American culture reflected in the Fair. Henry Adams commented in 1907 that

"The exposition itself defied philosophy. One might find fault till the last gate closed, one could still explain nothing that needed explanation. (...) since Noah's Arc, no such Babel of loose and ill-joined, such vague and ill-defined and unrelated thoughts and half thoughts and experimental outcries as the Exposition, had ever ruffled the surface of the Lakes."<sup>118</sup>



figure 3-66- 1893 - The Ferris Wheel  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," Chicago History, 12 (Fall 1983),

<sup>115</sup> Quoted in Muccigrosso, Robert. *Celebrating the new world: Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893*, Ivan R. Dee, 1993.

<sup>116</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, August 13, 1893

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Badger, Reid. *Great American Fair: the World's Columbian Exposition & American Culture*, Chicago, Nelson Hall, 1979. pg 113.

<sup>118</sup> Adams, Henry, *The Education of Henry Adams*, Courier Dover Publications, 2002 (1907). pg339

<sup>119</sup> Mayer, H.M. and Wade, R.C., *Growth of a Metropolis*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1969. pg.193

<sup>120</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, August 3, 1893

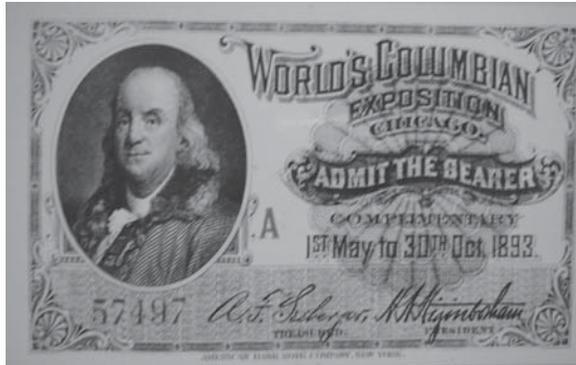


figure 3-67 - 1893 -Admission Ticket  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," *Chicago History*, 12 (Fall 1983),

figure 3-68- 1893 - The Caravels  
source: Frank A. Cassell and Marguerite E. Cassell, "The White City in Peril: Leadership and the World's Columbian Exposition," *Chicago History*, 12 (Fall 1983),



The contrast between the White City and Chicago itself was clear to many and the consequences of this are described by Meyer and Wade:

"Chicago had sought the fair to demonstrate the limitless possibilities of metropolitan man; when it closed the future seemed as uncertain as before. (...) The result was an artificial city that conflicted with the actual city in almost every important element. Where the American metropolis was chaotic and disorganised, the exposition was planned and orderly; while the real city was private and commercial, the ideal was public and monumental; where Chicago was Sooty and gray, the White City was clean and sparkling"<sup>119</sup>

The cost of the Fair was of course one of the most criticised issues and one in which the Retrenchment Committee had to react even in the middle of the period of the fair. According to the *Chicago Tribune* the financial management of the fair "can only be characterized as shamefully extravagant"<sup>120</sup>

in the effort of solving the financial problems some measures were taken during the last months of the fair. One of the measures was to pressure railroad companies to lower their fares.

To promote the fair there were boat races organised in the Court of Honour basin, organised by Millet. Another event to attract visitors was the *Great Midway Ball*, in the fair's natatorium. The *Chicago Tribune* called it the "ball of the Midway freaks" and "the strangest gathering since the destruction of the tower of Babel". The last event organised by Millet to attract more visitors to the closing of the fair was the planned day-long celebration with music, speeches, fireworks and

a landing of Columbus from the replicas of the caravels built in Spain for the fair (figure 3- 68). This event could not be carried out because a day before the closing of the fair, mayor Harrison was murdered and this brought a dark shadow on the celebrations. Instead of Millers organised party there was an austere celebration where the "star spangled banner" and "America" were played. 200,000 visitors attended the closing day.

The financial expenditures of the fair also included a great amount spent by the Exposition Company in replacing trees, sewer works, realigning roads and overall landscape requirements. The fair grounds were returned to the South Park Commissioners on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1894.

After the fair was closed one of the worrying issues was what to do about the structures left. There was one idea to set the whole site aflame. Neither McKim nor Burnham truly believed that the fair should be set aflame. The buildings had been designed to maximize the salvage value of their components. However, the public had a different view:

"Better to have it vanish suddenly, in a blaze of glory, than to fall into gradual disrepair and dilapidation. There is no more melancholy spectacle, than a festal hall, the morning after the banquet, when the guests have departed and the lights are extinguished"<sup>121</sup>

Finally, by July 1894, the seven greatest palaces of the exhibition were set on fire including the Manufacture and Liberal Art's building, Hunt's Dome, Sullivan's Golden Door.

The Fair also had an important influence

on the labour situation of Chicago. Even though the Fair had provided a great amount of jobs during the building of the grounds, by the end of 1892 and beginning of 1893, twenty percent of the workforce was laid off in the winter and at least ten percent of the population was living in extremely poor conditions. By the end of the Exposition the situation was still worse, as Larson remarked: “The white city had drawn men and protected them; the black city now welcomed them back, on the eve of winter, with filth, starvation, and violence.”<sup>122</sup> The impact of the closing of the fair in the city’s economy was great. The immense amount of infrastructure that had been settled for the Exposition was left empty and useless as mentioned by authors of the period and later by commentators.

“The city’s huge garment was too large for it; miles of empty stores, hotels, flat-buildings, showed its shrunken state. Tens of thousands of human beings, lured to the festive city by abnormal wages, had been left stranded, without food or a right to shelter in its tenantless buildings”<sup>123</sup>

“What a spectacle! What a human downfall after the magnificence and prodigality of the World’s fair which had so recently closed its doors! Hights of splendor, pride, exaltation in one month: depths of wretchedness, suffering, hunger, cold, in the next”<sup>124</sup>

The Fair had a powerful and lasting impact on the nation’s psyche. Every carnival since 1893 has included a Midway and a Ferris wheel, and every grocery store contains products born at the exposition. The Fair’s greatest impact lay in how it changed the way Americans

perceived their cities and their architects. The White City had given Americans a new image of the city. Cities did not have to be dark, unsafe and unhealthy, there was another option, they could be beautiful, white and healthy. The influence of the idea of the White City was not praised by everybody. Chicago architect and member of the Chicago School of Architecture Louis Sullivan considered that the White City had doomed America into fifty years of imitation and that it had stopped a cycle that had been born with the skyscrapers of Chicago.

The role of Burnham in the transformation of the image of the city in the following decades was very influential. Burnham was a pioneer of modern planning. Besides starting the *City Beautiful* movement Burnham was active especially in city planning. In 1894 Burnham and Charles Atwood designed their first great intervention on the lakefront linking Grant Park and Jackson Park with a driveway. The intention of this project was to give a proper frame of public space to the commercial area of the centre of the city. The project was not realised then but it would later influence some of the issues in the Plan of Chicago commended to Burnham in 1906. He also created urban plans for Cleveland, San Francisco and Manila.

The words of Rydell sum it up clearly:

“The fair lasted only six months. But through the City Beautiful Movement, popular novels, pulp fiction, souvenir albums, theatrical performances, and even a scale model of the White City built by George Ferris, which travelled to subsequent fairs, the World’s Columbian Exposition left a lasting imprint on American cultural landscape”<sup>125</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Boyesen, Hjalmar Hjorth. “A New World Fable”, *Cosmopolitan*, vol 16, no.2 (December 1893)

<sup>122</sup> Larson, Erik, *The Devil and the White City; murder, magic and madness at the fair that changed America*, Vintage, New York, 2003, pg.323.

<sup>123</sup> Herrick, *The Web of Life*, New York, Macmillan, 1900. pg.135

<sup>124</sup> Gilbert, James, *Perfect Cities: Chicago’s utopias of 1893*, University of Chicago Press 1991, p 211

<sup>125</sup> Rydell, Robert. *All the World’s A Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984. pg.68



figure 3- 69 - 1907- John Charles Olmsted  
source: www.wikipedia.org

figure 3- 70 - 1920s- F L Olmsted Jr.  
source: www.wikipedia.org



### 3.2.2.2- Olmsted Brothers

#### Olmsted Brothers – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

The firm was originally Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot formed by Frederick Law Olmsted's nephew and stepson, John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) (figure 3-69) and son Frederick Law Olmsted Junior (1870-1957) (figure 3-70), and Charles Eliot (1859-1897) (figure 3-71)

Eliot pioneered many of the fundamental principles of regional planning and laid the conceptual and political groundwork for land and historical conservancies across the world. In addition, he played a central role in shaping the Boston Metropolitan Park System, designed a number of public and private landscapes, and wrote prolifically on a host of topics. In 1883 he became an apprentice for Frederick Law Olmsted and Company. Afterwards he continued to work with the Olmsted Brothers.

The Olmsted brothers were college educated and had tremendous experience from working on their father's firm.

Between 1889 and 1895 the firm worked on the Lake Park of Milwaukee, following the landscape principles of their father and mentor. The park was located north of the city, still far from the nearest street car stop. Many elements that were found in the parks of F.L.O. Senior were planned for the park in Milwaukee. These included a meadow, a concert grove, carriage concourses, carriage drives, walking paths, and the sublime nature of the lake as experienced from the lake park.

After the early death of Eliot in 1898, the Olmsted Brothers formed an independent firm. They began their work as landscape designers in 1904 with the design of the first neighbourhood

parks in Chicago and continued to work as landscape designers for the city and the country. The Olmsted Brothers completed numerous high-profile projects, including park systems, universities, exposition grounds, libraries, hospitals, and state capitols. Notable commissions include the United States Capitol and White House Grounds, Great Smoky Mountains and Acadia National Parks, Yosemite Valley, Atlanta's Piedmont Park, and entire park systems in cities such as Seattle, Boston and Louisville. Some of these projects were developed within their father's firm. The firm employed nearly 60 staff at its peak in the early 1930s. Notable landscape architects in the firm included James Frederick Dawson. The last family member in the firm, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., retired in 1949.

The brothers were also among the founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and played an influential role in creating the National Park Service.

figure 3- 71 - 1890s - Charles Eliot  
source: The Magic City. Chicago Park District



## Olmsted Brothers - projects – 1895-Jackson Park

*We consider that the project of the Olmsted Brothers for Jackson Park was a compromise between their father's original project and the project for the Exposition. The elements of the park are a clear combination of both intentions and programme of both previous projects. Areas that were previously meant for lawns and just natural landscape were transformed into areas of sports and even nautical activities. Mainly one great building of the fair was maintained in the project, which would be meant for a museum, one of the didactic intentions of the Fair recently closed. The waterfront avenue is proposed for the first time as an element of both circulation for vehicles and strolling, for enjoying the views of the lake. The pier is kept, but this time as part of a system of nautical sports. Therefore basically, Olmsted brothers' project proposes a much more active use of leisure.*

## Context and administration

After the World Fair, in 1894 Jackson Park suffered the consequences of the terrible depression and of the destruction caused by the homeless and the embittered at the Pullman strike. Despite the fires and vandalism, reconstruction of the site also began in that year. The North Bridge was reconstructed. Some structures remained, such as the Japanese temple in the wooded Island and the German Pavilion. The Spanish Pavilion would later become the La Rabida hospital. The replicas of the ships of Columbus did remain in the yacht basin.

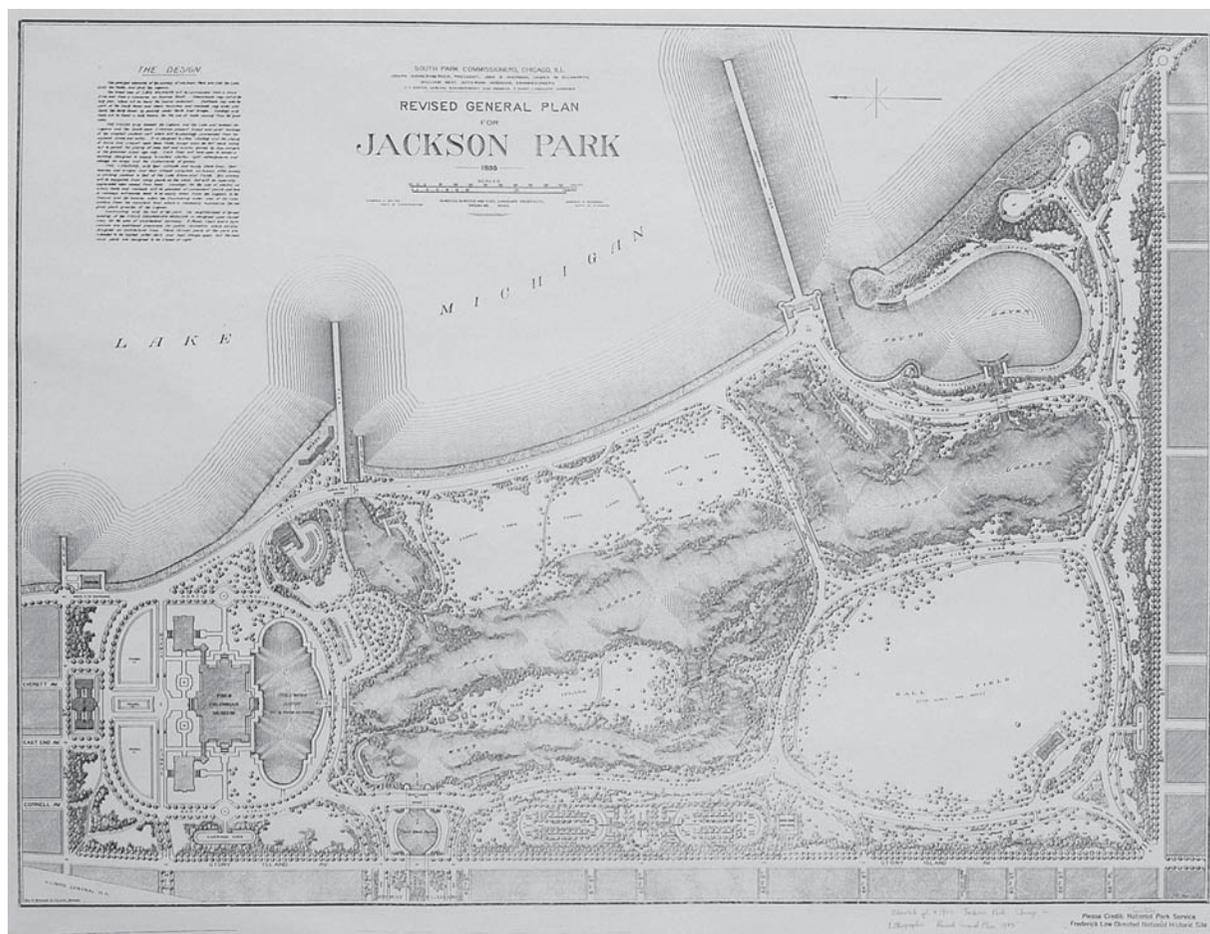


figure 3-72 - 1895 - Revised Genral Plan for Jackson Park  
author: Olmsted Brothers  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive

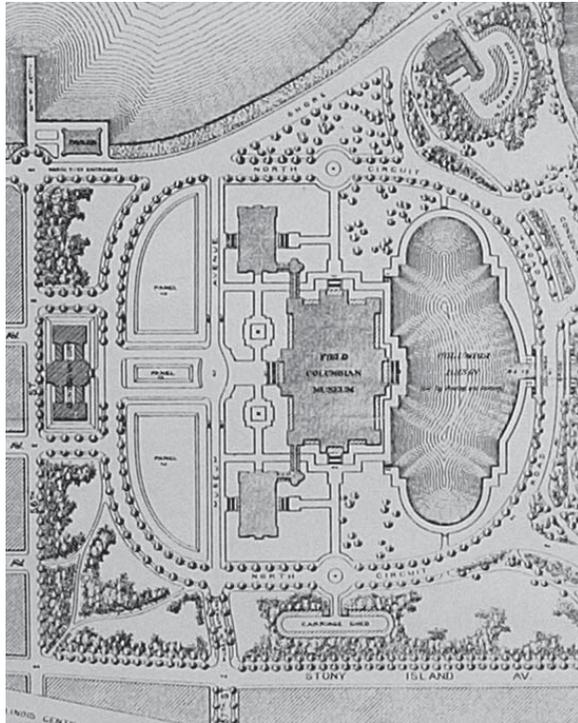


figure 3- 72a - 1895 - Revised Genral Plan for Jackson Park - detail  
 author: Olmsted Brothers  
 source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive

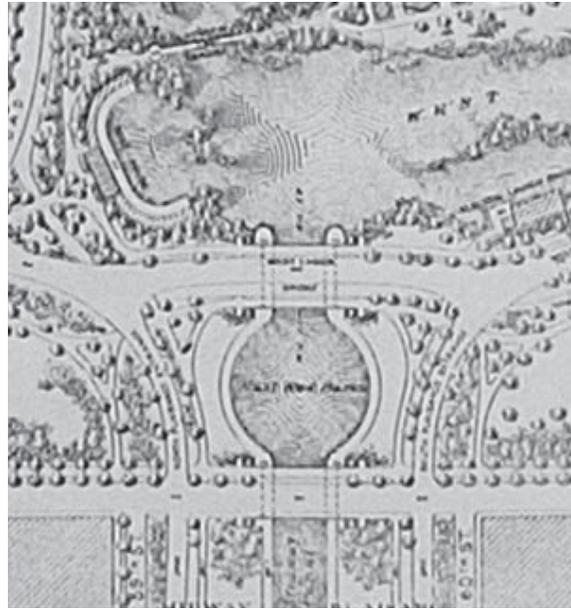
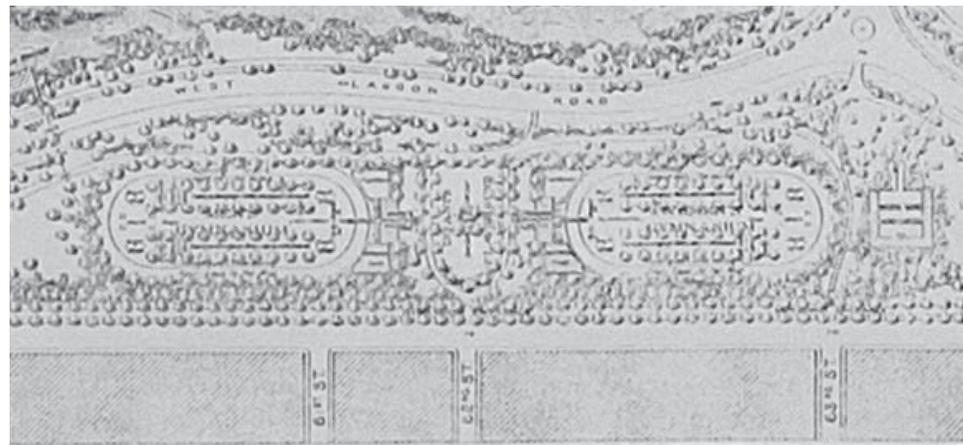


figure 3- 72b-c - 1895 - Revised Genral Plan for Jackson Park - detail  
 author: Olmsted Brothers  
 source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive



In 1895, the firm Olmsted, Olmsted, & Eliot, who would be later the designers of Grant Park after the World Columbian Exposition. The South Park commission requested their work as designers for the park. They followed most of the original project of their father from 1871, besides some added buildings and restructured spaces with new functions.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The project of Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot comprised first the 34-hectare north side of the park, as seen in their design (figure 3-72).

The northern part of the project comprised the Field Museum, which was the converted structure as used for the Fine Arts building in the World Fair. As in the original project, the Field Museum was made of one main pavilion and two adjacent smaller ones on each side. The entrance was of monumental character, with a semi circular boulevard in front of it and a couple of symmetrical pathways to access the building.

Just in front of the Field Museum, on 56<sup>th</sup> street there was a small structure, a conservatory, which would serve as a division of the symmetrical pathways to access the museum (figure 3- 72a).

On 56<sup>th</sup> street and the lakefront remained a small jetty and a new pavilion that was not there in the Fair. This jetty was the northern limit of the bathing beach that extended up to the second pier southwards. The bathing beach was served by a bath house and next to it, crossing the lakeshore drive, was a restaurant with carriage sheds.

The lakeshore drive served as a limit between the park and the lake, but by then it was only a narrow path, which could be crossed at any point. The lakeshore drive connected all three piers. The third pier southward, and the

greatest in size, was located where the Main Pier was in the Exposition had a completely different character from the one in the Fair; it was narrower and served only as a docking harbour for the steamer that arrived from downtown.

The Field Museum was surrounded by the North Circuit, this was a boulevard that surrounded the building and the Columbian Basin, placed in the back side of the building. The shape of the basin also differed from that in the Exposition. The one in the Fair was informal and surrounded by nature, in the case of the Olmsted brothers' project it was a symmetrical basin curved on the side, which almost embraced the building. In the design it is specified that the use would be for toy boating.

On the east of the museum there was another carriage shed for those who entered from Stony Island Avenue.

Recovering the idea of their father of 1871 the project proposed the linking of both Jackson and Washington Park with a waterway (figure 3-72b). This water would come in through the north inlet on the second pier, into the North Haven and then through the east and west lagoon into the east end basin. From there a canal would continue through the Midway Plaisance. These waters were all crossed by bridges where roads encountered them. The bridges also acted as gates for they would open in the case of the crossing of a ship.

Active recreation was an important part of the project of the Olmsted Brothers. Just east of the lake, between the second and third pier, there was a great tract of land open for tennis courts, provided by a tennis house and a tennis landing next to the east lagoon. On the eastern side of the lagoons, adjacent to Stony Island Avenue there were two gymnasiums, one for men and one for women, and between them a children's

playground (figure 3-72c). This was a groundbreaking idea for the Olmsted Brothers used it even before the playground movement began. Limited by Stony Island and 67<sup>th</sup> street there was the Ball Field for girls and boys and the field house.

To the west of the ball field, passing the south lagoon was the south haven. This haven was surrounded by a gravel beach (figure 3-72d). However it was not only active entertainment that was being encouraged here. At the entrance of the third pier there was a casino in the project, which would provide evening entertainment as well as daytime recreation.

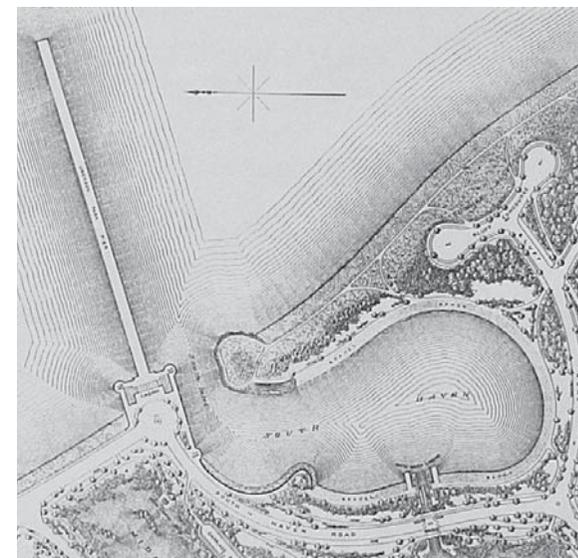
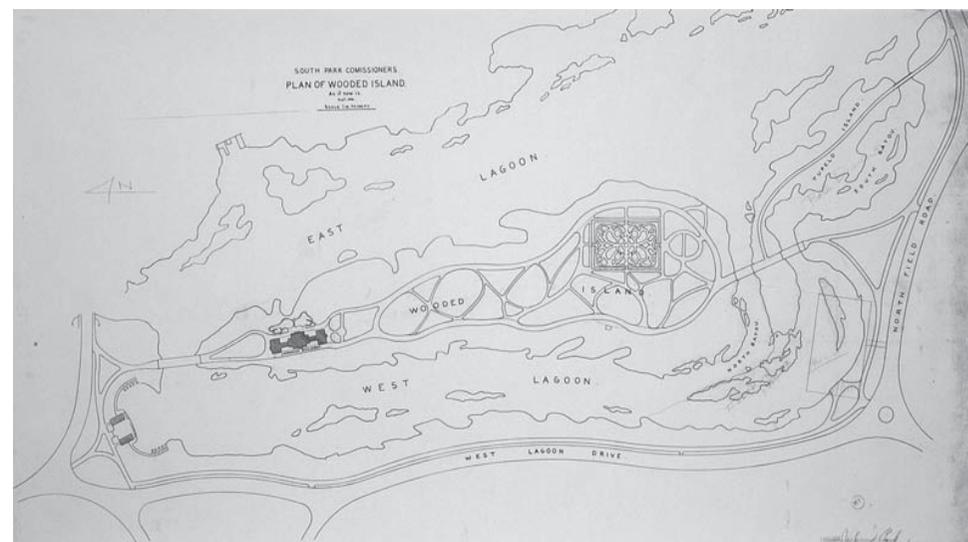


figure 3- 72c - 1895 - Revised Genral Plan for Jackson Park - detail  
author: Olmsted Brothers  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive

figure 3- 73 - 1896- Jackson Park - Wooded Isle  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive



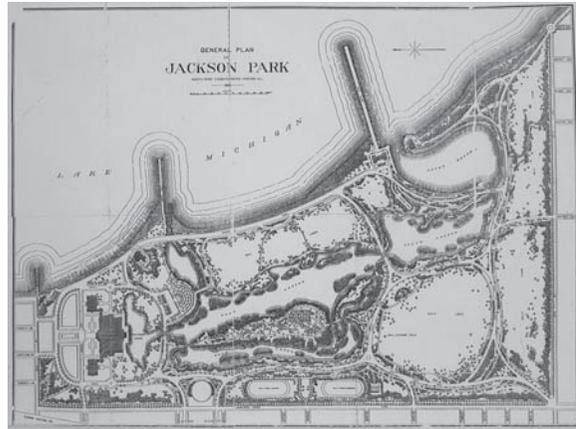


figure 3- 74 - 1903 -General Plan of Jackson Park.  
South Park Commission  
author: Olmsted Brothers  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive

### Realisation and repercussions

The works on the reformed Jackson Park took decades to be built, but most of it was based on the project of the Olmsted Brothers.

In 1896 the 59<sup>th</sup> inlet bridge, designed by Daniel Burnham, was built. Approximately 175 of all 219 hectares had been developed by the same year. The German pavilion, as expressed in the project was being used as the park refectory restaurant. A project was developed on the same year for the wooded isle. This includes the Flower Garden that was present in the Columbian Exposition (figure 3- 73).

In 1899 the space dedicated in the project for tennis courts, between the lake and the east lagoon, was replaced by a golf course.

A busy period of park improvements followed between 1899 and 1906. In 1903 the expanded athletic facilities included two golf courses, 22 tennis courts, one baseball diamond and two football courts. By this year 192 hectares of the 219 were already developed. In the same year the design of the Peter J. Weber for the South Bridge or Animal Bridge is accepted. One year later it was built.

By the beginning of the century the Jackson Park beach was a popular place. The paved walk extended for a mile and a half along the lake and was accessible by Cottage Grove and Jackson Park surface cars, the South Side Elevated and the Illinois Central Commuter trains.

The plan of 1903 shows some changes in the layout, especially regarding the distribution of sports throughout the park (figure 3- 74). The entrance from the north is modified and there is no conservatory in front of the Field Museum. The pavilion located next to the first jetty is

located in a different position than in the original design, making us believe that it was left from the original structure from the World Fair. The Columbian basin keeps the irregular shape it had in the Exposition's layout. A new formal garden is planned in the wooded island. Most remarkable is that the playground does not appear and the ball field for girls and boys was replaced by a golf course, changing completely the function of the area.

In 1906 a new building is raised in the park, the Music Court bridge was placed between the 59<sup>th</sup> Marina and the Columbia Basin. Not much is built in the following years until in 1912 Burnham and Co. design a golf shelter and the South Shore Motor Boat Club was founded by boaters.

In the early decades of the century, people enjoyed buggy and auto rides through the park, picnics, strolling the granite-paved beaches and piers, visiting or snacking/dining at the remaining amenities of the fair, rowing off shore or around the and Columbia Basin, skating the lagoons and Basin in winter, strolling on or around Wooded Island and its Japanese temple-gardens and the Rose Garden.

By the beginning of the 1920s the habits of inhabitants changed and bathing in the lake became a very popular recreation. In 1919 the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street beach house was opened by the South Park Commission and it became extremely popular. This was a segregated space; blacks were not allowed to bathe at this new beach.

Olmsted Brothers – project – 1892-1903 – Grant Park

*The project for Grant Park, as well as all subsequent projects for this park, had a completely different formal and ideological characteristics compared with the projects for the north and south parks already studied. Grant Park had a geometrical and symmetrical design. The main element in it was the Field Museum, located in the centre of the Park. The main influence that conditioned these characteristics was its location. The park was no longer located on the outskirts of the city, a tramway ride away, now it was just steps away from the business and commercial centre of the city. This location demanded a representative space, more related to the urban qualities of its context. The gardens were also geometrical and very few lines of trees limited the lawns. The relation between land and water was determined by a straight avenue with trees and just a couple of small piers determined the only possible active use of the park.*

### Context and administration

Grant Park was originally known as Lake Park or Lakefront Park. The area was owned by the city until the passage of legislation of 1885 gave it to the South Park Commission.

The first that is known about the area was that in 1835 a group of citizens made sure that the area would be: “reserved at all time to come for a public square accessible at all times to all the people.”<sup>126</sup> One year later the Canal Commission designed a plat for the sale of lots in which the

area between the lake, Michigan Avenue, Park Row and Randolph Street was marked with the phrase: “Public Ground forever to remain free of buildings”<sup>127</sup>.

In 1844 the ownership of the space was transferred to the city and three years later it was officially named Lake Park. The city could not afford to build the seawalls needed to prevent the land from washing away so it was decided to make a deal with the Illinois Central railway. The company was granted access and path through the land if they built the necessary structures. This was effectively done and would pose conflicts between the city and the IC for decades. Once the land was filled the IC started building industrial structures and the city decided to reserve the space as an industrial park. The complaints of neighbours and other citizens lead the city to back down on the proposal in 1863 and decided to reserve the land as open space.

The land remained as a dumping ground for decades, the basin between Michigan Avenue and the Lake had already been filled before the fire of 1871, but after the fire there was space needed to drop debris and rubble, therefore the area to the east of the railroad was also filled (figure 3-75). Well into the 1880s the area was barren and occupied by wooden shacks of squatters.

The first significant building raised on the site was W.W. Boyington’s Interstate Industrial Exposition Building, the city’s first convention centre (figure 3-76). Constructed in 1872, the glass and metal building with ornamental domes was based on exposition buildings in London and New York. Its purpose was the annual displays of industrial manufactures. Later it would be the first home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the site of national political conventions in 1880 and 1884, until it was torn down in 1892.

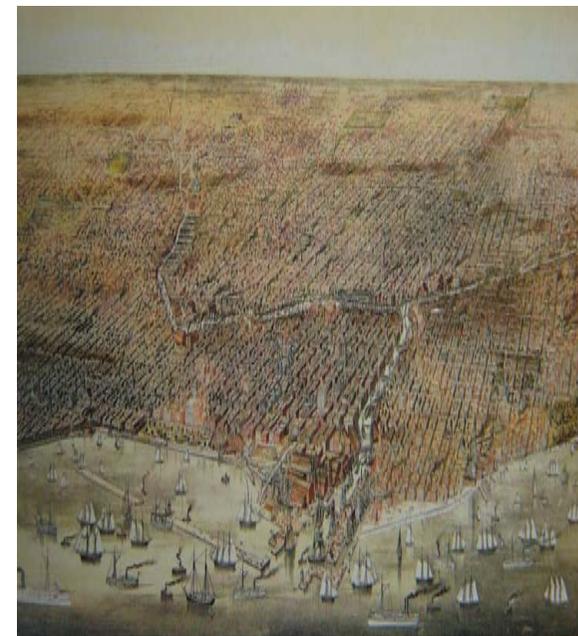


figure 3-75 - 1874 - View of Chicago  
source: The Encyclopedia of Chicago. Chicago Historical Society

<sup>126</sup> Wille, Lois, *Forever Open. Clear and Free: The historic struggle for Chicago’s Lakefront*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1972. pg.22

<sup>127</sup> Fink, J. Theodore, *Grant Park tomorrow, future of Chicago’s Front Yard*, A study undertaken by Open Lands Project. Chicago, April 1979, pg.4



figure 3- 76 - 1872- William Boyington - Exposition building  
source: <http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/queen/img/0127.jpg>

In 1890 the discussion for the location of the World Columbian Exposition was on the table and the first proposal of the committee was to place it in the basin in front of Michigan Avenue. The space turned out to be too small and there were discussions whether to have a dual space for the Fair. Finally this idea was turned down and the location was chosen in Jackson Park. However, there was one single building of the fair to be located in this area, the Congress Building, which would later become the Art Institute. The building was constructed in 1892 as well as the new IC terminal, just south of Lake Park.

Several discussions and legal actions took place around the Lake Park in those years, Montgomery Ward, who was a resident of Michigan Avenue was one of the protagonist of these struggles, always claiming for the park to be left as open public space.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

Lake Park began to receive more attention from citizens and architects due to the World Fair. By that time it was still limited by Park Row, Randolph Street, Michigan Avenue and the Lake. The first structure built in the park was the Fountain designed by Franz Machtl, built in 1893.

The first plan for the park was commended by the Municipal Improvement league to architect Peter B. Wight. The proposal was to build a civic centre in the City Beautiful manner. This first plan included a grand basin in the centre of the park, an amphitheatre, an exposition building, an armory, a police and fire building, city hall and buildings for the Crear Library and the Field Columbian Museum. The central feature was an open air music pavilion<sup>128</sup>. The Chicago Architectural club proposed another

project following similar lines to that of Wight.

The following project for the park, which was not published officially but did appear in the newspapers, was the plan of Burnham and Co. He proposed a different layout to that of Wright and the Architectural Club. In his case the central area of the park was not left open but was the location of a neo-classical museum.

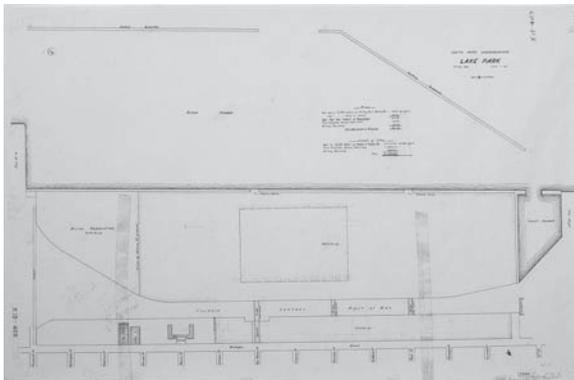
In 1896 the Park was transferred to the South Park Commission (figure 3-77). Immediately afterward the park was renamed Grant Park. One year later Montgomery Ward won his first suit to the city and claimed the demolition of all buildings in the park except for the Art Institute. In the same year the first of a series of landfill projects were carried out to extend the park east (figure 3- 78).

The next structure to be built in the park was the Logan Memorial. The Olmsted brothers had already suggested the placing of the Memorial in Grant Park.

“We would suggest that the finest opportunity for placing that splendid work of art among appropriate surroundings will be found in the development of the new Lake Front, where it will be accessible to vastly greater numbers of people, especially to strangers, who are usually in the receptive mood for appreciating the magnificent and artistic features of the city.”<sup>129</sup>

Finally in 1903 the South Park Commission, which had acquired a new stretch of land between Randolph Street and Jackson Street, decided to commend the first comprehensive plan for the park. This was granted to the Olmsted Brothers. By this time Daniel Burnham had been commended the design for the Field Museum, that would be placed in Grant Park. The location

figure 3- 77 - 1896 - South Park Commissioners Lake Park  
author: Olmsted Brothers  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive



of the Field museum in the middle of the park was part of the program for the project. This raised criticism in Olmsted's office, but Burnham was clear when he stated that: "no view of a great body of water can be so beautiful as glimpses."<sup>130</sup>

The Olmsted brothers and Burnham and Co., who already had Edward Bennett as a collaborator, were contemporarily commended the projects for many neighbourhood parks. These included new programmes such as swimming pools, wading pools, outdoor gymnasia, play equipment, ball fields, etc. This type of program was also present in some of the projects that the Olmsted brothers later developed for Grant Park. However, the project chosen by the South Park Commission was a much simpler one with geometrical structures of meadows and gardens rather than the new structures for active recreation.

In the plan of 1903 we can see a simple layout (figure 3-79). The Field Museum is a protagonist in the centre of the plan. On the sides of the museum, there were the north and south meadows. The limit of the park was given by Michigan Avenue, adjacent to this were stretches of parkland, geometrically designed, with basins in each of them. The Art Institute was the only building in this section at the end of Adams Street. Jackson Boulevard and Hubbard Street were the two main access streets for carriages and Congress Street for pedestrians, which led to the main entrance of the Field Museum. Parallel to Michigan Avenue was the right of way of the Illinois Central Railway, which was crossed by bridges in all accesses, and had a suburban train station through which there was also access to the park.

On the waterfront there was a straight

and long drive, flanked by trees on both sides in the northern and southern sides. The central part of the drive, adjacent to the Field Museum only had trees on the lakefront side. Two very small floating piers were located symmetrically on the north and south sides (figure 3-79a). The northern pier was meant as steamer landing for public use and the southern as boat landing for private use.

### Realisation and repercussions

There were strong efforts from the Olmsted's firm and from the South Park Commission for this project to be carried out, but Montgomery Ward's litigations did not allow the project to be built. The project would still be in process the following years and Burnham was the one to be able to carry out the new project within the plan of 1909.



figure 3- 78 - 1902- Lakefront. Area where landfill would be set for Grant Park  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive. 1508

<sup>128</sup> Bluestone, Daniel, *Constructing Chicago*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1991. pg.187

<sup>129</sup> Olmsted Archives, theses "the Olmsted Brothers continue of the naturalistic tradition developed by their father" The Chicago Park District. Pg.3

<sup>130</sup> Bluestone, Daniel, *Constructing Chicago*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1991. pg.188, quoting Chicago Tribune, June 1895.

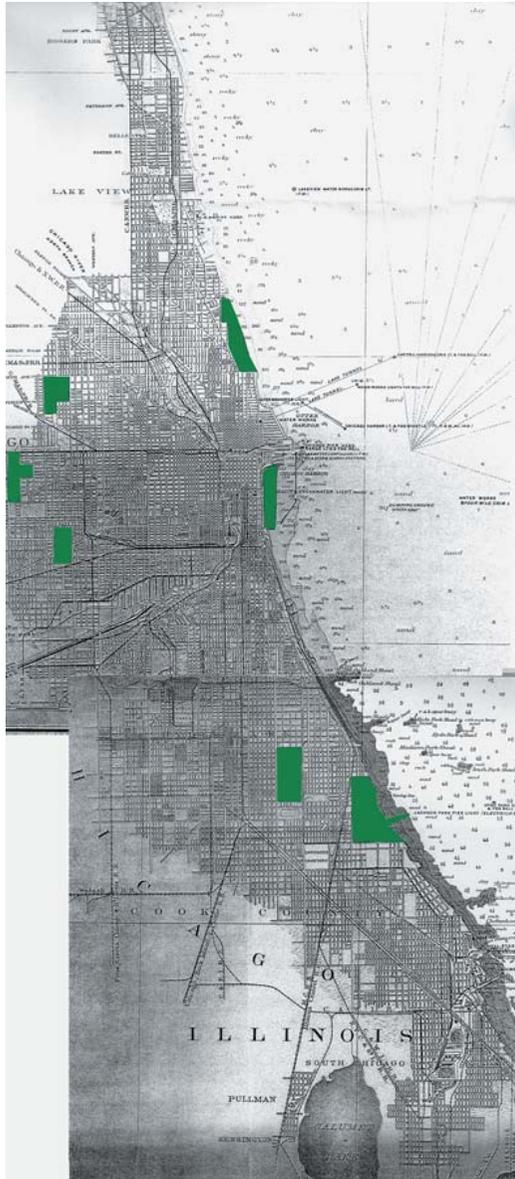


figure 3- 80- 1900 - Lake Michigan Coast Chart  
author: War Department  
source: Dennis McClendon Collection

### 3.2.3 – 1905-1930 – Burnham. Bennett. Ossian Cole Simonds.

During this period the northern lakefront changed its appearance completely. The elite that had settled in Prairie Avenue in the last decades of the nineteenth century, in the southern side of the city, moved to the northern lakefront founding what would be called the Gold Coast. They were led by Potter Palmer. Pine Avenue was lined with mansions in front of Oak Street Beach, a popular spot to see and to be seen.

The immense growth of population in the previous decades had transformed the city, and the parks that had been designed and restructured in the last decades of the nineteenth century were not enough for the growing demand of open space. By 1900 almost 750,000 people, half of Chicago's population, lived in the central area of the city, more than a kilometre away from any park in the city (figure 3-80). The city had also grown miles around the centre. The living conditions were very poor. Children were forced to work to be able to maintain the families, where the work of both parents would not be enough for surviving.

By the end of the 1890s, Mayor Carter Harrison, pressed by reformer Jacob Riis of New York, decided to make a Special Park Commission that would focus on the provision of parks in the tenement districts of Chicago. Two members in this special commission were Jens Jensen and Ossian Cole Simonds. The Commission set to create new open spaces in different parts of the city, providing playgrounds and a systematic plan for recreational areas. The year after the bill was made the shortage of budget impeded the continuation of public parks, but the influence was already settled and public schools also began to provide playgrounds in their schoolyards.

The first commission to begin the creation of playgrounds later was the South Park Commission, which built the experimental McKinley Park next to the stockyards south of Chicago. In 1902, when the new park was opened it gained immediate popularity.

In 1905 superintendent of South Park Commission J. Frank Foster conceived a variety of features that would be included in the new parks of the south. These were namely outdoor gymnasiums for men and women, children's wading pools and sand courts, a new type of building: the field house, which would provide athletic, educational and recreational programs throughout the year. Foster commissioned the Olmsted brothers as landscape architects and D.H. Burnham and Company architectural firm to design 14 neighbourhood parks for Chicago's South Side.

Meanwhile the inland west park system was being innovated and reformed. Jens Jensen (1865-1936) was in charge of this area, giving Humboldt, Garfield and Douglas parks new functions, with a naturalistic landscape design.

The lakefront suffered great changes in these decades. Already since the end of the Columbian Exposition, Daniel Burnham had envisioned Grant Park as a "lovely campus of civic and cultural buildings."<sup>131</sup> Burnham also designed a linear lakefront that would link Grant Park to Jackson Park. The Field Museum of natural history was the first building one to be planned for Grant Park. After quarrels and disputes with the owners of property on Michigan Avenue, who did not want buildings in front of them but a stretch of open space, the commission negotiated with Illinois central railroad and managed to acquire a section of landfill on the southern side of the park, where the building of the Field Museum would finally be raised.

### 3.2.3.1- Burnham and Bennett

#### Daniel Burnham and Edward H. Bennett – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

Earlier we saw the first period of the life of Daniel H. Burnham, here we will see how his professional life followed after the World Columbian Exposition and how this affected the Plan of Chicago of 1909 and its later realisation.

After the Fair, Burnham had become a well known architect and very famous and effective planner, for the Fair had not only been a ground of exhibition but almost a city in itself, which as we saw earlier managed to survive successfully to even the harshest criticism. Burnham continued to work as an architect and began working also as a city planner. After the death of Root during the preparations of the World Exposition his office was only headed by him and he took over Edward H. Bennett as an assistant. Before preparing the plan of Chicago, which was started in 1906 he worked on several projects, amongst them the Flatiron Building in New York in 1902, the Columbus Union Station in 1893, the David Whitney skyscraper in Detroit in 1915. His plans for cities included the one of Manila (figure 3-81), the group plan of Cleveland, the plan for San Francisco (figure 3-82) and the McMillan plan for Washington DC. All of these plans were published in the publication of the Plan of Chicago of 1909.

In the 20 years between Root's death and his own, Burnham found his greatest fulfilment as the leader of the City Beautiful movement—an effort to achieve for American cities something approaching a “cultural parity” with Europe's great urban centres. Burnham was harshly criticised for his architecture style by architect

Louis Sullivan. Sullivan claimed the neoclassical example of the World's Fair had “set back architecture fifty years”. This criticism did not minimise the architects work and his production in Chicago and other American cities had no precedents. Other architects had a different view of his work, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, who eulogized, “(Burnham) made masterful use of the methods and men of his time... (he was) an enthusiastic promoter of great construction enterprises... his powerful personality was supreme.” Apart from the architecture and planning he produced, Burnham was also an active man in different institutions. He was twice president of the American Institute of Architects. He died in Germany in 1912.

One of Burnham's most famous and quoted phrases said: “Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will not themselves be realized.” This quotation was a sign of the times of Burnham's work and is reflected in most of his urban plans, which tend to approach all problematic issues of the city.

Edward H. Bennett (1874 - 1954) (figure 3- 83) , was born in Wiltshire, England. As many other architects from New York, he followed his education at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. This formation would condition his performance as an architect and the relations he would continue to keep throughout his life. After finishing his studies in Paris he returned to New York and worked with architect George B. Post for a short period. He later moved to Chicago where he started working with Daniel Burnham on a project for a military academy at West Point. Burnham was very satisfied with the work of young Bennett, so he included him in his team and they studied together the conditions for the comprehensive plan of San Francisco. Due to

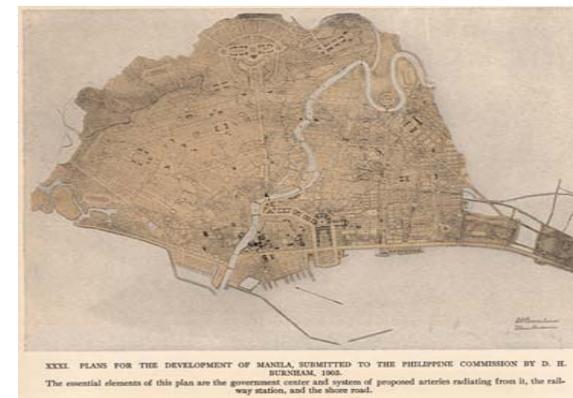


figure 3- 81- 1905 - Plan of Manila  
author: Daniel Burnham  
source: Burnham, Bennett, The Plan of Chicago, 1909.

figure 3- 82 - 1909- Map of the City and County of San Francisco  
source: www.wikipedia.org



<sup>131</sup> Sniderman Bachrach, Julia (Ed.), *The City in a Garden: A Photographic History of Chicago's Parks, Santa Fe: The Centre for American Places, in association with the Chicago Park District*; Chicago : Distributed by the University of Chicago Press, 2001.



figure 3- 83 - Edward H. Bennett  
source: www.wikipedia.org

After Burnham's death Bennett was in charge of the Plan of Chicago well into the 1930s. Apart from the plan of Chicago, since 1905 Burnham also passed on other architectural projects to Bennett and his partners William E. Parsons (1872-1939) and Harry T. Frost (1886-1943). The City Beautiful movement saw in Bennett one of its fervent enthusiasts and can be seen applied to several urban plans Bennett went on to develop after Burnham's death. Some of these were the plans of Minneapolis and Portland.

The firm dedicated mainly to consultancy on the plans and worked especially for public-private and commercial interests. One of the groups the firm worked for was the Commercial Club of Chicago, which actually sponsored the plan of Chicago. Some of the main urban tools the firm used were the creation of zoning ordinances and the study of transportation and regional planning. The axial and symmetrical layout was used as a main Beaux Arts design principle, incorporating monumental public buildings. Bennett's ideas about the combination of technical devices and aesthetic ideals signed the projects he designed. He was interested in the great scale of the city as well as in the enjoyment of the individual citizen.

After the 1920s the work of the firm turned into official city planning and left most of its work for independent businesses or groups. Bennett's work declined in the 1920s. From 1927 until 1937, Bennett served as Chairman of the Board of Architects responsible for the development of the Federal Triangle in Washington, DC, a large complex of government buildings between the White House and the Capitol built to house a number of Federal agencies. Bennett was also responsible for the planning of the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition in 1933.

Burnham and Bennett - project - 1909 - Chicago Plan Commission

*Burnham and Bennett's project was not an isolated element. Even if previous projects for the waterfront had been part of a wider system of parks, for the first time a great comprehensive plan for Chicago was formulated, and the waterfront projects were an important part of it. Transportation, open space and infrastructures were all considered in this plan. The waterfront was a protagonist, being the greatest stretch of leisure area of the city. The greatest innovation of this waterfront project was the proposal of a boulevard that would run on the waterfront from north to south, bringing access to the waterfront as leisure space to the whole city.*

### Context and administration

In a letter dated June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1906 Merchants Club member Franklin MacVeagh, who previously discussed with Daniel Burnham the idea of the Club backing an effort to offer a plan for Chicago, expresses his approval that Burnham will work on this project.

*"I am extremely glad the Merchants Club has taken up the great matter of a working plan or programme for Chicago's development and security, in the present and future, along lines of beauty and convenience, and that you are willing to give your services."<sup>132</sup>*

In this letter MacVeagh complained that though he had been pushing for five years at the Commercial Club for this plan to be made he had

not been heard. He was glad the Merchants club had taken up this task.

In 1906 the Merchants Club called Daniel Burnham, who was already an authority in American urbanism, to formulate a great urban plan for Chicago. The initiative comes from a group of businessmen, which promoted and financed the whole plan. In October 1906 Daniel Burnham was requested the task of developing the plan of Chicago and in 1907 was granted one hundred thousand dollars to develop the plan. Eventually, early in 1907 the Commercial Club and the Merchants Club associated on the task of the Plan of Chicago, merging with the name of Commercial Club.

The planners met formally several hundred times over the thirty months prior to the publication of the *Plan* on July 4, 1909. They also held countless informal discussions in person and by telephone both during and outside business hours, and they exchanged hundreds of notes, telegrams, and letters among themselves.

The expenses of the plan were covered by the businessmen in charge of the Commercial Club, but they were not as low as expected. Even though Burnham agreed to work for free, the expenses raised as the plan became more complex and it took a longer time than expected. The final publication of the plan was co-funded by Burnham himself who wished to have a publication "in more attractive form and with ample illustrations in colour" and for hiring Charles Moore, who had edited the Washington plan, to help write and edit the *Plan of Chicago*.

Later, Charles Wacker was hired to develop the promotion of the plan. In his text he claimed "This is the day that gave the city the most beautiful waterfront in the world."

The plan was a long lasting instrument,

and though it was based on Burnham's ideas and the City Beautiful Movement it suffered transformations throughout the decades and was the work of many planners and architects throughout. Here we will concentrate on the original plan of Burnham and Bennett.

The plan, in words of their authors:

"it should be remembered that the purpose has not been to invent novel problems for solutions, but to take up the pressing needs of today, and to find the best methods of meeting those requirements, carrying each particular problem to its ultimate conclusion as a component part of a great entity – well ordered, convenient and unified city"<sup>133</sup>

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The plan was first published in 1909, with a rather small edition, which was mostly given out to officials and authorities. In 1911 the extended version of the plan, with prints and maps was published together with a manual for students. There was a great print run for both publications, which were not only available in Chicago but later worldwide and would represent an important influence on international urbanism.

The plan was based on an organisation of the city around civic centres and axis of transportation which would solve functional as well as aesthetic problems. The problems of the city were addressed in a metropolitan scale. Elements such as infrastructure and public space were organised in a unified scheme, from the lakefront to the west end of the city and from north to south ends.

Many political figures were consulted during the process of formulation of the plan,

characters such as Governor Charles Deneen, Mayor Fred Busse, numerous aldermen, and the officers of the Drainage Board, the Board of Education, the Art Institute, the Chicago Commercial Association, the park commissions, the Western Society of Engineers, and the American Institute of Architects, among other organizations. Also the other side of the political spectrum was consulted in the figure of Jane Addams, who was at the time still in charge of the Hull House.



figure 3-84 - 1909-Chicago. Diagram of a system of freight handling for land and water transportation, to be worked in conjunction with one another  
source: Burnham Daniel H., and Bennett, Edward H. *The Plan of Chicago*. Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.

<sup>132</sup> Letter from Franklin MacVeagh to Daniel Burnham, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1906. Encyclopedia of Chicago, Historical resources.

<sup>133</sup> Burnham, DH, Bennett, EH, *Plan of Chicago*, Edited by Charles Moore, Da Capo Press, New York, 1970, 1909.pg.2

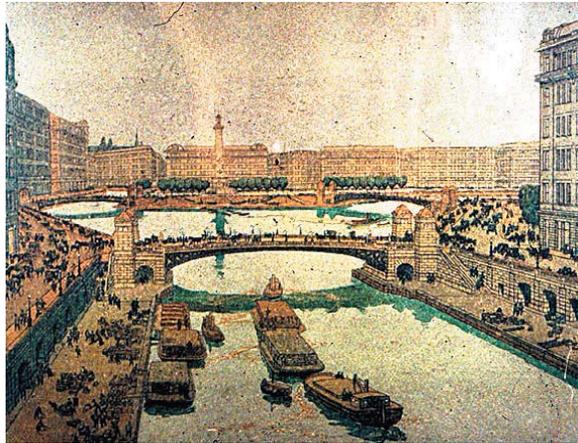


figure 3- 85- 1909 - Plan of Bridges over the Chicago River  
 author: Daniel Burnham  
 source: Burnham D H., and Bennett, E H. The Plan of Chicago. Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.

figure 3- 86- 1909 - Plan of Chicago. The lakefront and harbour  
 author: Daniel Burnham  
 source: Burnham D H., and Bennett, E H. The Plan of Chicago. Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.

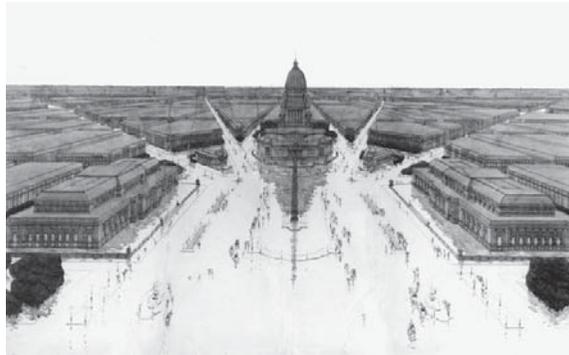
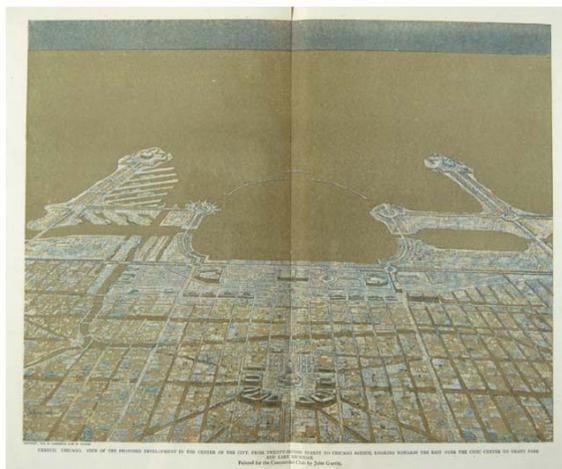


figure 3- 87- 1909 - Plan of Chicago. Monumental Civic Centre  
 author: Daniel Burnham  
 source: Burnham D H., and Bennett, E H. The Plan of Chicago. Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.

figure 3- 88- 1909 - Plan of Chicago. Floorplan and Parks  
 author: Daniel Burnham  
 source: Burnham DH., and Bennett, E H. The Plan of Chicago. Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.



The transportation system was one of the crucial themes planned by Burnham and Bennett (figure 3-84). Many studies were done prior to the formulation of the plan. Burnham wrote innumerable letters to institutions and individuals to request information about all kinds of issues such as heights of roads in the city, dimensions of ships that circulated in the Chicago River and amount of passengers and freight transported.

The main node of transportation in the plan was located where it was traditionally since the first railways were built in Chicago, on the northern edge of Grant Park. Apart from the inner city transportation system, the plan also provided a study on the possible future of the outskirts of the city and the expectations of growth, considering the transportation system that would be needed to provide sufficient means for the growing metropolis.

The origin of the spatial qualities of the project for the plan of Chicago was obviously that of the Columbian Exposition:

“The origin of the Plan of Chicago can be traced directly to the World’s Columbian Exposition. The World’s Fair of 1893 was the beginning in our day and in this country, of the orderly arrangement of extensive public grounds and buildings.”<sup>134</sup>

The plans and conceptual designs of the south lakefront from the Exposition came in handy, as Burnham envisioned Chicago being a *Paris on the Prairie*. French inspired public works constructions, fountains, and boulevards radiating from a central, domed municipal palace became Chicago’s new ideal layout (figures 3-85/86/87).

Burnham remained close to his Plan of Chicago even when he was abroad. While he was

visiting Germany, he wrote a letter to Bennett saying that the pamphlet to help promote the Commercial Club's proposal for Michigan Avenue was magnificent and that the works would increase the value of real estate between Randolph Street and Chicago Avenue. He adds:

"If the property owners are captured by the argument as it is, then well and good & our object is accomplished; if they are not, then the real estate argument must be used, raw. For they are, as they have frankly said, fighting for their pockets, and nothing but proof that this scheme will pay them very directly will have any weight with them."<sup>135</sup>

Other aims apart from the aesthetic were also implied in Burnham's discourse in the text of the plan. The purpose of transforming moral values of the population throughout the design of urban space was one of Burnham's objectives.

"the aim of the commissioners is to improve the health and morals of the people, and to stimulate local pride and patriotism."<sup>136</sup>

Despite the fact that the plan was of a hard character and focused on issues of circulation and commercial convenience it also touched subjects as leisure and recreation:

"good workmanship requires a large degree of comfort on the part of the workers in their homes and surroundings. (...) Rest and recreation without which all work becomes drudgery"<sup>137</sup>

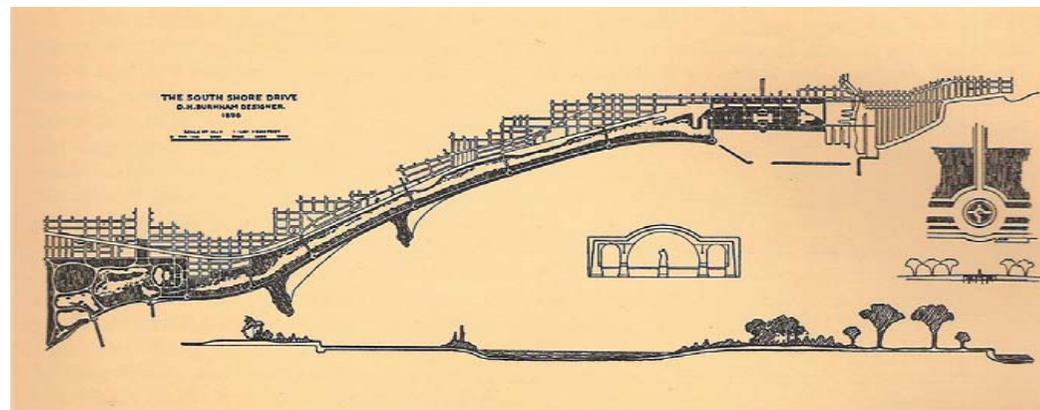
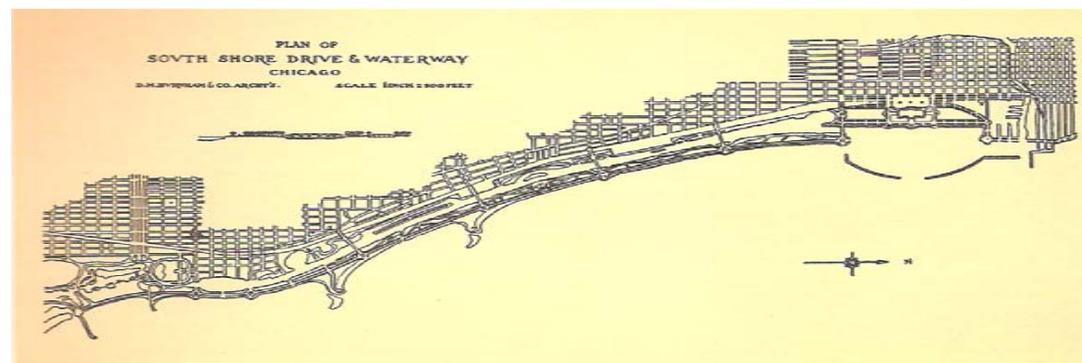


figure 3- 89- 1896 - The South Shore Drive  
author: Daniel Burnham

source: Burnham DH., and Bennett, E H. *The Plan of Chicago*. Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.

figure 3- 90- 1905 - Plan of South Shore Drive and Waterway  
author: Daniel Burnham

source: Burnham DH., and Bennett, EH. *The Plan of Chicago*. Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.



<sup>134</sup> Burnham, DH, Bennett, EH, *Plan of Chicago*, Edited by Charles Moore, Da Capo Press, New York, 1970, 1909.pg.4

<sup>135</sup> Letter from Daniel Burnham to Edward Bennett, Jena, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1908.

<sup>136</sup> Burnham, DH, Bennett, EH, *Plan of Chicago*, Edited by Charles Moore, Da Capo Press, New York, 1970, 1909.p.44

<sup>137</sup> idem.

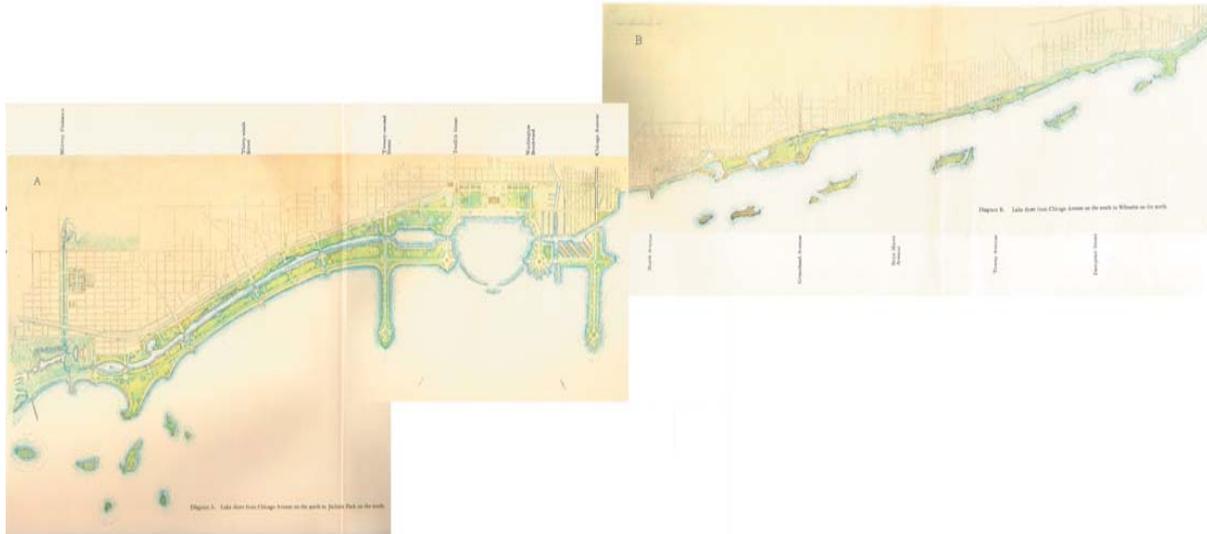


figure 3- 90b - 1909 - The Plan of Chicago Lake Shore Drive  
 author: Daniel Burnham  
 source: Burnham DH., and Bennett, E H. The Plan of Chicago.  
 Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.

The park system in Burnham's plan was formed by a rather simple organisation of three parks and a ring avenue that surrounded the city. Two of the parks were placed on the waterfront and one in the middle of the ring avenue. (figure 3- 88)

The process for the definition of the waterfront was a complex one. The discussions about how to develop this area heated up during the first decade of the twentieth century. The idea of Burnham and many other Chicagoans was to leave the lakeshore as open space, park space. There were parties who opposed to this idea, for they thought the destination of the lakeshore proposed in the plan would jeopardise the commercial interest of the city. Just as Governor Deenen was about to sign the bill declaring the authorisation to construct a parkway between Grant Park and Jackson Park, Colonel W.H. Bixby opposed to the plan. Bixby was the United States Army engineer in charge of federal projects in the city. He wanted to build a line of docks along the shore north and south of Grant Park for ships. This caused turmoil at the Commercial Club and Bixby was invited to discuss the matter. Burnham and other members of the Club gave a good alternative to Bixby's plan, proposing the movement of freight to Calumet harbour and justifying that the future of trade did not lie in shipping through water but through rail. This permitted the complete clearance of the waterfront from freight and industry.

The origin of the idea of a parkway comes from a draft of his remarks to South Park Commission President James Ellsworth and other members of the commission in April of 1896 (figure 3-89). Burnham explains that the idea of building a lakeshore parkway arose the previous year during a discussion about the downtown parks with Ellsworth, whom Burnham credits for

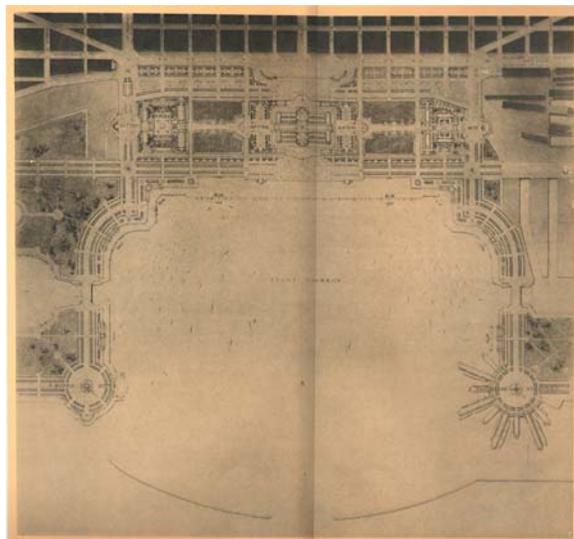


figure 3- 91- 1909 - The Plan of Chicago - yacht harbour  
 author: Daniel Burnham  
 source: Burnham DH., and Bennett, E H. The Plan of Chicago.  
 Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.

the idea. "After some thought, the possibility of carrying it out appeared to be an entirely feasible one, and it was proposed that a design should be made."<sup>138</sup>

Another project by Burnham was designed in 1904 (figure 3-90). This project already resembled more the final project of 1909. The lakeshore drive becomes much more present and the basin in front of Jackson Park is already designed (figure 3-90b).

Burnham defined an east-west symmetry axis starting in Grant Park. Grant Park then becomes a great monumental entrance from the lake to *downtown*, having as main front Michigan Avenue. Burnham had already presented some projects for Grant Park

In the first years of the century, but none of these had been realised (figure 3-91). One of the commendations was for the design and building of the Field Museum, which had been placed in the centre of the Olmsted brother's project for Grant Park. This idea was also included in the Plan of 1909 and was one of the buildings devoted to culture:

"The purpose of this building is to gather under one roof the records of civilisation culled from every portion of the globe, and representing man's struggle through the ages for advancement. Hence it must become a centre for human interest, making appeal alike to the citizen as to the visitor; to those who are drawn by curiosity and those who come for study. The very size of the building required to hold and display such collections as are being formed fits it to play an important part in the architectural development of the city"<sup>139</sup>

Regarding the lake and the lakefront, which were protagonists in the plan Burnham

was clear about the benefits of enjoying such a peculiar site:

"Views of a broad expanse are helpful alike to mind and body. They beget calm thoughts and feelings, and afford escape from the petty things of life. Mere breadth of view, however is not all. The lake is living water, even in motion, and ever changing in colour and in form of it waves, across its surface comes the broad pathway of light made by the rising sun; it mirrors the ever changing forms of the clouds, and it is illuminated by the glow of the evening sky [...] Not a foot of its shores should be appropriated by individuals to the exclusion of people."<sup>140</sup>

figure 3- 92 - 1909 - The Plan of Chicago Lakeshoredrive  
author: Daniel Burnham  
source: Burnham DH., and Bennett, E H. *The Plan of Chicago*. Edited by Charles H. Moore. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.

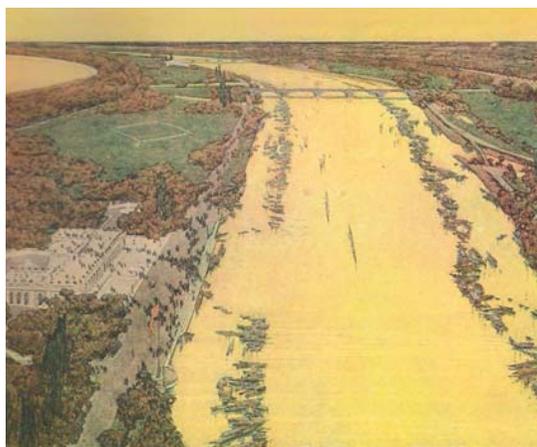


figure 3- 93 - Main Elevation Field Museum of Natural History at Grant Park  
source: Chicago Park district. Historical Archive



figure 3- 94 - 1908 - Area of Grant Park and Art Institute  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive. 1518

<sup>138</sup> Reproduction of document at <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/10859.html>

<sup>139</sup> Burnham, DH, Bennett, EH, *Plan of Chicago*, Edited by Charles Moore, Da Capo Press, New York, 1970, 1909.p.110

<sup>140</sup> idem.p.50



figure 3- 95 - Marshall Field Museum  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive. 1510

figure 3- 96 - 1916 - Navy Pier  
author: Charles Sumner Frost  
source: Great Buildings of Chicago Knowledge cards



Burnham was convinced that making this visual component as rich and appealing as possible was vital to winning Chicagoans over to the value of the *Plan of Chicago's* proposals. Jules Guerin and Fernand Janin were the most significant illustrators (figure 3-92). Guerin, born in St. Louis and educated at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, was a painter, illustrator, and muralist who had done some of the renderings for the Washington plan. His work graced the pages of leading magazines and, in the years to come, Pennsylvania Station in New York, the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, and the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, as well as the decorative fire curtain of the Civic Opera in Chicago that is familiar to opera goers to this day.

### The buildings of the plan

A project that had been planned before the Burnham plan, which later became part of it, was the Field Museum. In 1906 Marshall Field donated eight million dollars to the city for the building of the Field Museum (figure 3-93). Burnham was to be the benefactor and architect of the building. For its façade he was inspired by the Erechtheion in the Athens Acropolis. The building took a long time to be built, but finally in 1921 it was opened to the public.

The Soldier Field was one of the elements in the plan of 1909. This was to be the athletic grounds of Chicago. The building was first thought of when Marshall Field gave a donation for the Art Institute in 1893.

### Realisation and repercussions

The plan of Chicago was officially adopted by the city in 1910. However, the project for Grant Park continued to be unimplemented because the legality of building in the park remained unsettled (figure 3-94). The Plan of Chicago intended Grant Park to be the cultural centre of the city. However, struggles between the South Park Commission and Montgomery Ward, who represented the interest of private property of Michigan Avenue, continued through to 1911. Finally the problem was solved otherwise when the Illinois Central Railroad Company agreed to surrender its submerged lands on the south end of Grant Park to the Park Commission. The Field Museum was to be built in that area (figure 3- 95). The tracks of the railroad were eventually submerged, which gave the park a new perspective to the lake. During the following decade not many improvements were made to Grant Park. However, the park was being used as a place to play baseball and attend concerts, circuses and other special events. In 1913 underground comfort stations were built for the increasingly popular location. Also in this year Lorado Taft's fountain and the basin designed by Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge were built in the back of the Art Institute.

The agreement the South Park Commission had made with the Illinois Central Railway for the construction of the Field Museum had paved the path for the beginning of negotiations to realise the lakefront development proposed by Burnham.

The design of the lakefront proposed by Burnham and Bennett in their plan took a long time to be realised, but a great part of it was indeed materialised. The filling of the lakeshore south of

14<sup>th</sup> street began in 1917 and took thirteen years to reach Jackson Park. The city was in charge of the construction of beaches and other amenities such as the Soldier field, built in 1924, the Shedd Aquarium in 1929 and the Adler Planetarium in 1930.

Lincoln Park was expanded further northwards reaching Diversey Parkway in 1933. In 1916 the city was in charge of building the Municipal Pier, (later Navy Pier) (figure 3-96) which had been recommended by the plan. The pier that was planned by Burnham at 22<sup>nd</sup> street was never built.

On the other hand the parkway planned in 1909 was begun in 1917 and reached 57<sup>th</sup> street in 1932. This road was crossed by viaducts at 23<sup>rd</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> streets. The northern side of the parkway was funded by the state of Illinois and extended to Foster Avenue by 1933.

The process of realisation of the rest of Burnham's ambitious plan was a long one and was filled with conflicts of interest and struggles with different kinds of authorities and populations. The struggles would continue for a long time after Burnham's death.

One of the most remarkable Burnham scholars, Kristen Schaffer, maintains that the published version unquestionably bears the mark of Burnham's "genius." This "genius," she explains, "lies in his vision and his energy, in his ability to see how all the elements of the city and its functioning are related and his tenacity in making others see it as well."<sup>141</sup> Schaffer also remarks that there are significant differences between the original draft of the plan and the final version. Issues such as recommendations for improvements of health facilities and schools were much more present in the original draft than in the final published version. Schaffer argues that

this sheds a different light on Burnham's plan, showing it not as a conservative tool that showed no interest in the concerns of the citizens, but as a denouncing instrument that considered the improvement of quality of life in the city of Chicago.

<sup>141</sup>Schaffer, Kristen. Daniel H. Burnham Visionary Architect and Planner. Edited by Scott J. Tilden. New York, Rizzoli, 2003.

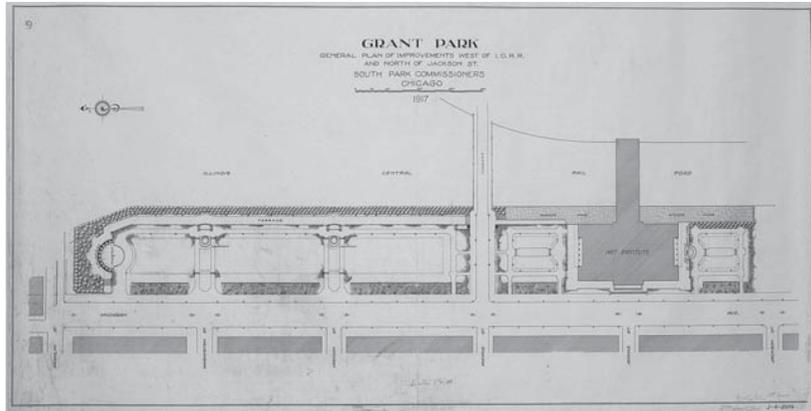
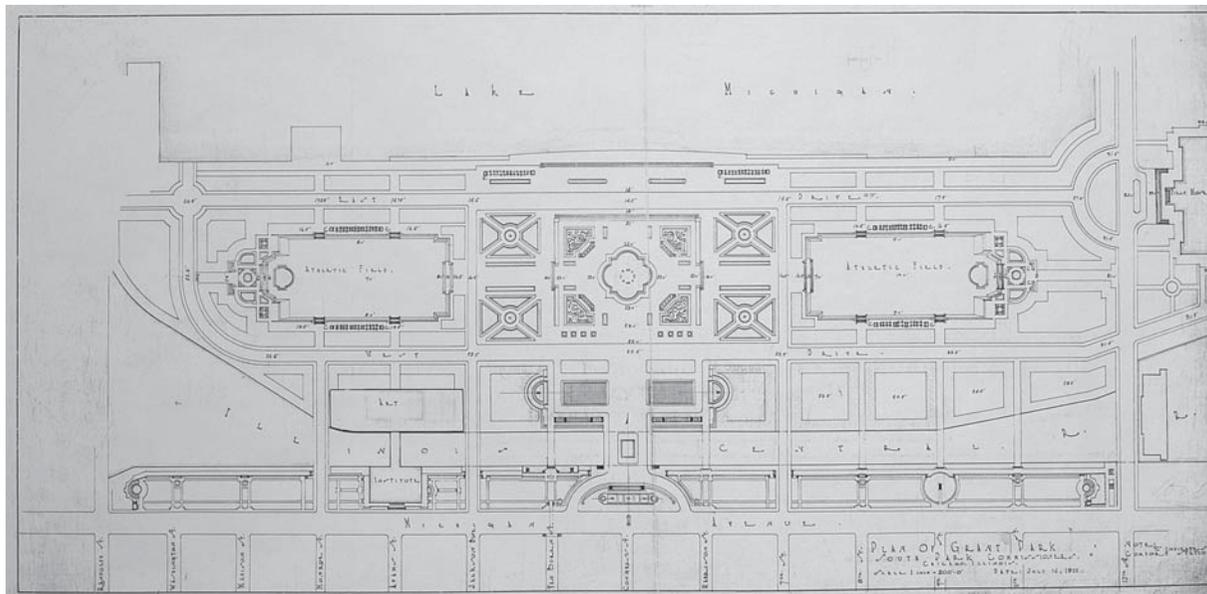


figure 3- 97 -1917 - Grant Park General Plan of Improvements West of I.C.R.R. and North of Jackson Street  
author: South Park Commissioners  
source: The Plan of Chicago

figure 3- 98 - 1922 - Plan of Grant Park South Park Commissioners  
author: Edward Bennett  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive.



## Bennett - project – 1915-22 – Grant Park

*Within the already geometrical and monumental project for Grant Park Bennett proposes a less architectural park. Due to the pressure of the neighbours the Field Museum had to be displaced from the original idea to build it in the centre of the park. Therefore the park was almost free of buildings, except for the Art Institute, small in scale compared to the extension of the park. The project is much more specific in design than that presented earlier by the Olmsted brothers. The main feature that changes is the inclusion of spaces for active recreation. The athletic fields take a great part of the surface of the park. The rest of the park has geometrical characteristics with flower beds and a fountain in the centre.*

## Context and administration

After Burnham's death the plans for Grant Park were granted to Edward Bennett, who would be in charge of it for the following seven years. The choice of Bennett over the Olmsted Brothers to lead the project of Jackson Park is still unclear, but the fact that Bennett had a strong interest in implementing the plan of 1909 must have been a good reason for this choice. Bennett served as a Consulting Architect of the Chicago Plan Commission since it was officialised in 1913 until 1930.

Through the years in charge of Grant Park Bennett added some associates to the firm, which became Bennett, Parsons, Frost and Thomas in 1922. Parsons and Thomas had also been students at the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

Grant Park had, since its beginning, a completely different morphology to that of the northern Lincoln Park and the southern Jackson Park. While the other two parks, further from the city centre were informal, with lawns and shrubs and with a picturesque quality reminiscent of the English landscape garden, Grant Park was always shaped by a geometrical layout and a symmetrical form, with a character reminiscent of Le Notre.

The first area addressed by Bennett in the Grant Park project was the North Section between Randolph Street and Jackson Street. The area included formal lawn panels, axial walks, pylons, balustrades and fountains.

Even though there were sketches for part of the area made before (figure 3-97) , the most complete plan of those of Bennett, Parsons, Frost and Thomas seems to be the one signed on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1922 (figure 3-98). This project showed all the elements that were to be adopted by the South Park Commissioners in the following decade. The limits of the park were the same ones of the project of 1903 with the difference that the location of the Field Museum was already placed in the south end of the park. The driving accesses to the park were through Montrose, Jackson, Seventh and Twelfth Streets. The presence of the automobile is already perceived in the plan, with the dimensions of streets and sidewalks specified. This was also shown in the depression and electrification of the rail tracks, which allowed the passage of cars over the bridges and a clearer view of the lakefront.

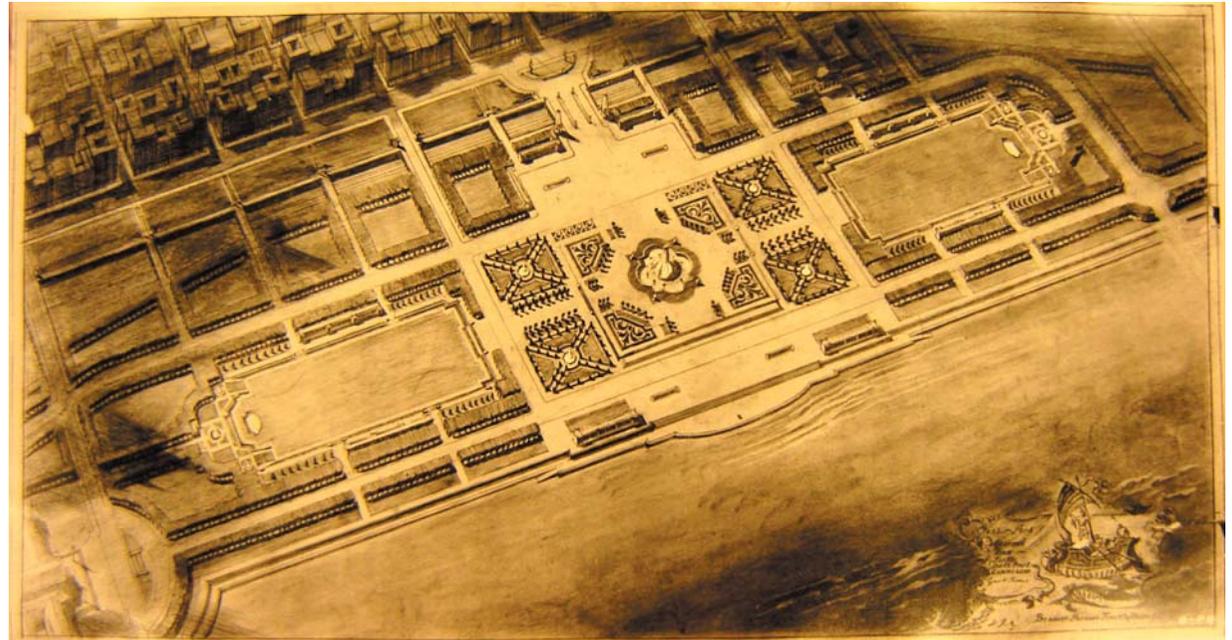


figure 3- 99 - 1920s - Grant Park  
author: Bennett Parsons and Frost  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive.

figure 3- 100 - 1929 - Shedd Aquarium  
source: Great Buildings of Chicago Knowledge cards



figure 3- 101- 1930 - Adler Planetarium  
source: Great Buildings of Chicago Knowledge cards



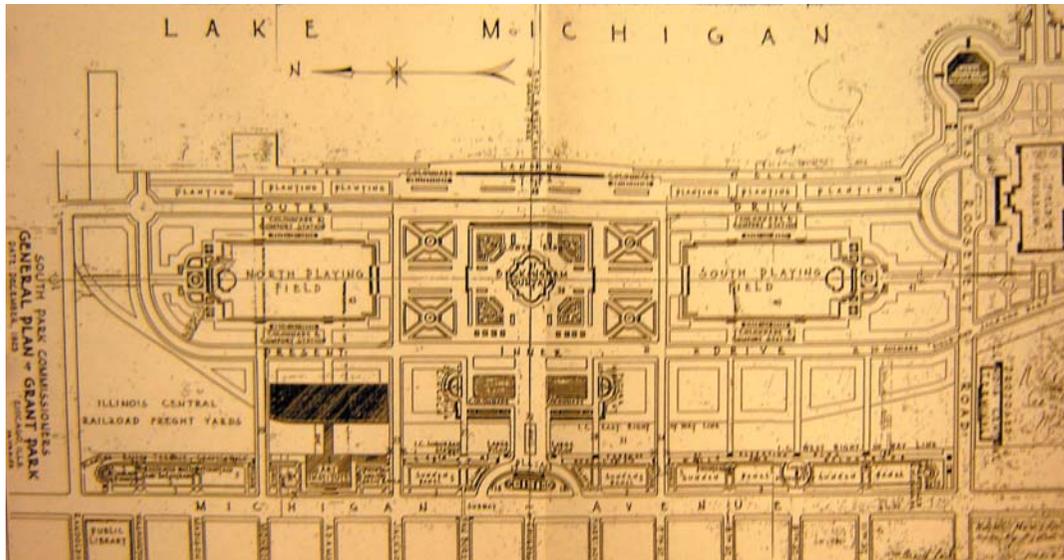


figure 3- 102 - 1920s - Grant Park  
source: Chicago Park distict. Historical Archive. 1521



figure 3- 103 - 1928 - Grant Park  
source: Chicago Park distict. Historical Archive.1512

figure 3- 104 - 1925 - Grant Park  
author: Edward Bennett  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive.



In general the characteristics of the park were formal, with gardens, parterres and the main fountain in the middle of the park. The fountain was surrounded by straight paths and symmetrical gardens. The rise of active recreation was clear in the project. Two great extensions of land on the sides of the fountain were dedicated to athletic fields.

The Art Institute was still in its place and a large extension was planned in the back of it across the railway tracks.

The floor plan shows no trees whatsoever and has no specification of the type of vegetation to be used in the park. The drawing by Bennett Parsons and Frost does show lines of trees flanking each square of garden and also the drive next to the lake (figure 3-99). The waterfront is as unspecified, a drive runs some meters away from the lakefront and it is flanked by wide side walks. The area adjacent to the fountain, between the fountain and the lake, has a wide staircase that descends to a lower level next to the lake. This is also shown in the drawing, which shows two small pavilions next to the lake.

### The buildings in the park

Grant Park would later also house the Shedd Aquarium (figure 3-100) and the Adler Planetarium (figure 3- 101). The Shedd Aquarium was an initiative of John Graves Shedd (1850-1926). Shedd, second president and chairman of the board of Marshall Field and Company, was a philanthropist who helped the process of Chicago of becoming a metropolis. He gave a three million donation for the building of the aquarium, which was to become the first inland aquarium to have a continuous supply of sea water. The Shedd Aquarium Society was founded in 1924 and in

1929 the building was finished and functioning.

The Adler planetarium was a gift to the city of Max Adler, a retired Sears, Roebuck & Co. executive. It was designed and built by Ernest Grunsfeld (1897-1970). Adler donated a Zeiss projector to the people of Chicago, with money to build an edifice to house it. The Zeiss projector was the first one to reproduce accurately the night sky on a domed surface. The landmark building that resulted was opened in 1930 on a small island connected to the shore by a causeway.

### Realisation and repercussions

The centrepiece of the park was and still is the Buckingham Fountain, finally built by Bennett, Parsons and Frost in 1927 (figure 3-102).

One of the most successful works done for Grant Park has to be the depressing of the rail tracks of Illinois Central. This permitted the clearing of the area and especially the view straight to the lake without such an interruption. The situation improved still more when the steam trains were replaced by electric ones which would cause less pollution and less noise (figure 3- 103).

The automobile had a strong impact in the further development of the park. First of all a parking lot was placed in the north side of the park, which had not appeared in the original plan. Another project was proposed by Eliel Saarinen for an underground bus station and parking lot which were never implemented.

Another way in which the car influenced the development of Grant Park was the Outer Drive Connection. The increasing number of cars in the city demanded for a road that would replace Michigan Avenue. In 1926 a state bill was introduced by the U.S. Congress to construct a lakefront bridge across the Chicago River<sup>142</sup>.

Most of the park was built between 1925 and 1930 remaining loyal to the plan of 1922. The park was given a formal elliptical entry way including a grand staircase at Congress Drive. The southern part of the park was only partially developed, due to the South Parks Commission's difficulty to acquire land (figure 3-104).

<sup>142</sup>Chicago Plan Commission, (E.Bennett) Outer Drive Improvement, Study No.2, approved, showing plan, profile and cross sections of proposed improvements between Ohio Street and Chicago River, January 16th 1928.



figure 3- 105- 1920s - Ossian Cole Simonds  
source: Chicago Park District. Historical Archive.

### 3.2.3.2- Ossian Cole Simonds

#### Ossian Cole Simonds – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

Ossian Cole Simonds (1855-1932) (figure 3- 105), often known as O. C. Simonds, was an American landscape designer. He was one of the country's earliest and most important landscape architects. He is said to have been the progenitor of the *middle-western movement* of landscape design.

O.C. Simonds was born near Grand Rapids, Michigan and studied architecture at the University of Michigan. He was trained as an architect under William Le Baron Jenney, but he became involved in landscape gardening in the 1870s while assisting in the design of Graceland Cemetery. He became well known as a designer of rural cemeteries.

He was also an influential teacher, author, and founder of university programs in landscape architecture. He was one of the founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects, together with Samuel Parsons, Jr., George F. Pentecost, Jr. and the Olmsted Brothers, among others. Among his landscape designs there are the Nichols Arboretum at the University of Michigan and Palmer Woods. The project for Palmer Woods' 76 hectares received the Michigan Horticultural Society's Award of Merit in 1938 for being the finest platted subdivision in Michigan.

He was also an author and wrote the book *Landscape gardening*<sup>143</sup> in 1920. *Landscape Gardening* presents Simonds's carefully conceived and still timely ideas about an approach to landscape design in which nature is both partner and model. In eighteen well-illustrated chapters,

he addresses the design of many different types of landscapes—from residences to parks to school grounds—and recommends an approach based on respect for natural systems and acceptance of stewardship responsibility. He encouraged the use of native plants; he called for the protection of land for aesthetic as well as utilitarian reasons; he championed interconnected park and boulevard systems or “green-ways”; he encouraged the planting of “nature gardens”; and he proposed thoughtful solutions to the increasingly ragged edges of early twentieth-century cities, warning of sprawl long before the word was invented. His text urges his readers to study nature as a means to develop a more refined aesthetic sensibility, which Simonds believed would foster better design and stewardship of parks, road ways, farms, schools, cemeteries, and suburban residences.

Simonds became consulting landscape gardener of Lincoln Park in 1903 and would keep his position until 1913. He also became consultant from 1917 to 1921.

Ossian Cole Simonds - project – 1905-20 – Lincoln Park

*Ossian Cole Simonds proposed a consistent and long development of Lincoln Park. being respectful of the existing design and structures of the Park, Simonds cleverly included new programmes in the park. There was a complexification of function that permitted the development of all types of leisure activities. The development of the zoological gardens provided space for didactic leisure. The sports facilities and beaches were house of active recreation. Finally the whole park kept its spirit and form dedicated to strolling and passive leisure.*

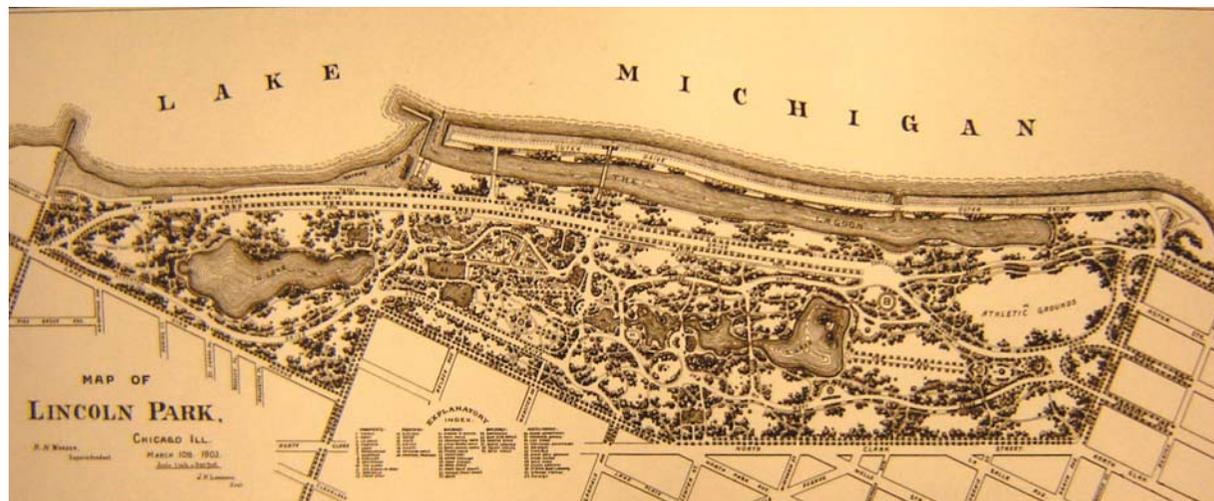


figure 3- 106 - 1903-Lincoln Park  
source: Chicago Park district. Historical Archive.

### Context and administration

There had been few problems with the parks administration until 1894, when all the directives of the Commission were laid off and the following superintendents of the park were chosen by political influence. The third of these superintendents was Paul Redieske, who had served as tax collector for North Chicago and was accused of financial mismanagement. Redieske was one year later appointed as superintendent of the park. An exception to this row of corrupt administrators was the case of Annetta McCrea. She was the first consulting landscape architect appointed in 1900. Despite McCrea's work, by 1901 the park had been extremely neglected and the governor was forced to dissolve the Commission and name Bryan Lathrop and Francis Simmons in charge. Lathrop was responsible for recruiting Ossian Cole Simonds as consulting landscape gardener of the park since 1903.

<sup>143</sup>Simonds, O.C., *Landscape Gardening*, University of Massachusetts Press, 2000.(1920)

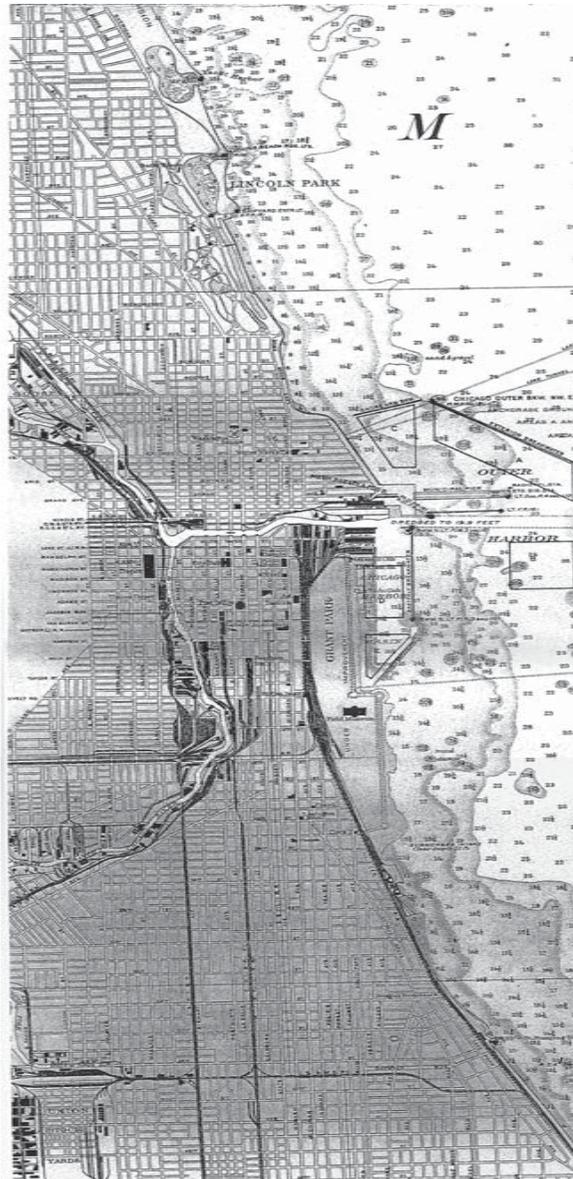


figure 3- 107- 1922 - Project for Sports harbour  
source: Dennis McClendon Collection

### Location, extension, program accessibility and realisation

Simonds' project consisted in adding almost one hundred percent more of land to the Park northwards. The west edge of the island was joined to the park by bridges on the outer drive, defining a new water inlet, the north lagoon, which would be renamed Diversey Harbour. Between 1904 and 1908 the northern part of the park was redesigned by Ossian Cole Simonds, who added approximately 111 hectares of land extending east and north (figure 3-106). An agreement had to be reached with the owners of land around the northern limit of the park. After this, the breakwater at Cornelia Avenue was finally built.

A new yachting harbour was placed at the north, the Belmont harbour, which would be later flanked by the city's first golf course, which was built in 1909. The extension proposed by Simonds incorporated programming and design elements that responded to the popularity of the lakefront.

Since 1915 the North Lagoon was provided with a beach and a ship harbour in the eastern side. The land between Diversey harbour and Belmont harbour was specified by Simonds as an area for playgrounds and athletic fields. The golf course built in 1909 was redesigned in 1915 by golf course designer Thomas Bendelow. This area has been now completely modified and the location that used to be occupied by the golf course has been taken over by the widening of the Lakeshore Drive.

Simonds was especially successful in the integration of architecture with the landscape. In his view, buildings were not supposed to stand out or be imposing, they were to be integrated

and almost hidden within the native shrubs and trees. A good example of this was the Park Place Café, designed by Perkins, Fellows and Hamilton 1913. This building was screened by rolling topography in its north and east sides and had an unimposing look over the pond.

Simonds suggested the same treatment for the additional buildings of the zoological garden. "if additional buildings in the area would be low and dark in colour, and have a setting of trees and shrubbery, the injury to the general scenery of the park would not be great"<sup>144</sup>. Many new buildings were included in the zoo in the following years, and Simonds reacted accordingly and designed screening features between the zoo and the park. He created two small ponds and an elevating hill and plant masses to create: "an effective screen in shutting out views of the unsightly buildings and cages of the zoological department from the direction of Stockton Drive"<sup>145</sup>

According to Miller<sup>146</sup>, in Simonds' redesign of some of the park's older sections his intention was to transform the existing grounds that were mainly meant for contemplative leisure into spaces of active recreation. Simonds also formulated a new plan between 1908 and 1914 but this would never be realised, due to changes in politics.

### The buildings of the park

Several different structures were added to the park throughout the following decades. One of the most impressive buildings was the Café Brauer, also known as the South Pond Refectory. It was designed in 1908 by Perkins, Fellows and Hamilton, replacing the one designed by William Le Baron Jenney in 1882. The architects of the Bauer Café were also responsible for the design of the lamp posts around the refectory and

spread in the whole south side of the park, which still stand there today. The Daily News Fresh Air Sanitarium, or Theatre on the Lake was designed by Perkins, Fellows and Hamilton in 1913 but was not built until 1920. The one and a half story building was shaped as a T and constructed in red brick. "The top of the T is a large open air pavilion which provided healthful lake breezes to sick babies."<sup>147</sup>

In the zoological gardens the bird House was designed by Jarvis Hunt in 1904. It was a single story Classical Revival structure with a terracotta tile façade. New exhibits such as an elephant stockade, pheasant cages, wolf pits, bear dens, fox pits, mountain lion shelters were added before 1911. The lion house was also designed by Perkins, Fellows and Hamilton in 1912. The building had a central exhibit hall surrounded by an area of rocks and a series of outdoor cages. The building won the gold medal for excellence of design by the Illinois Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1912. The reptile house and the primate house were designed by Edwin W. Clarke in 1922.

The protagonist role of Perkins in the architecture of Lincoln Park was not casual. He was involved in the park reform movement at the turn of the century and was appointed to the Special Park Commission formed by the city of Chicago in 1899 to study the need for new parks in congested tenement districts.

In 1923 the Chicago's Yacht Club Floating Clubhouse in Belmont Harbour was built by George Nimmons and was located in the south east of the harbour. In 1922 a South Field Club was built by Edwin Clark. It provided locker and shower facilities and club rooms to park visitors. Another significant building raised in the 1920s

was the aquarium, designed by Edwin Clark, with dozens of tanks for fresh water fish.

The Lincoln Park Cultural Centre was also designed by Edwin Clark in 1927, as well as the Lincoln Park Commission Administration Building. The Administration building was designed in the Georgian Revival style. It had a two story central pavilion and two flanking one story pavilions. Another Georgian Revival building was the Chicago Historical Society building, designed in 1932 by Graham, Anderson, Probst and White. It was a two story brick building, and its east façade, facing the waterfront, had a three bay columned portico and a broad stairway looking at the park.

### Realisation and repercussions

In 1915 a new plan was approved to expand the park from Cornelia Avenue to Montrose Avenue, but works were slow due to the development of the European war. Later, the city began discussing the idea of building an airport on the new extension. This idea was not approved by the Lincoln Park Commission. The area was instead used for new water activities and the lawns were used for new popular outdoor recreation such as croquet, fly casting, baseball and archery.

By 1916 almost all of the facilities in the northern extension were open to the public. Cars and buses drove through the park. Bathing beaches were popular as well as Diversey Harbour and Picnic Island. Rowing and motor boats were accommodated in the North Lagoon and in Belmont harbour. The building of the beach at Ohio Street followed a long process of formation. The City had elaborated plans for it between 1908 and 1911, by the Park Commission did not allow

the construction. Instead, three years later, the building of the Navy Pier was left to the city and the beach was finally opened to the public.

Sports harbours such as the one in Lincoln Park inspired the idea of other leisure harbours such as the one planned in 1922 for Grant Park (figure 3-107).

<sup>144</sup> Lincoln Park Commission Proceedings, 1911, 8: pg 16-18

<sup>145</sup> West, Myron H. *An illustrated guide to Lincoln Park, Chicago*. Chicago, Gunthorp Warren Printing Co. 1911, pg26-27

<sup>146</sup> Miller, Wilhelm, "The Prairie Spirit in Landscape", Illinois Agricultural experiment Station Circular 184. November 1915.

<sup>147</sup> National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, selection number 7, pg.22.

### Conclusions on Chapter 3 – Chicago

Out of the three case studies we are addressing in this research, Chicago was, as expected, not only the most complex and complete, but also the one in which the most projects for the waterfront were realised and are still now used for their original purposes. Even though from the post-war period to our days Chicago's waterfront has seen a very different development, which we will be addressing in the epilogue, the landmarks left by the main landscape designers of the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth are still there, ready to be used and studied.

There can be no talk of a traditional use of the waterfront before the projects, as there was in most of European cities, and as we saw in the case of Barcelona. The waterfront of Chicago began to be used as a freight transport harbour, but comparatively a very small one. There was no use of the water as fishing grounds or for other activities. The presence of the Chicago river took over these activities and the city was more connected to the river for its everyday activity than to the lake. Also, the early legislation that did not permit the building on the lakefront made this area a no-mans-land for some decades. The beginning of the park projects for the waterfront

was also a very early one, so this did not allow the development of great industrial infrastructure on the water.

We will see some typologies that were present in the projects studied and the way they developed within the period. The main typology is the lakefront park, but the evolution of the elements within them will be cleared here as a progression. Avenues, piers, lakes and harbours, waterfront buildings and beaches show us more than the formal characteristics of the projects. They also reveal the uses of these spaces and the way projects influenced behaviour, while behaviour provoked the specific design of certain forms and typologies.

#### Lakefront Parks

Obviously, the main typology to address in Chicago is the lakefront park. Even though other cities in the world within the period from 1870 to 1930 had typologies such as baths, beaches, amusement parks or harbours, Chicago's main project for the waterfront was the park. The lakefront park developed as in other parts of the world, from a space of contemplative leisure, passing through a decisively didactic space to one of active recreation. This process was slow and in Chicago it carries examples of each one of the steps of transformation, with the overlapping

of functions and forms referring to each step. The functions of the park depended as much on the programmes as they did on the formal characteristics of the projects. They also depended strongly on the ideologies of their designers.

If we look at the first waterfront project, the Lakefront cemetery located in the actual Lincoln Park, even though the intention was not to make a place for recreation, the location was used as a space of strolling, of contemplation and of naturalistic characteristics. Later, once the cemetery was moved away from the location, the projects of Nelson and Benson showed a similar type of use than the one already practised in the area. The Common Council, who commended the project, did mention the possibility of certain activities such as skating on the project for the park, but the contemplative condition of the features of the project is still on the lead. Formally, as in the project of Olmsted and Vaux for the South parks, the one for Lincoln Park had picturesque and naturalistic characteristics, prioritising the natural quality of the landscape, the combination of lawns, paths and groups of trees recreating nature.

Olmsted and Vaux had a slightly different approach to the waterfront park and to landscape design in general. This had to do with the wider experience in urban landscape design, and the deeper approach to theory. Olmsted's



preparation and experience both in England and the USA gave him the possibility of applying a series of new concepts to his designs. His and Vaux project for the south parks carried concepts that had to do with naturalistic and picturesque qualities, as well as with the civilising power of environment. The designers felt responsible for the social qualities of the spaces they were proposing. The need to give natural qualities to the park made the designers artificially create it. The flatness of the land seemed negative to Olmsted and Vaux, and they had to use strategies of earth movement to create the parks and gardens they were searching. The result was a project that combined within both parks a system of waterways, meadows and gardens added to an emerging system of recreation dedicated to young and adults including sports and other activities.

The 1880s brought change in the trade characteristics in the city. The harbour based commerce was changed to the rail based commerce. This allowed the almost total use of the waterfront as leisure space. The structures and functions of the parks became more complex.

Already by the 1880s the design of Lincoln Park starts to include certain elements that were not present in the original plan. The French Garden and the perennial garden showed a need of classification and a more scientific

approach to landscape in the urban context. The Mall, a long straight path flanked by trees, also in Lincoln Park showed a shift in the use and the characteristics of the design. The strolling, that used to be carried out only through the winding paths was being slowly replaced by a space of perspective, a faster track, to be used by carriages as well as by pedestrians. During the 1880s and 1890s new activities were developed in Lincoln Park. Passive activities such as the attendance to concerts, parades, weekly military drills, fireworks displays, and boats exhibits were popularised in the park. Other more active practices such as horseless carriages contests, baseball competitions, bicycle and foot races were beginning to rise in the park environment, but were more limited.

The World Columbian Exposition brought drastic changes to Jackson Park. Even though this was a temporary transformation, it marked the development of the city, the waterfront and urbanism in a national and international scope. The landscape principles followed by Olmsted clashed in many ways with the urban principles of Daniel Burnham. However, they managed to create an environment where the natural context and the built worked together. The choice of not adding excessive colour but providing a varied set of forestry as well as bushes made the landscape one that collaborated with the monumental and

white built context. The horticultural pavilion and the extensions of it showed part of the didactic character of the Fair, the appeal to the scientific curiosity of the visitors. The influence of the Fair on labour policies was an innovation.



figure 3- 108- 2006 - beach at Jackson Park  
source: photo by the author

figure 3- 109/110/111/112/113/114- 2006 - Jackson Park  
source: photos by the author



In a city where the labour conditions were extremely poor and a great amount of conflict had been seen between workers and bosses, the workers in the fair were the only ones who achieved the eight hour day of work throughout the preparation and building of the fair. It is true that the ending of the fair caused a great rise in unemployment, but the working conditions set a precedent for the subsequent changes in labour laws.

The transformations made to Jackson Park by the Olmsted brothers after the Fair followed greatly the original project done by their father in 1871. However, some important transformations were made that changed practically the use of the park. One of them was the Field Museum building. More space was dedicated to active recreation, such as the stadiums for men and women and a children's playground next to Stony Island and next to the lake the great track of land dedicated to tennis fields.

The project for Grant Park of 1903 changes the continuity in the evolution of form of the park. Inspired by the City Beautiful movement that had been encouraged by Daniel Burnham during the World Fair, the Olmsted brothers proposed a different kind of park. The location of this new waterfront park was in principle completely different from Jackson and Lincoln Parks; Grant Park was located in front of the city and required

a different type of design. This design was done in a monumental order and with formal qualities. There were no more informal ponds, scattered trees or winding paths. The shape of the park was geometrical, with the Field Museum in the middle of the project this was a simple and geometrical layout, with vast meadows of grass and areas of formal gardens. Despite the fact that Grant Park only had as programmatic elements the Art Institute and the Field museum in the southern and northern areas of the city's waterfront there was a continuous effort to provide spaces of recreation and active leisure for the citizens. For some or another reason this location was not considered suitable for this purpose.

The plan of Chicago of 1909 by Burnham and Bennett keeps a similar layout for Grant Park but proposes a much closer relation between lake and park. This is also provided by the lakeshore drive proposed southwards, that would link Grant and Jackson Parks. The lakeshore drive at the level of Grant Park surrounds the water basin forming a great pool that can be flanked by foot or by carriage or motor car.

The project of Grant Park by Bennett in 1922 provided a different programme and functions from the original one of 1903. Even though the formal and geometrical aspects of the park were kept, there were some radical

differences in form and function. The moving of the Field Museum to the southern side of the park cleared the centre of the park. The building was replaced by a fountain, which changed completely the perspective to the lake from Michigan Avenue. There is a lot more detail in the distribution of gardens and new athletic fields on the sides of the central fountain provided the space for active recreation that was being expected for the citizens of Chicago.

The development of Lincoln park followed a different formal evolution, which can be more related to that of Jackson park than to the one of Grant Park. Ossian Cole Simonds was in charge of the transformations of Lincoln Park through the 1910s and 1920s. He followed a respectful transformation of the already existing elements. The naturalistic character of the park was kept, despite the addition of new programme and functions. His main role in the park was to transform spaces that were dedicated for contemplative leisure to spaces of active recreation.

### Lakefront avenues and boulevards

The lakefront avenues and boulevards were part of most of the park projects for the waterfront. However, their condition depended on other variables that changed throughout time.



The project of Nelson and Benson of the 1870s for Lincoln Park shows a difficulty that would be present throughout all the projects of lakefront avenues. This was the erosion caused by the lake and the need of the proper technology to deal with it. The project for the lakefront avenue at Lincoln Park was conceived as a viewing place and contemplative scenery. The boulevard and beach were finally finished as a single project in 1894.

Different to the projects for Lincoln Park, the one of Olmsted and Vaux for Jackson Park proposed a completely different lakefront border. The limit between land and water was not to be marked by an avenue. Instead, though a strong protection structure was projected, the limit was to be blurred by foliage and the intricate system of canals that subdivided the waterfront.

The World Columbian Exposition had an avenue flanked by the northern and the southern piers. This avenue was mainly intended for pedestrians, who could see the boats arriving to the southern pier, as well as the monumental buildings – in this case the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, on their other side, by a series of formal gardens. No continuous avenue was planned here, as in other waterfront projects.

The project of the Olmsted brothers for

Jackson Park of 1895 included the first thorough and clear inclusion of a lakefront avenue. This avenue started in 57<sup>th</sup> street as an entrance to the park and flanked the lake up to the great pier to then form a circuit that would be divided into two branches: one of them would continue to the south end of the park, and the other would go into the park to form an inner circuit. This avenue was definitely planned for carriages and later for motor cars; the dimensions of the avenue are already wider than the ones of Lincoln Park and provide scenery on the sides that change in respect to the context. The first tract, between the entrance and the first pier has the beach on the left side and limited lawns with rows of trees flanking the road. A bridge crosses the entrance of the lake to the first lagoon. The second tract of the lakefront avenue has the beach on the left and on the right the tennis lawns, with a little shade provided by scattered trees. This tract ends on the pier, where there is a roundabout and the avenue then borders the south haven. In this tract there is no more view to the extensive lake but to two small ponds, one on each side of the road.

Grant Park has the first straight lakefront avenue in Chicago, which appeared in the project of 1903. This differs completely from those in Jackson Park and Lincoln Park, which were narrow winding roads for the slow contemplation of the landscape. In Grant park the avenue is a straight

line that starts at the continuation of Randolph Street and finishes in the southern limit of the park, insinuating a continuation southwards. There is an evident distribution of this avenue in different tracks.



figure 3- 115- 2006 - Museum of Science and Industry  
source: photo by the author

figure 3- 116/117/118/119- 2006 - Jackson Park  
source: photos by the author



The main track, further from the limit of the lake is flanked by double rows of trees along the meadows and next to the Field museum it only has trees on the lake side. The second track, which must have been intended for pedestrians is located on the lakefront and is also flanked by double rows of trees. From this main boulevard there is access to the two boat harbours and a central balcony on the lake placed in the axis of the Field Museum.

It is undeniable that the main element of the lakefront in Burnham's plan of Chicago was the Lake Shore Drive. This was a continuous road connecting Grant Park with Jackson park in the south, forming a parkway surrounded by greenery and bordered on one side by the spectacle of the lake.

The drive would start on a roundabout on the northern side of the Grant Park Basin, next to the northern projected pier. It would surround the basin passing next to the Field Museum and on to the next roundabout on the south side of the basin. It continued flanking the side of the lake until the pier of Jackson Park, following the latest project of the Olmsted brothers. The avenue was depicted in the plans as with one single wide road, flanked by single rows of trees, next to beaches that extended all the way next to the avenue. The avenue had accesses through four different points with the inner city streets. The peculiarity of this

boulevard was that it was separated from the city through a series of canals that ran parallel to it.

The lakefront avenue of Grant Park planned in 1922 has a different character from previous ones mentioned. It does not differ too much from the projects of the Olmsted brothers of 1903 or the Plan of Chicago of 1909 but at least here more detail is provided on the profile of the coast and the relation of heights between the elements. The avenue is not too wide and only has one lane. It is bordered by rows of trees on both sides, cut geometrically. The sidewalks are narrow under the rows of trees. The mid section of the avenue, between the athletic fields and next to the fountain has no trees around it. Instead it has an esplanade and grand staircase that permits the access to the lake.

### Piers

Piers were present in all forms and sizes, and with different functions on the lakefront of Chicago. Olmsted and Vaux designed the first pier of the waterfront in Jackson Park as a leisure harbour. That would be the main place of landing for visitors coming from the city centre. From there they would be able to appreciate the landscape qualities of the park at their arrival. This pier was not built but would set the standard for the one that would be built later for the World

Columbian Exposition with similar principles.

The first pier to appear constructed on the Chicago waterfront was the one stretching from the North Drive into the lake at Lincoln Park. The function of this pier was initially only for protection from the tides, but later, in 1879 it would be proposed as a children's hospital, to profit from the healthy air of the lake.

In the World Columbian Exposition the pier was one of the most outstanding features of the whole project. Even though there were three piers in total, the great southern pier was the principal one. The innovative characteristic of it, which made it stand out, apart from its size, was the movable sidewalk that would provide a spectacular entrance to the fair for those who arrived by boat. Once the fair was over the structure of the pier was reduced and in the project of the Olmsted Brothers both piers seem to be used only as protection for the beaches projected.

Two main piers were designed on the sides of Grant Park within the Plan of Chicago of 1909. The design of these piers must have been one full of conflicts, for there are some drawings that show them and others that do not. The northern pier also appears with different shapes in different drawings. In the first two plans previous to the one of 1909 there is no sign of such piers. In the floor plan of the original plan



of 1909 there are two symmetrical piers on the sides of Grant Park that seem to be mainly spaces for strolling and driving to admire the spectacle of the lakefront. Both of them have a road in the middle and are flanked by gardens on each side. The bird's eye perspective, also published in the plan shows a different northern pier, which is later specified in the book, dedicated exclusively for freight, collaborating with the southern pier at Calumet.

### Inland lakes and ponds

Inland lakes were part of many waterfront projects; they formed an intermediate space between land and the vast waters, providing through time a space of contemplative and active leisure.

In the case of the South Parks by Olmsted and Vaux, the inland ponds were part of a whole water system that provided a different character than the great extension of the lakefront. The water system was an intricate structure of waterways including ponds and canals, which had contrast in shade, light and colour. Swain Nelson's project for Lincoln Park shows a similar approach to inland water, the streams and ponds seem to be a space for passive contemplation; they are prominent in the park and formally they resemble the pathway system for pedestrians.

The inner lakes on the project for the World Exhibition were crucial in the landscape design, and turned out to be spectacular elements during the exhibition. Given the monumental character of the whole fair and the predominance in presence that the buildings had referred to the landscape, water had to become a main element in the Fair, according to Olmsted. This led the inner water in the Exposition to respond to different characteristics regarding their location. The water around the wooded isle reflected the picturesque ideas that had been present in the original project of Olmsted for Jackson Park. On the contrary, the Great Basin, surrounded by buildings, showed a much more monumental character.

### Lakefront buildings

Early designs for the parks of Chicago did not include buildings. The projects of Olmsted for Jackson Park and of Nelson for Lincoln Park were exclusively dedicated to nature, with hardly any constructed work. Jackson park and Washington park only counted with a structure for supporting the area of sport practice and an arrival station in the lagoon, where boats would be kept and delivered for rowing in the water system.

The first buildings on the waterfront parks were dedicated mainly to didactic activities and scientific curiosity, as well as aesthetic. Lincoln Park's first buildings were the greenhouse

and the palm house. The Chicago Academy of Sciences was built in the park in 1893 and set the standard for academic facilities to be placed in park environments, especially in waterfront parks.



figure 3- 120- 2006 - Chicago Lakefront and Grant Park  
source: photo by the author

figure 3- 121/122/123/124/125- 2006 - Grant Park  
source: photos by the author



More mundane structures were also built in the end of the 1880s at Lincoln Park, the Men's and Ladies' comfort stations were of a more functional kind and provided space of rest and relaxation for the visitors of the park. A structure that exemplifies the inclusion of didactic activities on the lakefront was the zoological gardens, which became extremely popular in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

We have described in detail the buildings of the World Fair in the chapter dedicated to it. What we rescue of all these buildings, besides the formal character of them, is the idea of leisure they were reflecting. The buildings in the fair formed a campaign for scientific development and the expansion of this as an instrument for the civilisation of the masses. The didactic qualities of all the buildings were reflected in their exhibits and in the way they were displayed. Especially the children's pavilion was one in which most of the elements of Rational Recreation were included, be them scientific or of physical activity. The situation of the Midway Plaisance was a different one. This part of the exhibition was more related to the uses of leisure inherent to the working classes. Entertainment and spectacle were the protagonists of the Midway, pleasure grounds filled with sideshows and curiosities, including the setup of supposed foreign cultures that were providing a prejudiced view on anything coming

from outside the western world.

In the project for restructuring Jackson Park after the fair there is one single great building left from the Exposition. This was the Field Museum, now called Museum of Science and Industry. This building followed the same form as the Fine Arts building but the contents would be different, for instead of art it was dedicated to sciences. However, the principles of leisure behind the building were similar to those of the fair; the didactic element was there and the building was almost the gateway to the park. Other smaller buildings were restored for the restructuring of the park, such as the German pavilion, which was used as a park refectory restaurant. Other buildings to satisfy the needs and uses of the park were added in the following decades. Most of them were dedicated to sports and active recreation, such as the golf shelter and the South Shore Motor Boat Club designed by Daniel Burnham.

The plan of 1909 and the project of 1922 had similar structures planned for Grant Park on the lakefront. The only one which changed its location was the Field Museum, which was supposed to be placed in the middle of Grant Park and was later placed on the south end of it. The Art Institute kept its location on Michigan Avenue and built an expansion towards the

park and over the Illinois railway. The Shedd Aquarium and the Adler planetarium were later added to the project forming a system of didactic leisure which involved the visiting public of the park.

New structures were added to Lincoln park throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. Most of these buildings were dedicated to entertainment and active leisure such as sports. Many buildings were added to the zoological gardens and other buildings such as the Yacht Club floating clubhouse and the Lincoln Park Cultural Centre.

### Beaches

The first lakefront beach in Chicago was the one of Lincoln Park and dates from 1888. This beach was paved, for there was no technology at the time to keep sand from being taken away by the tides. In any case, by this time the beaches were not being used yet as bathing facilities but as places of strolling and contemplating.

In 1895 the condition of the beach changed with the intervention of the Free Bath and Sanitary League. This meant that the Park Commission was to build bathing facilities at the lake, which was done immediately.

Even though the project for the World Exposition did not include the design of a beach,



next to the Manufacturers Building the area was used as a beach. The use was not for bathing, but the pictures show many people strolling next to the water on low tide.

Jackson Park took long to become the bathing centre it was in the 1920s. However, it was already in 1896 when the project of the Olmsted brothers designed two bathing beaches in the site of the finished World Fair. The opening of the 63<sup>rd</sup> street beach house by the South Park Commission signed the beginning of a new culture of lake bathing in Chicago.

### Epilogue

The Chicago waterfront after the Second World War went through a different development. Not many transformations were done apart from the addition of some buildings, the extension of Lincoln Park and the finishing of the Lakeshore Drive. Actually, the one single transformation that has affected the use and appearance of the lakefront has to be the extension and enlargement of the Lakeshore drive. Of course the change in transportation in the second half of the twentieth century has affected the park systems of many cities. But the case of Chicago is a special one. There is still the possibility of enjoying the spectacular views of the lakefront from means of transportation like a car, but the access of the pedestrian to the lakefront has grown increasingly

difficult.

As Blair Kamin remarked in his article on the Chicago Tribune of 1998, on the series about the lakefront, we can confirm that now people are cut off from the lake and waterfront parks by the lakeshore drive and the rail tracks beyond. The lake can only be reached by “a few shabby overpasses” according to Kamin<sup>148</sup>. This has been confirmed in a visit to Chicago, where it was extremely difficult to find paths from the city into the lakefront parks.

In his article of 1998 Kamin also remarked:

“This 30-mile long front yard is at once a victim of our poverty of imagination and the crippling consequences of its own success. As good as it is, the lakefront could be so much more. It could realize its vast potential if we just had a vision - and the will to act on it”<sup>149</sup>

Since then, there have been modifications done to the lakefront, but until now they were limited to the restructuring of Grant Park. Another project that was realised and has been successful is the path dedicated to cycles and runners that follows the whole lakefront. The current plans are mainly to rebuild lakeshore drive; to build forty hectares of lakeshore drive and to build two new beaches. One of the main efforts to be made is to improve access to the waterfront.



figure 3- 126- 2006 - Chicago Lakefront and Lincoln Park  
source: photo by the author

<sup>148</sup>Kamin, Blair. “Reinventing the Lakefront,” Chicago Tribune, Special Reprint, Originally published October 26, 1998 - November 5, 1998. Pages 1 - 16.

<sup>149</sup>Kamin, Blair. “Reinventing the Lakefront,” Chicago Tribune, Special Reprint, Originally published October 26, 1998 - November 5, 1998. Pages 1 - 16.

figure 3- 127/128/129/130/131- 2006 - Lincoln Park  
source: photos by the author





**Chapter 4**  
**Buenos Aires 1870-1930**  
**The urban waterfront as a leisure experiment**



## Chapter 4 – Buenos Aires 1870-1930 – the urban waterfront as a leisure experiment

*¿y fue por ese río de sueñera y de barro que las proas vinieron a fundarme la patria?*

Jorge Luis Borges

*Few cities, in fact, will have the possibility, for its placing in front of a river like ours, of being able to build a promenade of this extension, which magnificence can be previewed without effort. On one side the river, whose display will be always a main attraction. On the other side beautiful country houses, modern constructions, a site preferred by people of good taste and fortune, big hotels, bath houses, etc. And at the promenade, with its grand perspective, the wide attendance this city already has, will assume proportions that escape any estimate*

Carlos Maria Morales, 1895

In the previous chapters on Barcelona and Chicago the situation of leisure waterfronts was analysed. Two very different models gave evidence of how urban landscape was being transformed in Europe and North America, following guidelines that depended on the urban, social, economical, political and aesthetic situation of the cities studied.

Barcelona was a city in which the harbour was taking over most of the waterfront. Despite the old tradition of baths and the intention of the urban plans to open these areas for leisure there was no real materialisation of these projects and technical facilities succeeded over leisure

space. The city would have to wait for at least a whole century to see its waterfront restored as leisure space and opened for the use of the city dwellers.

Chicago's waterfront, on the other hand, since the beginning of this period, did not have such an important harbour and was a city in continuous growth and development. The industrial use of the waterfront was limited to the slaughterhouses in the southern side of the city. Therefore the waterfront was largely exploited for leisure purposes. The projects designed for the waterfront, including the World Columbian Exposition, Jackson Park, Grant Park and Lincoln Park were examples of urban landscape adapted to the conditions of the waterfront. In their development it is possible to see the evolution of concepts of urban and landscape design combining European and North American ideas. Concepts regarding leisure provision and behaviour were also predominant within these projects.

The case of Buenos Aires comes here to close a circuit of spaces for leisure provision on the urban waterfront in the western world. Buenos Aires, as well as Rio de Janeiro, follows a quest and conflict between the proposal of leisure areas and harbour facilities in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Later, in the first decades of the twentieth century, cities such as Valparaiso, La Habana or Lima and other Latin American metropolis follow these steps and propose and build promenades and parks next to their waterfronts.

So now concentrating on the case of Buenos Aires it is relevant to say that during this period, waterfront areas were being used for the development of new leisure practices. This is shown by the projects that were built and by

those that were not as well. Parks and gardens, promenades and avenues, baths and beaches were being incorporated in the city plans. Architects, engineers and politicians who had different positions towards the physical qualities of these spaces developed such projects. However, they had one aim in common: the ambition of providing a *better* environment for city dwellers, therefore restructuring the space for changes in behaviour. Buenos Aires' waterfront underwent a series of modifications and construction, which reflected ideas of European influence and incorporated local ideas and expertise. The main benefit of the location lay in the potential of the city to transform itself, due to its youth and the lack of obstacles provided by many aspects of tradition.

The evolution of the urban waterfront in these years consists on a continuous line of changes, modifications and transformations that follow different variables such as social, economical, urban and behavioural necessities of the city. As a general overview it is here understood that the variables just mentioned were dependent on each other and influenced by each other throughout. Each variable has its own timeframe and these time frames coincided at times, but at others they did not. The spatial development of the waterfront leisure areas also had its own time frame. What is meant here is that these events are not independent, but they are also not necessarily attached, there is not one necessary cause followed by one consequence. Political decisions had a direct relation to some economical ones, but the reaction of the physical environment of the city to these transformations would happen in a more extended span of time. In the same way, spatial transformations of the waterfront were advanced regarding the period

in which they were being developed, and were not necessarily a direct consequence of political or economical decisions.

This is the reason why this chapter is arranged into a first section (4.1) that explains the whole context of the period, analysing the economical, political, social, leisure and urban variables. The following section (4.2) will be that of the projects themselves and their makers; the relation of these with the local and international context will be analysed.

For the purpose of understanding this evolution a sub-periodisation is presented. Three main positions are observed in the waterfront projects. The period from 1870 to 1895 was that of the provision of parks as a civilising tool for the local citizens, the use of parks as a didactic and scientific institution was part of the agenda of those responsible for these projects. Meanwhile, the waterfront park that was actually built was actually a picturesque landscape for contemplative leisure limited to the higher classes. Later, more developed ideas of hygiene, social provision of leisure and the will for national representation through the International Exposition signed the period between 1895 and 1912. Finally the period between 1912 and 1930 was the one that introduced the hierarchy of leisure space and the complexification of recreation and entertainment. This periodisation does not intend to state a unique system of understanding and the closed grouping of projects.

There was indeed an influence of each project on the next; each designer, engineer and administrator used instruments and elements of the previous projects, combined with their own expertise as well as international influences for the development of new ideas. To show what this evolution consisted on, this is a general idea of the

periods presented. Leisure concepts as those of the *rational recreation* and the *park movement* were implemented at first. These movements had their origin in the Anglo-Saxon culture, providing a sense of change in behaviour in leisure activities. They focused on passive and active leisure as means to enhance the soul and improve the working capacities of city dwellers. The means to provide these were mainly the building and developing of parks in the urban context.

Later on, by the turn of the century as the city grows in an unprecedented way, infrastructure is needed for the growing population. On the waterfront a new set of projects appear. The projects show the need of a network of leisure space, where accessibility becomes more important and the projects focus more on issues of circulation than on the actual program of the parks. The *Exposición Internacional* of 1910 is also relevant regarding the idea of a leisure network and urban parks as spaces of representation and prestige.

During the 1910s and 1920s the projects show a new face of urbanism and leisure ideas. Recreation and entertainment take a more relevant place, as well as a difference and provision of private leisure space for the rich and public leisure space for the poor. As projects evolve, with the influence of foreign ideas, waterfront and leisure become one system of development that saw few precedents in the past.

For being able to understand this evolution and the phenomenon of the discovery of the urban waterfront it is necessary to have an idea of what the conditions were for this phenomenon to occur. The case of Buenos Aires needs a more exhaustive explanation, for out of the three cases in this thesis, it is the least published and spread, especially in English language. For this purpose the social, economical, political and urban context

will be analysed, to understand what conditions permitted the development of such particular areas of the city.

*In this chapter we intend to show how, in what is considered as a peripheral case such as Buenos Aires, when it comes to the waterfront, many projects were presented and realised. Pioneering ideas and realisation of models were developed within the constant conflict between the building of harbour and leisure facilities. There is an evolution of ideas in the materialisation of the projects, which not only reflects ideas developed abroad but also a thorough knowledge of the local situation which led naturally to original projects and the opening of the relationship between the city and its waterfront.*

## 4.1 – Introduction – urban, political, economical and social context

*The following introduction will be more extended than in the previous chapters on Barcelona and Chicago, for it is assumed that there is less common knowledge about the case of Buenos Aires. The historical context in which the projects for the Buenos Aires waterfront developed was extremely important for those which were realised as well as for those which were not. The social, economical and political developments that took place in Buenos Aires between 1870 and 1930 did not only shape the society and the city of the twentieth century but also its waterfront and the relation of the city with it. As in previous chapters, the end of this section is dedicated to the overview of general leisure activities and those particular of the waterfront.*

### 4.1.1 – History

#### The foundation

Buenos Aires was founded in 1536 for the first time, by the Spanish explorer Pedro de Mendoza. The foundation of Buenos Aires was one within many<sup>1</sup> in the campaign of the Spanish crown to settle in America. The process of Spanish *conquista* and colonisation of America was simultaneously based on the occupation of territory and the foundation of cities. This expansive impulse of territorial occupation was almost consolidated by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, making it an extremely rapid process. The network of administrative centres was, by the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, occupying a wide territory from the south of what now is the United States to the Patagonia, now Argentina.

The roles of these cities within the colony were various. They were the main base for goods provision, the trade centre for larger zones around them, the entrance gate for further penetration into the territory. They were also the local and regional administrative centres, the concentration pole for all kinds of activities, the focus of control of land ownership and the point of reference of a lifestyle brought from Europe. These cities were both the administrative and ecclesiastical centres for the zones they provided.

The foundation of these American cities was ruled by the Laws of Indies, a document signed by Carlos V in 1523 and later reorganised and corrected by his son Felipe II in 1573. The laws of Indies would not only determine the administrative characteristics of the cities but also the formal qualities they were supposed to have. This shape was ruled by the grid and certain other aspects we will see as follows. In Carlos V's words:

“And when the floor-plan for the place is made, it has to be laid out in its *plazas*<sup>2</sup>, streets and *solares*<sup>3</sup> to string and ruler, starting from the *plaza mayor*<sup>4</sup>. And starting from it streets to the main gates and roads, and leaving enough open space so that even if the population grows greatly, it will be extended in the same form.”<sup>5</sup>

It is relevant to state that in Hispano-American urbanism, the urban tracing is clear and geometrical, evidently in contrast to European cities before the nineteenth century, therefore giving an ordered and rationalised basic organisation to the new cities.

The main qualities of these cities (figure 4-01) were: the geometrical tracing, the straight streets forming *manzanas*<sup>6</sup> with rectangular or squared shape.

<sup>1</sup> Bogotá 1538, Santiago 1541, Caracas 1558, Rio de Janeiro 1565, Colonia 1680, Montevideo 1724

<sup>2</sup> squares

<sup>3</sup> plots

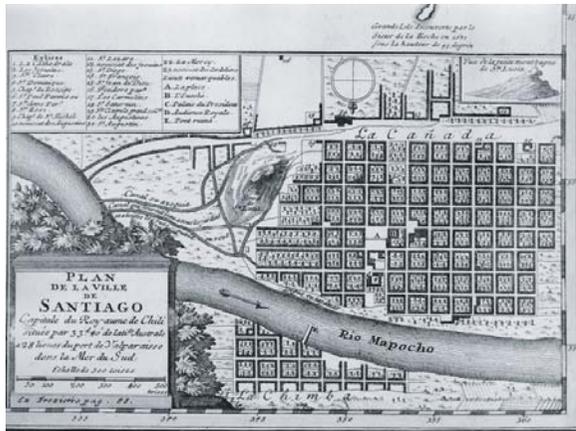
<sup>4</sup> main square

<sup>5</sup> Ordenanza de Carlos V, 1523

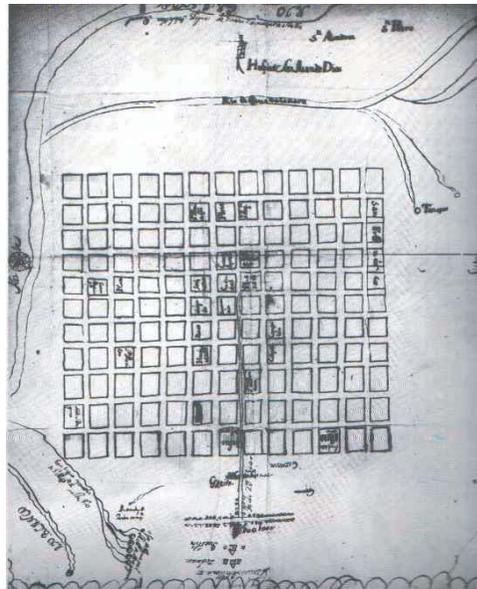
<sup>6</sup> Urban blocks or plots formed by houses and limited by streets. The Spanish name of *manzana* (apple) for a group of houses became used during the XVIIIth century. The most ancient literary citation of *manzana* as ‘block of houses’ dates back to 1654. About the etymology of the origin of *manzana* as ‘block of houses’ we do not find anything in any dictionary, be it etymological or general, ancient or modern. In the dictionaries *manzana* appears as singular acceptance under the meaning apple ‘fruit’ (derivative of the Latin *malus mattiana*), giving to understand that it is a question of one metaphor.

According to Juan Ramón Lodaes Marrodán, in his article “los dos origenes de *manzana*”, in the case of *manzana* as ‘block of houses’ we are before a popular explicable etymology from two possible origins: a) ‘bricklayer’ comes from the French *maçon*; b) ‘house’ comes from the French *maison*. It has nothing in common with the Latin etymology of apple ‘fruit’, of which it is a simple namesake and never more than a metaphor.

Quoted from Fernandez Lopez, Justo, Hispanoteca, lengua y cultura, <http://culturitalia.uibk.ac.at/hispanoteca/Foro-preguntas>.

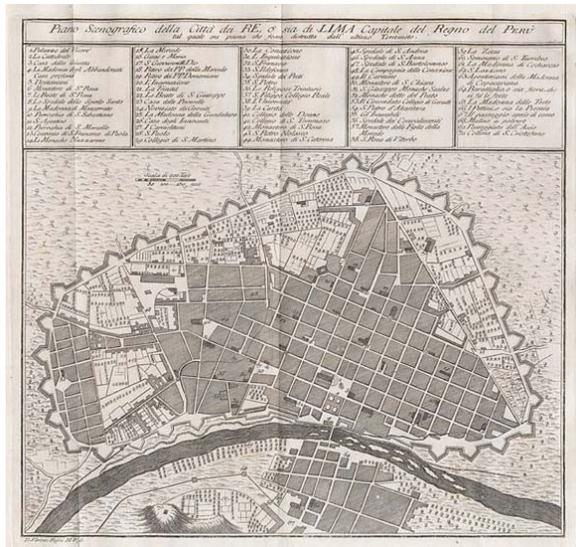


**figure 4-01a** - 1712 - Plan de la Ville de Santiago. Capitale du Royaume de Chile.  
author: Armando Frazier

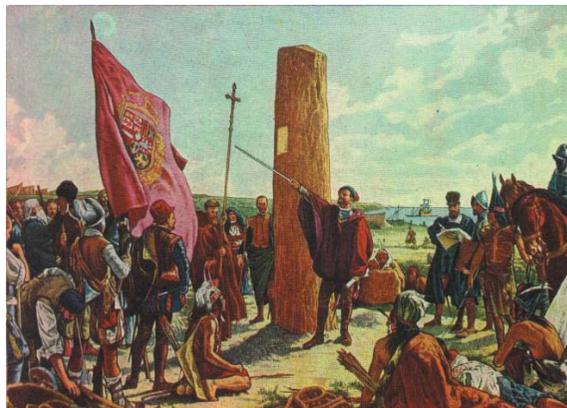


**figure 4-01b** - 1731 - Guadalajara  
author: n/a  
source: Expediente de Conducción de agua para la ciudad, Archivo Histórico de Guadalajara.

**figure 4-01c** - 1763 - Plano scenografico della citta del Re o sia di Lima Capitale del regno del Peru  
source: Caen 61 photos <http://www.flickr.com/>



**figure 4-02** - 1580 - the foundation of Buenos Aires by Juan de Garay  
author: Jose Moreno Carbonero (1860-1942)  
source: Madrid Museo de America-Coleccion Fundacion de Buenos Aires



The square was the most prominent shape of blocks in these cities. One of the main central blocks would be left empty of construction and take the function of Plaza Mayor. This plaza was a basic structuring element in this system. This would be the public space, the meeting place for all kinds of social, official and leisure activities. The buildings representing power and religion, such as the cathedral, the royal palace and the *cabildo*<sup>7</sup> were always placed around the Plaza Mayor. The model for the structuring of these cities was the *parcelación*<sup>8</sup> each block was divided into 4 plots, the most important buildings, administrative and religious, would be the closest to the Plaza Mayor. The following ring would be occupied by the *conquistadores* and the rest would be given to the rest of the settlers.

One of the most significant characteristics of this imposed system was the lack of consideration of the geographical qualities of the terrain. No matter what the geographical accidents were – coastlines, hills, lakes – the shape of the city would practically always be the same.

Between the two foundations of the city of Buenos Aires (1536-1580) no real urban development took place, for this was one of the remotest ports from the European continent and the presence of some Indian tribes made it difficult to settle.

In 1580 a new foundation of the city took place in the hands of Juan de Garay (1528-1583) a Basque explorer, who named the city Santa Maria del Buen Ayre on the name of the Spanish crown. The city was founded on the banks of Rio de la Plata (figure 4-02) next to Riachuelo, a smaller river opening to Rio de la Plata. The floor-plan of the city was dictated by the laws of Indies (figure 4-03). As can be seen in the map, and was the case of most of these cities, the plan had no correlation

with the main geographical accidents of the area, namely the waterfront condition, the slope next to the river and the streams that lead to it. The only variation in the floor-plan is the fact that the Plaza Mayor was placed next to the river and not in the centre of the town (figure 4-04). The first tracing of the city consisted of 146 plots of 100 by 100 metres, the closest ones to the plaza divided into 4 plots (one per owner) and the rest would have one owner per whole block. Another peculiarity in the built elements of this city was the fort, as in many other colonial cities<sup>9</sup> on the waterfront the building of a fort was crucial, for this areas would be difficult to protect, being so far way from the main power of the Spanish crown. Apart from the fort located in one of the limits of the plaza, there also was the cathedral and the Cabildo located on the northern and western limits of the plaza.

In this case the territorial qualities were not considered either, nor were they in the following centuries. Geographical accidents were not considered in the development of the city and were systematically flattened and regularised.

### Colonial times

During the following 250 years after the foundation of the city the population grew slowly (chart 4-01) and Buenos Aires was not an influential city within the vice royalties of South America, despite being a harbour town. The area around Buenos Aires was not attractive as those of Alto Peru or Nueva Granada (on the Caribbean) for there were no raw materials that would interest the European markets; there was neither silver nor gold nor spices that could be exported to the old continent. Therefore Buenos Aires was left to a slow development without many changes in social structure or economy throughout all the years of the colony.

The British victory in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) left the Caribbean in the hands of the British, and the Spanish crown had to find an alternative route for their trade. Buenos Aires was then proposed as a new gateway to Potosí silver, but Lima merchants opposed. Later, Buenos Aires merchants and governors petitioned the Spanish crown to strengthen them commercially in order to have resources to mount defence against British (in the Malvinas or Falklands) and Portuguese (in Colonia do Sacramento). Finally a military expedition from Spain under Pedro de Cevallos (1715-1778) in 1777 took Sacramento and then declared Buenos Aires a new viceroyalty.

By 1778, *free trade* was proclaimed, and economic expansion accelerated until the wars of independence. The British invaded Buenos Aires in 1806 and 1807, but locals defeated the invasion, which gave self-confidence to native leaders. By May 1810, after the fall of the Junta de Sevilla, locals forced viceroy Cisneros (1755-1829) to convoke a *cabildo abierto*<sup>10</sup>. The locals, headed by Cornelio Saavedra (1760-1828), Mariano Moreno (1778-1811), Manuel Belgrano (1780-1820), and Bernardino Rivadavia (1780-1845), all free traders, deposed the viceroy. Violent internal disagreements and clashes led to the replacement of the junta by a triumvirate in September 1811. On July 9, 1816, an Argentine congress met at Tucumán<sup>11</sup>, declaring Argentine independence and adopting a constitution. The following years saw a mixture of liberal and conservative thought in the political environment of the city and the country. Rivadavia (1780-1845), the first president under the 1826 Constitution, which declares the Republic, was liberal, in support of free trade, popular voting, anti-Church, and in favour of European immigration. However, he also favoured power centralisation and social order .

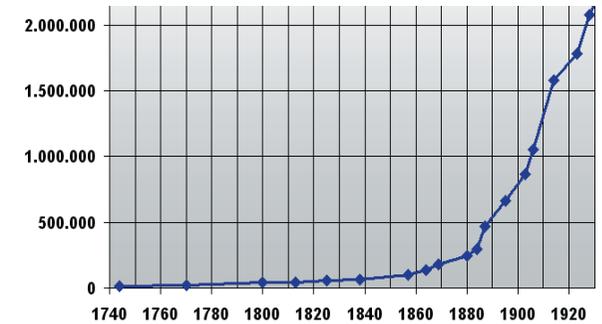


Chart 4-01 - Population Growth in Buenos Aires 1740-1920

<sup>7</sup> government house

<sup>8</sup> division of land in plots

<sup>9</sup> Cartagena de Indias, Santa Marta, La Habana

<sup>10</sup> The Cabildo Abierto reminds us of the Broletto held in the area of Lombardy in Italy since the eleventh century. In Italy the government building placed in front of the plaza or cortile acquired the name of Broletto. The same happened in Buenos Aires, where the government house was called Cabildo.

<sup>11</sup> city on the northwest of Argentina



**figure 4-03** - 1580- repartimiento de la Traza de Buenos Ayres hecho para la Corona.  
author: Juan de Garay  
source: Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Esteticas. FADU. UBA.

## After Independence

Despite the developments in economy and politics and the opening of the harbour as an international trade centre, the growth of the city between 1820 and 1870 (chart 4-02) was not yet considerable. This growth was slow and sustained by cattle rearing, smuggling and slave trade.

Regarding the physical environment of Buenos Aires (figure 4-04), to the east, the coast and the slope were the natural boundaries to the city. The city was limited in the north and south by trenches or streams. On the other hand, to the west, the urbanisation advanced without impediments. The division of the land was as arbitrary as can be seen in the map. These lots on what were then the outskirts of the city will eventually mark the shifting of the grid required by geographical conditions.

Buenos Aires in the 1850s was a small town on the banks of the Rio de la Plata. The population of the city was basically composed by Spanish descendants remained from the time of the colonies and some very small minorities of European immigrants. The harbour was still not developed as an important trade centre and the lifestyle was a very simple and austere one.

In 1853 the Federalist constitution was passed, accepted by all provinces except Buenos Aires, which declared independence. Justo José de Urquiza (1801-1870) became president of the Confederation, which was kept under the shadow of rich Buenos Aires. In 1860, the governor of Buenos Aires, Bartolomé Mitre (1821-1906), defeated Urquiza, and the provinces submitted to Buenos Aires. The submission was a positive development, providing respect for mutual needs and conciliation. Under the power of Buenos Aires, the constitution was reformed:

the document provided the division of political power in a federal regime, with two legislative chambers and an independent judiciary power. The constitution included a bill of rights and the abolition of slavery. This government committed to the promotion of immigration, communications and industry, and the ban of internal restrictions on trade.

The document kept some features from both political sides present at the time, the Unitary and the Federalist. A Unitarist feature was for example the strong executive power, which could sometimes dissolve provincial governments. On the other hand the Federalist and more relevant features were that the Senate would protect landed oligarchies and that provinces would keep their own militias. Mitre was elected by Electoral College in 1862 and during his mandate the Argentine Republic was created. This included the creation of a state apparatus, a national legal system, bureaucracy, a taxation system, national treasury/customs, national voting law, national army (1864) and civil law code (1870). Development in technology and information such as the construction of the first railroad line in 1862 from Rosario to Cordoba<sup>12</sup>, and the production of the national dailies, *La Nación* and *La Prensa*, also led way to changes in the economical and social fields. The consequences of these changes in the following decades are what will be dealt with next.



**figure 4-04** - 1750 - Map of Buenos Aires  
author: Anomymous  
source: Servicio historico militar 6.267, E-16-7

<sup>12</sup> Two meridional cities located at about 400 and 600 km west of Buenos Aires.

### The last decades of the nineteenth century

This situation of slow and sustained growth changed as Buenos Aires turned into an international harbour and became the gateway to the rest of South America. Cattle rearing and agriculture boosted the potential of the city for becoming a powerful economy by the end of the nineteenth century.

The period we will be dealing with in further depth will be the one between 1870 and 1930. It would be impossible to understand the position of Argentina and Buenos Aires without understanding what was happening in the rest of the world. Historians have extensively dealt with this period in the last decades. Authors such as Heinrich Friedjung<sup>13</sup>, later Wolfgang Mommsen<sup>14</sup> and Eric Hobsbawm<sup>15</sup> have called it the Age of Empire<sup>16</sup>. As mentioned earlier in the introduction, according to Hobsbawm the period concerned the last decades before the First World War and was marked by the end of the *long* nineteenth century and the end of the world of the bourgeoisie. When Hobsbawm marks the end of this period he is considering primarily the European and North American context, in the case of Mommsen the focus is only on Europe. When it comes to Latin America it corresponds to say that the period and its characteristics may be extended. As commented in the introduction the periodisation for each case study is adapted to the circumstances regarding basically the configuration of the urban leisure waterfront related to the social, economical and political context. In this case the periods introduced by Felix Luna<sup>17</sup>, *La modelación de la Argentina Moderna*<sup>18</sup> (1880-1912) and *La Democracia Radical*<sup>19</sup> (1912-1930) are used as guidelines for the determining of the period used here.

However, in the terms of continuity and

discontinuity mentioned by Hobsbawm, this thesis and especially this chapter try to illustrate the continuity of events and phenomena. Not as a continuous line on the events that do not change but as a continuity of ideas that see themselves built from time to time and, with interruptions, always return in one form or another. The projects we deal with and their construction in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first ones of the twentieth have reflected a way of using the city that is still present today. And certain types of urban form allow now for the use of waterfront spaces in a very similar manner to that of the moment they were conceived. When it comes to leisure and park design this long nineteenth century can be extended even longer. Considering that the first laws of labour in Argentina did not appear until the 1930s the leisure practices before this time can be still considered as part of the nineteenth century model, despite the differences within the period and the developments which will be described further into this chapter. The end of this period for this case coincides then with the great depression that affected world economy in 1929-1930 and the break of democracy in Argentina by the first coup d'état in 1930. This period (1870-1930) was for Argentina and Buenos Aires one of considerable growth, of change and development in economical, social and political issues, sowing the seeds of much of what the country and its capital are today.

Between the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth, the growth of population, the migration and the economical and commercial changes caused great modifications in Buenos Aires (chart 4-01). The city had different logics of growth and change, regarding its limits, the extension of its growth and the authorities responsible for the decisions taken. Urban plans

and projects developed by public administration had an essential role in the first decades of the century for the transformation of Buenos Aires. This phenomenon was greatly influenced by the economical conditions at the time. The urban waterfronts were subject to such changes too, as mentioned in the local bibliography<sup>20</sup>.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, immigration from Europe escalated intensely showing a need for the city to re-organise its spatial and urban qualities (chart 4-04). Politicians saw themselves in the position of shaping a new and diverse society, and for this purpose they appealed to help and sought influence from abroad in the form of foreign professionals intervening in the urban development decisions and in expertise acquired by locals abroad. The period treated here was not only the time of great economical and social development but also the time of the first composition of intellectual and political elite in Argentina. One of the main causes for the great development of this period were the high immigration rates.

#### 4.1.2- Immigration – the motor of development

One of the main factors of change that lead to the transition from a traditional Argentina to a modern one was immigration. There was no other period in which the proportion of foreigners in adult age had been so significant. For more than 60 years<sup>21</sup> more than half of the population of the Capital Federal and almost 30% of the provinces of Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Santa Fé were immigrants.

#### International migration – general overview

Looking at the wider spectrum of international migration it concerns to see what was happening in Europe that permitted this phenomenon to happen. During the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, more than 60 million Europeans left the continent escaping from the threat of hunger and looking for better opportunities in the New World. Most of them emigrated to North and South America, especially to the United States, but Brazil and Argentina were also among the most popular destinations.

In the 1840s the main causes for the emigrating population may have been problems such as famine, religious conflict and revolution in Europe, but as this migration becomes massive during the last fourth of the century the phenomenon shows a bigger extent of complexities, reasons and explanations.

The total amount of emigrants from Europe per year (chart 4-03) between 1846 and 1876 was approximately of 300.000, between 1876 and 1896 the amount doubled, and after 1900 it went up to almost a million per year.

**Chart 4-02**

Population Growth Buenos Aires 1869-1914

Year	Buenos Aires	Average growth rate	Argentina	Average growth rate
1869	181.000		1.830.000	
1895	671.000	5,2	4.045.000	3,1
1914	1.973.000	5,8	7.904.000	3,8

source: INDEC. Censos Nacionales de Poblacion

**Chart 4-03**

Gross Emigration Rates from European Countries, 1850-1813 (emigrants per 1000 population per annum, decade averages)

	1850-59	1860-69	1870-79
Belgium	1,9	2,22	2,03
Denmark	--	--	1,97
France	--	0,12	0,16
Germany	1,8	1,61	1,35
Great Britain	4,83	2,47	3,87
Ireland	18,99	15,16	11,28
Italy	--	--	4,29
Netherlands	0,5	1,67	2,66
Norway	--	--	4,33
Portugal	--	--	2,91
Spain	--	--	--
Sweden	0,51	2,52	2,96

**Source:** Hatton and Williamson (1998), p. 33.

Notes: These figures are for gross emigration and were drawn largely from Ferenczi and Willcox (1929). Where possible the figures include emigration to other countries within Europe. Data on return migration is somewhat limited but it is possible to construct net emigration figures for a more limited set of country/decades.

<sup>13</sup> Heinrich Friedjung (1859-1920) German historian and publicist, was the first to call this period the age of empire.

<sup>14</sup> Mommsen, Wolfgang J., *La época del imperialismo, Europa 1885-1918*, Siglo XXI Editores, 1971. (Original en alemán 1969)

<sup>15</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, Vintage books, New York, 1987.

<sup>16</sup> see introduction pg... this period has been interpreted by different authors and each had limited it by different years and events. Hobsbawm's period extends between 1875 and 1914, Mommsen's between 1880 and 1918, including the First world war.

<sup>17</sup> Luna, Felix, *Breve Historia de los Argentinos*, Planeta, Espejo de la Argentina, Buenos Aires, 1993.

<sup>18</sup> The modeling of Modern Argentina

<sup>19</sup> Radical Democracy

<sup>20</sup> Secondary bibliography mentioning urban waterfront projects Walter, Richard J. *Politics and Urban growth in Buenos Aires. 1910-1942*. Cambridge University Press, 1994

Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero. *Costanera Sur*. Ediciones La Riviere. Buenos Aires.1999

Gorelik, Adrián. *La Grilla y el Parque. espacio público y cultura urbana en Buenos Aires, 1887-1936* Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1998.

Novick, Alicia: "Técnicos locales y extranjeros en la génesis del Urbanismo porteño". En *AREA*, Revista de Investigaciones. SIP, FADU/Universidad Politécnica de Laussane, 1992.

Silvestri, Graciela. *La ciudad y el río, Un estudio de las relaciones entre técnica y naturaleza a través del caso del puerto de Buenos Aires*. En Liernur, Jorge / Silvestri, Graciela, *El Umbral de la Metrópolis, transformaciones técnicas y cultura en la modernización de Buenos Aires 1870-1930*. Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires 1993.

<sup>21</sup> 1860-1920



growth in Europe, national emigration rates often rose, steeply at first from very low levels, rising more gradually to a peak and then gradually falling. This evolution, often seen as a multistage process, has sometimes been called the *mobility transition*<sup>22</sup>. Such patterns have been identified in studies of aggregate emigration rates from a number of countries<sup>23</sup>.

### Immigration to Argentina

Argentina, as many other countries of the New World attracted immigrants already early. Although the number of immigrants in the first decades was low, it gradually increased and eventually Argentina became one of the world's leading countries of immigration in modern times, reaching an all-time high in the period between 1880 and 1916.

"In the peak period of the world's overseas migration, 1821-1932, six countries absorbed 90 per cent of the total, and among these six, Argentina ranked second in the number of immigrants, with a total of 6,405,000. The only other Latin American country on the list is Brazil, with 4,431,000. The United States, of course, came first with about 5 times as many as Argentina."<sup>24</sup>

Some of the main causes of immigration to Argentina were the need of Argentina to become integrated to the European Market and the need of manual labour in Argentina due to the expansion of the agricultural market. The offer of European manual labour, as a consequence of the technification of agricultural tools in Europe and the unemployment brought by it were paramount in the migration process. Other causes were the lack of Argentine capital for development of

agricultural exploitation and the policies of the *Generación del 80*<sup>25</sup> that intended to transform the country to the North American image, by the industrial policies of the Anglo-Saxon world and the European well structured and modern cities.

The immigration numbers fluctuated (chart 4-04) in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth, but it is evident by the numbers that the quantity of immigrants per year and the remaining immigrants in the country increased systematically in the period studied. Two peaks are observed in the periods between 1887 and 1889 and 1906 and 1910. Some ciphers show the scale of this influence like, for example, the fact that between 1906 and 1910 Argentina was receiving 17 percent of world migration<sup>26</sup>.

Between 1880 and 1890, 1.000.000 Europeans arrived to the country and 85% of them remained definitely to be residents. This immigration did not satisfy the whole demand for work force that was needed. Between 1880 and 1914, 6.000.000 Europeans arrived. 4.000.000 remained as residents in total. By 1890 the urban population surpassed the rural one for the first time, as 90% of the foreigners lived in the cities. Argentina went from a population of 1.800.000 in 1869 where 12% were immigrants to 7.800.000 in 1914 where 30% were foreigners. In 1914, the majority of the immigrant working force was urban, which served as a proof of this urban profile of the immigrant population and of the way the country was becoming increasingly urban with a high proportion of immigrants in the economically active population.<sup>27</sup>

This whole tide of immigration tended to settle in waterfront cities, for those were the most accessible and offered the highest amount of work places. Only small groups of immigrants moved to the centre and west of the country.

<sup>22</sup> Zelinsky, W (1971) The hypothesis of the mobility transition. *The Geographical Review* LX1, 219-249

<sup>23</sup> Hatton, Timothy J. and Williamson, Jeffrey G., *The Age of Mass Migration: Causes and Economic Impact*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, Ch 3

<sup>24</sup> Whitaker, Arthur P. *Argentina*. New Jersey, Prentice Hall Inc., 1964. Pg. 54

<sup>25</sup> the principles of this generation of political and social leaders will be explained later in the chapter

<sup>26</sup> Ferenczi, I. And Willcox, W.F. *International Migrations*, Vol. I. National Bureau of Economic Research, New York, 1929. pg 236-7

<sup>27</sup> Lattes, Alfredo y Recchini de Lattes, Zulma, *La población de Argentina*, Buenos Aires, C.I.C.R.E.D. Series, 1975.

**Chart 4-05** Immigration in Argentina by country of origin

period	country of origin						
	Italy	Spain	France	Great Britain	Austria-Hungary	Russia and Poland	Siria and Libia
1871-1875	56	19	15	4	0,4	-	-
1876-1880	62	14	9	3	3	-	-
1881-1885	72	10	8	2	2	-	-
1886-1890	53	23	12	2	2	-	-
1891-1895	68	15	5	0,6	1	-	-
1896-1900	64	23	3	0,6	1	-	-
1901-1905	54	27	4	0,8	3	2	1
1906-1910	41	41	2	0,7	2	5	4
1911-1914	30	47	2	0,8	2	6	6

Source: I.N.D.E.C. Registro Estadístico. 1971. adaptation.

**Chart 4-06** GDP Per Capita

	1820	1870	1900	1913	1950
Austria	1218	1863	2882	3465	3706
Belgium	1319	2692	3731	4220	5462
Denmark	1274	2003	3017	3912	6943
Finland	781	1140	1668	2111	4253
France	1135	1876	2876	3485	5271
Germany	1077	1839	2985	3648	3881
Italy	1117	1499	1785	2564	3502
Netherlands	1838	2757	3424	4049	5996
Norway	1104	1432	1937	2501	5463
Sweden	1198	1662	2561	3096	6739
Switzerland	1090	2102	3833	4266	9064
United Kingdom	1706	3190	4492	4921	6939
Argentina			2800		

Sources: Angus Maddison, *Monitoring the World Economy 1820-1992* (Paris Development Centre of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 1995), 23-24; Development Centre Studies *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*,

## Immigration precedence

Regarding the national and social precedence of immigration, between 1857 and 1958 the main source of immigrants to Argentina were Italy and Spain accounting for 46 and 33 percent (chart 4-05) respectively, of the total. The rest of the immigrants were made up of different nationalities, including French, German, British, and Irish. "Though their numbers were small, these minority immigrant groups averaged high in special skills and soon achieved distinction in their new home."<sup>28</sup>

"Irish and Basque immigrants were hard workers, inured to privation, readily accepted the heavy seasonal labours of lambing, sheeping and dipping. For the rest of the year monotony dominated their lives. Yet mutton cooked over a smouldering fire of dried sheep dung was preferable to starving in Ireland. The hope, and frequently the realisation, of land ownership provided stimulus for continued immigration and, further expansion of sheep rising. An estimated four thousand Irish shepherds in the province of Buenos Aires at the time of the fall of Rosas (1852) increased to 35,000 by the 1870s, and their labours contributed more than half of Argentina's wool exports."<sup>29</sup>

Most of the immigrants came from poorer classes of society, and the majority of them began working as labourers, either in the cities or in the country.

"Indeed, half of the gross immigration was made up of seasoned workers or *golondrinas*<sup>30</sup> who crossed the Atlantic

only to work the Southern Hemisphere harvest season in Argentina and then re-cross it for the Northern Hemisphere harvest season at home.”<sup>31</sup>

Many other immigrants remained in the country and established in this steady economy, becoming small businessmen, shopkeepers, artisans, office workers, or members of the liberal professions.

The immigrants that remained in Argentina found more opportunities for economic development in the cities than in the rural areas, and more in agriculture than in stock raising. Buying land was hard for them due to the fact that native Argentines owned and held on to their properties, which gave them social prestige. In stock-raising immigrants were allowed as common labourers, with few opportunities of ownership. The immigrants found their first stop in the cities, especially in Buenos Aires, where they would find the opportunities, institutions, sociability, and wealth generally absent in the countryside.

“The opportunities in the coastal cities reinforced the effects of Argentina’s land tenure system by draining off the majority of immigrants to urban occupations, often to services rather than to industries. Even those who initially made their way to the pampas...frequently found their way back to the city. Urban life was crowded and expensive, but it provided social contacts education, colour, and activity lacking on the pampas. The poorest might cluster in the *conventillos*—slums composed of entire blocks in the downtown area burrowed by long corridors and honeycombed with tiny rooms—which developed in Buenos Aires and Rosario in the 1880s. But

here their children attended school for a few years at least, and the church, the plaza, and the cafe were just around the corner.”<sup>32</sup>

Most of the immigrant families would settle in the south of the city of Buenos Aires, in the houses that had been left behind by richer families at the time of the yellow fever that took over the centre and south of the city in the mid nineteenth century. These great houses would be turned into *conventillos*, a sort of apartment building with many families per floor and a patio joining them. By 1890 one fourth of the population of Buenos Aires lived in this type of dwellings.

For these poor, often illiterate, immigrants the hope of finding their fortune in this new country was immense and for many, this hope came true. But for the majority being able to earn a decent living was sufficient, considering the overcrowding of land and industries at home. The voyage from Europe was long and hard under very unpleasant conditions, but it was also inexpensive, and sometimes, as in the Argentine government’s experiment in 1888-1889, even free. And the *golondrinas*, or the nineteenth century migratory workers, needed to work only two weeks in Argentina to pay for their roundtrip tickets.

The cities were growing, and with the growth new jobs were opening: masons, plumbers, carpenters, labourers and then each new neighbourhood required its own grocers, milkmen, tailors, bakers, butchers, servants and so on. Together with these existing needs, new ones were brought by immigrants themselves, and new industries producing pasta, beer, textiles began to flourish.

Italians and Spanish had little adjustment to make in terms of religion, language, or food.

These first groups adjusted well, and also influenced the culture of the new country with what they contributed. They intermarried readily with Argentines and other immigrant groups, and as the years passed and their local obligations and attachments grew, the dream of returning to their homeland gradually folded—never to disappear completely but to become an impractical wish. The other groups, in much smaller numbers were absorbed by the Latin culture of the country, especially in the large urbanised centres.

<sup>28</sup> Scobie, James R. *Argentina, a city and a nation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971. Pg. 55

<sup>29</sup> idem. Pg. 85

<sup>30</sup> swallows

<sup>31</sup> Scobie, James R. *Argentina, a city and a nation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971. Pg. 55

<sup>32</sup> idem. Pg. 33

## National migration policies

Regarding the state immigration policies, these were not institutionalised until 1876, so before that the most significant manner of promotion of immigration before and through the mid-nineteenth century was through *acuerdos*<sup>33</sup>. These deals were meant for group colonisation and consisted basically in the intervention of a promoter that organised the trip of European families, and settled them on state land. They subsequently would pay back the promoter in instalments. By 1850 the government would trust the *sistema de contratación*<sup>34</sup>, and in some cases the government would send officials (consuls) that would be in charge of migrating groups<sup>35</sup>. Already in 1852, the local journalism insisted that the State should not be transformed into the *businessman of colonisation* and his role would have to be "limited to remove the obstacles that oppose to the free influence of foreign arms, and to favour the action of individual interest"<sup>36</sup>. The immigrant was therefore by legislation included into the economical life of the country, which was not the case of the *Gaucha* or the *Indian*<sup>37</sup>. Within this context it is not until 1862 that immigration became a state policy, establishing migration offices in Europe. On October 19, 1876 the first law of immigration was written under the presidency of Nicolás Avellaneda (1837-1885), once the work of the immigration agencies was not enough. Buenos Aires was in charge of the representation of foreign affairs abroad until 1880, afterwards the National State became responsible for such tasks.

Once this system was institutionalised, from 1887 offices of information were established in the main European capitals, as collaborators of the Argentine government and promoters of the improvements of the country in the Old Continent.

This is the time when subsidised tickets were provided by the Argentine government, until 1891. This is one of the reasons that explain the high increase in immigration during these years (chart 4-04).

The city of Buenos Aires was the most affected by this phenomenon. In 1869 there were 98 foreigners in the city for each 100 natives. In 1887 this relation had changed and for every 100 natives there were 112 that were not Argentine born. This fact affected all fields of economy, politics and social situations, and especially the physical conditions of the city, for the lack of housing became one of the most serious problems the city and the state had to face.

After the crisis of 1890<sup>38</sup> spontaneous immigration<sup>39</sup> was settled in Argentina. This was still a good business for companies, who would take advantage of the situation bringing European workers especially for agricultural work.

## Consequences of immigration

The migration flows arriving to Argentina in the period studied had direct and indirect consequences that shaped what the country is today. Most obviously European immigration contributed to the increase of population and especially to the increase of the Argentine white race, also to the rapid process of urbanisation and industrial development. Foreigners contributed to the transformation of the language and customs of the Argentines. Politically the introduction of socialist ideas and the creation of the unions were also due greatly to immigration. The explosion of population of urban areas led way to unemployment, which ended up in strikes. The creation of this new dwelling unit, the *conventillo*, was also mainly caused by the

excessive immigration to cities.

The popular stereotype of the immigrant as coming to *hacer la América*<sup>40</sup> was to a large extent accurate. Economically, immigrants proved their success, inserting themselves in a position above the unskilled Argentine masses but below the traditional landed elite. There, they formed both the core of Argentina's urban working class and the emerging middle or entrepreneurial class.<sup>41</sup> But while active in the economic sphere, few immigrants demonstrated any inclination to integrate politically. Naturalisation rates were extremely low: during this period, only two to three percent of all immigrants to Argentina became citizens.<sup>42</sup>

The withering of the democratic ideal under the positivist regime, coupled with the immigrants' reluctance to naturalise, explains why Argentine political leaders no longer viewed the immigrant as the essential element in the project of transforming Argentina into a nation of participating citizens.

One fear frequently expressed in the anti-immigrant literature of the period was that of social upheaval. Immigrants formed the core of Argentina's new urban working class and played key roles in the anarchist and syndicalist<sup>43</sup> movements that began to organise by the 1890s. The alarmed national elite blamed this new militancy on foreign agitators whose *imported ideologies* had no place in Argentina. Legislative efforts to remedy the situation resulted in the infamous Residence Law of 1902 and the 1910 Law of Social Defense, which allowed the executive branch to deport undesirable foreigners. These issues will be addressed in the following section of the chapter.

### 4.1.3- Economical, political and social context – sudden growth and the birth of national and municipal politics

Once again the international reality of the period has to be dealt with when it comes to understanding the local reality. Trans-national relations of all kinds, including economical and political were bursting. Events were no longer limited to self contained and independent countries or regions. Of course trade had already been present between Europe and other colonies, occupied zones or independent countries all over the world. However, this is a period in which relations and communications became faster, and the possibility of receiving information and products of all kinds from somewhere else in the world became available to a wider extent of the population.

As seen in the previous section the element of immigration was one of the main reasons for the economical growth of Argentina, therefore also for Buenos Aires. But this was not the only reason, this period of mobility and internationalisation was taking over the whole western world in the last decades of the nineteenth century and this included not only the mobility of people but also the mobility of goods, namely raw material and industrialised goods. From the mid nineteenth century Argentina began to receive a sustained flux of European capital, which was strongly intensified in the period between 1880 and 1914, decayed during the First World War and reappeared in the 1920s. The development of technology, especially in transportation, led way to a rapid economical growth of different areas of the world. This growth was neither balanced nor available for all sections of society, but it nevertheless implied development and progress in the wider sense of the concept as understood

at the time.

The social situation in Europe, United States, Latin America in general and Argentina in particular during the period studied is one of constant transformation. When it comes to the urban situation of the population, even though the conditions in the three areas were extremely different by the beginning of the period (1870), as the period ends (1930) many similarities are to be found. This statement involves more a notion of quality of life than one of culture, a notion of economical wealth than one of behaviour, for it is clear that culture and behaviour have much more subtle differences, especially in a diverse continent such as Europe.

### Argentina's economical, political and social situation

In this context we can start to understand the position of Argentina and Buenos Aires in political and economical terms.

“When Argentina is finally incorporated in the world market towards 1880, the scheme of division of work internationally, based on the principles of free trade was suffering significant transformations. With one of the poles in Great Britain – the great factory of the world, main exporter of manufactures and financial and trade centre of the commercial world, to whose influence were attached the other power centres of the world – and the other pole in the immense majority of peripheral countries, whose function was to provide raw material and food to those great metropolises”

Between 1870 and the awakening of the First World War in 1914, Argentina shows an impressive index of economical growth. The economy was based on exports, or the agro-exporting model<sup>45</sup>. A country whose economy is based on the exporting of agricultural products was expected not to have a very developed industrial activity.

<sup>33</sup> deals/contracts

<sup>34</sup> agencies that worked in the vicinities of the harbours to bring workers to Argentina

<sup>35</sup> Oddone, Juan Antonio, *La emigración europea al Río de la Plata*, Montevideo, 1966.

<sup>36</sup> Diaz, Benito, *Inmigración y agricultura en la época de Rosas*, Buenos Aires, Editorial El Coloquio, 1975, pp. 33-63.

<sup>37</sup> both these racial and cultural groups were segregated from the urban life and were relegated to work that was not legislated, so they tended to remain working in the countryside

<sup>38</sup> see economy and politics sections in this chapter

<sup>39</sup> this was immigration not sponsored by the state

<sup>40</sup> coming for the sole purpose of making a fortune

<sup>41</sup> Ospital, María Silvia, *Inmigración y Nacionalismo: la Liga Patriótica y la Asociación del Trabajo (1910-1930)*, Buenos Aires, CEAL, 1994, Colección Biblioteca Política Argentina. Pg.469

<sup>42</sup> Girbal-Blacha, Noemí, *Estado, chacareros y terratenientes 1916-1930*, Buenos Aires, CEAL, 1988.

<sup>43</sup> Union workers movement

<sup>44</sup> Rapoport, M. “El modelo agroexportador argentino, 1880-1914” en Rapoport, M. (comp.) *Economía e Historia – Contribuciones a la historia económica argentina*. Ed. Tesis. Buenos Aires, 1986. p. 168.

<sup>45</sup> Economical model that extended in the country from 1870 through 1930 approximately, which core was dedicated to the exportation of meats from Argentina to Great Britain. For a deep analysis of this period see Rapoport, M. “El modelo agroexportador argentino, 1880-1914” en Rapoport, M. (comp.) *Economía e Historia – Contribuciones a la historia económica argentina*. Ed. Tesis. Buenos Aires, 1986. Or “Argentina y el mercado mundial” en *Coyuntura y Desarrollo*. FIDE, Nro. 45. Buenos Aires, mayo de 1982.

### The agro-exporting model and the *generación del 80*

The agro-exporting period (1850-1930) is considered to be divided into two, the *wool* period and the *meat and cereal* period, similar to the processes Chicago or Australia went through in the same period. The first one was the period in which practically the only product that was exported was wool. The sheep rising in the mid area of the country and the building of the first rail roads connecting this area to the Buenos Aires harbour allowed the first boost of a mono exporting economy. As economy developed approaching 1880 the production moved geographically southward and the new trade of cattle raising and cereal took over the whole mid section of the country.

The exportation of wool introduced the Argentine production into the world capitalist market. During the nineteenth century this market was subject to periodical crisis of expansion and contraction that affected accordingly. Half way through the wool period the sector of producers with the greatest political power introduced for the first time a nationalist and protectionist<sup>46</sup> economical position.

In Buenos Aires, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the structure of society was quite simple and clear. To talk of social class as understood in Europe at the time would sound premature, but it is doubtless that social groups did exist. The highest section of society was called *la gente distinguida*<sup>47</sup>, or distinguished people, basically constituted by landowners. The following layer would be the *populacho*<sup>48</sup> and the last *la chusma*<sup>49</sup>, these were distributed through city and country and their economical activities were limited to those of a village like society. The

aristocracy of the small town of Buenos Aires had been an austere and conservative social class, conformed by great landowners in a modest environment. The basic characteristics of the landowner oligarchy were shaped in the period before the mid nineteenth century. This goes to show that when the period of strong immigration came, there already was a material local culture, that Argentina was not an *open space*<sup>50</sup> at least represented by this social class. Buenos Aires society was local and limited to Spanish influences left from the conquest and colony combined with the local developing identity.

1880 marked an inflection point in the economy. The countryside was transformed into an area in which it was convenient to invest capital. Investment in material and breeding, as well as the habit of rotating land for pasture and crops improved the agricultural exploitation even more; these events marked the step into the *meat and cereal* period.

In the international market, gold was the measure of currency and the emission of currency was conditioned by the quantity of gold each country possessed. The monetary system in Argentina was chaotic: English, Chilean and Bolivian currencies were used regularly until the laws of 1881 and 1883 disposed the circulation of paper money backed by gold. The banking system adapted to this laws and the standardisation helped the stability of the market in the following years. The *Banco de la Nación* became the one to regulate the financial market of the country. Many other national and international banks established in Buenos Aires and the rest of the country during this period.

Three political events marked the last decades of the nineteenth century: The

final consolidation of the National State, the federalisation of the city of Buenos Aires and The Campaign of the desert. These events gave way to the project of the so-called *generacion del 80*.<sup>51</sup>

The president who started this process was Julio A. Roca (1843-1914). He was in charge of the national administration between 1880 and 1896. His government was one of prosperity, in which immigration, the construction of the railway system and agricultural exports were the main issues at stake. Roca was in charge of finally separating the church and the state, and with it broke diplomatic relations with the Vatican. He gave a significant push to the education system by the proclamation of the law 1420<sup>52</sup>, which established free, compulsory and lay primary education for all the inhabitants of the country. However, financial speculation and corruption were common under his presidency, which was sustained by electoral fraud.

Roca was a pragmatic conservative, able and witty, and he would manage the politics of the country for the following years. A group of men that were related to president Roca would gain recognition and be later called *La generacion del 80*. This group of men were behind the deep transformations of the country and the city of Buenos Aires within the named period.

The politics that ruled the country since the presidency of Roca until 1910 were signed by an oligarchic rule. Roca founded a political party that would hold the power of the alliance between politicians of the whole country, the P.A.N. (Partido Autonomista Nacional). This party would balance the weights between the provinces and the capital.

The system of Roca's government was based on protection of foreign investment and control of provinces through patronage, subsidies, and threat of the use of force. The

elites were divided between conservatives and progressives. As would be expected the conservatives were against political opening and the progressives were influenced by J.S. Mill's<sup>53</sup> liberalism and Catholic reformism derived from *Rerum Novarum*<sup>54</sup> (social solidarity). This system catered interests of provincial landowners and kept urban interests at bay. These politics should be understood as an assimilation of the European liberalism and as a need to attract immigration and investment, which came from non-catholic countries.

Eduardo Wilde, Lucio V. Mansilla, Miguel Cané (h), Eugenio Cambaceres, among others, were protagonists – from government, literature and journalism respectively – of a process that showed the model of an agro-exporting country, tightly related to the British government and susceptible to immigration. They were liberals despite their arguable positions. They believed that the management of political issues was to be dealt with by an elite, a minority who possessed wisdom and wealth. Arguing that the state should administer rather than govern, positivist-inspired leaders such as P.A.N. founder Julio Roca envisioned a state run by an enlightened elite whose citizens would contribute to the general welfare but without challenging established political practices.

Under Roca's power the city of Buenos Aires was declared federal territory in 1881 and the Concejo Deliberante<sup>55</sup> was founded in 1882 to be in charge of most of the issues regarding the city. The role of the CD in decision making for the urban transformations of the city was crucial according to Scobie<sup>56</sup>. This institution was founded in 1882 and the main reason for its protagonism in urban change was given to the fact that the citizens who paid taxes elected it. The responsibilities of the city government were those of paving, electricity

and maintenance of hospitals. On the other hand, the national government was in charge of public education, water supplies and sewer supplies. The national government was also in charge of the harbour area and facilities, which would later give some conflicts around the public use of the urban waterfront.

<sup>46</sup> Protectionism is the economic policy of restraining trade between nations, through methods such as high tariffs on imported goods, restrictive quotas, a variety of restrictive government regulations designed to discourage imports.

<sup>47</sup> The highest social class

<sup>48</sup> The people or middle class

<sup>49</sup> The lowest social class

<sup>50</sup> It has been insisted, especially in the school of theories of 'economic development' that Argentina was a typical 'open space' (A. Ferrer, *La economía argentina*, Buenos Aires, 1962, pág. 103). The existence of suitable lands as much as the orientation of its production according to certain international guidelines show that previous conditioning determined the fundamental development of the exporting Argentina.

<sup>51</sup> The leading men of who lived around the decade of 1880 are called the *generacion del 80*. This generation was characterised by a group of men that in politics, education and literature gave a new sign to their times: practical, executive and programatic, with a European influence but holding an important national seal. This generation carried out the work that was called *organización Nacional* (national organisation).

<sup>52</sup> Initiative of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, then director of the national council of education

<sup>53</sup> John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), English philosopher and political economist. In metaphysics and epistemology, Mill was an exponent of British empiricism; in ethics and politics, he is widely recognized as one of the most influential theorists of classical utilitarianism and liberalism.

<sup>54</sup> *Rerum Novarum* (Translation: Of New Things) is an encyclical issued by Catholic Pope Leo XIII on May 15, 1891. It was an open letter passed to all the bishops that addressed the *condition of the working classes*. Leo XIII supported the rights of labor to form unions, but rejected socialism and affirmed private property rights. He discussed the relationships between government, business, labor, and the church.

<sup>55</sup> City Council, from now on: CD

<sup>56</sup> Scobie, James R. *Buenos Aires, del centro a los barrios 1870-1910*. Ediciones Solar, "Dimensión Argentina", Buenos Aires 1977



### The crisis of 1890

Around 1890 a historical change as important as the political occurred, the economical step from the cycle of the wool production to that of the refrigerated meats and cereals, within an agro-exporting structure.

The economical and social situation also generated conflicts. In the last years of the nineteenth century, the British ban to import standing cattle from Argentina produced a great transference of income to the British meat cooling companies. By 1883 the first Argentine meat cooling companies were installed, but they were soon taken over by those built with British and North American capital to satisfy the demand coming from Britain. Then it was the British who owned the 2 main markets in the country, that of meat production and that of railway transportation. However, at the same time, new smaller industries were being born in Buenos Aires in the fields of graphic arts, food, construction and fashion.

The civic-military coup of 1890 was the first in Argentine history and had the precise political objective of getting over the fraudulent and corrupt ancient regime. This gave way to the effective contemplation of the norms of the constitution, a control over rents and distribution of public lands and an electoral system with clear and respected rules. Even though the coup was defeated and did not reach its aims, it nevertheless ended the corrupt state forcing it to transform into a conservative regime.

By the end of the century, very few Argentine leaders promoted the notion that Argentines should strive to construct a nation of citizens along the lines of the French Republican model. Inspired by European positivism<sup>58</sup>,

Argentine political elites embraced the ideal of *scientific politics*, meaning that national leaders should forget abstract political principles in order to develop, through observation and experimentation, policies and institutions in tune with the peculiarities of their societies.

The 1890 economic crisis gave way to a modern political formation: *Unión Cívica*, supported by university students, urban dwellers, and veteran liberals like Bartolomé Mitre (1821-1906) and Leandro Alem (1842-1896). Alem created the *Unión Cívica Radical* (UCR) in 1891. The Radicals or members of the UCR were pushing for popular democracy. The middle classes were their natural support base. They have been called the *liberales reformistas*<sup>59</sup> due to their political ideas. Alem committed suicide in 1896 and he was followed in the direction of the party by his nephew Hipólito Yrigoyen (1852-1933). This first mass political party was more a 'movement' held together by personalities, not by institutions.

Other political parties developed in this period of high population growth, especially urban. The left had been growing in the urban environment, particularly helped by high working class immigration from Europe. Anarchism came from Italy and Spain in the 1880s. This was the radical face of the left. This tendency embraced trade unionism in 1900, and became main agent of workers' resistance through general strikes. It advocated violence and direct action to empower the workers.

Finally, the Socialist party was founded in 1894 by Juan B. Justo (1865-1928). This party was also primarily urban. It was influenced by positivism, belief in progress through gradual change. It rejected violence and direct action and was a much disciplined party led by notables. It advocated redistribution and lower consumer

prices, which meant an economic rather than a political program.

As commented in the introduction to this chapter the development of the economy in Argentina and especially in Buenos Aires was strongly conditioned by the development of industry and transport. The railway system provided a fast communication with the rest of the country for the transport of raw materials to the harbour, and the steam-boat allowed the massive immigration of the turn of the twentieth century.

Between 1890 and 1913 the transport of goods by railway raised from 5 million tons to 42 million and the income of the railway system rose from 8 to 52 million pesos oro. This fact accompanies the period of political stability achieved by the ruling classes.

<sup>57</sup> of course successful for the Argentine government, not for the indians.

<sup>58</sup> Positivism, developed by French philosopher Auguste Comte, enjoyed enormous prestige throughout late nineteenth-century Latin America and proved extremely influential in Argentina. In the Latin American context, positivism became a heterodox set of ideas adapted to the needs of local situations, unified principally by an all-encompassing faith in the scientific method. While Comte himself did not develop a theory of politics, the idea of "scientific politics" gained common currency among the elite throughout Latin America. For an excellent synthetic treatment of Latin American positivism, see Charles Hale, "Political and Social Ideas in Latin America, 1870-1930," in Leslie Bethell, ed. *The Cambridge History of Latin America, 1870 to 1930*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, vol. IV, pp. 367-441

<sup>59</sup> Zimmermann, Eduardo A. *Los liberales reformistas. La cuestión social en la Argentina 1890-1916*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Sudamericana/Universidad de San Andrés, 1995

### Turn of the century, class diversification

By the last decades of the nineteenth century the social structure diversified. As a consequence of the immigration process the Argentine social structure became more complex, while mid and lower social layers grew, changes in the political culture took place, as described in previous pages. In the decade between 1880 and 1890 the population of the city of Buenos Aires increased by 84% while that of the country only grew in 29%. A new and open society was shaped. The state was responsible for the direction taken by society through the dictation of several laws that influenced the life of the citizens. These were the laws of civil register and civil matrimony, the law of compulsory military service and the law of education. These laws became a tool for the control of civic life and were trying to insure the integration of the large mass of immigrants arriving to the country.

This quote of Scobie shows the diversity of population of the urban environment in the Buenos Aires of the last decades of the nineteenth century.

“The porteño sheep economy, therefore, marked the transition from the colonial *estancia* and *saladero* to the modern *estancia* that emerged on the coast in the late nineteenth century. Sheep attracted immigrants and capital, encouraged the conquest and settlement of the pampas and provided a favourable environment for breeding, crops, railroads, and packing plants—in a word, conditions necessary for Argentine beef and wheat supremacy in the twentieth century. In this period of transition much of old Argentina faded and disappeared. The

influx of Irish and Basques was swelled by British engineers and managers. French shopkeepers, Italian and Swiss peasants, German labourers, and Jewish refugees totally transforming the Spanish-mestizo origins of the population. The Indian, pushed off the pampas, ceased to appear in coastal Argentina. The gaucho, hemmed by the fences, troops, and immigrants continued to evolve into a rural peon, leaving only a legend behind him.”<sup>60</sup>

The end of the nineteenth century brought not only international influence in the form of immigration of the working class but also the uses and customs of the developing metropolises of the old continent. The sensuality of cities like London or Paris tempted the aristocracy, who began to adopt all sorts of activities and customs that were fashionable there. Leisure activities in the city and recreation began to impregnate everyday life in Buenos Aires. This refinement of customs started to be ruled by different norms than the ones that had proceeded in the Buenos Aires society. These attitudes were altered by a certain *maniere* that came from translating the village like atmosphere of Buenos Aires to the fashion, uses and customs of the great European capitals, then submerged in the euphoria of capitalist spectacle.

The class structure of the period (1870-1930) can be then divided into four segments. The first one was represented by the *high or aristocratic class*, which did not change much from the previous period. This class occupied one percent of the population of Argentina until 1914. The *high middle class* would follow, and even though it was successful and growing it did not carry social prestige. The *low middle class* did not have economic force or political power, but did have

the potential of mobility. Finally the *low class*, which represented two thirds of the population, occupied the base of the social pyramid.

Within this structure, the dominant class was made up by stock raising landowners, retailers, lawyers and politicians. This social stratum had been in charge of most of the international trade that took place during the last decades of the nineteenth century, for it was the one to act as an intermediary between the national system and the international interests. When the process of expansion began, the oligarchy handled the trade market so that their power would not be touched, and for a while they did succeed in the task. The gaining of land to the Indians in the south allowed this powerful class to occupy great territory. This was not the case of an open frontier<sup>61</sup>, but a system in which large extensions of land were offered to the already rich landowners at very low prices. This management of political power was present until the crisis of 1890, with the sustained inflation of real estate prices due to speculation<sup>62</sup>.

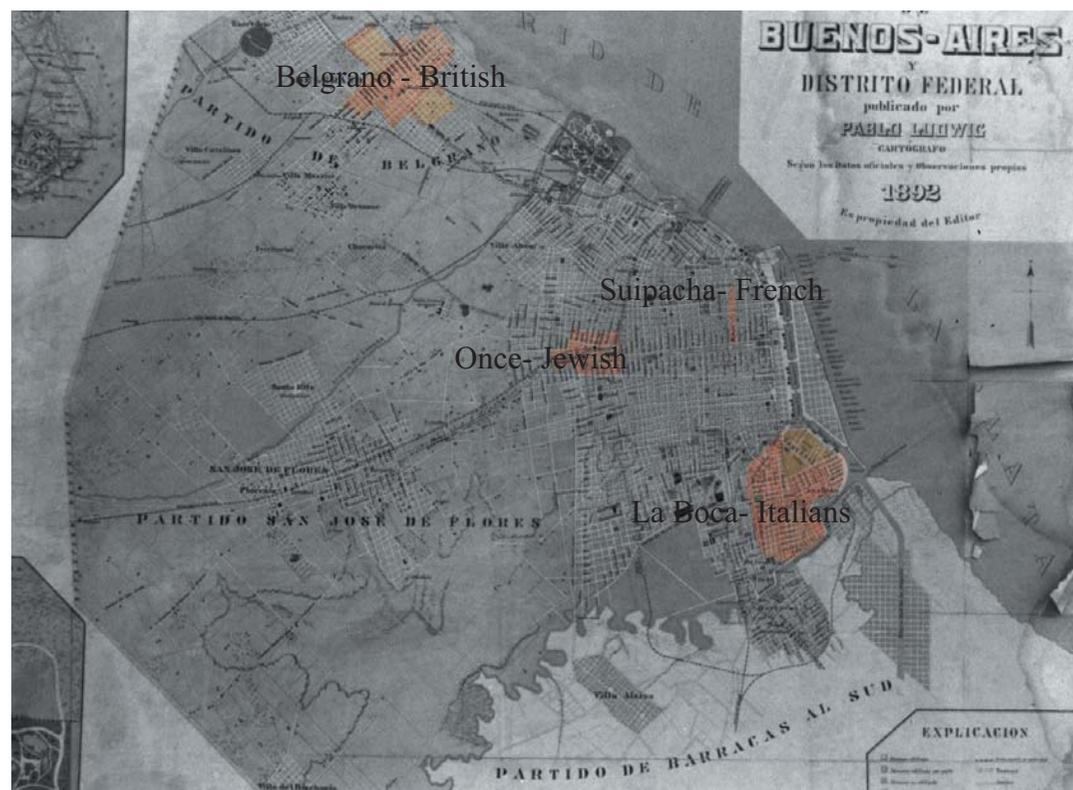
On the other hand the primary productive sector changed the occupational structure. The establishment of the National State extended the bureaucratic areas, which grew throughout the country. In the urban centres of the Litoral<sup>63</sup> the secondary and tertiary activities were concentrated. In the rural areas the regime of land renting and leasing created a wide intermediate sector that differentiated this period from the old landlord-labourer system.

We find ourselves then in a period of expansion and diversification of society and of the apparition of the middle classes. The middle class was formed by professionals, administrative employees, teachers, small traders and freight administrators, whose success accompanied the success of the exporting model. The process of

economical development allowed the growth of a new and constantly growing middle class. This section of society was characterised by heterogeneity and was in constant adaptation for they were mainly made up of a majority of immigrants with diverse background and qualifications. Instead they did have one aim in common, the need to escape from the marginality in which they were left by the monopoly of the market by the oligarchy. Despite the fact that many modernising actions were taken by the ruling class, the main issue of participation in politics and the bigger scale trade market was still out of reach by the 1880s. The economical expansion then allowed for a social mobility that would eventually change the social organisation of the country and its capital.

The lower classes, also made up greatly by immigrants and the remains of the traditional low class, were spread all over the country. The main trades of the lower classes were those of hat makers, tailors, shoemakers, bakers, carpenters, as well as the dock workers, factory workers and freight workers.

A similar process of inclusion into the participating layers of society happened to the lower classes. The tendency to union action was part of the working class movement. There were two tendencies in this movement. The socialist party was trying to incorporate the working class into politics, convinced that the participation in Parliament and law writing would improve the conditions of the workers. On the other hand the *sindicalismo*<sup>64</sup>, separated from socialism, distrusted politics and sustained that through unions the same aims could be met. These two currents were not crashing with the National government. Instead, the anarchists did appeal to violence to overthrow the established system, but they had no strategy or method for this.



**figure 4-07** - 1892 - Buenos Aires y Distrito Federal  
author: Pablo Ludwig  
source: Museo Mitre  
highlighted the neighbourhoods and nationalities distributed in them

<sup>60</sup> Scobie, James R. *Argentina, a city and a nation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971, page 87

<sup>61</sup> The system that allowed the development of small and medium land owners like the one in the United States.

<sup>62</sup> In 1872 the *Buenos Aires Standard* estimated that the value of lands in the immediate proximity of the Capital had raised 50 times between 1850 and 1870. Cited by H.S. Ferns, *Gran Bretaña y Argentina en el siglo XIX*, Buenos Aires, 1966, pg.30. This situation consolidated the power structure of the oligarchy, to such extent that the stop of inflation and the fall of agricultural goods prices after 1890 did not affect the existing scheme.

<sup>63</sup> The Litoral occupies the whole area on the edges of the Rio de la Plata and the Paraná River, this includes cities such as Buenos Aires and Rosario.

<sup>64</sup> Union workers

## Social structure and influence in politics

Between 1902 and 1910 great changes occurred to the social structure, which led to schisms in the political system. The war in Europe provoked an interruption in the immigration flows, which broke the constant growth of population of the previous decades. Despite this, the immigration of the previous generation was already providing a new one, conformed by people that had received a national education and that were being integrated into the local society rapidly.

The economical and social situation in Argentina had strong factors of mobility. This made the power constellation in the country from 1880 to the Centennial of Independence be open to the appearance of new stars, however still not as strong as the old ones of the aristocratic republic.

By the beginning of this period there was no union power, as the one that would appear decades later and the economical power was a less complex actor than it is today. Socialist and anarchist ideas were scarce, but they began to gain strength with the arrival of immigration. This happened not only through the intellectual reformists but also through workers movements. A series of strikes were almost uninterrupted until 1890, and they were stimulated by the political and economical situation. The main factors that enhanced the struggles were the internal division between workers anarchism and the opposition of the socialist groups adhering to the ideas of Marx.

The social environment was also in a process of transformation as the working class movements passed from the hands of the extremist anarchists to the more moderate socialists and *sindicalistas*<sup>65</sup>. However, social problems were still

developing as certain areas of the city as La Boca (figure 4-07) and the rest of the southern areas of the city remained in poor conditions. The higher classes were maintaining their status and quality of life.

During the first decades of the twentieth century the old idea of immigration as only a positive influence for the state was to be abandoned, and fearing the conflicts that were arising within the middle and low social classes the government decided to take some drastic measures. The law number 4144 or *Ley de Residencia* was proclaimed by both chambers, with little discussion. Five articles formed the law and its main issues authorised the government to expel any foreigner whose behaviour would compromise the national security or disturb public order. The law was applied immediately and by December, 60 foreigners had been expelled and embarked to Genova and Barcelona, among them many famous anarchists. The arrests and expulsions had an influence on the anarchist movement, even though some activists escaped to Uruguay and came back later. Eight years later, the *Ley de Defensa social* of 1910 would be the one written to make a selective process in the authorisation of immigrants to the country. This law was also intended to prohibit the entrance of anarchists to the country. These two laws show how the government insisted on blaming the political disturbances caused by the unions on immigration.

By 1909 46% of the population of Buenos Aires was composed by immigrants, they were in charge mainly of the real estate trade, the industry and commercial facilities. These immigrant groups tended to be separated by nationality in different parts of the city (figure 4-07). This is

how Italians were concentrated in La Boca, Jews in Once, English in Belgrano, French in Suipacha Street and Turkish in Retiro.

Education, at the turn of the century was seen as one of the most important factors of development of the state and the city. The focus was set on free primary education for all social classes, but secondary and university education was not left aside. The government insisted on the need and provision of education for locals as well as for immigrants all over the country including schools for girls and adult education in the evenings.

The architecture provided for the education services was essential for authorities and commentators, such as the quote on the book published for the Centennial of Independence in 1910.

“The houses that we have built for our schools are very luxurious palaces, as corresponds to our greatness and our richness. This splendour is not superb vanity but profitable convenience. The big and clean schoolhouse educates while the teacher instructs. And when it is luxurious and magnificent it educates more and better.”<sup>66</sup>

The importance given to education and the education policies that came with it allowed that by 1910, 80% of the population of the city of Buenos Aires was alphabetised.

Immigration during the 1920s after the war regained a position in the population transformation, as by this time the numbers had risen again from 87.000 to 195.000 per year.

Regarding women, some changes happened in their working condition. Middle class women, who used to be limited to the housework, slowly began working outdoors,

mainly doing administrative work and working in the world of entertainment.

The specific issues regarding urban life in Buenos Aires and leisure of these social classes will be specified in the following section of this chapter.

### Radical democracy and local industrialisation

As commented by Felix Luna<sup>67</sup> the period between 1912 and 1930 was that of the Radical Democracy. This period is limited by two relevant events that shifted the political situation of Buenos Aires as well as that of the whole country. This was a period in which constitutional continuity was perfect and a reasonable amount of pluralism between parties was achieved. This stability ends in 1930 with the first military coup d'état that would transform the social and political life of the capital and the country across the century.

1912 was the year in which the Saenz Peña law was signed. This law insured that voting became universal, compulsory and guaranteed. This right and obligation was limited to national and naturalised foreign men. It is relevant to state that the naturalisation rates remained low (less than 5%) and the cause of this may have been the fact that together with voting there was a compulsory military service for men over 18.

The political party that was in charge of insuring this law was the UCR, which was founded in the 1891, but it was not until this period (1912-1930) that it gained relevance and power. The principles of this party were very clear: *revolution* as a permanent objective, as a way of drastically changing the current order. *Intransigencia* was the second principle to which they stood, as a dogma, there were to be no alliances and no treaties, for this party believed itself not to be a political party

but a civic crusade. Finally the last principle was that of the abstention to participate in elections, as protest towards the corrupted current system of elections.

Of course this caused the party some difficulties, but nevertheless Radicalism gained strength, because it was outstanding for its ethical qualities, which were widely appreciated especially by the youth.

One of the most relevant qualities of this party was that it was not affiliated to any particular social class, it had members of the high as well as the working classes, of the rural workers as well as landowners. This allowed eventually an equality that was rare at the time even in older and more developed democracies of Europe.

“The country worked well enough; in 30 years the transport of a European civilisation was achieved, to an anarchical and poor country, with one third of its territory occupied by Indians and without a capital city. In 1910, instead, it could be shown as the most achieved expression of European civilisation in America, with a formidable service of education, a middle class that was outstanding compared to other countries in the continent, a great institutional community and an important ruling class”<sup>68</sup>

In May 1912 elections were called and the Radicals won with Victorino de la Plaza on the lead. It was not until the victory of Hipólito Yrigoyen in 1916 that the standard of Radical leadership in its most successful form was established.

The First World War (1914-1918) in Europe was one of the causes of the development of local industrialisation in Argentina. This process

was a rough one and it showed the weaknesses of an economy dependent on importation of industrialised goods from Europe. The war deeply affected the trade relations with Britain, France and Germany, which were the main sources of importation of the time. This led naturally to the beginning of national production, source of labour and development of the economy.

The government of Yrigoyen kept the neutrality and economical structure of the country, was not aggressive towards landowners, listened to the proposals of students and silently guided a revolution of equality. The new generation of immigrants' children had been able to receive an equal education to that of the local ones in the previous decade provided by the new education laws. This fact allowed them to have access to political power, therefore, similar opportunities to influence the power structure of both city and country as the local traditional higher classes.

By 1914 the per capita income of Argentina was comparable to that of Germany and the Netherlands (chart 4-06). The country had the largest middle class in Latin America and Buenos Aires was the second city in hemisphere after New York. This was a moment of high social mobility, although increase in inequality. In particular, urban poverty became a cause of political concern.

<sup>65</sup> Members of the system of workers unions called sindicatos.

<sup>66</sup> Chueco, Manuel. 1910. *La República Argentina en su Primer Centenario*. Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco. Buenos Aires. p.428

<sup>67</sup> Luna, Felix, *Breve Historia de los Argentinos*, Editorial Planeta, Buenos Aires, 1993.

<sup>68</sup> Luna, Felix, *Breve Historia de los Argentinos*, Editorial Planeta, Buenos Aires, 1993. P.162

The first hit of the influence of the war in Argentina was in 1913 when the Bank of England raised their exchange rate to stop the uncertainties caused by the Balcan wars. Most of the foreign capital in Argentina returned to their original countries, which meant that Argentina was forced to pay its foreign debt. This problem was made worse by the lost of the crops of 1913-14.

The war induced a certain amount of industrial development in the country. Argentina, a traditional consumer of European manufactured products saw a sudden interruption in the provision of these goods. Importation was reduced in 40%, manufactured oils, woods and construction material was reduced to one third, iron and steel articles were reduced to half and the importation of vehicles and machinery went down from 15 million to 3 million. The war deprived Argentina of coal as energy source, which came from Britain, so this lead to the nationalisation of petrol, which preservation was important, for by this time the automobile was beginning to replace the animal traction and even the railway in some cases. This is why the *Dirección Nacional de Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales* (YPF) was inaugurated, this was a national company, and it dedicated to the extraction, refinement and sale of oil and its derivatives. This industry was a very successful one as it doubled its assets between 1922 and 1925.

The war also coincided with the great demand of cereals and the development of the meat cooling trade and its sub-products, which were by then in the hand of the United States. The state intervened in this production by taking measures on the agriculture and stock raising fields and their commercialisation.

As a consequence of this development the national and international trade augmented,

manifested in the production and sale of manufactures such as textile, shoes, furniture, food products and especially the industries derived from agriculture such as wine, *yerba*, tobacco and oil sub-products. To protect the metal industry, exportation of this product was prohibited. However, due to this process, exportations at the time surpassed the thousand million pesos oro. This whole development provided also a great amount of new jobs, which solved at least temporarily the problem of unemployment.

The mending of the labour problem also facilitated economic development. While real wages may have fallen for a time, immigrants, as an important factor of production, were able to help diversify the Argentine's commodity markets. Previously, the capital-intensive livestock raising and pastoral sector had dominated production. Now, with the rise in labour supply, the arable sector saw development. As a result, Argentina's commodity market ceased to specialise in any one product. For the most part, this helped fortify the country against relatively minor world-market shocks<sup>69</sup>, contributing to the overall, successful level of development the country experienced between 1870 and 1920.

Once the war was over it was time to ask if going back to the old system of production and export of raw material and importation of industrialised goods or change to a different system. This was not a sure decision, but what was clear was that there should not be a return to the *laissez faire* of the last decades of the nineteenth century.

The situation was slightly improved by the shift in trade from having Britain as first trade partner to having the United States. This was a conflicted shift in any case, for the economies of Britain and Argentina were complementary, but those with the USA were competitive and they

had a conflictive diplomatic history.

The 1920's were the golden era of the physical and demographic development of Buenos Aires. The investments, importation and loans that began to come from the United States allowed for a growth in size and population that had no precedents. By then the transport industry in Argentina was rapidly developing. Most of the underground railways of Buenos Aires were finished in this decade. In 1926 an aeroplane factory was built in Cordoba<sup>70</sup> and in 1930 the first hydro-port was built in Buenos Aires, close to the main railway station and to the waterfront and new harbour.

Still within this system, by 1929 Argentina was the greatest exporter of frozen meats, corn and oats, and the third in wheat and flour.

The private sector was also involved in the oil extraction enterprise, and companies from the USA, Britain and the Netherlands exploited petrol from the country. The state eventually tried in 1929 to nationalise these companies, but the National Congress did not accept the project.

### The political crisis of 1930

The commercial deficit that Argentina had with the United States was equivalent to the surplus that it maintained with Great Britain, therefore, the amount paid for the importation from the US was equivalent to the amount received by the exports to Great Britain. Eventually, the United Kingdom began to study the preferences of the Empire and adopted a system that would exclude the countries that did not belong to the Commonwealth.

This caused a deep fall in exports not only for Argentina but also for the rest of Latin America. The power of importation in Argentina fell 50% between 1928 and 1932. The eventual

consequence of this was the reduction of expenses from the state, which meant a fall in salaries for employees, providers, contractors and people related to the trade.

The Radical Party followed a rather stable period until the mid-1920s, when the party was divided and this instability within the party provoked disbelief in the population in general. 1930 then was the year in which the first coup d'état would condition the following decades of the country, politically and socially. The coup d'état was facilitated by the general discontent generated by the measures of austerity.

#### 4.1.5 – Leisure Precedents - Leisure as social manifestation

*In this section we address the subject we are focusing on. We will be giving an overview of the bottom-up manifestations of leisure in Argentina and Buenos Aires, to try to understand the relationship between leisure activities that were practised and those that were planned, which will be later studied in each waterfront project. As in Europe and North America in Argentina, leisure activities on the countryside and the city were different, as well as activities of the higher and lower social classes. Throughout the period studied these activities were transformed and became more regulated and organised, which can be seen in the urban spaces that hosted them.*

Leisure in South America in general was the product of the influences of local – Indian – and foreign – mainly Spanish – cultures. When the Spanish arrived in America collective recreation was included in the plans of organisation of each establishment of the Spanish. Popular parties and feasts were, as in Europe, the order within disorder. Spanish stratification was very strict and collective feasts became a way to relax this rigid system. Religious and improvised feasts would build a system of celebration in which both types would be sometimes confused with each other.

During the colonial period and for centuries these activities would not be extremely differentiated. Geographically, they took place in the same space, the main square; most of public activities would be developed there, practically at the same time. In the case of Buenos Aires the main square was just a few metres from the

riverside, but the presence of the fort on one of the sides of the plaza would block any relation between them.

Feasts and celebrations would take place, or at least begin in the Plaza Mayor, explained in 4.1.1. Every festive event in the New World had two basic elements: a religious and a civil one. Some days before the event the *pregoneros*<sup>71</sup> would announce the feasts and order to clean up and arrange the town for it. They would order to install lamps and candles on the streets. Just before and during the event the bells of the churches would toll incessantly. Then there would be mass which would finish with a *Te Deum* and the crowd would join in the Plaza Mayor.

Authorities would stay in the balcony of the Cabildo or any governmental building to witness the celebrations. After mass the group of authorities would have dinner. Population would gallop through the streets until midnight when they would give in to dancing. The coloured and the Indian would separate to practice their own dancing. The following day would begin with mass and be followed by a procession, religious and eventually military.

Other activities carried out in festive events would be bullfighting, juego de cañas, fights of Mores and Christians, sometimes theatre pieces, *autos sacramentales*<sup>72</sup> and comedies. Theatre was used as a didactic tool for educating the natives. The missionaries would do representations of the Bible to educate the Indians in religion.

<sup>69</sup> though certainly not internal, social or political disturbances

<sup>70</sup> main city of the west of the country

<sup>71</sup> announcers

<sup>72</sup> religious celebrations



**figure 4-08** - 1850s - Caricature of Pulperia  
author: Florencio Molina Campos (1891-1959)  
source:www.relinchando.com/Didacticos/Gaicho/Biblioteca\_Digital/

**figure 4-09** - 1850s - Caricature of Casa de Trucos  
author: Florencio Molina Campos (1891-1959)  
source:www.relinchando.com/Didacticos/Gaicho/Biblioteca\_Digital/



### Leisure in the Argentine countryside

The concept of leisure has been related lately to the leisure of the masses allowed by the new systems of leisure time. This time was provided by the reforms in labour laws and regulations. However, leisure activities have been around in human society almost uninterrupted, with a short interruption provided by the industrial revolution in Europe.

The Argentine countryside was not an exception and it shows how, in the countryside, the differentiation of class when it comes to leisure tended to be small or insignificant. On the one hand, the inhabitants of the Argentine territory before the Spanish arrived, already had a complete repertoire of games, sports and entertainment, and the characteristics of this entertainment did not differ too much from those brought over by the European colonists.

The Mapuches, for example, practised the *palin* or *viñu*, which could be somehow related to the modern hockey. It would be played in a preferably clear ground of about 100 by 60 metres. Two teams of about 10 to 12 men each would hit a ball with sticks and fight for it.

Among children's games we can mention the *küme*, similar to the game of not speaking in which the first one who laughs loses or has to pay a pledge, the *triarangue* which works like the modern *gallo ciego*<sup>73</sup>, the *nütun*, a persecution game or the *elkaun*, a kind of hide-and-seek. Other games were practised with feathered balls, which had to stay in the air, with rings that had to be placed in a stick or with elements that had to fly far in the air. The Indians were very keen on betting games, and as much as the Spanish and Creoles they were happy to go to the limits of their possessions in the hopes of getting some extra earnings.

Later, during Colonial times a series of games, sports and leisure activities such as dances and music were introduced by the Spanish and became the mixture of Spanish and local activities.

One of the most traditional among Argentine sports was the *Pato*<sup>74</sup>, which has been around for about 400 years. In its beginnings it was rather dangerous sport and had tragic results, for which it was prohibited in the province of Buenos Aires by president Rivadavia (1780-1845) in 1827. The competition in its origins was held between two hundred riders divided into two groups. The field of play was sometimes even the space taken by two *estancias*<sup>75</sup>. The game was played with a duck inside a leather bag with handles and riders on horses had to struggle for the animal and place it in a given high place on a tree. The game then developed and with the protection of animals and the new rules it became a more civilised sport that can now be compared to the Polo.

Among the traditions related to the celebrations there was a curious tradition that had to do with the burial of the dead. In the Argentine countryside in the times of the colony there was the archaic custom of *velar a los angelitos*<sup>76</sup>. This consisted in the celebration of the death of a child under the age of seven. This event would be celebrated with singing, dancing and eating, for it was believed that the soul of a child under seven was not polluted by this world and they would go directly to heaven. These events surprised the visitors that came from other countries, for they found it a macabre activity.

So there is also a lot to say about the dancing and music that used to be part of everyday life in the country at the time of the colony and which did not change much during the nineteenth century or even the twentieth.

Some of these were the *Carnavalito*, a simple group dance where dancers move around the musicians and sing along, which existed since before the discovery of America, were common and are still today. The *Chamamé* was a dances developed in the Northern provinces of Argentina, resulting of a mixture of Indian and Spanish tradition, where music is played with accordion and couples dance together in grace and eroticism. The *Gato* was danced in the countryside as well as in the cities, it is believed to have come from Perú around 1820 and it expanded not only geographically but also among all social classes. This piece is danced by a couple, in which the man does all sorts of movements to attract the attention of the woman. The *Gato* became one of the most popular dances in the countryside. Another very popular dance was and still is the *Malambo*, danced only by men it goes to the rhythm of the guitar and the man performs movements especially with the feet, crossing legs and also moving the *boleadoras*<sup>77</sup>. Apart from these sports and dances some games were very popular such as card games and *juegos de prendas*<sup>78</sup>.

### Leisure in Buenos Aires before the nineteenth century

The situation of leisure in the city was rather different. Especially since the nineteenth century, leisure activities became more complex and diversified having influence from different parts of the world.

Leisure in Buenos Aires, having few Indians as population was practically only influenced by the Spanish culture. Buenos Aires, as most of the other cities founded by the Spanish in America and in other continents had a Main Square or Plaza Mayor. This place in the city, from its origins, would provide the space for market,

administration, politics, religion and leisure.

Leisure activities would be carried out inside the houses and in specific public places, and the differences between social classes were seen in some of the games and sports they played, as well as in the music and dances they practised. By colonial times these differences were less notorious but by the end of the century they became deeper.

In colonial times the games played were many. Card games were preferred and they would be played in *café*s and *pulperías*<sup>79</sup> (figure 4-08) and in *Casas de trucos* (figure 4-09), which were especially established for playing. These were common practices around the end of the eighteenth century and they continued throughout the nineteenth.

Another practice that was common to different social classes was the game of *bolos*<sup>80</sup>, with the Spanish variant of it. This game was considered an honest one by most and was practised by all social classes until the nineteenth century. There were also some who did not consider this an honest practice, for the owner of the game field would get too much profit from it.<sup>81</sup>

Games that came from abroad included the *domino*, presumably of oriental origin, brought again into fashion by the Italians or the *juego de la oca*<sup>82</sup>, of German medieval origin. These games were also considered and honest pastime.

The higher classes did have their preferences in board games: Chess, played the Spanish style and checkers were very fashionable and served for imitating the lifestyle of the Parisian higher classes. Billiards was played in Buenos Aires since the sixteenth century, with curved poles, balls of ivory and blue tissue tables. This was another one of the games reserved for the elite until public billiards were established

in the city by the end of the eighteenth century when it became a more popular practice.

Regarding public spectacles, bullfighting was established in the city by the beginnings of the seventeenth century. This spectacle was accompanied by horse riding and *juego de cañas*<sup>83</sup>. They were practiced by local dextrous men, for the Spanish bullfighters would not cross the ocean to give the spectacle to the locals. The bullfighting practice was not as successful or spectacular in the area of Rio de la Plata as it was in Mexico or Perú, which had a higher standard of cultural link with Spain and a more cultivated population. Buenos Aires had its first and very modest *plaza de toros*<sup>84</sup> in 1791 and was replaced by that of Retiro in 1799, which lasted very few years standing.

<sup>73</sup> Blind rooster

<sup>74</sup> The literal translation of the word is duck, for the game was originally played with a live duck.

<sup>75</sup> land estates

<sup>76</sup> guard the little angels

<sup>77</sup> a throwing weapon similar to the surujin made of weights on the ends of interconnected cords, designed to capture animals by entangling their legs. They are most famously used by the South American gauchos, but have been found in excavations of pre-Hispanic settlements.

<sup>78</sup> Games in which the one who loses has to do something difficult or embarrassing

<sup>79</sup> a sort of popular restaurant

<sup>80</sup> Game of balls, similar to bowling or *juego de pelota*, or *petanque*, where each player throws a ball and the one that gets closer to the main coloured ball wins.

<sup>81</sup> Urquijo, José María Mariluz, *El Virreinato del Río de la Plata en la época del marqués de Avilés (1799-1801)*, Academia Nacional de la Historia, Buenos Aires. 1964.

<sup>82</sup> The Game of the Goose is a game of table for two or more players. Every player advances his card on a board in the shape of spiral with 63 pigeonholes with drawings. Depending on the pigeonhole in which one falls it is possible to advance or to step back and in some of them a punishment is indicated.

<sup>83</sup> The *juegos de cañas* was an antique game of riding simulation for the training where two teams of riders would confront each other throwing canes at each other.

<sup>84</sup> Bullfighting ring

Another spectacle that dates back to colonial times in Buenos Aires and is still as present today is that of the horse races. Horses were brought to Argentina by the first founder of the city, Pedro de Mendoza, and this was only the beginning, for the breeding of horses turned out to be a trade that was useful for all types of agricultural and transport activities. The first races to be held in the Rio de la Plata were done in holidays between the *vaquería* and the *corrida de indios*. Chronicles of the time allow us to see how popular these races were, so much that they were even adopted by the Indians.

One of the most important leisure events in the city of Buenos Aires is and was the *carnaval*. This has been celebrated in the country as a Christian feast, or at least in a Christian context, for it is celebrated the three days before the Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins. This is a period of fasting for Christians so the three days before would be days of celebration and excess. The carnival embodies the sublimation of leisure, in this feast the costume proposes the confusion of social places and of gender, of race and of condition of all kinds. It is also a time of dreaming, of taking the place that can not be taken in normal life.

Throughout all its years of existence, the carnival has taken many shapes, but the most prominent custom has been that of throwing water. The abuse of this practice was the cause of many prohibitions put on this feast.

### Leisure in Buenos Aires before 1870

Leisure practices in Buenos Aires during the nineteenth century developed faster. Even though the phenomenon of industrialisation and growth did not appear until the end of the century, leisure practices would follow some

of the guidelines of the European examples, adapting them to local culture and customs.

Leisure in this period is best described by the travellers who would visit Buenos Aires and stay to live in the city for some months or years. One of these was an *Englishman*<sup>85</sup>. He made a full description of the Buenos Aires everyday life during the 1820's, that even though experienced by only one man, sheds light on many of the every day activities of people in the city, their duties, jobs and especially their leisure practices. This period was the decade after the independence from Spain and after the English invasions in Buenos Aires, and even though there are some animosities about the subject, the English population seemed to be adjusting to the local life. According to this Englishman the majority of foreigners apart from Spanish were English, as by a census of 1822 there were 3500 English inhabitants in the whole province of Buenos Aires, these were said to be in charge of great part of the retail facilities of the city. On the other hand there was also a high amount of French population in the city, who would be the ones to sell French products such as textiles and clothes. Other immigrants such as Italians and Germans were less in quantity but would also be present in the commercial environment of Buenos Aires in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The society of Buenos Aires is described by this Englishman as:

“...Happy distance from the French vivacity and the English phlegm. The English man will feel comfortable next to them, and despite not speaking the language he should not fear being mocked by his mistakes(...) to know them is to appreciate them (...) even though there are well-off families I don't think they are extraordinarily

rich. The houses cattle and land constitute their safest property (...) the consideration of women is based on a true respect for the virtues of the gender and will therefore prevail for ever.”<sup>86</sup>

### Outdoor activities

One of the main issues talked about by these travellers was the capacity to ride horse in the city as a leisure activity. The Englishman, though criticising the monotony of the landscape does praise the Sunday horse back ride to San Isidro (figure 4-10) and compares it to those from London to Richmond in England. The road to Barracas and other roads surrounding the city were good places to go riding in the spring, where the peach, orange and aloe trees were in bloom.

The Alameda (figure 4-11) was one of the first promenades of Buenos Aires. It was an avenue located on the waterfront of the city, close to the only pier existing then. This promenade was said to be sad and located in a badly reputed neighbourhood. It was only 200 yards long and the trees on it were low and the benches not worth sitting on. This avenue was populated by the higher classes by elegant women on Sundays, but the rest of the week it remained empty.

Sailors of all nations always populated the beach and establishments of restaurants and shops variegated it. This would also be the place of brothels and prostitution, much like many port cities in Europe. Actually many of the sailors there were European, especially English and also American, who were said to be the most mischievous.

All social classes would bathe in the river during the summer, especially women, for

this was a very fashionable activity at the time. Here the traveller is surprised about the lack of dressing cabins, which were already at the time present in seaside resorts. Instead the women would get dressed with the help of their slaves and would play in the water until past dark time, when lights would be lit.

Close to this location, the washing woman, mainly black slaves and some white servants, would wash all the clothes of the city through a distance of two miles away from the centre. Weddings and other celebrations would be held in this location and the noises of the celebration could be heard from a far.

Fishing as a sport was regarded as uncomfortable and inconvenient. This activity was done by horse, two riders would go into the river with a net between them, and one man on foot would help on the process.

Sports were practised as much as in the time of the colony but ball games appeared to stay in 1850 with the opening of the first ball field. Until the end of the nineteenth century many ball fields were inaugurated in the centre and in different neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires. In 1866 the first tournament of athleticism was held, and a year later the Buenos Ayres Athletic Society was inaugurated, which led to the regularity of practices such as the high jump, long jump, running races and obstacle races. Other athletic practices were added throughout the following decades<sup>87</sup>. In 1868 the Buenos Ayres football club was opened and the field of Palermo began to be used as a football field. Throughout the following years new sports were added, especially practised by the students of the English schools, such as tennis, golf, polo and boxing.

Nautical sports that were popular in England at the time were not popular in Buenos Aires, this was attributed to the not so attractive

appearance of the river. Instead, the most popular local sport was that of throwing the lace. The sport consisted on a rider coming into a herd of cows and putting his lace around one of the cows. A fair was held annually on October 12 close to the Recoleta, where this sport would be practised and other celebrations would be held, such as singing and dancing.



**figure 4-10** - detail Buenos Aires y Distrito Federal

author: Pablo Ludwig

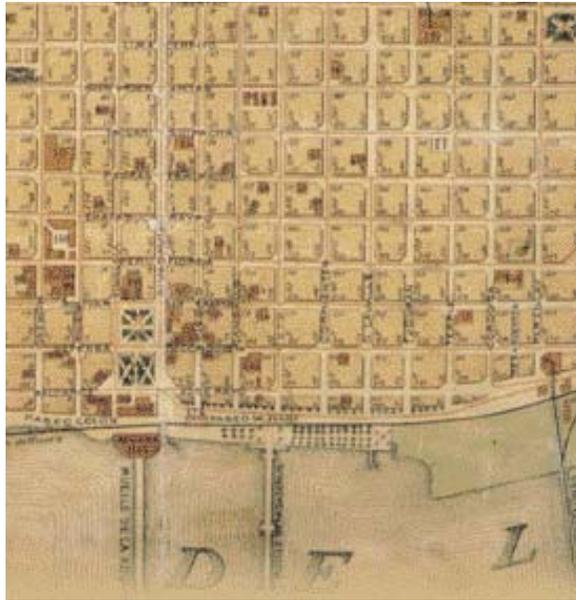
source: Museo Mitre

Highlighted trace of horseback riding from Buenos Aires to San Isidro

<sup>185</sup> "Cinco años en Buenos Aires (1820-1825)" was published in London in 1925. The author was 'an englishman' that describes different details of the life in Buenos Aires in this period. It was attributed by Rafael Alberio Arrieta to the English traveller Thomas George Love, founder of the Buenos Aires journal 'The British pocket and argentine news'.

<sup>86</sup> Un inglés, "Cinco años en Buenos Aires (1820-1825)" London, 1925.

<sup>87</sup> *The Standard*, 30/5/1867



**figure 4-11** - 1882 - Buenos Aires  
author: J.B.A. Bianchi  
source: Museo Mitre  
on the bottom right corner we can see the Alameda, a series of trees on both sides of the passenger pier, between the river and the railroad.

### Indoor Activities

Regarding entertainment establishments in the city the *café* was a very popular type already in this period. The *café de la Victoria* was one of the most frequented and elegant ones and was comparable to those in Europe. Cafes would be placed all around the centre of the city and they all had a patio covered with a canopy, which would be very pleasant in the summer. Most of the cafes were decorated with exotic paintings of India or Thaiti and decorated with episodes of the Quijote and Classic history.

Theatres in Buenos Aires were scarce at the time, and there was not one main theatre in the city. During the 1860s the plans for the new main theatre close to the Plaza Mayor were being developed, but this was not built for a while. The existing theatres were in any case very much attended and were the scenery not only for the plays performed there but also for the public that attended. This theatre was observed as a very calmed one compared to those in Europe.

Comic Portuguese dancers coming from Rio de Janeiro performed dance in the theatre. Operas and ballets were regularly performed during lent, which changed the sad image this period had under Spanish rule. The Barber of Sevilla, Figaro and Enique IV were performed in the theatre. Fashion wise, when it came to attending the theatre, women would dress practically always in white, and in a rather austere way, not wearing large jewels but flowers instead.

Apart from the theatres there was a circus owned by Bradley, an English man who opened on Sundays and was a good clown and horse rider.

Regarding private celebrations birthdays

were very celebrated, presents were given, and parties were thrown were sweets, dinners and *tertulias* were organised. A great consumption of sweets was observed, especially amongst the children.

Porteños were very keen on dancing, all social classes would enjoy the entertainment in the evenings, and all ages would dance without difference. Dances such as the *minuet* or *waltz* were imported from Europe, but also dances such as *el Cuando* and *el Gato* would also be performed indistinctively. The lower classes would perform music inside their houses, the guitar was very common in the city's patios and you could see couples dancing to their music through house windows in the summer.

As an everyday leisure activity in the long nights of winter it was very common amongst the urban middle classes to organise *tertulias*, in them all members of the family, together with neighbours and friends would talk, drink mate, coffee and liquors and practice simple games, where all could participate. Card games were popular in these reunions. Similar card games to those played in the country would be also played in the city and games such as bridge or poker would be added as international influences were more popularised.

The tavern was not popularised in Buenos Aires and according to the tales, it was difficult to see a lot of disturbances in the streets, except for those by the sailors and poorest classes near the harbour.

Games also had periods of prohibition as those of 1816, 1821 and 1852. These laws were not complied for in general and the generalisation of clandestine gaming lead to the subsequent approval of gaming after some time of prohibition.

### Leisure for women and children

During this period schools in Buenos Aires were already sprawling. They were mainly dedicated to boys between fifteen and seventeen years old and some of them would teach lessons in English. On the other hand, education for women was extremely scarce; they were only expected to learn to read and write and to learn music and dancing.

Young women were kept under the strict supervision of their mothers until they were married. This would happen normally at the age of fourteen or fifteen, and most of the marriages were arranged.

Children of different classes would have different kind of behaviour in the street. It was said that kids of the most popular classes would rumble around on the streets stealing handkerchiefs from gentlemen and throwing stones to people in general. Instead boys of higher classes were appreciated by the foreigners for their correct manners and their good upbringing.

### Leisure in Buenos Aires – 1870-1930

According to Thomas Reese<sup>88</sup> leisure activities have a set of *objects* and *actions* that constitute them. *Objects* such as symbols, urban spaces, architectures, monuments and historical buildings, public sculptures, medals, stamps, commercial merchandise are acted upon by *actions* such as education, work, politics, leisure and recreation, commerce and consumption, home and neighbourhood.

Leisure and recreation by the end of the nineteenth century become organised by the governments, which increasingly favoured massive ceremonial reunions, the spectacle,

ostentation and rituals.

Theatre opera and symphonic music, expositions and *canonical* collections on museums; zoos and botanical gardens; festivals, parades and civic festivities; organised exercise, sports and competitions; and multiple types of popular entertainment as street representations, bars, ballrooms, cabarets, circuses, entertainment parks, cinemas, hot air balloons, balls, singing, gambling and recreational excursions. All of these activities built a culture of leisure that develops steadily in the city.

“Rituals associated with leisure at the beginning of the century were more and more tied with the democratisation of desire and the search of goods, built by and to the service of capitalism. Notably in the new rituals of shopping, going out for dinner, travelling and other forms of consumption; and in the assistance and participation in national and international exhibitions and commercial fairs of architecture, cattle, transportation, industry, hygiene and fine arts – to name only those which were realised during the celebrations of the Centennial of Independence in Buenos Aires”<sup>89</sup>

Most of the leisure practices that were common among the *porteño* society of the nineteenth century we have been observing up to now did continue being practised. The tendency was to institutionalise some of these games and sports and bring them into the civic culture.

### Outdoor activities

To what concerns the places of leisure in the city there were new ones added to the traditional ones. The economical boom of the

last decades of the century brought a change in habits and leisure rituals became more organised. Florida Street (figure 4-12) became the forced place of reunion of the aristocratic class, as well as the promenades of Recoleta and Barrancas de Belgrano. However, the main place of entertainment was the *Corso de Palermo*, the afternoons of Thursdays and Sundays. There were regular ceremonies in this promenade by carriage. People would greet each other from their own carts and follow their way through the Sarmiento Avenue.

In this period one of the most fashionable practices for the higher classes was to travel to Europe, especially to Paris. The summer in Deauville would have given the inspiration for the first waterfront summer resort in Argentina, Mar del Plata.

Sports leisure practices were becoming more and more anglicised. By 1893 the Argentine Association Football league was constituted and the first amateur championships were organised. This event led to the professionalising of the sport and the later creation of the Asociación Argentina de Football. Later, this sport became the sport of the Argentines as a practising sport as well as a spectacle. Clubs appeared all over the city, local and national championships began to be played regularly giving the sport and the spectacle more and more popularity.

<sup>88</sup> Reese Thomas, ‘Buenos Aires 1910. Representacion y construccion de identidad’ in Gutman, Margarita, Reese, Thomas, *Buenos Aires 1910. Un imaginario para una gran capital*, Edudeba, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires 1999.

<sup>89</sup> idem. p.27



figure 4-12 - 1911 - Calle Florida Buenos Aires  
source: Archivo General de la Nación

figure 4-13 - 1930s - Confiteria Las Violetas  
source: Archivo General de la Nación



Regarding games for adults, finally a law passed in Buenos Aires in 1902 to forbid games of chance and those who practised them were systematically prosecuted. The author of this project was Rufino Vareta Ortiz and it received criticism from Carlos Pellegrini who said:

“playing is not, as has been said, a symptom of corruption: on the contrary, it is more a symptom of wealth and abundance... here between us, in the period that was called *the crisis of progress*, time of singular abundance, there was more playing in one day than there is now in one year.”<sup>90</sup>

Another leisure habit that was kept from the times of the colony but that was strongly legislated and organised was that of the *carnaval*. By the last decades of the century it was no longer a street party without organisation but a fully blown festival. *Centros and orfeones* would be developed during the whole year. Singers and dancers would rehearse the whole year to make up the *comparsa* that would walk the city streets during three days in February. An ordinance had passed that forbid the water games in this period, however, people would throw ashes, flour and even perfumed water at each other during the traditional party. Apart from the throwing of water and other elements there was a whole spectacle going on, all the dancers of the *comparsas* would be dressed up in coloured costumes and carriages would hold the most relevant characters of the carnival.

By this time the carnival would also be the time of the most popular dances in the city, where dances such as *polka* and *waltz* would be practised. All the clubs of the city would offer a dance at this time of the year but such exclusive

clubs as the *Club del Progreso*, or the *Jockey Club*, would only accept a limited and select group of invited people. By 1909 the carnival seems to have got too violent, and for this reason it was suspended by the authorities.

Games were played by both girls and boys, and approaching the end of the century these became much more diverse. Games played in the street or patios would be for example *esquinitas*, where four girls would stand in the corners and the one in the middle would have to take the place of a corner as the rest would change places. Another would be that of the *estatuas*, where one girl would make the others behave as a statue and pick the best one who would later become the one to pick. Other games such as hopscotch would be practised on the street or sidewalk, as it had been done for centuries in cities all over the world.

Boys would practise more active games such as *rango*, where they would jump over the other boys opening the legs and then kneel down to let the next one jump. Hide and seek was also played and persecuting games would be there still since the times of the colony.

Even though the first importation of toys came to Buenos Aires in 1799<sup>91</sup>, local toy production in the city did not occur until the end of the nineteenth century. Until then, in the last decades of the century, some toys were imported such as plumb soldiers, dolls, tricycles, bicycles, wooden horses, drums and puzzles. These toys were mainly accessible to the best-off children but others were more accessible to the working classes also. Those were the *trompo*, or spinning top and the marbles. The older boys would also play *bolos*, a kind of game that can be related to the North American bowling but in a more primitive manner, where pins had to be hit by a ball.

Summer holidays were for the higher

classes a representation of prestige. Apart from the country houses close to Buenos Aires and the beaches of Montevideo on the other side of the Rio de la Plata, there is the new summer resort of Mar del Plata founded in 1888 for the leisure of the aristocracy. This location would become more popular by the end of the century when the railway reaches Mar del Plata, allowing the European style of vacations.

### Indoor activities

One of the most typical and popular spaces of leisure and entertainment in Buenos Aires has been the café (figure 4-13). These spaces had existed since the mid-nineteenth century but it is not until the last decades of the century that it becomes so important a place and almost an institution. This period saw the inauguration of cafés such as *el Tortoni*<sup>92</sup>, inaugurated in 1858 but it was in 1880 that the new building where it stood was built on Rivadavia, later Avenida de Mayo. This café was a reunion space for intellectuals and artists of the city and became a centre of artistic and literary production and diffusion. Another café founded in 1850, which turned into a must among the highest classes of Buenos Aires was the café del Molino. Two Italian bakers, who saw the potential of the location opened the establishment. They bought the terrain of what was later to be the opposite corner to the palace of congress, this location gave the café a prominent place in the city. The café La Ideal was founded in 1912 and was also a well known location of the higher classes, it was famous for its lady's orchestra.

Other cafes as those in La Boca, such as *La Perla* or *El Dante* were more popular and less exclusive, this neighbourhood was still considered not to be safe but very cosmopolitan

in its dwellers however. These places were located on the vicinity of the river and mainly sailors and workers of the meat cooling companies attended them. Manuel Bilbao comments on them:

“La Boca with its cafes on the riverfront, on calle Pedro de Mendoza, with its ultra cosmopolitanism, in which all languages and dialects are heard; with its railway, and with its waterfront full of mechanical installations and yards. The Arena street was that to coast the Riachuelo, a place feared by the milkmen, due to the frequent assaults”<sup>93</sup>

By night, these establishments of la Boca would hold shows of guitar players, magicians and all kinds of musicians.

To what concerns theatrical spectacles the scene did not change much during the nineteenth century until the first Teatro Colón (figure 4-14) was built next to the Plaza de Mayo. This building became the centre of the local cultural life from the beginning. *La Traviata* of Giuseppe Verdi was the play chosen for the inauguration of the theatre. The new Colón theatre was not inaugurated until 1908 (figure 4-15). This building, designed by the Italian architects Francesco Tambourini and Vittorio Meano was a great success and it made theatre yet more successful than it was before. For the event of the inauguration another piece by Verdi was chosen: *Aida*. Other theatres were inaugurated in this period, the Politeama in 1879. In the years before 1880 new associations of artists came together to support national theatre, for the favourite had always been the European.

The end of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of tango, a popular music characteristic of Buenos Aires. Tango dancing clubs were part of a network including

brothels, male same-sex cruising areas, and centres of crime. These spheres were identified at the time as *la mala vida*, a Spanish phrase including all those whose life was *bad* in contrast to what the elite and the professionals considered *decent*.

### Leisure for the poorer classes

In Buenos Aires, the legislation of working hours and the rights of the worker were not developed at all during the nineteenth century. The lack of industrialisation and the small amount of population did not require modifications in laws or regulations. Conservative governments did not consider these possibilities until further into the twentieth century. The eight-hour working day and the weekend did not appear until the 1930s with the reforms of Alfredo Lorenzo Palacios (1880-1965). However, from the time of the conquest and onwards Sunday was a free day, or a day of rest and worship, related to religious reasons and not subject to modification. By the end of the nineteenth century also Saturday started to become a free day for some disciplines, it was called English Saturday and it was surely influenced by the social reform coming from Anglo-Saxon culture.

The social situation was of course a direct influence in the leisure activities of the population. In the midst of the image of progress and positivist development, the city of Buenos Aires shows another face, that of the poor families, forgotten by most except for the statistics.

<sup>90</sup> Pellegrini, Carlos, *Actas del concejo deliberante*, 1902.

<sup>91</sup> Urquijo, José María Mariluz, *El Virreinato del Río de la Plata en la época del marqués de Avilés (1799-1801)*, Academia Nacional de la Historia, Buenos Aires, 1964.

<sup>92</sup> The name was taken from the original Café Tortoni of Paris inaugurated in 1798.

<sup>93</sup> De Bilbao, Manuel, *Buenos Aires desde su fundación*, imprenta Juan A Alsina, Buenos Aires, 1902.



figure 4-14 - 1880s - Plaza de Mayo and Antiguo Teatro Colon  
source: www.bibliotecasarmiento.org

figure 4-15 - 1920s - Nuevo Teatro Colon  
source: Archivo General de la Nación



The popular classes in Argentina were not characterised by family life. On the contrary, in general, collective life was more important. Men would socialise at work, and spend their free time in bars, women would work for many hours, and children were left alone in the streets. This meant that there was no family sociability for most of the poor, but instead of perceiving this as an opportunity to question bourgeois family and create new institutions,

Socialists were abhorred by the regular household arrangements of the popular classes, and in fact they promoted their familiarisation. In fact, the performance of Socialists had great importance, because they were considered as the legitimate opponents of the elite.

From the foundation of the nation, the state was in charge of orphan children. In 1823 Bernardino Rivadavia founded the *Sociedad de Beneficencia*, to be in charge of women and children who were left to their own means. Between 1880 and 1910 the thousands of immigrants who arrived in Buenos Aires left the city with a great need for housing. The conditions in the crowded houses of the centre of the city - or *conventillos* - caused disease and epidemics. In Buenos Aires, the problem was never as serious as in other urban centres such as New York, Boston, and Chicago or some Italian, Russian or French cities. However, this was indeed a cause of concern for authorities who were searching for a solution in the city government as well as in the national one.

The problem of street children was much more difficult to solve, for they had parents who were unable to take care of their children. Even very extreme measures were proposed for the solution of the problem, although they were not realised. In 1910 Luis Agote, a national deputy,

proposed the law – *Tutela del Estado sobre Menores de edad*<sup>94</sup>. This deputy proposed his wish to send all *anarchist* children to the Martin Garcia Island, a remote island on the La Plata River. This law was not approved but it shows the will of the elite to eradicate the street children. Given these conditions it is evident that leisure for most of the children of the city was relegated to wandering the streets and playing in the crowded yards of the ‘conventillos’. By the beginning of the century, with the new laws of education and labour this situation would change and leisure would become more organised and regulated.

The condition of women’s recreation and leisure was not too different to that of children, it is not until the first feminist movements after 1910 that rights pro women and children begin to be considered. Prostitution was also part of the city. It was legal since 1875, and every new prostitute would be registered, but there were no regular secure measures of hygiene or of later registration. Although Socialists promoted equality, in daily life, they accepted a subordinated role for women. However, women from the popular classes were actually very independent, and many Socialists and Anarchists had a hard time accepting it. Both currents opposed the existence of prostitution as a form of “white slavery,” however, not all prostitutes thought this was an oppressive institution and the left could not avoid a very moralistic point of view.

Only statistics show the situation of inequality and lack of rights of women and children, no photographs or official papers for the public were delivered at the time or are available now.

**Press and Literature** – reflection of the local culture according to leisure

The publishing industry had its first period of shine around 1860. Carlos Casavalle, who worked hard on the diffusion of the book, created in 1862 the press and bookstore de *Mayo*. In 1863 it was Pablo Emilio Coni who founded his printing press, which building still stands today. Kraft founded his in 1864 and became one of the most popular printers of the city in the last decades of the century, as well as Jacobo Peuser who first established a bookstore and later became a famous printer.

Authors such as Esteban Echeverría (1805-1851) (figure 4-16), are a good source of information of the first period of Argentine literature. As many of the local intellectuals Echeverría had part of his education in Europe, between 1825 and 1830. Later he would go back to Argentina where he was part of what was called the *Romantic* period of Argentine literature. His book *El Matadero* is not only a good reflection of the dependency of the porteño on meat production and consumption but also a testimony of the social situation in Buenos Aires by the mid-nineteenth century.

Publishing in Buenos Aires at the end of the century was a very expensive matter, so most of the writers were limited to write through magazines and newspapers. However, by this time the image of the author in Buenos Aires was already configured.

Payró is a good example of this new type of professional writer of the end of the nineteenth century. He would be known as a writer as well as a journalist. Ideologically, he was not far from the social criticism lines of the nineteenth century, but he also belonged to the lines of the transcendence of art and the theories of *l'art pour l'art*.

Argentine writers had a very outstanding role in these years, they were not limited to the cultural environment, and they also had a strong influence in political activities due to their passion and interest in public matters. That is how they also developed simultaneously the role of politicians and writers interested not only in the creation of a public capable of giving value to their literary efforts, but also to play a critical role over all the stages of the national state. This is why the literature of the generation of 1880 is such an interesting raw material.

During the last years of the nineteenth century a great renovation of literary practices and aesthetic fields. The main scenery for this is Buenos Aires, which is quickly adapted into modern urban life.

Ricardo Rojas (figure 4-17) grouped the writers of the generación del 80 under the title *prosisitas fragmentarios* or fragmentary writers, due to the lack of continuity of their thoughts, reflected in pieces without an organic unity. They were travelling men, who lived sporadically in Europe and alternated their conversations in elegant clubs with intellectual and political life. They wrote essays, journalism articles, biographical memories and short narrations and judgements about the time they lived in. They belonged mainly to the powerful governing class and they admired European culture above all. They were idealists, liberals and positivists, and sustained the need for a change in the social and cultural Argentine reality.

Humour and irony are two main qualities of the literature of this period. The most representative of humorism was Eduardo Wilde, an extravagant man, who left proof of his originality in his witty phrases.

The main figure in the naturalist novel of

the generacion del 80 was Eugenio Cambaceres, the most renowned novelist of the period, who wrote four texts, among them *En la Sangre* (1887) and *sin rumbo* (1885). The novel that expresses the social and cultural changes of this period more exactly was *La Gran Aldea* (1884), by Lucio Vicente Lopez (1848-1894).

Among the literature that describes the process of the fall of the market in 1890 the main issues in them had to do with the demonstration of the need of changing gears in the way economy and politics were developing. The works of Martel and Ocantos have a didactic aim in them.

Within the expansion of the press the first issue of the magazine *Caras y Caretas* appears. This magazine was first directed by José Sixto Alvarez (1858-1903). This magazine joined reports, caricatures and illustrations regarding all sort of national and international news. Along with these the magazine would publish literary articles coming from the local styles of modernism, costumbrista, realista or rural literature.

<sup>94</sup> Tutelage of the State on Minors.



figure 4-16 - Esteban Echeverría  
source: <http://www.aldeaeeducativa.com/small/estebanecheverria.jpg>

figure 4-17 - Ricardo Rojas  
source: <http://www.fundacionpea.org/r.rojas.jpg>



Modernism is said to have entered Argentine literature in the hands of Ruben Dario (1867-1916) Nicaraguan poet. His name was already known in Buenos Aires, before his first visit in 1893, through the publication of his book *Azul*, published in 1888. Latin American modernism is considered to have started with the Cuban José Martí and the Mexican Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera. From the beginning, modernism found in Buenos Aires a suitable cultural environment that made its acceptance favourable. Another magazine that collaborated on the spreading of this literary style was *La Biblioteca*. The elite was the one to welcome this sort of literary influences. This bourgeois elite had supported greatly all the immigration flows until the end of the century.

This is when some animosity is registered in these classes against the uncontrolled immigration flows. This problem regarded mainly the bastardising of the language and the different cultural education of the immigrant groups.

1910 and the centennial of the independence bring a Hispanic current. This attitude can be seen in the works of Ricardo Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista* (1922) and in Manuel Galvez, *El Solar de la Raza* (1913). In this piece he notes "the time has come for feeling Argentines, for feeling American and for feeling finally Spanish, for this is the race to which we belong".

In the period between 1880 and 1910 the Argentine fiction stories have to do with the life of the foreign one that has decided to settle in a strange land, with his success and failure stories, his projects and relations, friendly or foe with the locals.

From this scheme two opposing theses appear, the one that supports the stay of the foreigner and the one that opposes it. These two

theses are reflected in the local literature. The xenophile one was shown in the literature of Adolfo Saldías *Bianchetto* (1896) or *Promisión* de Carlos María Ocantos (1897). On the xenophobes side we can see *¿Inocentes o culpables?* by Antonio Argerich (1884) or *La bolsa* by Juan Martel (1891).

In *Bianchetto* an Italian orphan leaves the suburbs of Genova to move to the Argentine countryside and become a real gaucho, in a place considered a land for work, prosperity and the realisation of the *crisol de razas*. *Promisión* tells the story of some immigrants, French, English, and a German that achieve in Argentina to get the reward for their efforts.

On the other hand there were books regarding the other side of the ideology spectrum. *¿Inocentes o culpables?* tells the story of an Italian immigrant who goes from stupidity to madness, of a wife who dreams of adultery and a son who, going from vice to laziness ends up in suicide. *La bolsa* by Juan Martel does not have a much happier story, this book narrates the life of a man who gives in to the speculation of Jewish usurer and is taken over by madness.

The following chapter in Argentine literature comes in the 1920s with the avant-garde, when the magazine *Nosotros* is published. In 1921 the manifest entitled 'Ultraismo' written by Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) was published in this magazine. The writer, after living for some years in Europe brings the ideas of ultraismo, a Spanish version of the avant gardes, Futurism, Cubism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Surrealism.

In 1922 Borges becomes editor of the magazine *Prisma*, and later *Proa*, with the help of Eduardo Gonzalez Lanuza (1900-) and Guillermo Juan (1906). These younger writers replaced the success of the literature of Lugones as a hegemonic model of literature to rescue instead

the figures of Macedonio Fernandez (1874-1952) and Ricardo Güiraldes (1886-1927). The work of Macedonio as a n addition of fragments were fiction and critical theory coexist was opposite to the realism brought by previous generations. The genre crossings, the use of humour and irony, the absurd as a form of knowledge were a great influence on later literature, especially that of Borges.

The writer considered most talented in this period was Roberto Arlt (1900-1942), he belonged to this group of writers, but in a slight manner. He was the first to introduce the urban novel in Argentine literature. The lexicon used by him referred to physics, geometry, electricity and magnetism and this were his ways of perceiving the urban environment. He presents a series of marginal, displaced and dislocated characters in his novels, whose values coming from the pre war period seem to be crumbling.

#### 4.1.6 – Urban context – analysis of existing studies on the city and its relation to the waterfront

It is important to understand the growth and development of the city of Buenos Aires as a

The campaign for transformation of the spatial conditions of Buenos Aires coincides with the international impulse of nineteenth century society towards material progress. However, this is not the only reason for physical change. Specialists of different fields have studied the reasons for the growth and development of the city of Buenos Aires between 1880 and 1930.

The text that follows does not intend to be a thorough analysis of the historiography of the city of Buenos Aires, but rather an overview of tendencies in previous studies on the city. This will help understand the standing point of this research as a fragment of history in which the different times of each field appear as reciprocal influences in the configuration of the urban space of the leisure waterfront.

The tendencies in writing on the urban history of Buenos Aires during the last decades have been different and even contradictory. Authors have taken and reinterpreted the theories of the previous ones transforming the way we as researchers understand this period of development of the city.

One of the first authors to provide a general analysis of the period studied was James R. Scobie. Preceding his work, only fragmentary and particular analyses had been done which did not provide a thorough view of the situation. Scobie, in 1977 wrote the book<sup>95</sup> that would since then be used as a primordial secondary source for any study of the urban condition of Buenos Aires. The author presented a series of hypotheses about the development of the city

that would later be used by some and questioned by others, especially from the field of architecture and urbanism. Scobie had the conviction that the expansion of the city was the direct product of technical modernisation - harbour, train, electric tramway – and the need of local and foreign investment.

During the 1990s Graciela Silvestri and Adrián Gorelik<sup>96</sup> have been developing studies about the subject and questioning previous hypotheses. Gorelik gives a more vast definition of this growth and transformation. This definition includes political and social change as motors of development, and concentrates on the relation between the grid and the park in the city as material and cultural figures that have a main role in the history of space production. He also defines space as one of the elements that define the modalities of sociability within the city in general and public space in particular. Gorelik also criticises the traditional histories of Buenos Aires, which concentrate in showing a European city, modernised with foreign loans and infrastructure from Britain, French urban criteria and Italian builders. He qualifies this approach as useless.<sup>97</sup>

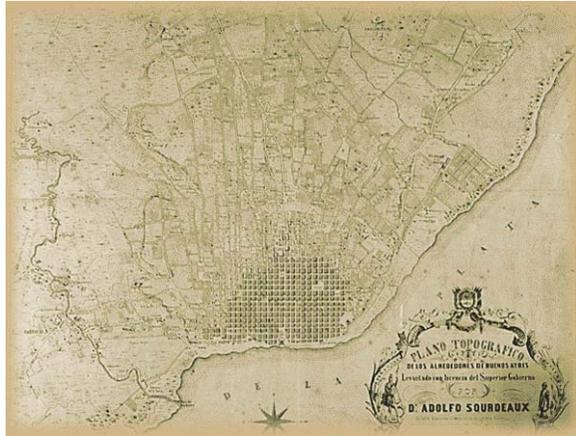
In the field of economics and politics history Richard Walter<sup>98</sup> made a study of the conditions of Buenos Aires in the following period, from the centennial of independence onwards. His study, done in 1994 shows a hypothesis that bases the development and growth directly on political power and economical drives.

<sup>95</sup> Scobie, James R. *Buenos Aires , del centro a los barrios 1870-1910*. Ediciones Solar, “Dimensión Argentina”, 1977

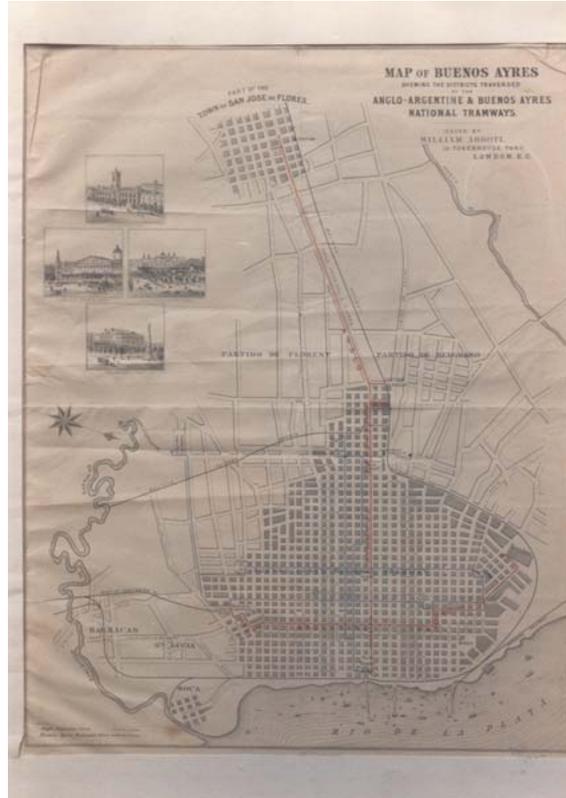
<sup>96</sup> Gorelik, Adrián. *La Grilla y el Parque. espacio público y cultura urbana en Buenos Aires, 1887-1936*, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1998.

<sup>97</sup> idem.

<sup>98</sup> Walter, Richard, *Politics and Urban Growth in Buenos Aires, 1910-1942*, Cambridge University Press, 1994.



**figure 4-18** - 1850 - Plano Topografico de los alrededores de Buenos Ayres  
author: Dr Adolfo Sourdeaux  
source: Museo Mitre



**figure 4-19** - 1865- Map of Buenos Ayres shewing the districts transversed by the Anglo Argentine and the Buenos Ayres National Tramway  
source: Museo Mitre



**figure 4-20** - 1892 - Buenos Aires y Distrito Federal  
author: Pablo Ludwig  
source: Museo Mitre

All these tendencies had a certain value at the moment they were proposed and were related to tendencies in historical research of their period. Now, and especially in a study that regards a particular section of the city, the waterfronts, it is necessary to gain some perspective on these positions and take what can be useful of them.

The hypothesis of Scobie seems to be restricted. His can be a general definition of growth but it looks like a rather limited definition for the transformation of space, especially when talking about the development of public space and waterfront. As we have observed, a great range of subjects such as cultural and social issues are barely considered in his writing.

In the case of the propositions of Gorelik, we disagree with the idea of discarding certain perspectives as useless. The fact that there was a very strong influence from European professionals and ideas in the development of urban space is crucial. However, this does not mean that local work was worthless or that space production does not influence urban behaviour, because they indeed do.

It is necessary to consider all of these criteria, even the traditional historical one to be able to grasp the wide spectrum of influences and ideas that shaped such a complex part of urban life, considering economical, social and political change. It is important not to eliminate criteria that were present at the time these areas were built and thought of. In this case, and once again talking about the waterfront, the ideas of leisure imported from abroad and combined with a both local and foreign imagery help to shape the transformation of a very particular urban space.

On the other hand it is true, and here Gorelik is right, that the formal and physical transformations of space in the waterfront of the city did come from a necessity of homogenisation

of space. This fact had great consequences on the social atmosphere of the city and on leisure behaviour of the population.

“If you think of the continuous landfill on the Rio de la Plata, of the monumental fills of La Boca, in the covering of the streams and the almost total flattening of the slope that defined the central part of the city, there is a will for equalisation of the territory leading to the achievement of the city which tried to domesticate deliberately and consciously any irregular bit.”<sup>99</sup>

Nevertheless, this is not the main motor of development and the shaping of the urban waterfront follows a path of direct relationship between need and realisation, form and program, space and time that alternate regularly.

Most of the literature referring to the urban development of Buenos Aires is extremely concentrated on the role of the harbour and the concept of Harbour City<sup>100</sup>. Also on the way these two elements have interacted and how the harbour influenced on the growth and development of the city. Many hypotheses have been stated on the location, construction, conflicts and relation between port and city. However, other uses of the waterfront have been disregarded as the issues of leisure and the parallel transformation of society and behaviour and their relation to leisure spaces on the waterfront. Those have not been sufficiently studied as a relevant independent phenomenon. These spaces have only been studied in the context of park systems and their makers.

In the following chapters we intend to describe the peculiarities of these locations and how they were influenced by systems of thought that related to them. We will address not only

the economical, political and social situations of the country, city and abroad, but especially a particular area of social studies that regards leisure practices.

As mentioned in the previous chapters on Chicago and Barcelona, the need for leisure space as well as time was a motor that provided the rapid design and construction of waterfront projects. These came from institutional decisions and combined the landscape and urban ideas of European and North American precedence with the very important local expertise and knowledge of the conditions of the city.

**City limits** – restrictions of the existing structures

As analysed in the beginning of this chapter the foundation of the city gave it a shape and a pattern that would condition any subsequent transformations applied to urban form. The grid imposed by the Spanish rule was for centuries the only formal condition of the city. Even though it was not completely consolidated as seen in the progression of city maps (figure 4-18/19/20/21) it seemed to have the potential of infinite expansion. This was not really the case in the long run and the limits of geography did impose some conditions on the morphology and function of the city. The strong presence of an urban form – the grid inherited from the Spanish colonial founding – impressed in the minds of Engineers and Topographers that acted upon the city during the nineteenth century. This grid became the background of the plan. This point is very important because the characteristic grid of Buenos Aires would be the sieve through which various models of the city would be filtered, thus becoming an important line of discussion at the end of the century.



**figure 4-21** - 1916 - Plano Indicativo de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires  
author: Benito Carrasco  
source: Berjman, Sonia, *Benito Javier Carrasco, sus textos*. Facultad de agronomía, UBA, 1997

<sup>99</sup> Gorelik, Adrián. *La Grilla y el Parque. espacio público y cultura urbana en Buenos Aires, 1887-1936*, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1998.

<sup>100</sup> Among others: Gorelik, Adrián. *La Grilla y el Parque. espacio público y cultura urbana en Buenos Aires, 1887-1936*. Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Quilmes 1998. Longo, R.E. *Historia del Puerto de Buenos Aires*, Fernandez Blanco, Buenos Aires 1989. Pando, H.J. *El Puerto de Buenos Aires*, FADU, UBA, Buenos Aires 1989. Radovanovic, Elisa. *Buenos Aires, ciudad moderna*. Buenos Aires. ET. 2002. Liernur, Jorge / Silvestri, Graciela, *El Umbral de la Metrópolis, transformaciones técnicas y cultura en la modernización de Buenos Aires 1870-1930*. Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires 1993.



**figure 4-22** - Fuerte de Buenos Aires  
source: Del Carril, Bonifacio, Monumenta Iconographica: Paisajes, ciudades, tipos, usos y costumbres de la Argentina 1536-1860, Emece, Buenos Aires, 1964.

**figure 4-23** - 1861 - Aduana de Taylor  
author: Derooy  
source: Museo Saavedra. Coleccion Guillermo Moores. DSAA\_03



The Rio de la Plata on the first place always gave the eastern limit to the city. This edge was first taken by the fort, which was used for the defence of the city (figure 4-22), but was never really active and would have not been enough protection in the case of a real invasion. However, this was, as in many other South American waterfront cities, an essential urban element. The fort was demolished in 1853, as it would not serve any purpose. By this time the harbour of Buenos Aires, though still small and austere, was beginning to develop from being a smuggling port to a rather relevant trade station in the continent. This is why the site was used for the new customs building designed by Taylor (figure 4-23/24/25). This building did not last for long either for the growth of the harbour demanded a whole new project, which would establish one of the great structural limits between the city and the river. Other waterfront facilities such as two piers, one for trade and one for passengers shaped this natural border and the relation of the city with it. The rest of the waterfront followed different patterns of use and transformation that will be analysed later.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the seemingly boundless pampas beyond the built city were to be considered and the limit of the city was one of the most discussed and proposed issues when it came to urban development. The reasons for the searching of this limit were diverse, but the strongest of these had to do with the need of proposing a jurisdiction for the city that would be leading the country from then on. The proposition of limits for the city and the avenues that would trace them were not new ideas internationally, but here they meant a struggle for power and economical primacy that were influential in the whole process of

urbanisation. In 1882 the first ring avenue was proposed for the city. This happened two years after the city of Buenos Aires was declared capital of the country. Major Torcuato de Alvear was responsible for this decision and for the tracing of it. This avenue was only expanding the limit of the city by just a few hundreds of metres and would never be materialised. In 1888 the real and still current limit of the city was proposed. This is the actual avenida General Paz, which still provides the limit between the Capital city and the province of Buenos Aires. The inclusion of some of the outer towns into the jurisdiction of the city of Buenos Aires changed the morphology of the city and some spatial qualities as well as the extension of the potential of the city.

The Riachuelo on the other hand, was set as the southern limit of the municipal area. This was a process that went through quite an amount of conflict, especially regarding the harbour and the jurisdiction that had to watch over it and regulate all trade activities. It was nonetheless left as a limit in 1888 and the whole boundary of the municipal area was established (figure 4-26).

During the period we are studying here, 1870-1930, urban growth and transformation were as radical formally as social, economical and political transformations. Due to the combination of high immigration and foreign investment, local tradition and foreign ideas, political change and cultural needs, the city followed a complex process of transformation that will be analysed in the following sections.

The population of Buenos Aires grew from an amount estimated at 250.000 inhabitants in 1875<sup>101</sup> to 2.2 million in 1925. The extension of the city grew from approximately 17 km<sup>2102</sup> of consolidated built area in 1875 to the current 203 km<sup>2</sup> already in 1930, when the city started to

grow out of its limits into the province of Buenos Aires. A tenfold growth does not only imply a growth in size and quantity but a very complex diversification of function and form of the city, and this one being a harbour city, the waterfront plays a very important role in this diversification.

The grid expanded systematically, following the original tracings given by Spanish rule but its direction being constantly modified by geographical accidents and other variables. The city became a complex space, with a developed infrastructure of services and transport, with diverse functional zones, with a centre and a periphery, residential areas, green and open spaces. This process was the product of urbanisation and urbanism, a mixture of planned and unplanned development that begun in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Spontaneous urbanisation, real estate speculation and urban plans and projects of various characters were widespread across the city.

In the following sections of this chapter the urban conditions and the process of city growth will be analysed and understood, but the focus will be on the particular urban element of this research: the urban leisure waterfront.

The precedents of use and design for these areas and the peculiarities of the projects presented for parks, promenades and avenues will be addressed. All kinds of alternatives for this area were stated in every general plan for the city, and besides, countless complementary project proposals were prescribed for the site itself. It was, as we will try to show, a trial landmark, a site of experimentation of green, free and open space. The proposals for these areas differ throughout the period. These differences are related to ideas of open space, leisure and social transformation,

to programs that follow the mentioned ideas and concepts and to form in the reflection of these programs combined with park design ideas related to foreign influences and local expertise. All these aspects of each of the projects analysed here will reflect a series of conditions and urban issues that affected the city as a whole, but that were particularly materialised on the waterfront areas.

A couple of important characteristics common in most of the projects of this coast border were their complexity and segregation from the rest of the city of Buenos Aires. Starting by the harbour, the tram lines and later the airport and the highways created the barriers that made the coast a singular space.

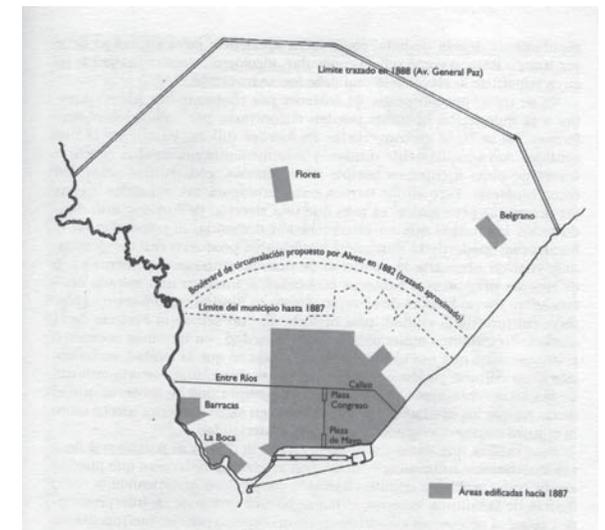
The focus will now be set on the projects for the urban leisure waterfront, their design, their content, their programme and the authorities and designers who were responsible of carrying them out.

**figure 4-24** - 1865- Aduana and washing ladies  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Archivo fotografico. caja 865 sobre 6



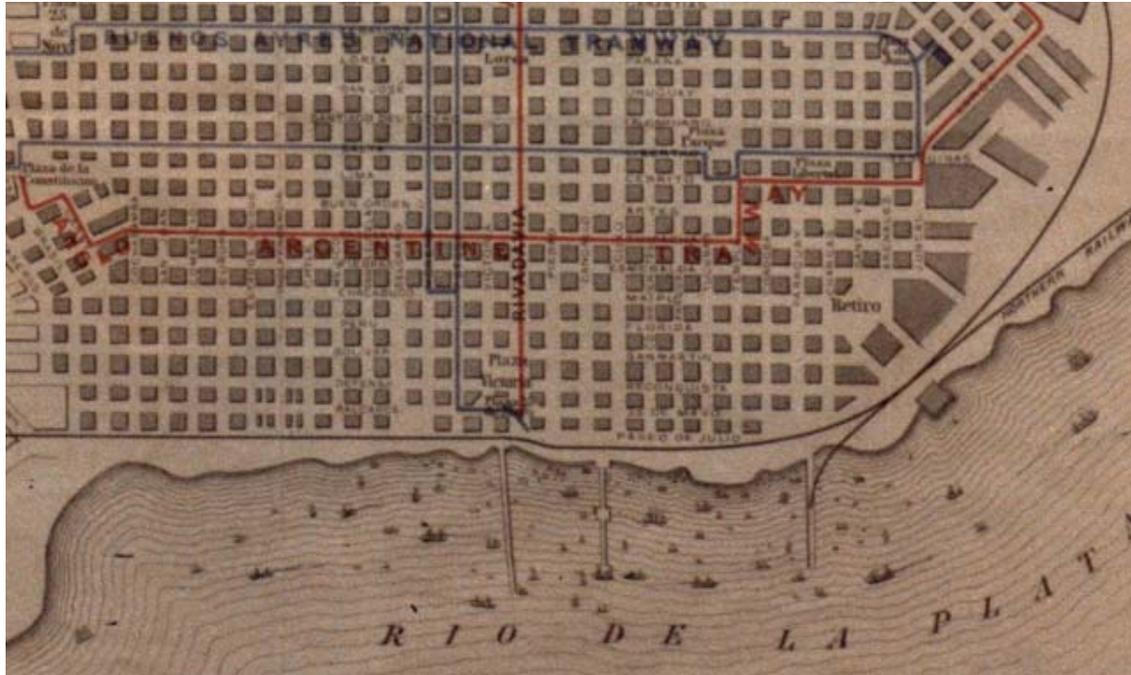
**figure 4-25** - 1853 - Aduana de Taylor  
source: Museo Saavedra. Coleccion Guillermo Moores.

**figure 4-26** - Scheme of limits of the city of Buenos Aires  
author: Adrian Gorelik  
source: Gorelik, Adrián. La Grilla y el Parque. espacio público y cultura urbana en Buenos Aires, 1887-1936, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1998.



<sup>101</sup> The census showed a population of 187.126 inhabitants in 1869, of 663.854 in 1895 and of 1.575.814 in 1914

<sup>102</sup> these areas are calculated from the original maps of Buenos Aires. For the approximate area of 1875 the map of Ernst Nolte of 1882 was used as a reference.



**figure 4-28** - 1865- Map of Buenos Ayres shewing the districts transversed by the Anglo Argentine and the Buenos Ayres National Tramway  
author: anonymous  
source: Museo Mitre  
all three piers are active



**figure 4-32** - 1891- Plano que demuestra la parte de la Ribera de la que se desea prohibir la concurrencia de lavanderas  
author: Buenos Aires Aguas Corrientes  
source: Instituto Historico Municipal.

### Waterfront traditional uses and conflicts – muddy waters, piers and baths of the poor

During the nineteenth century the superposition of the traditional uses of the waterfront such as clothes washing, water drinking and fishing with the technical webs such as harbours and industries, together with the attempt to create representative public spaces, make this territory a conflicted one.

One of the first attempts of using the *Costanera*<sup>103</sup> as a place of entertainment, parallel to the harbour use, was the construction of the *Alameda*. This was supposed to be a prestige avenue next to the river, first built at the beginnings of the 1800s, which found itself set aside by the immediate building of the harbour. The avenue was used as a promenade, but its condition was sad and it was scarcely frequented by the local population.

The main functions of the coast at that time were those of the dock lands. The piers (Muelle de Catalinas-1755, Muelle de la Merced-1802, Muelle de Pasajeros- 1826) (figure 4-28 and 2-29) gave way eventually to the projects for a harbour. By the last third of the century the country was integrated into a circuit on international trading. This happened in the context of a search for giving a solution to the problems of limits and uses of the city.

In 1847, due to the aggression of the river in some months of the year an embankment was built to protect the city from the river. This was a project of Felipe Senillosa and extended in front of the centre of the city between Corrientes and Rivadavia over the old Alameda of Vertiz (figure 4-30) In the meantime the river was used informally as baths and space for washing (figures 4-31/32).

In 1854 new harbour facilities were built

due to the need of more space and organisation for the harbour. The customs building of Taylor crowned the main pier just metres away from the centre of the city. The tramway lines and the first railway stations created a technical border that found itself mixed and in conflict with the determination of creating a public space as early as 1857 (figure 4-22).

By 1865 the first conflicts arise between technical facilities and relation between city and river. A railway communicating the harbour with the area of Retiro passes over Paseo de Julio, the only waterfront promenade built up to that date. By the end of the nineteenth century the coast was not only used for trading aims, in some sites it was even used as a public bath. This was the case of the *Balneario de los pobres*<sup>104</sup> (figure 4-25), located behind the recently built (1887) harbour.

The complex development of the harbour deserves its own description and analysis, which follows.



**figure 4-30-** ca.1867 - Paseo de Julio  
author: Panunzi  
source: Coleccion Carlos Sanchez Idiart



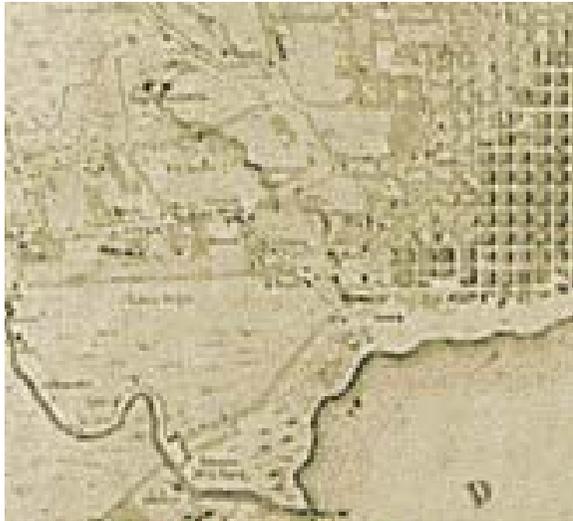
**figure 4-31** - c.1900 - El Balneario de los Pobres  
source: Instituto de Arte Americano. Coleccion placas de vidrio.



**figure 4-29-** 1864- Buenos Aires a vista de Pajaro  
source: Imprenta lemercier. Sorrieu Lithografias

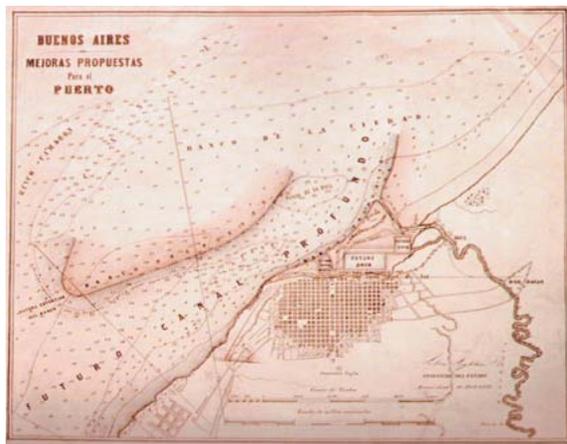
<sup>103</sup> Waterfront avenue

<sup>104</sup> Baths of the poor



**figure 4-33** - 1850 - Plano Topografico de los alrededores de Buenos Ayres  
 author: Dr Adolfo Sourdeaux  
 source: Museo Mitre  
 the image shows the distance of the Riachuelo and Ensenada from the central area

**figure 4-34** - 1859 - Port proposal by Coghlan. Mejoras para el puerto de Buenos Aires.  
 author: Coghlan  
 Source: Archivo General de la Nación, pieza 11-2-29. Coleccion Pillado Viedma



### The Harbour – boundaries of conflict

During the nineteenth century, the city of Buenos Aires underwent problems of urban conditions. One of the most serious conflicts was the one of the harbour, which led to commercial and projective problems.

The subject of the development of the harbour of Buenos Aires has been recently analysed by commentators<sup>105</sup> and an evolution towards a more urban perspective is observed, especially in the work of Graciela Silvestri. It is not the intention of this text to question these approaches but their views are necessary to understand the processes of the conflict between harbour development and the need for a provision of leisure areas, especially at a time of radical economical, social and urban transformation.

Most of the projects presented to the government before mid nineteenth century were concentrated on the functional conditions of the harbour and had very little do with the relationship between the port and the city.

From mid-eighteenth century, even before the creation of the Viceroyship of Rio de la Plata there were already proposals for the harbour of Buenos Aires. Most of them were located on the mouth of Riachuelo. The project of Cardozo gives the first proposal of an artificial harbour with two piers surrounding a section of water, where ships could be protected from the tides of the river, just in front of the city's centre. The location of this harbour was unprecedented but it was not built. Another location that was also present in many projects for the port was that of Ensenada (figure 4-33) inwards through the Riachuelo. Even though this location was further away from the city's commercial centre it was a logical answer, for this was a natural port where rather deep ships could have access.

The first project to really consider both natural accidents of the site such as the slope and the access of Riachuelo, as well as the geographical commercial needs of the centre of the city was the one of E. Giannini<sup>106</sup> (1805). He proposed a harbour that, with an entrance through Riachuelo, would have a canal that reached the centre of the city by the fort.

In the 1820s James Bevans proposed several alternatives for the harbour, establishing new typologies. The only one of these alternatives that was approved by the government consisted on a dock that connected the Riachuelo and Rio de la Plata through two canals.

Until then all the projects were mainly focused on the technical qualities of the harbour. The relation between port facilities and the city were disregarded.

In the same decade Guillermo Mickeljohn (1824) proposes an idea that would be systematically repeated until the end of the century, the landfill on the river in front of the central area of Buenos Aires. Mickeljohn proposes an urban expansion with the same gridiron organisation as the rest of the city that would allow a better connection between city and river. This is the first proposal of its kind, which would be followed by others approaching the end of the century.

There was hardly any construction done in the harbour until 1852, when there is a competition called for by the government. The main two projects presented were those by John Coghlan (1857-1887) and Carlos Enrique Pellegrini (1800-1875). These two professionals were engineers, Irish and Italian respectively. They belonged to a group of engineers that were related to the army, and this fact conditioned part of the design of their projects. According to Silvestri<sup>107</sup>, the reason why these first projects

completely blocked the relation of the city to the river were due not to technical necessities of defence from the river tides but more a matter of military defence.

Coghlan (figure 4-34) was an Irish engineer trained in Britain, where he practised his career. The most advanced technological tools were being developed in Britain and this fact influenced the work of Coghlan overall. This is the reason why his proposal is more concentrated on infrastructure and works of water provision and sewage of the city than in the urban qualities and relation between city and harbour. Coghlan, in contrast to the previous project of Mickeljohn, creates landfill that has no relation to the city and does not mention the economical advantages of such a development.

Pellegrini took a different approach (figure 4-35). Having spent already a couple of decades in Buenos Aires before formulating his project for the harbour, he was more concerned with the function and development of the city than with the harbour itself. His proposal had its centre in the northern part of the city, Coghlan's in the south. Pellegrini's project interconnected harbour and city with the intention that the public lived the commercial life of the port, considering this area a place of development and civilisation. He proposes the harbour as an element of urban life. In contrast to the project of Coghlan, who prioritises the access of ships to the harbour, Pellegrini is focused on the accessibility from the city to the harbour.

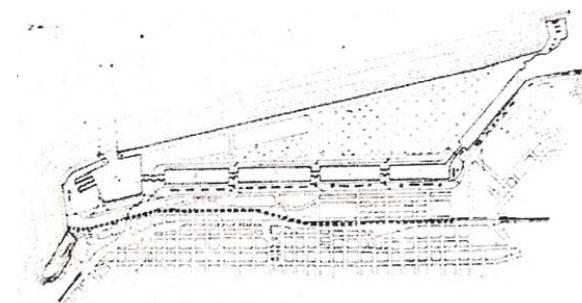
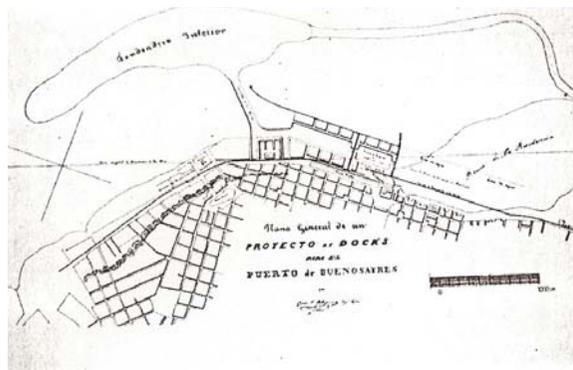
The following relevant project was that of John La Trobe Bateman, British engineer, who had also been hired, as Coghlan, to solve problems of sanitation in Buenos Aires. This engineer presents a proposal that can later be related to the main two projects that fought for the realisation of the harbour at the beginning of the 1880s.

The two main projects – Luis Huergo (1837-1913) and Eduardo Madero (18?-1893) – have been subject to analysis and considerations throughout the last decades of the twentieth century as well as 100 years ago. The reason for this discussion has to do with the fact that in the decision for the building of one of these two proposals lay the destiny of the whole Buenos Aires waterfront.

**figure 4-35** - 1853 - Proyecto de docks para el el puerto de Buenos Aires.

author: Direccion de Geodesia del Ministerio de Obras Publicas de la Provincia de Buenos Aires.

source: De Paula, A. y Gutierrez R., *La encrucijada de la arquitectura Argentina, 1822-1875*. Resistencia, 1974.



**figure 4-36** - 1885- Puerto Madero

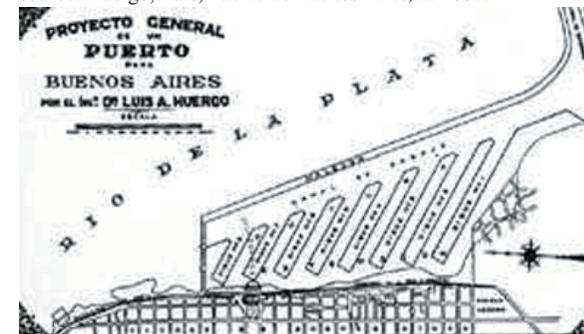
author: Eduardo Madero

source: Huergo, Luis, *Puerto de Buenos Aires, Conferencia del Ingeniero don Luis A Huergo dada en la sociedad Cientifica Argentina el dia 28 de Abril de 1886*, en *Anales de la Sociedad Cientifica Argentina*, t.XXI, Buenos Aires, 1886.

**figure 4-37** - 1865- proyecto Central del Puerto de Buenos Aires

author: Luis Huergo

source: Huergo, Luis, *Puerto de Buenos Aires, ...* 1886.



<sup>105</sup> Silvestri, Graciela. *La ciudad y el río, Un estudio de las relaciones entre técnica y naturaleza a través del caso del puerto de Buenos Aires*. En Liernur, Jorge / Silvestri, Graciela, *El Umbral de la Metrópolis, transformaciones técnicas y cultura en la modernización de Buenos Aires 1870-1930*. Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires 1993.

Pando, H.J., "El Puerto de Buenos Aires", FADU, UBA, May 1989

Lucchini, P., *Historia de la Ingeniería Argentina*, CAI, Buenos Aires, 1981

Longo, R.E. *Historia del Puerto de Buenos Aires*, Fernandez Blanco, Buenos Aires, 1989

<sup>106</sup> Giannini, E. 'Manifiesto sobre el Puerto de Buenos Aires y demás proyectos sobre el Río de la Plata' en *Revista del Archivo General de Buenos Aires*, T.II, Buenos Aires, 1870.

To sum it up, the projects of Huergo and Madero were different, formally in one main aspect. The one of Madero was a closed harbour, of docks connected by a canal (figure 4-36) comparable to that of Liverpool or Montevideo, with only two entrances. On the other hand, the one of Huergo, on exactly the same location (figure 4-37) consisted on a series of parallel docks, a dented harbour, a morphology that had been recently introduced in the US and Australia.

Huergo, a local engineer and first generation to graduate from the faculty of exact sciences in the University of Buenos Aires had received also an important influence from the Anglo Saxon culture as he did his secondary studies in Maryland, US. By 1881 Huergo was already working as a technician for the National Harbour on the Riachuelo. This was a small harbour in national jurisdiction that could have never taken the place of the harbour for the capital city. On his project for the city's harbour Huergo, as Coghlan before him, was more concentrated on the natural conditions of the place and the waterways than in the urban relation of the harbour with the city.

Madero, on the other hand was focused on the urban role of the harbour and its relation to the various functions and uses of the city adjacent to the port. However, Madero's project presented one very serious problem that was not addressed at the time. This was that even though the typology of port he used was very popular for military harbours, it was already out of use for commercial ones for its lack of flexibility having only two entrances.

The project of Huergo was much more innovative in the typology used for the comb-shaped harbour was the latest advance in port technology. Huergo proposed a regional harbour that could be continued up to the mouth of Paraná

River, therefore providing an integral solution to the trade issues of the region. This was a rather ambitious project but the limited project for the city did not depend on the regional proposal.

"The docks have been projected in front of the city, immediate to the commercial centre, on lands of the state and with the possibility of giving them more extension to the north or to the east being then the conditions as those in Marseille, Brest, etc. laid out in directions that can be called limitless."<sup>108</sup>

In his project, Huergo kept the existing image of the Buenos Aires, the traditional centre as the neuralgic point of the whole country. Madero's image of the city, on the other hand, was focused on services and production sent to the hinterland. He proposed an almost inland harbour, limited in space and with no possibility of expansion.

After serious conflicts of interest between government and investors, the choice for the project to be built was taken in 1882. This took place during the process of capitalisation of Buenos Aires and the project of Madero was chosen under these circumstances. The building of the harbour was done in a short lapse of time, between 1889 and 1897. This project had been designed and realised by the British engineer John Hawkshaw (1811-1891), who was at the time one of the most famous harbour engineers alive who had worked in the harbours of Riga, Brazil, Venezuela and Amsterdam. The British banking company Baring Brothers financed the project.

The harbour was placed in the eastern shore of the city, adjacent to the house of government and the whole central area of

Buenos Aires. It consisted on a 21 feet deep canal, an outer embankment, an outer dock and four interconnected 21 feet deep docks for the loading and unloading of merchandise. On the sides of the docks a series of warehouses with cranes were built to receive the loads from the ships. A great amount of money was invested on the harbour. It counted with 17.000 meters of dock perimeter, 134.4 hectares of water, 219.000 m<sup>2</sup> of warehouses and 97 km of railways.

Once the harbour of Madero was chosen and began to be built in 1885 a fraction of the land gained to the river ended up in the hands of the harbour authorities. These lands were supposed to be sold in public bid to private entities for the expansion of the city, for it would be made into 100 by 100 metre blocks, such as the rest of Buenos Aires.

In this respect the newspaper La Prensa accused Madero of the speculative sale of lands and of occupying an accessory and not a main role in the construction of the harbour. He was even accused of being an agent of the Baring Brothers. This operation of real estate could not be carried out for, due to the crisis of 1890, the price of the land raised and the foreign investors bailed out from the operation. In his own defence Madero said: "if the government would have accepted one of the proposals when they were made, the harbour would have cost nothing."

The conditions in which this project was chosen and then built have been a matter of discussion for years, but we will not dwell on this conflict in this occasion. We will stick to the consequences that the building of the project of Madero brought to the evolution of the leisure coast.

The technical problem of Madero's

design announced by Huergo arose in Puerto Madero a few years after it was built. The weight of ships grew in a few years by the beginning of the twentieth century from 4 tons to 10 tons and would soon grow to 20 tons. This circumstance, added to the increase in commercial activity showed how soon Madero's project would be obsolete and this called for the design and building of the new harbour.

In 1907 the National Government decided to face the decision of building a new harbour. A competition was done, whose winner was *Thomas Walker and co.*, a building company. The project consisted on a series of docks, comb shaped harbour, similar to the project of Huergo but located on the northern area of the waterfront north of Puerto Madero. The project proposed 6 opened docks and 2 jetties to protect them. The building of the harbour took place between 1911 and 1919 and the harbour materialised another barrier between the city and the waterfront.

As a whole, the history of the harbour of Buenos Aires in the period studied can be considered as a peripheral harbour, not belonging to the traditional network of European and Mediterranean harbours. As it is correctly observed by Silvestri<sup>109</sup> peripheral harbours such as North and South American were outstanding for several reasons. One of the main reasons was that Mediterranean harbours, having a long tradition and a long history were a "cumulus of interventions throughout time where no coherence could be found". Examples such as the harbours of Naples, Genova, Cittavecchia showed contradictions in their morphology. Cases as that of Marseille would be an exception for this was a systematised harbour that had been built after abandoning the old one.

Another issue that allowed the building of

the harbour *ex-novo* to be ahead of the traditional harbours of Europe was that there was a lack of heavy weight cultural pre-existences. Or rather, these pre-existences were already in a process of transformation that allowed the flexibility that was not possible to achieve in the European continent.

This hypothesis coincides with the one trying to be shown in this research regarding the leisure waterfront areas. The open space for leisure on the urban waterfront had the potential of development due to the flexibility that these new urban centres, such as Buenos Aires, offered. Besides, even the exception for this case given by Silvestri, the case of Marseille coincides with the exception as a leisure waterfront in a European harbour city, due to the moving of the harbour, Marseille was a pioneer in proposing a leisure area at the waterfront.

Regarding the space contested by the need of leisure and of harbour facilities the discussion about the port takes a different angle. We have to admit that, despite the problems of spatial segregation caused by the building of Puerto Madero and the whole railway network that came with it, his project was much more successful than what would have been the one of Huergo. The project of Madero left a new waterfront available, which was a land of experimentation and later the main waterfront promenade of the city. To what concerns the new port built from 1911, this caused a real barrier between the city and the river not allowing any further development of leisure practices of any kind.

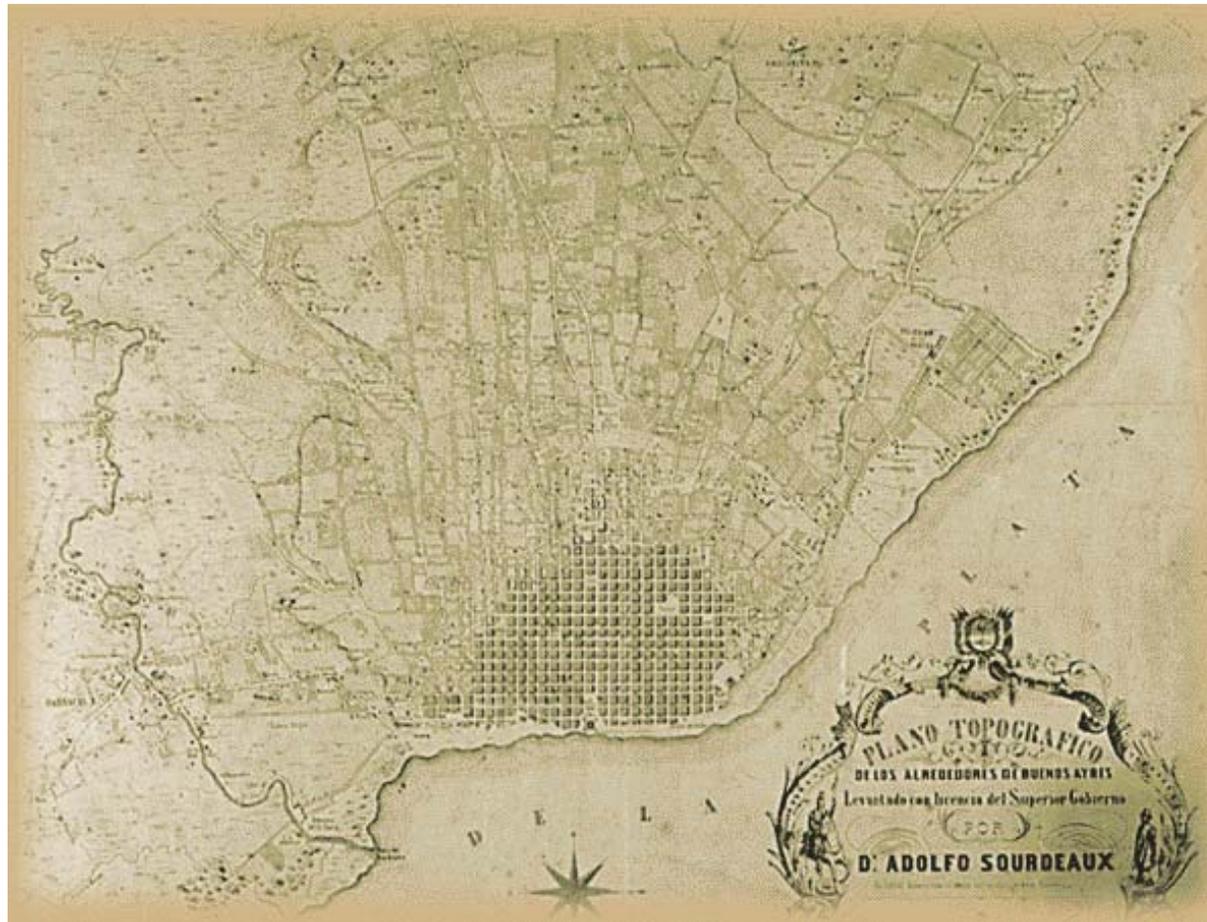
In the following section we will be analysing each project that proposed the use of the waterfront as leisure space. The processes of political decisions, formal design, international

influences, local conflicts, transformation of program, influence in urban behaviour, among others, will be analysed. The ideological positions of each of the designers and politicians behind the configuration of these spaces will be studied as well as the landscape principles they practised and the relations between them in an evolution of urban leisure space on the waterfront.

<sup>107</sup> Silvestri, Graciela. *La ciudad y el río, Un estudio de las relaciones entre técnica y naturaleza a través del caso del puerto de Buenos Aires*. En Liernur, Jorge / Silvestri, Graciela, *El Umbral de la Metrópolis, transformaciones técnicas y cultura en la modernización de Buenos Aires 1870-1930*. Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires 1993.

<sup>108</sup> Huergo, Luis, *Puerto de Buenos Aires. Los dos canales de entrada de 20 km de longitud desde un mismo punto al mismo puerto*, Buenos Aires, Peuser, 1898, pg 174

<sup>109</sup> Silvestri, Graciela. *La ciudad y el río, Un estudio de las relaciones entre técnica y naturaleza a través del caso del puerto de Buenos Aires*. En Liernur, Jorge / Silvestri, Graciela, *El Umbral de la Metrópolis, transformaciones técnicas y cultura en la modernización de Buenos Aires 1870-1930*. Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires 1993. Pg.104-105



**figure 4-38** - 1850 - Plano Topografico de los alrededores de Buenos Ayres  
author: Dr Adolfo Sourdeaux  
source: Museo Mitre

## 4.2 – The Projects

**4.2.1 – 1870-1895 - Waterfront parks** – A tool for social transformation – Sarmiento 1874. Alvear 1885. Thays 1892.

*In this section we will analyse the projects of Domingo F. Sarmiento, Torcuato de Alvear and Carlos Thays. Each of them had a rather different approach to the subject of public space on the waterfront, but they all share principles of landscape, hygiene and civilisation. They follow the lines of a rationalisation of leisure space and this is shown in each one of their projects. Even though the realisation of some of these did not respond to their original ideas the energetic impulse to provide open spaces in the city is evident in all three projects. A short biography of each character will be given basically for understanding what their position was towards landscape and urban development.*

This period begins in 1870, when the war of the Triple Alliance of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay against Paraguay was over. This event marked a significant political shift together with an economical crisis that would not be overcome until the following decade.

As explained in the introduction to this chapter, this was the period that shaped municipal autonomy and the new social structure created by the high immigration and the change and diversification of production and trade. This is also the period of a rapid process of urbanisation and of intensive economical development. All these transformations also affected the political environment of the city and country, whose

oligarchic administration began loosening power and led the way to the further development of a more democratic government. The economical and political crisis that took place in 1890 led political groups to adopt ideas of positivism and a change of gear in urban policies.

Urban policies and the formulation of the first projects for waterfront parks were parts of this process of transformation. Given the growth of the city in population and extension, the old urban system of the gridiron would no longer be effective as the only urban pattern (figure 4-38). New issues about hygiene, landscape and urbanism were being raised in European and North American cities by the mid nineteenth century that managed to reach the city of Buenos Aires. These issues contributed to the subsequent changes in leisure practices in the city during the following years.

As mentioned before in the general introduction, urban plans for cities in Europe and in the United States were giving a new shift to the role of landscape and public space in the city. The plan of Pierre Charles L'Enfant for Washington DC in 1791 had been one of the first ones to propose parks as a predominant element in the city. This plan proposed a series of parks, boulevards and avenues that were not realised at the time but that would be used as a main guideline for the city's plan one hundred years later. The plan of Georges-Eugene Haussmann for Paris of 1857 had the collaboration of Adolphe Alphand (1817-1891) as landscape designer. His designs were the main tool for providing public space in a city that was already overcrowding. The city of Barcelona was also the tissue of experimentation of modern urbanism by Idelfonso Cerdà (1815-1876), who proposed parks in the outskirts of the city. By the same period Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-

1903), with the collaboration of Calvert Vaux, was proposing parks and park systems for different cities of the United States, including New York, Chicago and Boston. By this period, in Europe as well as in the United States, the production of public space by the water was incipient. One of the first examples of these is the project of Olmsted for the South Park in Chicago. This project shows the first interest in the waterfront close to the city, but still not integrated as part of the urban tissue, which would be the case of this same area in the following decades.

One of the main aspects of this period in Buenos Aires was the emergence of public exhibition of progress, which contributed to the sciences as well as to the consciousness of sovereign space. The new image that articulated agriculture, technology and immigration gave way to progressive thoughts, a need of a cultural, not only economical change. The rise of population density and lines of communication favoured the possibility of cultural extension and civic education. Not only ideas of hygiene and organisation were influencing the layout of urban elements such as parks and boulevards. There were other principles coming from social needs that were as present and would also have a strong influence in the park projects for Buenos Aires.

The three projects studied in this chapter correspond to the mentioned principles. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888) as president, Torcuato de Alvear (1822-1890) as city mayor and Carlos Thays (1849-1934) as director of parks and promenades were responsible for these projects. However, despite the obvious relation of these projects and their makers to economic, social and political issues, there is a stronger relation

that ties them together. This was the approach these professionals gave to the landscape of the waterfront. All three proposals are addressing the use of the waterfront as a necessary space for leisure activities located close to the city and in one way or another competing with the harbour facilities that were developing contemporarily.

Each project has particular issues and the civilising ideas of Sarmiento are replaced by the predominant hygienist ones of Alvear. Later, the project by Thays reflects a higher sensitivity regarding aesthetic issues and a more developed concept and realisation of leisure facilities. Nevertheless they all share the use of landscape as a picturesque section of the city, where the citizens are able to escape the restrictions of urban life and where the geometry defies the rigid structure of the grid. They all share an appeal for the benefits of the waterfront and a struggle with the difficulties to build their projects.

1895 is the year that closes this period, the crisis of 1890 was over and a new political and economical stability signed the following period.



**figure 4-39** - 1873- Domingo Faustino Sarmiento  
author: Christiano Junior  
source: Archivo General de la Nación

#### 4.2.1.1.- Sarmiento – social change through park design

##### **Domingo Faustino Sarmiento – biographical facts and urban landscape principles**

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888) (figure 4-39) was a politician and writer and president of Argentina from 1868 to 1874. Despite his short administration, he was extremely influential in the development of the city and its inclusion in an international network of cities. Even though he is most famous for his influence on the education laws and social development related to immigration, he was also responsible for the implementation of the first urban park in Buenos Aires, Parque Tres de Febrero.

Sarmiento was born in the province of San Juan, at the north west of Buenos Aires, to a rather well off family. He followed his first years of schooling in San Juan, he later tried to follow his studies in Córdoba (Arg.) and in the *Colegio de Ciencias Morales de Buenos Aires*<sup>110</sup>, but he was not accepted. In 1827 he joined the army but was sent to prison for claiming equity in the treatment of the recruits. At the age of 20 he is forced to exile in Chile, for the wars in Argentina pushed him to leave. There he got married and had one child. Five years later he required the permission to go back to his province of San Juan and it was granted.

His first relation to politics took place as he organised a literary group in San Juan. This group, which included some important characters from the *Generacion del 37*, opposed the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas. During the last years of the 1830s he becomes more politically active, and from the newspaper he founded, *El Zonda*, he heavily criticised the government. For

this reason he was again exiled to Chile.

In the years before his second exile in Chile he becomes the founder of the ladies secondary school *Colegio de Pensionistas de Santa Rosa*. His career as an educator continued in Chile, where he founded the first school for the training of teachers and in 1849 president of Chile Manuel Montt Torres sends him to study teaching methodologies of Europe and the United States.

One year after his trip to Europe and the US he dedicated exclusively to writing. Two books were the products of this work: *Viajes por Europa, Africa y America*<sup>111</sup> and *Educación Popular*. In 1850 he returns to Argentina where he begins his real political career.

He was active in political life, being a counsellor and senator during different periods after the fall of Rosas. In 1860 he develops an important role in the convention for the reform of the Constitution. As a minister of government under the presidency of Mitre he works towards the national unity. Due to this unitary position, he also participated in wars in the provinces. He is designated governor of his province in 1862 and he develops a series of urban transformations, namely paving of streets and opening of market plazas in San Juan. A series of conflicts within the wars put him in a dangerous position and forced him out of the country in a diplomatic mission. He was sent as an ambassador to Chile, Peru and the United States for three years.

His mission to the United States was crucial for the shaping of his ideology regarding education, civilisation of the masses, democratisation and the shaping of the city and a tool for social transformation. He arrived in New York in May 1865. Andrew Johnson had just assumed the presidency after Abraham Lincoln, who had been murdered by a fanatic racist. Sarmiento was very impressed by the events and

researched and wrote a book about Lincoln. He was active in the intellectual spheres of the city and was recognised with the *Honoris Causa* titles of Michigan and Brown Universities.

In 1868 national presidential elections were held in Argentina and Sarmiento's candidacy was presented by a group of local politicians. He won these elections and on October 12<sup>th</sup> of the same year he assumed the position as president of the country.

As president of Argentina, Sarmiento's most important agendas were those of providing free public education and international communication. During his presidency he founded schools for the formation of teachers, as he had previously done in Chile. He created *Escuelas Normales* in several Argentine cities. He founded the Military School and the Navy School, the schools of arboriculture and agronomy in San Juan, Mendoza, Tucumán and Salta. Sarmiento also created numerous primary schools in the country and imported teaching material and teachers from Europe. Burmeister a German expert in education was hired in 1869 to be in charge of employing twenty European professors for teaching natural and exact sciences in the University of Córdoba. He achieved the invitation of the famous astronomer Benjamin Apthorp Gould to create the first astronomical observatory in Argentina, built in the city of Córdoba, where they created the National Meteorological Office.

In the US, Sarmiento had learned the importance of communications of a country as extensive as Argentina. During his government 5000 kilometres of telegraphic cables were installed and in 1874 he inaugurated the first telegraphic line with Europe. Sarmiento was also in charge of modernising the mail service and

the extension of the railways. He believed that the train, as in the US, should be the main source of impulse of the internal market, fomenting national trade. When it came to the real building of the railway network this was not the case. The main interest on this network came from the main trade partner of Argentina, Britain, and their interest was based on the provision of raw material coming from the provinces to the harbour of Buenos Aires. This is why the rail network did not become a series of connections between cities but a fan of lines all directed from cities in the provinces to the harbour of Buenos Aires. Nevertheless the railroads were built and they grew from 573 kilometres in 1868 to 1331 km in 1874.

In 1869 the first national census was carried out. The population in Argentina was then of 1.836.490. 31% of the total population inhabited the province of Buenos Aires and 71% was non-alphabetised. According to the census, 5% of the population was Indian and 8% European. 75% of the families lived in poverty, in houses of mud and straw. Professionals only represented 1% of the population. Population was scarce, uneducated and richness was unevenly distributed. Sarmiento's position towards the sources of immigration was rather clear. He fomented the immigration of northern European and British and discouraged the one of southern Europe. He was convinced that this selection would increase the development of culture and industry. The northern European population was nevertheless more prone to emigrate to the United States, where a more industrialised society was being developed as opposed to the Argentine economy that was and would be later still based on the production of raw materials.

As to his work in politics after his presidency, his role in the education institution of

country and capital was paramount. During the presidency of Roca Sarmiento was Superintendent of Schools of the National Education Council. Sarmiento's campaign for public education in the cities as well as in the countryside was focused on convincing the land-owning classes that education for all would bring well being for them as well.

"To have peace in the Argentine Republic, for the *montoneros* not to rebel, for there not to be lazy ones, it is necessary to educate the people in real democracy, teach them all the same, so that they can all be equal...that is why we have to transform our republic into a school."<sup>112</sup>

It was still hard to convince the leading classes of this concept and it was not until 1882 that the law 1420 would provide for the principles of education of Sarmiento.

Among the works of Sarmiento as a president it is important to mention the facts that he created the first service of horse tramways in Buenos Aires, and he was in charge of the design of the Zoological Garden and Parque Tres de Febrero.

<sup>110</sup> School of Moral Sciences of Buenos Aires

<sup>111</sup> all texts of Sarmiento can be found in Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino, *Obras completas*, Universidad de la Matanza, 2001. Reprint from the edition of 1884-1903.

<sup>112</sup> Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino, *Obras completas*, Universidad de la Matanza, 2001. Reprint from the edition of 1884-1903.

To understand what kind of person Sarmiento was it is useful to refer to the comments of his peers. The Chilean Benjamín Vicuña Mackena, politician and writer, described Sarmiento among other figures of Argentine liberalism:

“One night, in the house of Coronel Mitre we find Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. This chief was wearing a blue tied *frac* and was there leaning backwards with his lieutenant colonel, whitening moustache. He was a parade of military pretensions, twitching his shoulders as if his epaulets were heavy on him. Buenos Aires is working on the rehabilitation of the decent people, for the substitution of the citizen for the *gaucho*, the *frac* for the *chiripá*, to uplift democracy from intelligence, for work and public virtue over the lazy and stupid *gauchaje* that was raised by Rosas. One day we visited Sarmiento’s house and we found him in a barren room, with no furniture but a bed and a table full of papers. It was separated from the bed by a screen, with no ornament on the walls but a portrait of himself dressed in the white dress of the Algerians. They were his great friends, for mister Sarmiento - *salvaje de las pampas* as he would make himself be called in Europe in front of all the eminent men that came to congratulate him, full of curiosity and respect - has many analogies with the desert Bedouin, as the *zonda* winds of his native province resembles the Arabian Simun”<sup>113</sup>

As ambassador in New York, Sarmiento was a thorough observer of the tools of organisation and administration that were displayed in the

new urban strategies. Even though he was not an architect or designer he was the brains behind the birth of park development in Buenos Aires that would set a precedent to the park system that would come in the next decades. The *Park Movement* and the *Rational Recreation Movement*<sup>114</sup> were for him a great influence and an example of the civilising powers of urban development.

Sarmiento described the semi-inhabited frontier, the countryside, as centre of feudalism, miserable and defenceless, possible to be transformed by civilisation. He imagines picturesque villas as those he saw in North America, idyllic image that remains with Zeballos, his follower. This image was apparently inspired by the works of Emerson and Thoreau in the US, who took part of the *Transcendentalist Movement*.

In his book *Facundo, Civilización y Barbarie* (1845), a text of almost defined urban theory he prefigured the deep differences between the *natural* and the *civilised*. The *natural* site was the deserted, the uninhabited. The inhabitants would be citizens, their productive activities realised in natural space. He defined the metropolis as the key to concentration of economical and political power. He defined the democratic system that can only exist in cities and the ideological system in which the civilising role subordinates the political project.

Sarmiento backed up the strongest urban tradition of occidental Greco-Roman times: that of growing urbanisation. He proposed the spatial elements of his *modern* city: public plaza, wide and protected streets. He also defines schools as the machines and land – his idea of progressive population, designed with the imagination of the “American statesman that is improvising on this virgin land, a new world, virile societies, opulent cities and flowered countryside.”

The first proposals in Buenos Aires for the intervention of governmental power in the provision of open spaces for leisure, at the beginning of this period, were in the hands of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. He was the first one to give landscape a set of moral values and political senses:

“To know meant then, fundamentally, to limit and transcribe the limits of the geographic chart or the urban map. The romantic view opposes a hard criticism to this illustrated view, allowing the landscape of naturalism of the *fin de siècle*”<sup>115</sup>.

The idea of romanticism of Argentine literature was not identical to the concept of romanticism as the artistic and intellectual movement of the end of the eighteenth century Europe. Romanticism was brought to Argentina from Europe, by Esteban Echeverría (1805-1851), Argentine writer who began his studies in Buenos Aires but completed them in Paris being embedded in the European new tendencies. Some members of this literary movement in Buenos Aires did belong to the ideas that challenged the static concepts of the Enlightenment and provided a view that was more related to nature and the sublime. Sarmiento was one of them when it came to literature and even in his primordial ideas of park design. However, he did have principles that distanced him from the romantic view. These referred to the civilising of the people and the didactic elements of the transformation of open space.

Sarmiento – project – 1874 – Parque Tres de Febrero

*Sarmiento's project for Parque Tres de Febrero was unique in its initial phase. The park was conceived not only as a space for passive contemplation, but also as a space of production and didactic development. The waterfront is hardly considered as an issue, but the location of the park on the waterfront responded especially to road tracing and transportation elements that already existed or were already planned for the area. The realisation of the park was different from its original project and activities such as strolling and horseback riding became the most prominent ones. Even though Sarmiento had the ambition of providing a public space for all citizens, disregarding social class, in practise this would not be the case until decades after it was built.*

### Context and administration

As described before, during this period the city of Buenos Aires was still not federalised, and the role of the national president in any sort of development or transformation of the urban landscape was decisive. Sarmiento's role on the development of the first public park of Buenos Aires, that happened to be located on the waterfront, was far-reaching.

To be able to understand the choice of the location of this park we have to go back to the history of the place and the relation to the already existing city. In 1590 a Spanish coloniser called Juan Domínguez de Palermo bought a

terrain on the northern outskirts of the city of Buenos Aires. This land was much later, in 1836 bought by the Argentine president Juan Manuel de Rosas, a great tyrant dictator. This place used to be known by the name San Benito de Palermo. Rosas had his house built there and managed to make of it a great suburban rural establishment. The vegetation that already existed there next to the waterfront was left untouched. A series of *sauces, alamos and espinillos*<sup>116</sup> would grow next to the swampy area of the riverside. The rest of the land had been decorated with flowerbeds and gardens with marble statues and ornamentation.

With the fall of Rosas as a president a new ideology and concepts appeared. The growing population, the physical growth of the city to the north and the influence from abroad brought the need to install an open public space. The land that used to be from Rosas passed to the hands of the government and in 1874 president Sarmiento proposed the first project for a public park in the area.

President Sarmiento presented a project for the conservation and rehabilitation of what is today Parque Tres de Febrero. This project was made effective by law on July 25, 1874.<sup>117</sup> The Senate and the Deputy Chamber of the Nation, reunited in Congress were the ones in charge of sanctioning the law.

Sarmiento had three ideas for his civilising plan in the choice of the location of the park. First of all, it would be placed in the land that used to be home of the dictator Rosas, a political barbarian in the eyes of Sarmiento. Second, the park would be a representation of the taming of the pampas, vast lands in the fringes of the city<sup>118</sup>. Finally, the park would be an alternative to the traditional city, filled with mistakes and obstacles left by the colonial system<sup>119</sup>.

The project presented by Sarmiento

was dependent on the combination of his ideas of civilisation of the masses and the ideas of recreation and park movement that he had gathered in the United States. One of the main sources for his first intentions to make a *Quinta Normal* was the observation of the first park cemeteries built in the outskirts of cities in Britain and the United States. These spaces provided the first leisure areas for the overcrowding cities. The change from the cemetery next to the church in the crowded city and the new park cemeteries gave some new ideas to Sarmiento.

Nevertheless, his proposals did not only have to do with influences from abroad. His first proposals for *Quintas Normales* had to do with the provision of land, close to the city, for agricultural purposes to be given to immigrants. This place was supposed to be provided with farms, schools, hospices, libraries, agronomy schools, chapels and cattle administration. This place was to be an educational and productive centre, a place for experimentation of the new technologies and a showroom of the social and economical advances.

<sup>113</sup> Perrone, Jorge, "Vicuña Mackena", in *Diario de la Historia Argentina*. Tomo II. Editorial Latitud, 1991.

<sup>114</sup> A middle-class phenomenon that promoted circulating libraries, literary societies, and public lectures, it eventually turned its attention to the public at large. The general idea was to offer the workingman an ordered, educational, self-improving alternative to the attractions of the tavern and the gaming house.

<sup>115</sup> Silvestri, Graciela, 'El Imaginario Paisajístico en el litoral y el sur argentinos', in Bonaudo, Marta, *Nueva Historia Argentina, Liberalismo, Estado y Orden Burgués (1852-1888)*, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1999. p.221

<sup>116</sup> Willows, poplars and espinillos

<sup>117</sup> Registro Nacional de la República Argentina -Año 1874- (Págs. 398 - 399). Ley mandando ejecutar una de las secciones indicadas en el Plano del Parque "Tres de Febrero"

<sup>118</sup> The idea of the taming of the pampas can be compared to that of the frontier in North America

<sup>119</sup> The traditional city was the one founded by the Spaniards, the grid regulated all urban growth, which according to Sarmiento, was a rigid urban object filled with mistakes.



**figure 4-40** -1850 - Plano Topografico de los alrededores de Buenos Ayres  
author: Dr Adolfo Sourdeaux  
source: Museo Mitre  
the location of Parque Tres de Febrero

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The land chosen for the creation of the Park was first proposed by Sarmiento in the leaflet *Plan Combinado*, included in the *Base de la Ley de Educación Común*.

“...in the surroundings of the city of Buenos Aires, on both margins of the Arroyo Maldonado, a squared *legua* of land will be expropriated for the cause of public use. This land will be used for the foundation of the Quinta Central for the acclimatisation of plants and the trial of agriculture. The precinct will be used also for a school of *preceptores de enseñanza*<sup>120</sup> a hospice for orphans, a house of reform for abandoned children, delinquents and crooks...”<sup>121</sup>

This place was still not completely delimited when this text was written. The location would be finally decided, as the decision about the destination of the lands belonging to dictator Rosas was determined. The land had been re-owned by the state in July 1852<sup>122</sup>.

This location (figure 4-40), as mentioned before, was already a place for the distraction of the rich, when it used to be the land of Rosas and even after the end of his rule. People who were able to go with their carriages to the north would stroll through the already developed gardens. But this was still only a place for the elite, so Sarmiento’s idea of reform had less to do with the park condition of the place and more with the productive and civilising qualities of the use of this land.

As years passed by the project for the parks of Palermo became imminent. This project had been developed already by members of the

Military school in Palermo under the direction of Sarmiento and started to be shaped as a realisable project during Sarmiento's presidency.

The location of the first section of the park (figure 4-40) was limited by Ugarteche street on the south, the Arroyo Maldonado on the north, and the Rio de la Plata on the east. The park would later be extended and transformed in different occasions.

The program for the park is very clear in its content and the intentions it carries. Elements such as sables, greenhouses, installations for agricultural and industrial exhibitions, observatories, a geological garden, fields for pasture, milk producing establishments, experimental establishments for the production of technology. All these elements were proposed as necessary in the program, but when it came to presenting the project to Congress the proposal changed and many of the elements of the program were eliminated. For the first time he presented this project as a park for the recreation of the masses, for the spectacle of the park. This would no longer be the space of production but the space for leisure, and Sarmiento compared it with the projects of parks such as Bois de Boulogne in Paris, Hyde Park in London or Central Park in New York.

Sarmiento compared the location of the Park of Palermo in the outskirts of the city to the location of Central Park related to the city of New York, which was still far from reaching the park. Gorelik<sup>123</sup> regards this comparison as forced, for Central Park belonged to an already traced growth of the city of New York, which would eventually embrace the park and it would become the city's central location. He remarks that Palermo did not belong to a tracing of the city and then would not be comparable to Central Park. We would say that what makes a difference

between the locations of both parks related to the cities is more the fact that Palermo was located on the waterfront and Central Park away from the shores. The relationship with the growth of the rest of the city remains quite similar, but the waterfront conditions change the relationship of the city with the shore and with the park itself.

With the change in program for the park, also the ideas of the relations of the park with the city are transformed. Sarmiento was influenced by the ideas of urban development he had been exposed to in Britain and in the United States. Here he attached to the concept that the centre of town had to be left for the bureaucratic and commercial city and the residences had to be excluded from this urban area, so that a transformation of society could take place. He used examples such as those of Chicago and New York to illustrate this process that should be followed.

For Palermo, Sarmiento used urban models coming not from Europe or the United States but from neighbouring cities. Montevideo, one of the only walled cities in South America had developed a modernising urban plan that was early and novel (1829-1836) (figure 4-41) where it developed a *new city* around the old walled one. Mendoza was the other city he took as a model; an earthquake had completely destroyed the city in 1861, so a new city was traced and built in the proximity of the old one, with an urban design that was very different to the old colonial urban tracing.

Within the law passed for the construction of the park of Palermo no issues about this *productive park* were written or mentioned. The law talks basically about the corresponding planting of local trees and flowers as well as the provision of local animals and birds for the supposed use of the place as a space of leisure and recreation, not a space of production.

The waterfront condition was not treated or mentioned in the park project. This would not be the case of Sarmiento's general idea of the potential civilisation qualities of the waterfront. Sarmiento was deeply interested in the waterfront condition of the city, which is shown in the book he wrote about a utopian Capital for Argentina. He called it Argiropolis, and would have been situated on an island in the Rio the la Plata. In his book he states the virtues of a waterfront society.



**figure 4-41** - 1850 - Plano de la Ciudad de Montevideo, Capital de la Republica oriental del Uruguay  
author: D. Albenart  
source: Berjman, Sonia, Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires: la obra de los paisajistas franceses 1860-1930, Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1998.

<sup>120</sup> school teachers

<sup>121</sup> Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino, *Obras completas*, Universidad de la Matanza, 2001. Tomo XXIII. Pg.230

<sup>122</sup> Registro Oficial de la Provincia de Buenos Aires -Años 1831-1859 (Pág. 416). Decreto N° 1.474/852. Declarando que todas las propiedades pertenecientes á D. Juan M. Rosas existentes en Buenos Aires son de pertenencia pública.

<sup>123</sup> Gorelik, Adrián. *La Grilla y el Parque. espacio público y cultura urbana en Buenos Aires, 1887-1936*. Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Quilmes, 1998. Pg.73

“Returning to the advantages that the creation of a capital city in that island would assure to the States of el Plata, we will point at one that is of incalculable importance, at least for us. Such is the influence that this society thrown in the water would necessarily exert on the national habits, surrounded by all the means of power that the civilisation gives. The defects that the life carried out in the continent has given to us is not hidden to anybody. The farm, the horse, the cattle, the lack of utensils, as well as the facility to replace them by old means show it. What change in ideas and customs! If instead of horses there were boats needed for the young people to take a stroll; if instead of taming colts people had to tame excited waves with the oar; if instead of straw and earth to improvise a cabin one were forced to cut the granite to square! The people educated in this school would be a cradle of intrepid navigators, laborious industrialists, eloquent men familiarised with all the uses and means of action that make the North American peoples so superior to those of South America”<sup>124</sup>

The spectacle of the park is considered, for the first time in Buenos Aires, as a tool to give balance to the social differences, to erase the old habits and provide a new social order. The morphology of the Park is definitely reminiscent of those by Olmsted, the integration of nature and a few scattered buildings would be the essence of Palermo.

Sarmiento was one of the most consequent within the enlightenment premise that underlines the didactic qualities of urban space. In his discourse for the inauguration of the Parks of Palermo he pronounced:

“Only in a vast, artistic and accessible park, the people will be people; only there will there be neither foreigners, nor nationals nor plebeians.”<sup>125</sup>

### Realisation

The project for the park had been developed for several years and was built during the years before its inauguration on November 11<sup>th</sup> 1875. At the time of inauguration a set of rules and regulations were established for the park<sup>126</sup>. All these rules had to do with the proper behaviour of visitors. The rules would forbid the stealing and damaging of plants and animals by individuals. The racing of carts and horses was also forbidden as well as the circulation of carts charged with goods, which allows for the exclusive use for leisure of the area. It was also forbidden to walk on the fields of grass, as well as over any planted area. It was only permitted to walk on the paths and sidewalks.

The original plan for the park also included the zoological gardens and the botanical gardens, but these sections would not be realised until a couple of decades later. The park would remain untouched for the following decades; especially the area close to the river would not be intervened into until 1893 when Carlos Thays presents the project for the restructuring of the park.

Sarmiento’s principles for the creation of public space were evidently influenced by Anglo Saxon ideas of park design and recreation principles. However, a divergence is observed between the intentions of Sarmiento for the design of Parque Tres de Febrero and the actual building of it.

There are three different stages in the

proposal of Sarmiento for a park in the outskirts of the city. These can be even considered contradictory. Before the formulation of the plan his position he has been categorised a *romantic* writer. This category would relate to the figures of Thoreau and Emerson, of the search of nature as the enhancement of the individual. This tendency would suggest the experience of nature in a subjective way, not a rational one. This is actually not the case of Sarmiento, even though he has been considered as part of this category.

Regarding the project itself there are his principles of civilisation of the people. Sarmiento had a strong discourse regarding the occupation of the countryside as an instrument for pushing the frontier further and getting rid of the *barbarie* that had to be civilised. His position could be also related to the *Rational Recreation Movement* coming from Britain and the United States. The purpose of the park proposed by Sarmiento was one that belonged to the belief that open spaces were not to be limited to the enjoyment of the higher classes but of all the population, as did the Rational Recreation movement.

However, when we come to the second stage of this proposal, the actual formulation of the plan, a shift appears regarding recreation. In the premises of rational recreation, *production* is not one of the elements used for *civilising* the people, in Sarmiento’s case it is. The formulation of the project for the park itself, with its program containing an important amount of elements that regarded a space of production was an innovative approach, despite the fact that it was not built in that way later. This type of park, the productive park, could be related to what was later described by Edouard Andre as the *Parc Agricole*<sup>127</sup>, but in this case André categorises it as a private park, and this is not the case of the proposal of Sarmiento.

Finally, the stage that refers to the form of the park as it was built is very different from the previous stages. First of all, as its location was far away from the city, it became a place for the elite, only those who could afford a carriage could visit the park. Formally, on the other hand, the park looks similar to those of Frederick Law Olmsted in his first period (1865-1875), especially that of Central Park in New York. Even though the location of the parks was different in relation to the city, the formal aspects of them were related. The picturesque quality of the winding paths and the lake, the naturalistic landscape, the scattered buildings hidden behind the groups of trees, the lack of geometry and classical order. Both parks shared all these characteristics. The picturesque spread all over Europe since the 1730s until the mid-nineteenth century, "the picturesque journey is an endless pursuit of spectacle and the pleasure it provides"<sup>128</sup> and according to Corbin it was a very different position than the classical. The picturesque allowed the focus on a complex network of sensations, memories and knowledge. This is evident in the first intentions of Sarmiento for park design explained in his texts.

Some ideas of the picturesque can still act as a bond in the different stages of the work of Sarmiento. A quotation of Uvedale Price on the Picturesque can be an example of joining ideas of nature and civilisation as a system:

"The study of pictures can only produce any real advantage if we use it as a school in which we may learn to enlarge, correct and refine our views of nature and by that route become good judges of a scenery"<sup>129</sup>



figure 4-42 - ca.1910 - Parque Tres de Febrero  
author: A. Della Valle  
source: Album de Vistas de Buenos Aires

figure 4-43 - ca.1910 - Parque Tres de Febrero  
author: A. Della Valle  
source: Album de Vistas de Buenos Aires



<sup>124</sup> Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino, *Argirópolis*, ã 2000

– Copyright www.aleph.com, www.educ.ar. 1850. p.73

<sup>125</sup> Sarmiento, D.F. 'Discurso Inaugural del parque', en *Obras Completas*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Luz del Día, 1953, tomo XXII, p.11

<sup>126</sup> Registro Oficial de la Provincia de Buenos Aires - Años 1871-1876 (Pág. 465). Decreto N° 2.617/974. El terreno denominado de Palermo con todas sus existencias, se destina al establecimiento del "Parque Tres de Febrero". Buenos Aires, Julio 13 de 1874.

<sup>127</sup> Some issues can be found in common with the Parc Agricole of André, in his text:

*"A true agrarian exploitation would not reasonably look like a park. Undoubtedly, good order, elegance, added to the simplicity of buildings, careful maintenance pathways and well-situated plantations can join the rural character and beautify it. But the landscape aspects contradict usefulness."*

On the other hand the private character of André's category does not fit with Sarmiento's ideas.

*"The agrarian park can fit in the condition in which the life of the castle should be replaced by a less luxurious existence. The park, together with a smart or comfortable, but simple house, must combine in a fair measure the environmental element with the productive element."*

In André, Edouard, *L'art des jardins. Traite General de la composition des parcs et jardins. Ouvrage accompagne de Onze planches en chromolithographie et de 520 figures dans le texte*, G. Masson editeur, Paris, 1879. pg.186

<sup>128</sup> Corbin, Alain, *The lure of the Sea, The discovery of the seaside 1750-1840*, London, Penguin Books, 1995, 1988.p.143

<sup>129</sup> Price, Uvedale, *Essays on the picturesque*, London 1794

<sup>130</sup> Olmstead, F.L., "Public Parks and the enlargement of towns", Boston 1870, in SB Sutton, ed. *Civilising american cities: A selection of Fredrick Law Olmsted's Writing of city landscapes*, Cambridge, MA, 1971.

<sup>131</sup> Andrew Jackson Downing (1815 –1852) was an American landscape designer and writer, a prominent advocate of the Gothic Revival style in the United States, and editor of *The Horticulturist* magazine (1846-52).

Horace William Shaler Cleveland (1814-1900) was a noted American landscape architect, sometimes considered second only to Frederick Law Olmsted. His approach to natural landscape design can clearly be seen in projects including the Grand Rounds in Minneapolis, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord, Mass., and St. Anthony's Park in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Sarmiento's relation to F.L.Olmsted is evident in the idea of bringing parks as a main fragment of urban development. Olmsted produced parks:

“large enough to completely shut out the city. These were meant to inspire the urban man to new standards of courtesy, self control and temperance.”<sup>130</sup>

The idea of the *Quinta Normal* as a development of the cemetery was proposed by Sarmiento, inspired by the North American cemetery parks as those of Cleveland and Downing<sup>131</sup>. However, once again, Sarmiento added the productive element as a plus and a shift from these spaces as places of passive leisure and contemplation to turn them into active spaces of production.

Another quotation that relates more to the realisation of Sarmiento's park than to his principles comes from one of the founders of the park movement, Andrew Jackson Downing:

“Citizens who would take excursions in carriages, or on horseback, could have substantial delights of country roads and country walls”<sup>132</sup>

Even some ideas of Humphrey Repton<sup>133</sup> can be read in the proposals for the park of Sarmiento. The functionality of parks went further than their beauty. For Repton, the garden was a utility place to which beauty could be added. This was a concern that Sarmiento was convinced about.

In the second half of the nineteenth century a new wave of reformers took charge of the issue of leisure and how to use it. These

new ideas depicted leisure as being the best area in which to inculcate self-control, familiarism and respectability, but were mainly practised by the middle and labour classes, a world of competition, urban life and bureaucracy. As the remark of Gary Cross, leisure historian shows: “Park commissioners also believed it their duty to reform leisure time as well as space”<sup>134</sup>, Sarmiento could be counted among the members of the Rational Recreation Movement, without having been actually part of it.

Sarmiento's project as a whole manages to combine ideas of Romanticism, the Park Movement and the first hints of the Rational Recreation Movement.

## Repercussions

The use of the park for the following years would increase. However, the park would only have limited use to those who were able to arrive there by horse carriage. (figures 4-42/43) This is an issue that would be discussed in the intellectual spheres as well as in the popular media.

In 1888 as the city of Buenos Aires had been previously federalised the Parque Tres de Febrero, which was under the authority and responsibility of the ministry of agriculture of the Nation is transferred to the authorities of the municipality<sup>135</sup>.

These discussions would later lead to the proposal of new park areas as well as the development and extension of Parque Tres de Febrero. The projects for this area by Carlos Thays (1893), Benito Carrasco (1914) and J.C.N. Forestier (1925) will be analysed in the following chapters..

#### 4.2.1.2- Alvear – hygiene and representation

##### Torcuato de Alvear – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

Torcuato de Alvear (1822-1890) (figure 4-44) was the first *Intendente*<sup>136</sup> of the city of Buenos Aires, being in charge of the municipal government between 1883 and 1887. He produced radical innovations to the city in its physical as well as administrative aspects. He has been identified as the archetype of mayor, and *his city* as the ideal model of a Buenos Aires that had to be completed. The importance of Alvear for the city is major, basically for he was responsible for the project of the Ring Avenue for the city and because he produced the administrative transformation and judicial reform that allowed the following transformations of the city. This process of changing of administration consisted in the relief of responsibility over the city from the Department of Engineers and the delivery of it to the hands of the city government, which gained jurisdiction over the city.

Torcuato de Alvear was a member of the third generation of an aristocratic family from Córdoba, Spain. The first of the family to settle in the area of Rio de la Plata was Diego Estanislao de Alvear y Ponce de León (1749-1830); being an expert in sciences, he came with the mission of confirming the limits of *Tratado de Tordecillas* established by the Spanish and Portuguese crowns. Diego de Alvear established himself for some time in Buenos Aires and married a local lady. With her and their family they moved to the jungle on the north of Argentina to carry out his work, which took 18 years. The family decided to return to Spain as the mission was finished, and they took two different ships. One of the ships

was attacked by the British Invasion of Buenos Aires of 1807 and most of the family died. Only Diego de Alvear and his son Carlos survived. Carlos de Alvear (1789-1852) became later general Carlos Maria de Alvear, deputy of the *Asamblea Constituyente* of 1813 and later in 1815 the *Director Supremo de las Provincias Unidas del Rio de la Plata*.<sup>137</sup>

Torcuato was one of Carlos Maria de Alvear's sons. He stayed in Buenos Aires and at a time of strong jurisdictional schisms became the first mayor of Buenos Aires. His family has been always considered as one of the only real aristocratic families of Buenos Aires.

“Probably Alvear's family was one of the only Argentine ones that could consider itself of real aristocracy, a Castillian origin, moved to Andalucía, of prolific lineage and lucid intervention.”<sup>138</sup>

The interventions of Alvear as a major were favoured by the fact that the projects for urban renewal, due to the federalisation of the city, counted also with the national budget that had been sustainedly increasing in the previous years. The fact that the *Concejo Deliberante* had been formed in 1880 also helped to the effectiveness of the urban renewal projects.

Alvear was a thorough observer of the urban transformations that had been taking place in Europe, in cities such as Paris, London, Milan and Berlin. He also had been up to date with the recent transformations of the North American cities. However, Paris, and the urban plan developed by Georges Eugène Haussmann was his most relevant influence. Alvear's admiration for the French urbanist was clear when he said of Haussmann that “he proposed to make of Paris a great city and he has achieved it”<sup>139</sup>.



figure 4-44 - Torcuato de Alvear. primer Intendente de Buenos Aires

source: Archivo General de la Nación. caja 310 sobre 9

<sup>132</sup> Downing, Andrew Jackson, *The Horticulturist*, 1844, quoted on Pregill, Philip, Volkman, Nancy, *Landscapes in history, Design and Planning in the Eastern and Western Tradition*, John Wiley & Sons inc., New York, 1999.pg.481

<sup>133</sup> Repton, Humphrey (1752-1818) English Landscape designer

<sup>134</sup> Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990.p.98

<sup>135</sup> Memoria de la Intendencia Municipal de la Capital Año 1887- (Págs. 123 a 126) Parque 3 de Febrero

<sup>136</sup> mayor

<sup>137</sup> this was the highest political power at the time following the independence from Spain.

<sup>138</sup> Luna, Felix, *Alvear*, Hyspamerica, Buenos Aires, 1958.

<sup>139</sup> Quesada, Héctor. *Vida Municipal de las ciudades europeas y americanas*. Buenos Aires. Editorial Peuser.1893. p. 17.

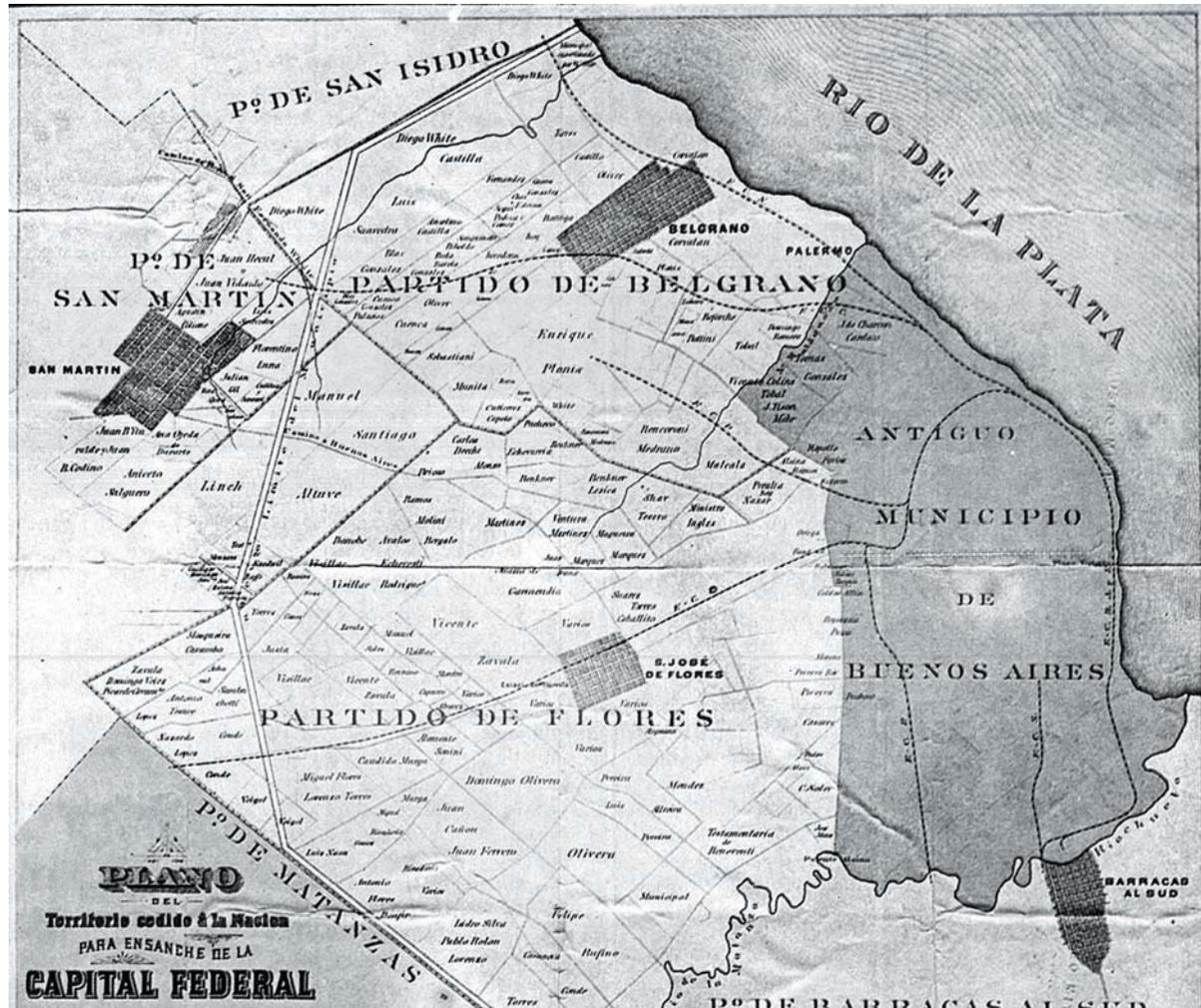


figure 4-45 - 1887-Plano del Territorio cedido a la Nación para el ensanche de la Capital Federal  
 author: Departamento de Ingenieros  
 source: Museo Mitre

Alvear's projects for the city of Buenos Aires did not contemplate a general integrating plan. However, he did propose the functionalising and embellishment of the city through the proposal of general projects for the paving of streets, electrifying of main circulation areas and parks. The proposals of several open public spaces and of opening of wider avenues and hygienic conditions for the city were developed in a very short lapse of time. His most relevant projects were necessarily located in the centre of the city, enhancing the main representative areas and the high profile residential areas.

The plan of Alvear was at the beginning limited by Av. Caseros on the south, Callao-Entre Rios to the west, Santa Fe to the North and the Río de la Plata to the east (figure 4-45). The outer ring of this district was supposed to be destined to parks, industries and services as hospitals, slaughterhouses, railway parks and cemeteries. All this was thought as a closed model. The limits of what was the Capital (figure 4-45) were changed during his mandate and included the towns of Belgrano, Flores and Barracas. The current limit of the Capital would be established in 1886 and began to be materialised in 1888. This event was decisive in the physical development of the city. This limit was exclusively political and referred to no geographical elements except for the southern one of the Riachuelo.

Alvear's two most relevant projects were those of Plaza de Mayo and Avenida de Mayo (figure 4-46). For this purpose, the demolition of a building dividing the existing Plaza and also of numerous buildings had to take place.

The architect in charge of this complex project was Juan Antonio Buschiazzi<sup>140</sup> (1846-1917). Buschiazzi was an architect of Italian origin who had arrived in Argentina with his

parents at the age of 4 and followed his studies in the University of Buenos Aires. He dedicated his career during the decade of 1880 to the public works proposed by Intendente Alvear, this included, apart from the Plaza and Avenida de Mayo also a series of public buildings such as markets, hospitals, cemeteries, housing projects, churches and so on.

The project for Avenida de Mayo had been presented since the 1870s by president Sarmiento. Seeing that the park he had been working on in Palermo was still too far from the city, he proposed to expropriate the blocks between the Cabildo and Plaza Lorea cutting through it an avenue-boulevard. He considered this project too ambitious and difficult himself and never carried it out.<sup>141</sup>

Alvear then seriously proposed the expropriation of the properties in this area, followed by the demolition and later construction of this avenue. There were two main justifications for the construction of this avenue: the solution of part of the problem of traffic due to the narrowness of streets and the need of embellishment of the city. For this purpose it was also proposed that the avenue would finish on the other end in the new Teatro Colon, imitating the situation of the Opera of Paris.<sup>142</sup>

Alvear's proposal of a high state intervention was in conflict with the liberal policies of the time. And the owners of the buildings were highly critical of the method and for their situation. The avenue was finally not built during his term as mayor but later between 1888 and 1894.

Ideas of hygiene were paramount in the projects of Alvear for the city. Epidemics such as Cholera and Typhus were spreading in Latin American towns as well as in Europe. The

main institutions that would be in charge of the hygienic conditions of the city were founded in 1852, the Facultad y Academia de Medicina and the Consejo de Higiene Pública<sup>143</sup>. In 1856 the Comisión de Higiene y Obras Públicas<sup>144</sup> was founded.

These institutions were effective until the federalisation of the city of Buenos Aires. They were in charge of all that had to do with public health in general, the inspection of animals, of the harbour, the surveillance over the sale of medicines, sanitary police and sanitary visits. It was not until the last decades of the nineteenth century that these isolated actions were organised under a state general intervention. The Departamento Nacional de Higiene and the Asistencia Pública Porteña<sup>145</sup> were created in 1880 and 1883 respectively.

Torcuato de Alvear surrounded himself of a group of doctors - Guillermo Rawson, Emilio Coni, José Ramos Mejía - who formulated a vast plan of sanitation and hospital planning. Both national government and the municipality were in charge of the sanitation of the city. They financed the great works of extraction of water, construction of sewers, paving and other street improvements. They created the health administration and all the institutions that depended of it.

Ideological changes brought positivism and a trust in science that spread all over Latin America. This allowed the intervention of the state in issues such as the solution of health problems in society as a whole<sup>146</sup>. Social medicine was influencing these environments too in the project of creating solutions for the problems of modernisation and the new conditions of urban life. Epidemiology and bacteriology were developed as a response to the problems of high population density.<sup>147</sup>



figure 4-46 - 1892 - detail Buenos Aires y Distrito Federal  
author: Pablo Ludwig  
source: Museo Mitre  
location of Avenida de Mayo and Puerto Madero.

<sup>140</sup> "Opere Edilizie dell'Ingegnere Giovanni Antonio Buschiazzo", in: *Gli Italiani nella Repubblica Argentina, Comitato della Camera Italiana di Commercio ed Arti di Buenos Aires*, Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco, Buenos Aires, 1898, pg. 352

<sup>141</sup> Sarmiento, Domingo F. *El Nacional* Buenos Aires. 14 de marzo de 1870

<sup>142</sup> Radovanovic, Elisa. *Buenos Aires, ciudad moderna*. Buenos Aires.. ET. 2002. p.99

<sup>143</sup> Faculty and Academy of Medicine and Public Higiene Council

<sup>144</sup> Commission of Higiene and Public Works

<sup>145</sup> National Department of Higiene and Public Assistance of Buenos Aires

<sup>146</sup> Terán, Oscar , *Positivismo y nación en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires, Punto Sur. 1987. p. 12

<sup>147</sup> Biagini, Héctor. *El movimiento positivista argentino*. Buenos Aires, Belgrano, 1985

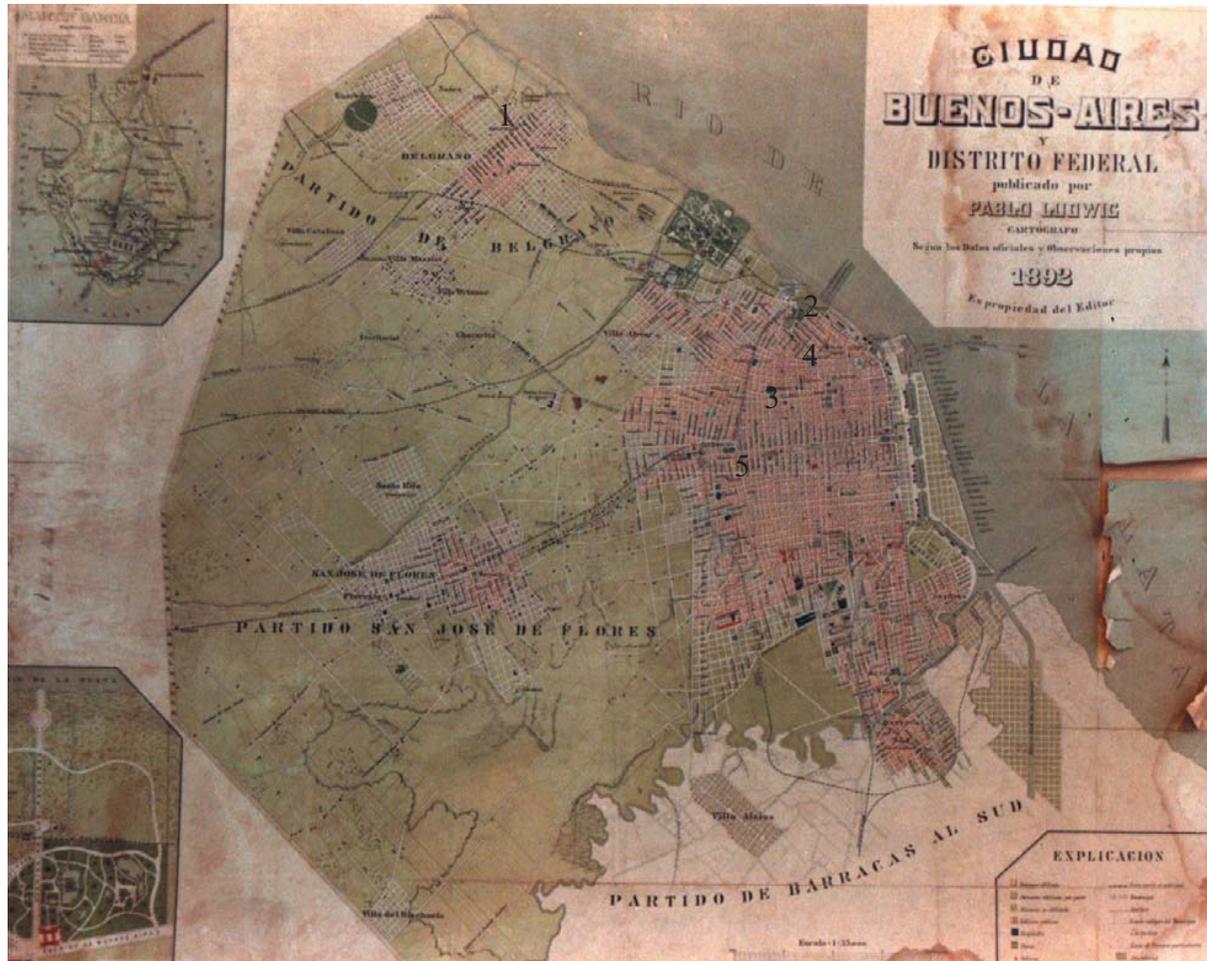


figure 4-47 - 1892 - detail Buenos Aires y Distrito Federal

author: Pablo Ludwig

source: Museo Mitre

1-water treatment plant Belgrano

2-water treatment plant Recoleta

3- Palacio de Aguas Corrientes - Nystromer

4-Plaza Vicente Lopez

5-Plaza Miserere

The works of sanitation begun in 1869 and accelerated after the epidemic of yellow fever of 1871 reaching their zenith in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The water sources of Rio de la Plata close to Belgrano (figure 4-47) required serious works until they were transferred to Recoleta, where the deposits and filters were installed. From there the water was sent to the new distributing deposits in Córdoba and Riobamba, built by the Swedish Nystromer as a *great public palace*.

The expansion of the service of gas illumination had grown steadily in 1882 with a network of pipes that covered 300 kilometres. From 1885 the *Compañía Nueva* built a great gas meter in Córdoba Street and 'La Primitiva' installed a gas meter of 17.000 m<sup>3</sup> in the neighbourhood of Palermo. Electric light began to be used in 1884 with 42 lights and its success was such that by 1901 there were 1500 installed lights in the city.

The one in charge of the design and realisation of green and open spaces was the French landscape architect Eugene Courtois. The character of Courtois has not been deeply studied and has not been given sufficient recognition; this is why it is not completely clear when he was born or dead<sup>148</sup>. Courtois was not similar to the rest of the landscape designers that were in charge of the Dirección de Parques y Paseos. He did not consider himself a theoretician but a gardener. Nevertheless his role in the shaping of the green areas of the city was crucial.

His principles about the need of new open spaces for the city were clear:

"The profusion of squares in an extensive city as ours improves its hygiene for the greater ventilation and if you add the fact that their flowers provide good smell the need for them

to be numerous and well preserved will be easily understood. (...) they have been turned into real spaces of recreation , being on the great part gardens that while embellishing provide a place of distraction for those who visit them"<sup>149</sup>

Courtois was very active in the claim for surveillance on the parks and squares of the city. He did so under the power of Alvear and also in his later work as *Director de Paseos*. He was focused on planting trees on the streets of the city and was very successful on this campaign. Courtois was also interested in the diversification of program of parks and promenades including children as a very important element in the development and conception of park design.

"Those who have said that encouraging games for children would be pernicious are right, for these are already attractive enough, but about games we should make a radical distinction among them. The moral sickness known as passion for playing can not be confused with the natural tendency of a child to have fun. (...) Therefore the only logical means is to direct that impetuous and natural necessity of children to move. (...) Not finding distractions around them, children get together to cause harm (...) it is exactly the intention to avoid these inconveniences the reason why I address this project to Mr. President. For he should authorise the construction of elegant kiosks that will serve exclusively for entertainment, which distracts and instructs while developing intelligence, skill and physical strength of children."<sup>150</sup>

Within the equipment of the parks

Courtois proposed one of the most relevant elements, which appeared in the squares of Constitución, Recoleta and Garay. This was the grotto. It was a recreation of a ruined castle that had been used in picturesque landscape in Europe and the United States previously. This element was used and appreciated in different ways in different parts of the city. The one of Constitución was highly criticised for being anti-aesthetic, dangerous and useless, and was later demolished. On the other hand the one built in Recoleta, together with the water games was highly appreciated and the use of the promenade was increased as the grotto was built.

Courtois' park design of Recoleta meant a substantial improvement for the area as it took advantage of the natural characteristics of the place, especially the slope that gave the place such a particular atmosphere. Other parks and squares, *hueco de las cabecitas*, now *Plaza Vicente Lopez* and *plaza de las carretas*, now *Plaza Miserere*, were planned and realised by Courtois (figure 4-47). Even though they were mostly attributed to the authority of Intendente Alvear and eventually to Juan Antonio Buschiazzo (1846-1917) or Eduardo Holmberg (1852-1937), the projects were probably a product of Courtois' work.

Another meaningful transformation of green spaces in the city was the forestation of the streets. To give continuity to this process that was begun during the government of Alvear, the Municipal Greenhouse was established. This institution was in charge of breeding about 30.000 species that would serve for the purpose of giving beauty and hygiene to the city.

According to Berjman<sup>151</sup> the work of Courtois possessed a style of great lines of schematic composition with landscape designs that could be much related to his contemporary, Adolphe Alphand. His projects provide an idea

of trust in the future, as well as a security for making long term plans.

The other professional that was in charge of the green spaces, especially in the first years of Alvear's mandate was Eduardo Ladislao Holmberg. Argentine born, he also proceeded from an aristocratic family of Buenos Aires. He studied medicine in the University of Buenos Aires but never practised. Instead he dedicated to the study of the Argentine flora and fauna. He was in charge of the direction of parks and promenades in the first years of Alvear's mandate. The most significant of his works was the design of the definitive zoological garden in the parks of Palermo. Holmberg had total freedom to develop his plan and was able to have the railways moved to be able to carry out the project. He decided the pavilions to be representative of the architecture of the areas from which the animals came from. One of them was the Hindu temple dedicated to the elephants, a replica of the one designed by Vicente Cestari for the Temple of the goddess Nimaschi in Mumbai. Holmberg acquired species from Europe, Africa and Asia to complement the rich local fauna. He was clear in his preference of educational principles for scientific purposes more than the pure recreation purposes expected of such an establishment.

<sup>148</sup> Sonia Berjman - Berjman, Sonia, *Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires: la obra de los paisajistas franceses 1860-1930*, Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1998. Pg.74 - estimates this dates as 1831-1898, but the man corresponding to this dates was called Francisco, and not Eugenio. Nevertheless Courtois was a very relevant character within the projects of urban transformation of Alvear's administration.

<sup>149</sup> Buenos Aires. Municipalidad. *Memoria del presidente de la comisión Municipal al Concejo correspondiente al ejercicio de 1879, febrero de 1880*. Buenos Aires, 1880, p.328

<sup>150</sup> Archivo del Instituto Historico.SP. Documento 30 de diciembre de 1879. Caja 10 1880.

<sup>151</sup> Berjman, Sonia, *Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires: la obra de los paisajistas franceses 1860-1930*, Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1998. Pg.:92

For this purpose he provided illustrated guides, plans and information, as well as publishing the magazine of the Zoological Garden.

Apart from the opening of Avenida de Mayo mentioned earlier, other boulevards and avenues were restructured establishing new uses of the city. Even before the 1870s the use of streets as mere paths of circulation was being replaced in certain streets by a new commercial use. The new boulevards complemented these commercial streets giving a sense of meeting place to these spaces. The connection between the new parks and squares was an essential element in urban landscape. The discourse of Sarmiento was finally being taken to construction: "finally resolving to open two or three ample boulevards, to finish with the last colonial remains"<sup>152</sup>.

The systematic paving of streets with stones was a measure that insured the development not only of the central areas but also of the neighbourhoods. This was guaranteed through a system in which the owners of the plots would pay for half of the expenses and the municipality would be in charge of the other half.

The last but one of the most important of the works done to the city under the mandate of Alvear was the extension of the tramway lines that would make possible the connection of the centre with the peripheral neighbourhoods and also the communication among these neighbourhoods. According to a newspaper of the time "it is just necessary that a remote street is paved and a tramway arrives to it for there to be a habitable neighbourhood"<sup>153</sup>

Alvear's interventions in the city were sometimes related to those of Haussmann for the urban plan of Paris, he was sometimes called the *Haussmann of Buenos Aires*. This would be an

exaggerated remark, for the conditions of the city of Buenos Aires before his mandate were very different to those of Paris. Paris was an established city, which had a long urban tradition and had gone through much more complex physical and social transformations than Buenos Aires. Instead, Buenos Aires before Alvear was a small town with few inhabitants, with a lot of potential and confirmed development, but far from being comparable to all the complexities of a city like Paris. However, the works of Alvear for Buenos Aires were decisive to all aspects of the urban environment, his projects transformed the city in an unprecedented manner and remain still today as structuring elements of the central area.

The project of Courtois under Alvear's direction for the municipal baths were the first ever to consider the waterfront as a space of recreation as well as a space for hygienic purposes in Buenos Aires. This project will be further analysed.

Alvear- project – 1885 – baths and parks

*Torcuato de Alvear, as a public administrator of great authority, used the services of engineers and architects to realise his ideals of urban development and open space design. His projects for the waterfront cover issues of open green space, transportation and circulation, hygiene and infrastructure. In the hands of Maraini and Courtois the projects proposed solutions to all the problems that were arising in the rapidly growing city at a moment of demographic explosion. Leisure spaces in these projects are considered mainly as places for contemplation but also as places for the practical solution of hygiene problems.*

### Context and administration

The first intentions of waterfront recreation facilities after the intervention of Sarmiento in Palermo were those of mayor Alvear in 1885. Among the many other projects for the restructuring of the city, he proposes a waterfront park and baths near the Recoleta. These projects were supposedly designed by engineer Maraini<sup>154</sup>, and were reflected in two drawings. One of the drawings, which is more detailed in its program, is signed by Courtois, whose work for mayor Alvear has been explained in the previous section. The whole project, shape and content coincides with the characteristics of Courtois projects so it would be correct to suppose that he was the author of this. It must have been a collaboration of the technical aptitudes of Maraini as an engineer in the works for protection from the river and the park design capabilities of Eugene Courtois.

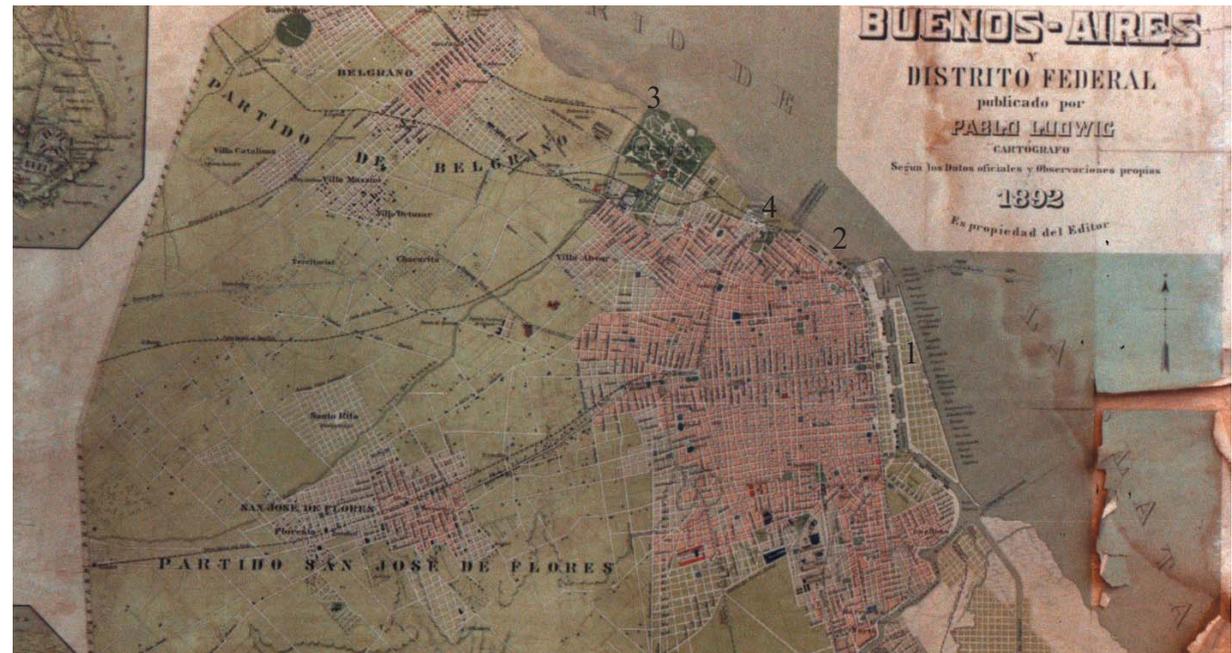
At first, the political process through which the project for the waterfront went through was similar to most of the rest of the urban projects under the mandate of Alvear. Alvear had a great authority, supported by the system of the CD, which allowed him to act rather freely in most of his proposals. Later on, to what concerned the actual building of the project, a series of different conflicts with the national authorities gave way to a different process.

The conviction of Alvear of the need of a waterfront avenue, parks and baths is clear in his discourse to the CD of 1885:

“Despite the serious obstacles that the state of the river has originated, almost constantly high and withering, the works of protection for the baths and great promenade have been consistently carried out. These works should be accelerated vastly through the realisation of openings and widening of streets in the project, and particularly for the important risk of the burning of garbage that has been consistently carried to where it does not belong and will probably make it impossible to continue burning. There, in that field, more than building a terrain for any sort of vegetable production, we are going to the conquest, for the city, of a great terrain destined to an object of vital importance to this neighbourhood. These will be the public baths and will be transformed as a whole into a promenade, which we expect will have a preference rank amongst those of South America”<sup>155</sup>

Among the little bibliography that exists on this project, is the book of Beccar Varela, who was a governor of the city of San Isidro in the

1920s and the one to do a recount on the projects of Alvear. His position tends to the praising of the character and work of Alvear, making him practically the only responsible of the urban transformations. He leaves little importance to the ones who were really in charge of the projects, in the case of the waterfront, Courtois, and Maraini.



**figure 4-48** - 1892 - detail Buenos Aires y Distrito Federal

author: Pablo Ludwig

source: Museo Mitre

1-Puerto Madero

2-Intersection of Calle Cordoba and the River

3-Arroyo Maldonado

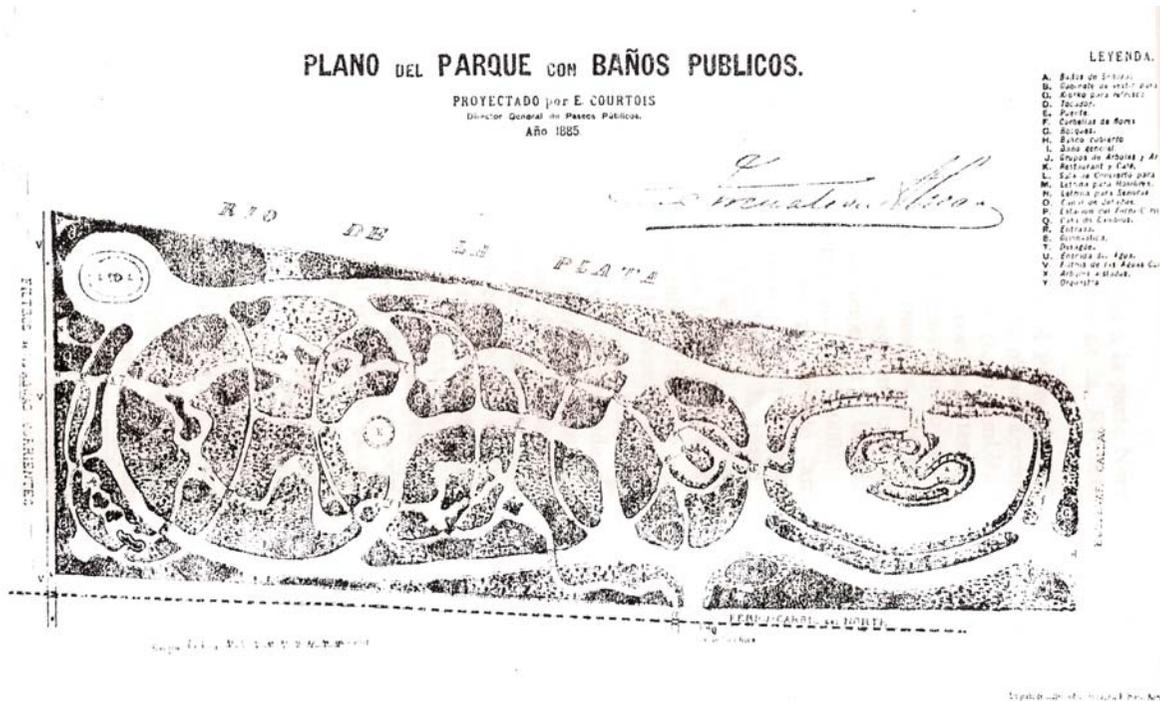
4-location of both projects for waterfront baths and parks

<sup>152</sup> Sarmiento, Domingo F. “Arquitectura Doméstica”. En Martínez, Alberto. *Baedeker de la República Argentina*. Buenos Aires. Imp. J. Peuser. 1900, p. 57.

<sup>153</sup> La Prensa, Buenos Aires, 22 de agosto de 1886. Tedin, Miguel. “Comunicación rápida en la Capital” In: *Revista Técnica*. Buenos Aires, 15 de enero de 1899, N° 76. By the end of the century there were 386 traks of tramway lines in the city.

<sup>154</sup> Beccar Varela, Adrián, *Torcuato de Alvear, primer Intendente Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Su acción edilicia*, Buenos Aires, 1925.

<sup>155</sup> Beccar Varela, Adrián, *Torcuato de Alvear, primer Intendente Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Su acción edilicia*, Buenos Aires, 1925. Pg.285



**figure 4-49** - 1885- Plano del Parque con Banos Publicos  
 author: Eugene Courtois  
 source: Beccar Varela, Adrián, Torcuato de Alvear, primer Intendente Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Su acción edilicia, Buenos Aires, 1925.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The fact that the location of the harbour was in the southern part of the city (figure 4-48) – Puerto Madero – and the supposed extension of it southwards were crucial in the selection of the location of the waterfront public baths and park. These were located in the northern part of the city, close to the Recoleta Park, which building had recently been finished, under a project of Courtois. This decision anticipated the growth of the city northwards and the segregation of the southern area of the city for industrial and technical facilities and the northern one as an area of residence and recreation. This decision would have allowed a development of jurisdiction that

would leave the southern waterfront in the hands of the nation and the northern one in the hands of the municipality.

The whole project described in the texts of Alvear and Maraini takes a greater extension of land than what is represented in the drawings. On a letter to Intendente Torcuato de Alvear<sup>156</sup>, Maraini describes the plan he is presenting as a project limited by Cordoba Street and the arroyo Maldonado (figure 4-48). Here he writes about an avenue 30 metres wide, parallel to the river, starting from avenida Alvear, where Recoleta meets the river.

There are two drawings illustrating this proposal. One of them represents a park along the river (figure 4-49), with a set of paths and waterways that cross each other intricately and give the impression of a picturesque landscape. The limits of this plan are the river, Callao Avenue, the water filters and the railroad parallel to the river. The other plan (figure 4-50) shows a main avenue surrounded by a park that finishes on a lagoon or pool for bathing but protected from the river. First it corresponds to have a closer look at the description of Maraini given to Alvear on the whole project.

In his letter, Maraini goes on describing, not a waterfront avenue, but one perpendicular to the river. Through this avenue the *problem* of the difference of level between the high lands of Recoleta and the river would be solved. The project stipulated the filling of the slope so that the avenue would only have an inclination of 0.03 cm per metre, which was much lighter than the existing one. He writes about this avenue that as it reaches the protecting wall of the river it splits in two and follows northwards parallel to the river until reaching arroyo Maldonado, and southwards until the pier of Catalinas in front of the gas plant. The extension of this avenue was

proposed as 3.330 metres to the north and 1644 metres to the south.

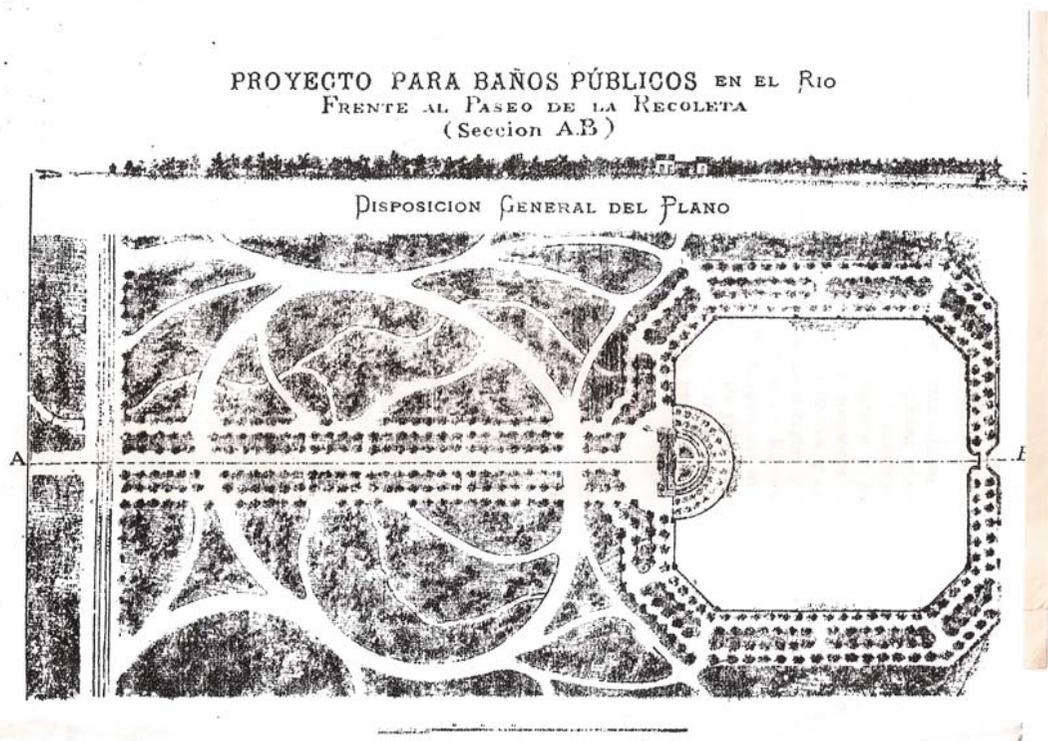
He says though, that his study is limited to the northern section of this avenue, but does not specify the reason for this. He describes the need of building two iron bridges on the one hand, on the avenue that descends towards the river, to avoid the train tracks and the Paseo de Julio. Later he also proposes two bridges on the avenue parallel to the river, one for the rainwater sewage and another for the traffic of carriages to access the river through Gallo street. Maraini is evidently concentrated on the technical aspects of this avenue and does not mention anything about leisure or recreation or even hygiene. He is still considering the use of carriages to access the ships in the river, without considering the change in technology and use that would not allow this system in a very short term. Maraini gives a detailed description of the budget needed for the execution of these works. Once again, as in other projects of Alvear for the rest of the city, the citizens participation in the expenses is mentioned to lighten the burden of the cost of works on municipal funds. In this case the owners of lands adjacent to the river would have to pay for a portion of the expenses on their land, so that works of protection from the river and the avenue could be developed.

After transcribing this text, Beccar Varela states that the two drawings shown by him in his book (figures 4-49 and 4-50) follow the project of Maraini for the Waterfront Avenue<sup>157</sup>. This is obviously not the case. The program mentioned by Maraini has very little to do with the drawings here presented, from which at least one of them is the work of Eugene Courtois.

To make things clear, then it corresponds to say that within the projects presented by Alvear

there is one by Maraini from which we have not found the original drawing, which consists on a waterfront avenue with its corresponding riverfront protections and infrastructure. On the other hand there is a project for a park and baths on the waterfront, from which one drawing is surely made by Courtois, general director of parks and promenades. The other drawing's author is doubtful but seems to be done by the same person, for its characteristics are similar.

**figure 4-50** - 1885- Proyecto para baños publicos en el rio frente al paseo de la Recoleta  
author: unknown  
source: Beccar Varela, Adrián, Torcuato de Alvear, primer Intendente Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Su acción edilicia, Buenos Aires, 1925.



<sup>156</sup> Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. *Memoria de la Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires*, Buenos Aires 1886.

## LEYENDA.

- A. Baños de Señoras
- B. Gabinete de vestir para
- C. Kiosko para refrescos
- D. Tocador.
- E. Puente.
- F. Corbellas de flores
- G. Bosques.
- H. Banco cubierto
- I. Baño General.
- J. Grupos de Arboles y Ar
- K. Restaurant y Café.
- L. Sala de Concerto para
- M. Letrina para Hombres.
- N. Letrina para Señoras.
- O. Canal de Desagüe.
- P. Estacion del Ferrocarril
- Q. Casa de Cambios.
- R. Entesa.
- S. Gimnastica.
- T. Desagüe.
- U. Entrada de Agua.
- V. Filtros de las Aguas Cui
- X. Arboles aislados.
- Y. Orquesta

figure 4-51 - 1885- Plano del Parque con Baños Publicos

author: Eugene Courtois

source: Beccar Varela, Adrián, Torcuato de Alvear, primer Intendente Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Su acción edilicia, Buenos Aires, 1925.

- |                          |                           |                  |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| a-ladies baths           | j-groups of trees         | s-gymnastics     |
| b-cabinets for...        | k-restaurant cafe         | t-sewers         |
| c-kiosk for refreshments | l-Concert hall            | u-running water  |
| d-toilet                 | m-latrines for men        | v-water filters  |
| e-bridge                 | n-latrines for ladies     | x-isolated trees |
| f-flower beds            | o-....                    | y-orchestra      |
| g-woods                  | p-estacion de ferrocarril |                  |
| h-covered bench          | q-gazebos                 |                  |
| i-common baths           | r-entrance                |                  |

In any case going into the drawing of the project by Courtois we can induce some conclusions on his intentions and the innovation in the characteristics of the park related to previous local and international ones. The main intention for the building of this park was that the city should have a:

“a great lake (...) destined to public baths, and as much as it is close to the river, as the evident development that the vegetation will have in this site, it will make this an attractive promenade. The willow woods that currently occupy the waterfront will be transformed into a garden with access to carriages. The *aquarium*<sup>158</sup> there formed for tropical plants is finally finished.”<sup>159</sup>

Courtois' project considered various aspects of the park in his design. The drawing that explicitly belongs to him presents a park with a series of complexities that not only compile a diverse flora and the combination of the walking and carriage paths with waterways and lakes. It also provides a series of buildings and program that are innovative and diverse. This program included (figure 4-51) as bathing facilities: latrine for men, latrine for women, baths for ladies, cabins for ladies and gentlemen and house for cabins. These were placed strategically close to the water, but there was no special infrastructure for the bathing in the river, no stairs or special facilities were provided for this activity. On the other hand there were many facilities for recreation and entertainment, especially for the summer. These included kiosks for refreshments, covered benches, an orchestra, restaurant and café and a concert hall for the summer. The landscape elements included flower corbeilles, woods, groups of trees, bushes and isolated trees. There

is no specificity in this case on what kind of trees and bushes would be used but there is a will to control nature especially by removing the existing willow trees and replacing them by an organised landscape effect. The infrastructure provided for this park included the bridges to cross waterways over by the walking paths, a sewage channel and the water filters from the Recoleta water plant. The railway is one of the limits of the area and a railway station was provided that would connect the centre of Buenos Aires with the northern areas. The park had an entrance with would imply that the park could be eventually closed.

The first insinuation of a sports field is here provided. An area for gymnastics is proposed, and even though there is not much specificity for what kind of sports and what kind of facility is provided there is evidence of the need for a space for active recreation apart from the traditional contemplative one.

In these waterfront projects there are three guiding ideas, even though not particularly explicit. One of them was the need for a limit for the city. It is relevant that Alvear proposed a set of projects, built and not, for the city. One of the most relevant of these was the ring boulevard, which would have surrounded and contained the city sustaining its centrality in Plaza de Mayo. It is also relevant to consider within this limit the Paseo de Julio<sup>160</sup>, which was proposed as a continuation of the projected parks. The project for the limits was later developed, but creating another new limit, that we actually know as Avenida General Paz. However, the widening of the city proposed by Alvear is not linked to the need of widening the territory but with regularising the limits of the city.

The second idea is that of continuing with a series of works for creating and recuperating squares all over the city. Even though it is

not specifically mentioned, the project for the Costanera Avenue and the parks seem to have a relation with the ideas of Sarmiento of creating a green public belt around the traditional city.

Another organising idea was the hygienist need of creating public baths, subject that would be continually discussed and brought up in the CD. The proposal however, is not limited to a hygienist solution to the problem, but also proposes a system of parks for recreation, which would later be more deeply developed in subsequent projects.

Alvear's project for the waterfront parks and baths can not be analysed separately to the rest of the network of urban development he was in charge of on his years as a city mayor. The whole development of infrastructure of sanitary elements as well as the aesthetic concern and the provision of public space in the city can be related to many international ideas. The plan of Haussmann comes to mind directly, for Alvear was explicit in the influence it had on him, but it was not only the French that influenced the urban ideas in Buenos Aires under the administration of Alvear.

The aesthetic element was crucial in Alvear's projects and this can be both related to the French concepts and principles of the *École de Beaux Arts* and as anticipation to the City Beautiful movement as well. However, as in cases such as those of Robert Copeland and H.W.S. Cleveland in Chicago, Alvear considered issues such as 'sanitary, economic and aesthetic laws'<sup>161</sup>. The issue of hygiene, as mentioned before, was one of the crucial subjects in the urban development of Alvear, and the park was one of the main elements in this.

When it comes to the actual design of the Waterfront Park and Baths made by Courtois both drawings show a different approach to

design and even fill different needs. Both designs (figure 4-49 and 4-50) can be related to the ideas expressed by Edouard André<sup>162</sup>. He would have categorised this as a *Parc Publique des Villes d'Eau*. André described them as:

"Places of exercise and recreation for a special population composed of the sick and the leisure people. Their proximity to sanitary installations is necessary. The design will hardly be pure and natural. Above all, wide and comfortable promenades are needed, a choice of bushes and flowers has to be considered, lawns, woods, heavy shadowed areas and isolated seats for reading have to be provided. In other parts, on the other hand there have to be open spaces for listening to music, pavilions for games, for selling objects of luxury and utility, in one word all the distractions that can be demanded by a rich population that is forcefully leisurely"<sup>163</sup>

However, this description fits with what we have addressed earlier in the introduction as the leisure cities, for the leisure class. The concept of *leisure class* was introduced a little later by Thorsten Veblen, in 1899. He gave a critical, and ironic account of the *leisure class*.

"the leisure class lives by the industrial community rather than in it. Its relations to industry are of a pecuniary rather than an industrial kind. Admission to the class is done by the exercise of pecuniary aptitudes – aptitudes for acquisition rather than for serviceability. There is therefore a continued selective sifting of the human material that makes up the leisure class, and this selection

proceeds on the ground of fitness for pecuniary pursuits."<sup>164</sup>

In the work of Veblen we are shown how the wealthy found themselves in a position which allowed them basically no time for work and most of their days spent in leisure. This can be clearly seen in Veblen's study.

"In the sequence of cultural evolution the emergence of a leisure class coincides with the beginning of ownership. This is necessarily the case, for these two institutions result from the same set of economic forces."<sup>165</sup>

Even though this might have been the social class that was in charge of the city decisions and the political scene, and the one to whom the aesthetic qualities of the reformed city was targeted to, when it comes to the waterfront project of Courtois-Alvear this becomes doubtful.

<sup>157</sup> Beccar Varela, Adrián, *Torcuato de Alvear, primer Intendente Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Su acción edilicia*, Buenos Aires, 1925, pg 290.

<sup>158</sup> In italics in the original

<sup>159</sup> Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. *Memoria de la Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires*, Buenos Aires 1884. Tomo 1, pg.201

<sup>160</sup> Already existing avenue that gave the limit between the city and the river

<sup>161</sup> Cleveland proposed these three variables for the development of cities, despite he was more focused on the integral and functional design than on the aesthetics.

<sup>162</sup> André, Edouard, *L'art des jardins. Traite General de la composition des parcs et jardins. Ouvrage accompagne de Onze planches en chromolithographie et de 520 figures dans le texte*, G. Masson editeur, Paris, 1879.

<sup>163</sup> idem, pg.187

<sup>164</sup> Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. New York: The Macmillan Company (1899). pg.82

<sup>165</sup> idem.



**figure 4-52** - 1880s - Casa de Baños  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 865. Sobre 14

Formally, both designs for the park and baths could be related to André's description, but the target group to which they are addressed is quite different. This project is meant for most of the population, and the fact that it was located near one of the most expensive areas of the city did not mean that the park was exclusively meant for the dwellers of this area.

The transport network, which had been developed in the years of Alvear's administration allowed the less fortunate people from the south, to also reach this area. Formally, both drawings show a different approach to park design. The one signed by Courtois seemed more inspired in the picturesque and park movement with its intricate net of pathways and waterways and bridges, the lake and naturalistic surroundings. This would be categorised as irregular. The program showed a series of elements that were named in André's description such as kiosks for music and restoration and an added element in the baths and changing cabins. On the other hand, the second drawing shows what André would have considered mixed style. There is an evident mixture of the picturesque landscape and an axial layout that focuses on one single building placed prior to the bathing pool, which is also surrounded by very geometrical rows of trees.

This project is innovative mainly because it uses elements of public parks in general and applies them to the waterfront, including these as a part of the city.

### Realisation and Repercussions

The projects of Maraini and Courtois for the Buenos Aires waterfront of 1886 were barely built. An important work of landfill done with the remains of the burning of garbage was a significant effort of work and investment. This

development allowed a much later project.

However, according to Alvear<sup>166</sup> there was a landfill of 15.000 cubic metres of earth, which covered 75% of the whole projected area. The embankment for the limit with the river was also built in the extension of 165 metres.

This project, after the sickness, demission and replacement of Alvear fell in hands of a new generation of engineers. The ones in charge of this project until 1891 were Coronel Carlos Gaudencio, a consulting engineer named D.G. Fouchard and a direction and council of medicine. This reinforces the hygienist ideas behind the project for baths. A great budget was established for this project between 1889 and 1891 but the economical crisis of 1890 put the project to a stop and it would not be until five years later that a new project for a waterfront avenue would be proposed. The project was unfortunately not built and the landfill of the area would later be used for the building of the new harbour.

Most of the decisions taken by major Alvear were not discussed in the City Council, but they went straight to the Commission of Hygiene and Public Works<sup>167</sup>. However, his project was barely started and only the filling and flattening of the land was realised.

The importance of Alvear is irreplaceable, from the perspective of the realisation of a ring avenue, because it produced the administrative transformation and the judicial reform that made it possible and because they set precedent for the main reforms of the city. Alvear represents faithfully the desires of reform of the elite.<sup>168</sup>

In any case, on the southern side of the city, close to the piers, the Paseo de Julio was adorned with gardens, a boulevard and a bathhouse, according to the pictures found in the Archivo general de la Nación (figure 4-52 and 4-53).

**figure 4-53** - 1880s- Muelle de Pasajeros  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. caja 865. Sobre 4



#### 4.2.1.3 - Thays – the civilising power of beauty Jules Charles Thays – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

Jules Charles Thays (1849-1934) (figure 4-54) was born in Paris and died in Buenos Aires after an extended career as park designer and park director of the city of Buenos Aires. He also did some work of park design in neighbouring countries Chile, Uruguay and Brazil.

In Paris he spent his childhood and youth where he was a student of Adolphe Alphand. Later he was also a student of Edouard André, and worked with him as an assistant in local as well as foreign projects in Austria, Holland, England and Switzerland.

While working with André in Paris he met Mister Paz, a *porteño*, who talked to him about Argentina. Later he received an offer to design a park in Cordoba, an Argentine city west of Buenos Aires. Alphand convinced Thays to move and work on the Argentine landscape, so he did. His stay in Argentina was planned to last just a couple of years, but his marriage to a local lady made him stay in Buenos Aires for the rest of his life.

From the beginning of his stay in Buenos Aires, Thays played a paramount role in the configuration of open spaces in the city. He soon became the first *Director de Parques y Paseos*, an institution that would from then on be in charge of the creation and maintenance of all green areas in the city, including street forestation.

Thays was a member of several institutions in the country: he was vice president of the *Société Philantropique du Río de la Plata*, president of *Club Français*, president of the *Comité des Sociétés Françaises*. Also vice-president of the *Comité del Centenario*, president of the *Comité Patriótico*, member of the *Comité de los Aliados*, honorific

member of the *Sociedad Rural Argentina*, of the *Sociedad Central de Arquitectos* and of the *Sociedad de Horticultura*. In 1913 he was Argentine delegate for the *Congrès Forestier Internationale* in Paris as well as for the International Exhibition in Gent.

Thays was extremely respected in all social environments, from the highest classes of Buenos Aires and Paris to the workers and unions. As a writer he was the first one to publish a book about green spaces in Argentina: *El Jardín Botánico de Buenos Aires*, appeared as homage to the Centennial of Independence in 1910. He also published the book *Les Forêts Naturelles de la République Argentine*, published in France after his visit to the *Congrès Forestier Internationale*. The local professionals appreciated his participation in the Conference and this is seen in the comments after his session:

“I do not want to close this session without thanking M. Thays for the interesting and pleasant conference that he just presented. He has passed in front of our eyes a series of frames, as artistic as instructive, that us French can see as a great benefit. The Argentine government shows us the way that should be followed for the creation in France of the national parks and we can be usefully inspired by the examples that our friend republic offers us. If our flora and fauna do not permit us to compete with her we could at least imitate them.”<sup>169</sup>

This quotation shows, as we have discussed earlier, that influences in landscape design were not only unilateral and decisions made in a *peripheral* country such as Argentina could be considered even in the most established environments, such as the one of Paris.

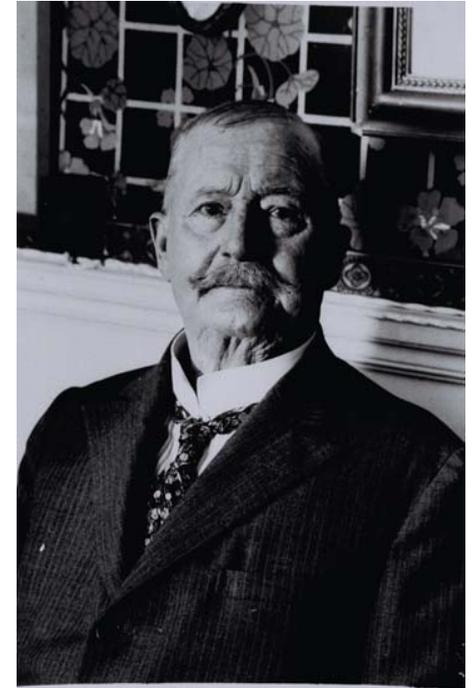


figure 4-54 - 1908-Carlos Thays  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. caja 1351 sobre 15

<sup>166</sup> Letter from Alvear to Concejo Deliberante. Beccar Varela, Adrián, *Torcuato de Alvear, primer Intendente Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Su acción edilicia*, Buenos Aires, 1925. pg 290.

<sup>167</sup> Concejo Deliberante, Versiones Taquigráficas.

<sup>168</sup> Gorelik, Adrián. *La Grilla y el Parque. espacio público y cultura urbana en Buenos Aires, 1887-1936*. Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Quilmes, 1998.

<sup>169</sup> Words of Henry Defert, president of the Congrès Forestier Internationale of the Comité de s Sites et Monuments Pittoresques and vice president of the Touring Club de France. In Thays, Charles, *Les Forêts Naturelles de la République Argentine*. Congrès Forestier Internationale de Paris. Paris, Turing Club de France, 1913, pg44-45

Thays is considered by Sonia Berjman as the synthesis of the *generación del 80*, but in contrast to most of the characters of this generation, who were praised as well as hardly criticised for their discourse and their doing, Thays was mostly praised. His work in the beginning of 1890s is regarded highly and shows an inflection regarded to previous projects. His work for the city was extended until the 1920s, when he retired and left his son to take over.

Thays' period of work in the parks of Buenos Aires was one of democratisation. The process in which the oligarchy began to loose power to democratic political parties coincided with his park designs. This process made the parks that had begun as a privilege of the elite turn into parks available for the whole population of the city.

Thays had tight relations with the power characters of the time, such as presidents, mayors, landlords and members of the oligarchy, for whom he dedicated part of his work as garden designer. But he was concerned about the lower social classes as well, and thus provided his work for public parks. "The new oligarchy founded its convictions – and its doubts as well – in a system of ideas tied to an intellectual tradition" based on the importance given by Argentine intellectuals to the French novel full of social problems.<sup>170</sup> Thays had grown up surrounded by these ideas as a student in Paris, which must have been an influence in the application of his work in Buenos Aires.

Having worked with Edouard André, and also having been close to Alphand was crucial for the formation of Thays as a park designer. He reached maturity in Paris, and for the time he came to Buenos Aires he was already 40 years old. This made him follow the tradition of his mentors and follow their aesthetic, hygiene and recreation

principles, considered for all social classes and for the improvement of the urban landscape.

According to Berjman the whole work of Thays was not an isolated system of open spaces for the service of the population. It was one more element in the configuration of the urban landscape in which *power structures* – government houses, tribunals, ministries – *services* – hospitals, cemeteries, libraries, schools, universities – and *infrastructure* – harbours, railways and water provision and sewage – were all being developed as a whole system.

This process of reconfiguration of the urban environment was a product of an oligarchy that was socially conscious and using models from abroad adapted them to the local situation to create a new system that was suitable for the new urban centres that were developing. This process was not only a reflection of foreign ideas but an implementation that provided specialised multiple new spaces in the city.

Once the position as *Director de Parques y Paseos Públicos* was left open in 1891 after the death of Wilhem Schübeck, a competition was held to decide who would be his successor. Some important characters in park design of Buenos Aires presented their proposal to the commission in charge, but the decision was unanimous and Charles Thays was chosen to take over the responsibility of all park design and maintenance of the parks of the city. He took this position since then until 1913 developing a brilliant career and having influence in every single park that existed in the city at the time.

Through Thays presentation for the competition for the *Dirección de Parques* we can have an accurate idea of his principles as park designer. As noted by Berjman, the index<sup>171</sup> of his

text reveals many of his concerns:

- 1- The gardens in general, historical. Gardens of antiquity: Egyptian, Babylon, Hebrew, Persia, China, Japan, Greek, Roman. Gardens of the Middle Ages. Spanish, Italian and French gardens. Modern gardens.
- 2- Economy of vegetation in nature, hygienic applications.
- 3- Measurement of the terrain given by levelling. Necessary instruments for it. Example.
- 4- Program for the organisation of the Service of Public Promenades and their personnel, distribution, material, organisation of works, inspection, administration.
- 5- Conservation of squares, cleaning, renovation of foliage. Plant nursery.
- 6- Ideas about new promenades and squares to be created, tracing of the squares in the most convenient Style and Lineal or fundamental avenues.
- 7- Harmful insects, particularly taladros, ants and nest insects. Means for destroying them.
- 8- Parks and promenades police
- 9- Criticism to parks and promenades of the Capital. Causes of the frequent variations they suffer.

In his book, Thays reveals his relation to the ideas of Alphand and André by his description of the concept of garden. For him, the garden is an element created by man, and it is an art, that can influence the behaviour of people through the reproduction of elements of nature.

The historical section of his manuscript might be considered similar to the traditional texts on garden history of the nineteenth century. However, his text adds some unprecedented topics such as the relation of the parks to their architectural environment and their cultural

significance to the normal questions of tracing, geometry and vegetation.

The second point of his text refers to the natural and the hygienic. As Alphand before him, Thays refers to public parks as the *lungs* of the city, a concept that was beginning to be spread internationally, and he proposes the inclusion of new parks and squares in the dirtiest neighbourhoods, especially where there are wetlands and disease was widespread. He also provides information about the capacity of trees to absorb water; he was ahead of his time in this, for now it is well known that in lands that tend to flood it is very beneficial to have trees planted for their capacity of absorption.

Most relevant to us in this section is the concept that Thays had of the capacity of beauty to influence in the morals of citizens:

“A man, especially the one who works, needs distraction. Is there then a healthier, nobler, truer, when able to appreciate it, distraction, than the contemplation of trees, of beautiful flowers, when tastefully laid out? The spirit then rests, sadness is forgotten for a moment at least, and the aspect of the beautiful, of the pure, produces an immediate effect on the heart.”<sup>172</sup>

Here we are aware of the importance of passive leisure and the way the environment can be beneficial for the health and morals of citizens. This position is very clear and can be related to leisure practices common at the end of the nineteenth century.

In the following chapters of his presentation he describes the technical tools for the design and levelling of parks, the administrative structure of the parks in general and of each park, square and promenade. He describes the works that would have to be done to maintain the green areas and

he is very detailed about the description of the plant nurseries and the type of trees that would correspond to each type of park

Regarding the formal aspect of parks and squares his main choice of the parks in Buenos Aires is that of the landscaped park, adapted to the local climate, which he calls the *mixed garden*. He does state though that the formal aspect of already existing squares and parks do not have to be modified radically, so that there can be a diversity that enriches the image of the city. He proposes then the design of English gardens, scenes from warmer weathers, French gardens, mixed gardens and special gardens with the local flora.

As a formal typology he is still considering the proposals of André and Alphand when he describes the *regular*, *mixed* and *irregular* gardens.

Thays describes already some of the characteristics of Parque Tres de Febrero and the recommendations for its design in this preliminary text, but this will be discussed on the following section regarding the project itself.

The following chapters of Thays' book deal with harmful insects and after that the necessary police in parks and squares, as had been previously suggested by Courtois in his role as Director de Parques.

Finally, the last point referred to the criticism of the existing parks and promenades. The main flaws he observed on the local parks were: The bad tracing of the roads, the lack of correct treatment of terrain, the wrong location of the masses of trees, the absolute lack of water games or the wrong location of them, the need for continuing to work on floral decoration. He also criticised the grotto of Plaza Constitucion as the public opinion already had done before. Most importantly he criticised the lack of a park policy

that would include all the parks, promenades and avenues of the city.

Thays' discourse was not limited to theory and throughout the 22 years in his position as Director de Parques he applied all these enunciates in park design of Buenos Aires and other neighbouring cities of the country and of neighbouring countries.

One of Thays aims was to provide Buenos Aires with at least as much park surface as Paris had. In his *memoria*<sup>173</sup> of the first report as *Director de Parques* he proposed a series of parks and squares that would be added to the existing ones. Paris at the time had 1,950 hectares of green for 2,425,000 inhabitants, corresponding to 7.83 m<sup>2</sup> of garden per inhabitant and 1 m<sup>2</sup> of green for each 2.45 m<sup>2</sup> of the total surface of the city that was 4.700 hectares.

Buenos Aires would have, considering the parks projected by Thays: 779 hectares of green space for 550.000 inhabitants corresponding to 14.17 m<sup>2</sup> of garden per inhabitant and a relation of 1 m<sup>2</sup> of green for every 25.87 m<sup>2</sup> of surface of the city that extended through 18,632 hectares (4 times that of Paris).<sup>174</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Romero, José Luis, *Las ideas en la Argentina del siglo XX*, Buenos Aires, biblioteca actual, 1987, pg.23

<sup>171</sup> Thays, Charles, manuscript, 1891. This index is taken from Berjman, Sonia, *Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires: la obra de los paisajistas franceses 1860-1930*, Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1998. The manuscript without title dated from 1891 comes from the archive of the Thays family.

<sup>172</sup> Thays, Charles, manuscript, pg.20

<sup>173</sup> Buenos Aires. Municipalidad. *Memoria de la Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires correspondiente al año 1891*. Buenos Aires, 1893.

<sup>174</sup> These calculations are taken from Berjman, Sonia, *Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires: la obra de los paisajistas franceses 1860-1930*, Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1998, pg.127

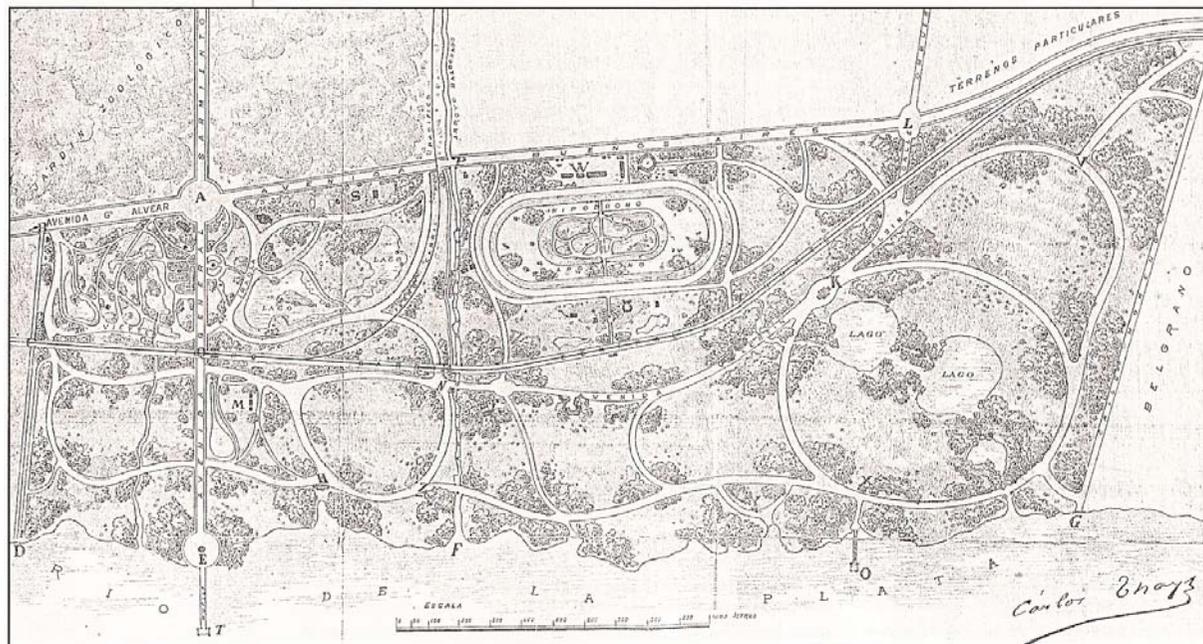
The first year of his role as *Director de Parques* he dedicated mainly to projects of squares that could be finished in a short time. Later, during 1883 and 1894 he dedicated to the extension of several greater parks, amongst them Parque Tres de Febrero.

One of the main problems observed in the first years of his work in the city was the fact that in the central area there was no green space larger than 2 km<sup>2</sup>, so a project for Plaza de Mayo and another for what would later be Plaza Congreso were formulated.

figure 4-55 - 1893- Parque Tres de Febrero

author: Charles Thays

source: Sonia, Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires: la obra de los paisajistas franceses 1860-1930, Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1998.



The rest of the work of Thays was carried out in the following period, which concerns an evolution in design principles as well as changes and transformations in the form given to park design. Thays will be also mentioned later in his intervention for the celebration of the International Exhibition held for the Centennial of Independence. Thays' role in the Centennial will be analysed in the following chapters.

Before that we will focus on his project for Parque Tres de Febrero, where the park begins to be considered as a waterfront area and this condition is enhanced by the design of Thays.

#### Thays - project - 1892 - parks and piers

*Charles Thays followed Courtois in the principles of landscape architecture on the waterfront of Buenos Aires but he added a much more complex and precise system of vegetation, programme and activities. Courtois was a gardener, instead, Thays was a landscape designer and gave a new morphology to Parque Tres de Febrero. The presence of the piers on his project for the park already show a different relation between the park and the water. Other elements such as the hippodrome and other buildings show the interest in a more active use of the park.*

#### Context and administration

Parque Tres de Febrero, as commented before, was first proposed and designed under the authority of D.F. Sarmiento, and it received few transformations between its inauguration and the intervention of Thays in 1893.

The administration context was that explained in the previous pages. Charles Thays was the *Director de Parques y Paseos del Municipio* and provided the design and realisation of the works of extension and restructuring of this park within this context.

#### Location, extension, program and accessibility

Thays project for Parque Tres de Febrero (figure 4-55) was the most significant of all his projects for urban parks in and outside Buenos Aires. Its reach was aesthetic, scientific and social and gave him the opportunity of experimenting and building different corners of diverse qualities

throughout the territory.

The three most relevant elements in the park design were the garden features of the whole park, the botanical garden and the urban design of the new neighbourhood of Palermo Chico. With these last two elements he proposed an axis given by Avenida Alvear that would connect Recoleta with the rest of the neighbourhoods of the waterfront northwards.

The project of Thays for the park was proposed and carried out in 1893, but in the proposal for the competition to be the Director de Parques, Thays included a limited section to the study and proposal of extension of this park.

His scheme divided the park in 4 areas:

The southern area was almost finished according to earlier plans. Thays suggests continuing the works on the ex Jardín de Aclimatación<sup>175</sup> and the Ring Avenue, to enlarge the water reservoir, to open general views and to suppress the regularity of some of the tree groups.

The Eastern area was naturally equipped for a landscaped garden and Thays considered it convenient to accent its similitude to southern European parks by the introduction of species coming from that continent.

The Northern area was the one less developed, and Thays proposes this area to be the one in which to plant all the Argentine species, for the public to recognise the beauty and richness of its local flora.

Finally, the Western part would be dedicated to a mixed landscaped park, with species from warm and temperate regions, a sector for a little French park and another for the Botanical Gardens. The botanical gardens were seen not only as a space for recreation and leisure but also as a didactic element in the city crucial for the education in medicine and pharmacy.

The parks morphology revealed in the drawing presented with his report in 1892<sup>176</sup> shows that there are few modifications done to the tracing of the southern part of the park. A whole new addition is presented starting on the northern limit of the park and taking a much bigger area than that of the existing one, adding the whole area of the park up to 565 hectares. The park is shaped in the landscaped typology of what Thays calls the *irregular* park design, but in a big scale, with long winding roads and courses of water that are crossed over by small bridges. New elements of program were also added, new forestation as was mentioned in the proposal of 1891, new flower areas and new buildings.

The hippodrome was added in the new section close to Avenida Buenos Aires. An earlier hippodrome or race horse court already existed further north, close to the waterfront; but this new one projected by Thays was part of the whole system of the Parque Tres de Febrero. The hippodrome was already popular in Paris and England; Paris had its first one in Longchamps in Bois de Boulogne since 1855, founded by the Jockey Club. However, in England the race tracks were not located in the capital but in peripheral cities, such as those of Ascot in Berkshire and Epsom in Surrey.

Other buildings as pavilions and kiosks were added, all close to the Avenue. The terrain closer to the river had less architectural elements and a more natural environment. There were no embankments to protect the park from the river tides and only two small piers would go into the water.

Compared to the drawing of the park in the map of Laurent of 1890, the park of Thays includes an avenue that continues from the city and crosses the park in the middle, finishing in a pier, which details are unfortunately not specified

in the drawing. The presence of the railway and the avenue then divide the southern section of the park into four separate distinct areas. The two areas limiting with the river are rather similar in morphology and keep the winding paths of the previous design, eliminating some of the roads and adding the closer relationship to the river, which used to lack in previous designs.

The south-western part of the already existing park is the one most modified and the one that differs the most from the rest. There the tracing of roads and the water areas are in a much smaller scale, showing a different relation to the avenue that limits it and the surrounding architecture. The access to the park is also modified by the Roundabout that connects the new Avenida Alvear with Avenida Sarmiento, which crossed the park.

As mentioned before, adjacent to the Park, next to this south-western section, Thays later projected in 1912 a new neighbourhood that was coherent with the design of the park.

Evidently, because of his education and years of work in France, Thays was naturally influenced by Alphand and André. As mentioned before, Thays added some new concepts to the ideas of his mentors. Thays included concepts of a more massive use of leisure, which in his project for Parque Tres de Febrero can be acknowledged.

<sup>175</sup> Acclimatisation garden

<sup>176</sup> Buenos Aires. Municipalidad. *Memoria de la Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires correspondiente al año 1892*. Buenos Aires, 1893.

<sup>177</sup> Downing Andrew Jackson, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America*, New York, 1841.

<sup>178</sup> *idem*.

Thays' influences did not only come from France but also in some way from British and North American park design. It is clear that Alphand had been interested in his Anglo Saxon colleagues, and this must have reached Thays eventually.

In the quote of Thays previously cited about the importance of parks, he includes the word *beautiful*, and his intention in the provision of parks is more concentrated on the need of such places as areas of rest and contemplation than of active recreation. His idea of the beautiful can then be related, as the projects by Sarmiento, to the works of the park movement. The influence of Downing is evident:

“the use of floral and horticultural riches of all climates (...) uniting in the same scene, a richness and variety, never to be found in any one portion in nature; a scene characterised as a work of art by the variety of materials... and by the polish and keeping of the grounds”<sup>177</sup>

Downing's insistence on the civilising powers of the park was also an inspiration, if not a direct one, on the works of Thays in Buenos Aires.

“that such a project, carefully planned and liberally and judiciously carried out, would not only pay in money, but largely civilise and refine the national character, foster the love of rural beauty, and increase the knowledge of and taste for rare and beautiful trees and plants, we cannot entertain a reasonable doubt”<sup>178</sup>

Thays' park had barely any buildings in it. As the project of Olmsted and Vaux for the south parks in Chicago, he completely relegated the

presence of architecture to the natural elements of the park.

“To conceive that all such architectural structures should be confessedly subservient to the main idea, and that nothing artificial should be obstructed on the view as an ultimatum of interest. The idea of the park itself should always be uppermost in the mind of the beholder”<sup>179</sup>

The piers in Thays' park were new elements added to the old project that changed the relation of the park with the river, providing a new perspective on the park as well as on the river. The location of these piers is rather peculiar. These were the first real pleasure piers built in Buenos Aires. Previously the piers on the southern side of the city had been used only for functional purposes, the three piers that were there prior to the building of the harbour were exclusively dedicated to trade functions and one of them for the moving of passengers.

Pleasure piers had at the time only been built in seaside resorts and spas, they had not been designed in cities with waterfront parks, so the combination of the park and the pier is rather innovative. Pier buildings for recreation were born in Britain, with the rise of the railroad network and mass tourism. Eugenius Birch's West Pier in Brighton was built in 1863, as well as the North Pier in Blackpool.

Thays' pier in the project for Parque Tres de Febrero is not detailed in the design but it is evidently a space for leisure, not for a functional need of the city, and it would serve as a precedent for the later projects for piers of Carrasco's waterfront parks.

Thays combined ideas of leisure as a civilising tool with concepts of the Park Movement

and not only developed and built the parks in Buenos Aires but he also provided a theoretical background to his work.

### Realisation and repercussions

Most of the project of Thays was realised and built, and in 1912 his project was finished. Benito Carrasco was made in charge of the park from that time on as Director de Parques y Paseos. The waterfront area of the park is not the most relevant one and it has received few comments or criticisms. However, it was paramount for the whole development of the park, for the low lands of the coast, that used to get easily flooded, were filled and drainage systems were provided, so that the park could be more easily used and it later needed less maintenance works.

The excavations for the building of the great lake provided enough soil for the fills to build a proper embankment for the railways. This infrastructure works gave the park a more cared for look and the addition of trees, statues, bowers, lampposts, piers, flowerpot stands and other elements gave the park the European image that was so sought for.

The restructuring of the park allowed a new scheme of urban behaviour that brought not only the public that could come from Recoleta by carriage but also the citizens that took the train. So they could all take advantage of this new park area and enjoy boating, concerts and bands, restaurants, cafes and milk shops. Particular buildings such as the Pabellón de las Rosas over Avenida Alvear or the Armenonville restaurant were placed in the park during the direction of Thays. However, these were built after the turn of the century and the Centennial of Independence, when leisure life in Buenos Aires was taking a completely different turn.

**4.2.2 – 1895-1910 - Waterfront promenades** – a search for international recognition – Morales. Bouvard. Exposición Internacional.

*In this period there is a shift of interest in the planning and design of open spaces, and the waterfront is also affected by this transformation. The projects of Morales, Bouvard and the Exposición Internacional propose a different type of landscape and open space. They are more focused on circulation issues and the role of these spaces in relation to the rest of the city. They are especially proposing open spaces as places of representation and didactic development. The widest reach of this ideas appear in the Exhibition, where parks are turned into real spaces of didactic leisure.*

The city of Buenos Aires went through a period of peace and unprecedented overall development throughout the last years of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. Once the crisis of 1890 was over, the fears of economical failure were mitigated and the idea of progress and evolution took over the political spheres as well as the everyday life of the common citizen. There was a strong expectation that this burst of success in the international markets and the local development in every sense would never cease.

As explained in the introduction, in this period of political stability and the configuration of the political scene, the city saw the development of political parties. The *Union Cívica Radical*, which would in later decades be in charge of city and country, the anarchist and left wing parties that would sponsor the labour and social reform, and

the Socialist Party, which would in a less extreme way make sure that these reforms took place. The French Republican model was replaced by European positivism<sup>180</sup>, where Argentine political elite embraced the ideal of *scientific politics*.

The urban condition in the rest of the world was changing, and so it was in Buenos Aires. The City Beautiful movement in the United States, inspired by the work of Daniel H. Burnham (1846-1912) was changing the concept of park design and planning in the US and Europe. Architecture was increasingly taking over public space. A good example of this transformation was South Park of Chicago projected by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in 1871. This park, which followed ideas of the *Park Movement* and *Rational Recreation* was transformed in 1893 into the World Columbian Exposition. This was a space of representation where international ideas and products were being shown in the context of a new kind of city, formally inspired in classical norms. The morphology of this new city was that of symmetry and monumental architecture.

As observed by Pregill:

“The Columbian Exposition demonstrated that Beaux Arts principles formerly limited to glorification of architecture were in fact equally or more suited to the creation of structured outdoor spaces.”<sup>181</sup>

The City Beautiful movement focused on civic art, design, reform and improvement and to what regarded open spaces it treated them as critical urban needs emphasising active rather than passive recreation. The hierarchy of spaces and the location of important buildings as nodes or focuses in the city were also central to the configuring of urban space. Despite the

intentions of this movement for the social reform of citizens, this aim was difficult to realise, for the need for civic space led to the demolition of slums and the legislation was not suited for relocating the dwellers, so this might have caused even more social unrest.

In general on the European Continent, by this time, another new tendency of public space design was being developed, the parks as a tool for social recreation, to afford relief of the workers, and this was a direct effect of the working conditions in already very industrialised and overcrowded cities. Examples of these kinds of projects were those of Leberecht Migge and Fritz Schumacher in Germany. These projects, opposed to the American examples did not have a symmetrical or geometrical configuration, but they still differed strongly in program from the landscape architecture of Olmsted or Vaux. On the other hand, the German school of Camillo Sitte<sup>182</sup> was very influential on characters such as Burnham in the US and Raymond Unwin in the UK.

<sup>179</sup> Description of Greensward Park 1858 (as reprinted in 1868) Olmsted and Vaux, Original Report, quoted in *Forty Years of Landscape Architecture*, vol II, by Kimball and Olmsted jr, 1928, p.222

<sup>180</sup> Charles Hale, “Political and Social Ideas in Latin America, 1870-1930,” in Leslie Bethell, ed. *The Cambridge History of Latin America, 1870 to 1930*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, vol. IV, pp. 367-441

<sup>181</sup> Pregill, Philip, Volkman, Nancy, *Landscapes in history, Design and Planning in the Eastern and Western Tradition*, John Wiley & Sons inc., New York, 1999, pp.579

<sup>182</sup> Sitte, Camillo, *Der Städtebau nach seinen Künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, Birkhäuser, reprint, 2002, 1889

International exhibitions in general throughout Europe and the US were being used as spaces of representation that were conditioning the way urban and public space was used and experienced. The use of public space for the packaged demonstration of certain cultures and places was being generalised world wide and Buenos Aires was one of the cities that could not be left aside in this international campaign for the didactic development of national identity.

International conferences on urban issues, such as the RIBA in 1910 and the 1910 and 1911 conferences in Berlin, were generalised throughout the world and were providing a set of tools for urban development. The roles of Herman Joseph Stübben and Werner Hegemann were crucial in these meetings, for they provided new ways of analysing cities and gave a set of rules and regulations as well as concepts of use of the city that were unprecedented. Among these was the very relevant role of parks, as *lungs of the city* for the health and recreation of citizens.

When it comes to waterfront leisure projects, they were already being built in cities throughout the United States and South America; the development of Coney Island and Battery Park in New York, the Chicago waterfront, Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro, and the waterfront projects for Buenos Aires were being developed. The contemporary building of harbours and leisure spaces was active and conflicted, but carried out. This was not the case of the European cities, where harbours were rapidly growing and taking over most of the waterfront adjacent to the city. In Europe, already since the 1850s, the waterfront cities exclusively for leisure were being increasingly exploited.

In the case of Buenos Aires the waterfront

avenue or boulevard replaces the picturesque and intricate paths and waterways of the parks inspired in the Anglo-American model. New perspectives are open and the waterfront projects become part of a general urban plan for the city, an interconnected, related and hierarchical system of parks and avenues.

In this chapter we will look at the first two protagonists of this waterfront evolution: Carlos Maria Morales and Joseph Antoine Bouvard. They share an interest both in the networking of the city through transportation and perspectives and in the need of a space that relates the water to the city. The international exhibition of 1910, in which these professionals and others participated, will be analysed at last, to understand the transformation of public space into a place of representation.



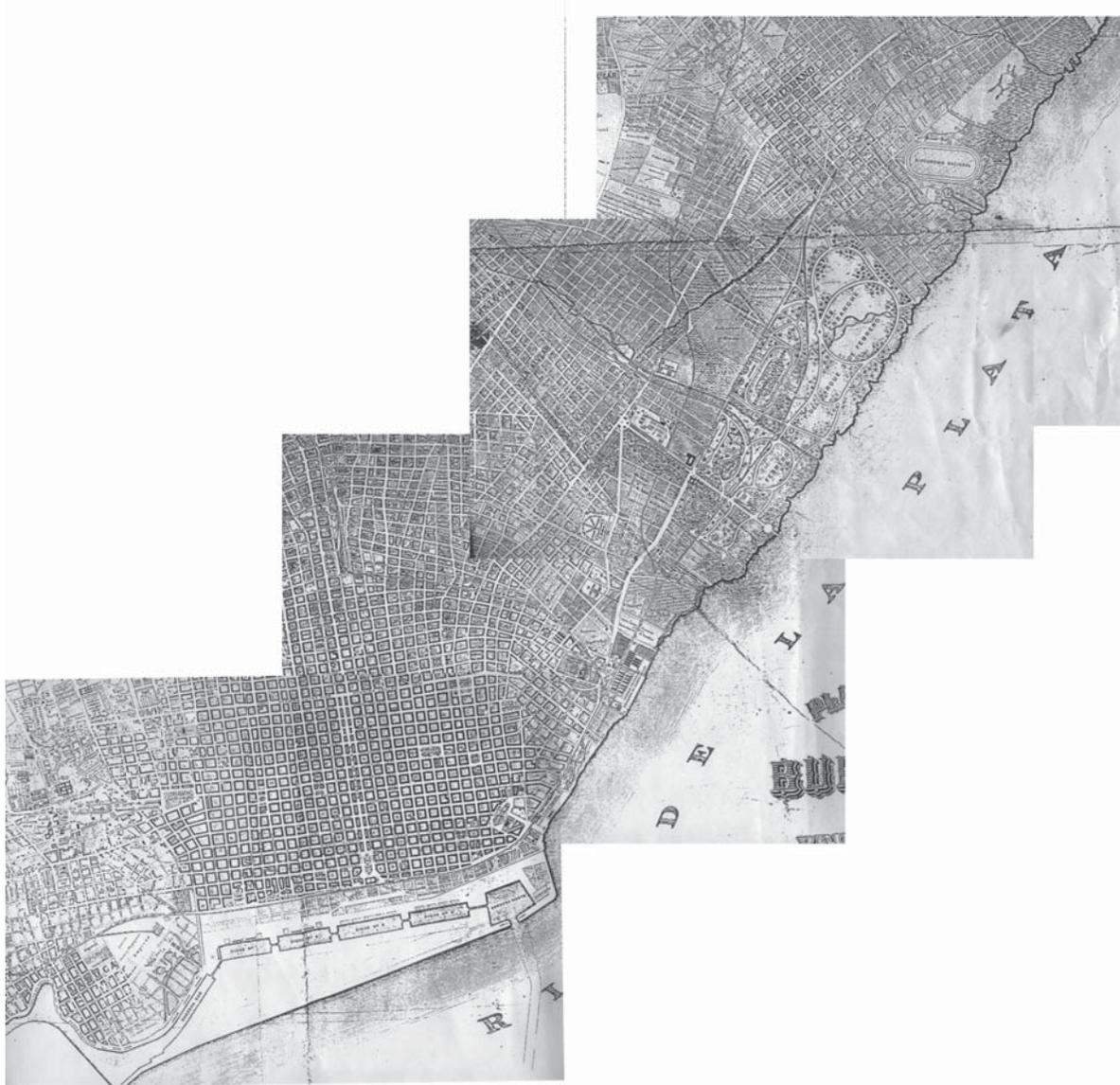


figure 4-57 - 1895 - detail - Plano Topografico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires

author: Carlos María Morales

source: archivo Alicia Novick

Due to the irregularity of the floor plan of the city apart from the original tracing of the Spanish colony, Morales notes the need for a plan and prior to it the observation and representation of the actual conditions of the city. Morales and a commission named for this purpose formulate the map of Buenos Aires that was presented in 1895 (figure 4-57). The map was based on the cadaster studies done since 1892. Morales was articulate in the description of the formulation of the cadastre and explains in detail the way the city is measured and how this is represented in the plan. He also explains a set of rules and regulations for the possible measurements made in the future.

All the studies done on the city, which included pavements, lots, and service infrastructure led to a plan that was done in 1898. This general plan for the city considered the major issues to be solved, focusing on a network of transportation that would link a series of focal points in the city providing also a series of urban perspectives. Another relevant issue considered in the plan was the design and inclusion of new parks and the refurbishing of the already existing ones.

The first point addressed by Morales was the growth of population and the raise in construction in the city, which did nothing but increase, having a record of 27,940 km<sup>2</sup> in 1897. Through this analysis he describes the location of these new constructions, that though they are built in much better quality than in previous decades in the central area, when it comes to the periphery there were many problems arising. One of them, and most relevant one, was that the real estate speculation allowed the sprawl of urbanisation without services, and once the area was built, it was very difficult to install the needed infrastructure. By 1898, there were 5373

blocks, in which 145.440 houses were built.

Morales then wrote about the inclusion of a series of diagonals in the city centre, as well as a north south avenue, but he did not mention who formulated this plan, which was made during the administration of Antonio Crespo as a major of the city (figure 4-58). The financing of the paving of streets was one of the main issues in the report by Morales. Basically the municipality would be in charge of half of the expenses and the rest would be paid by the owners of houses adjacent to the streets to be paved. In the case of streets that were crossed by tramways the tramway company would be in charge of great part of the expenses.

When it comes to infrastructure, one of the issues that seemed a growing problem was that of flooding, the increased building was not allowing the correct draining of water and each year the floods were increasingly serious. The solution provided for this was a system of embankments and drainage that would lead to the River, which had been done already in the neighbourhood of la Boca next to the Riachuelo.

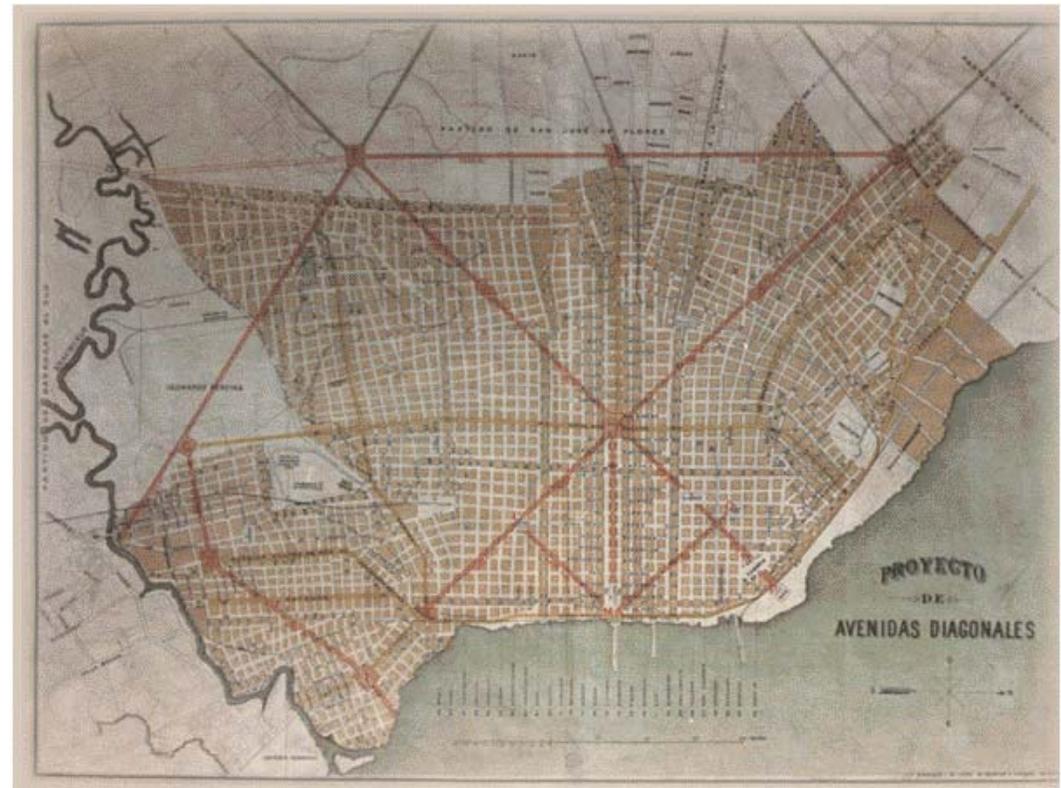
Another issue addressed by Morales was that of public transport. In 1896 the first electric tramway was established and more than 300 km of rail were planned for this new transport system. . By 1898 the extension of the tramways in Buenos Aires was of 439 km. The transition from the blood traction to electric had not convinced the locals until it was established, for there were fears that, being electricity more expensive than in Europe and the US the expenses would be excessive for the city. However, this was not the case, as the use of the new electrical tramways increased sensibly, the expenses were eventually lower.

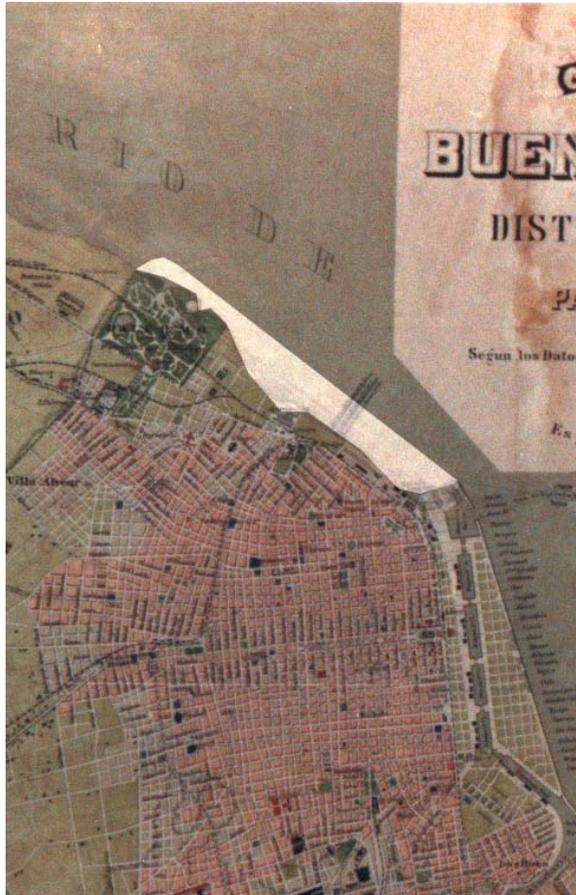
By this period the water provision services did not depend on the municipality but

on the State, so the municipality provided the new installations of water supply on the suburbs. However, the State was still in charge of all the network of water provision of the city, and did an extended work for it in the previous decades, which according to Morales had completely changed the hygienic conditions of the city of Buenos Aires.

Carlos Maria Morales, engineer in charge of the waterfront design, was the first to propose a waterfront avenue that would be a source of needed leisure space, as well as a part of a network of avenues that would give the needed limits and links to the city.

**figure 4-58** - 1887- Proyecto de Avenidas Diagonales  
author: Intendente Crespo  
source: Museo Mitre





**figure 4-59** - detail Buenos Aires y Distrito Federal  
author: Pablo Ludwig  
source: Museo Mitre  
location of waterfront Avenue by Morales

Morales - project - 1895 - avenue and promenade

*Morales was an engineer, and this is evident in the type of design he developed for the waterfront avenue. He focused mainly on this avenue as a constitutive element in a complex system of circulation, concentrating on the technical solutions and leaving little space for aesthetic issues. He still is clear about the importance of such a representative place in the city.*

### Context and administration

The first time the project of Morales for a waterfront avenue was presented was in 1895, within the context of the *Plan de Mejoras para el Municipio*. The project was presented to the City Council by the Mayor Emilio V. Bunge and commended to Carlos Maria Morales.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The location planned for the waterfront project was the northern coast of the city. It consisted on an avenue starting from Dársena Norte that would finish in Av. Sarmiento in Palermo<sup>185</sup> (figure 4-59). The avenue would be 100 meter-wide, so that it would be eventually joined with the already planned ring avenue (currently Av. General Paz). This avenue and lands would be linking the centre of the city with the parks of Palermo, providing eventually with the first hints of networking parks and avenues to form a municipal structure. This kind of project had already been previously proposed by engineer Maraini under the administration of Alvear and by a private company in 1890: Sociedad Malecon

y Puerto Norte (figure 4-60).

Two main partial projects had preceded the *Plan de Mejoras* for the city of Buenos Aires. One of them was Avenida de Mayo, an avenue placed in the centre of the city, designed to give a new scale to the area, to provide a style that would match with the new forms of living the city. The other relevant project was the Ring Avenue, first presented by Alvear and then finally traced and called avenida General Paz. This avenue would provide a limit for the municipal area and divide it from the jurisdiction of the province thus giving a limited geography to the already relatively autonomous city. Therefore, Avenida Costanera was a project thought of to provide a closing trace to the Ring Avenue, as one more element to provide a limit, a frontier that would separate civilisation and wilderness.

Once again as in previous projects for the harbour in the south, the project considered landfill on the river, which would act as a financing force with the selling of new land for private purposes. The idea of landfills as a way to provide space in front of the river is recovered in this project.

“Now, I do not think I am being optimistic at stating that the sale of 700,000 squared metres of land gained to the river will produce the necessary amounts for covering expenses. It is thought that these plots will be easily sold for more than 10 pesos the squared meter, average. However, admitting that it might be necessary to spend something, it would never be too much to carry out this project. Wouldn't the expense be completely justified knowing that we are dealing here with the fact of giving the city one of the most beautiful promenades in

the world?"<sup>186</sup>

The gained land would provide space for the continuation of the grid of the city and the selling of plots would eventually finance the whole project and even give profit. The idea of aesthetics is used to justify the investment of great amounts of money.

"Few cities, in fact, will have the possibility, for its placing in front of a river like ours, of being able to build a promenade of this extension, which magnificence can be previewed without effort. On one side the river, whose display will be always a main attraction. On the other side beautiful country houses, modern constructions, a site preferred by people of good taste and fortune, big hotels, bath houses, etc. And at the promenade, with its grand perspective, the wide attendance this city already has, will assume proportions that escape any estimate."<sup>187</sup>

This short quotation reflects the aesthetic aspect of the project presented, and the capacity of this aesthetic to provide a space of prestige that had lacked in previous times. These ideas are shared by the intentions of the International Exhibition of 1910, which celebrated the Centennial of Independence of the country. The urban project and the exhibition built a system of representation that intended to attract attention to a city that was pushing to appear in an international network of metropolises.



**figure 4-60** - terrenos de la Sociedad Malecon y Puerto Norte de Buenos Aires  
author: Pablo Ludwig  
source: Museo Mitre

<sup>185</sup>Morales, Carlos Maria, *Memoria presentada al Concejo Deliberante por el Intendente Municipal Sr. Emilio V. Bunge*. Año 1895. Establecimiento de Impresiones G. Kraft, Buenos Aires, 1896.

<sup>186</sup>idem

<sup>187</sup>idem

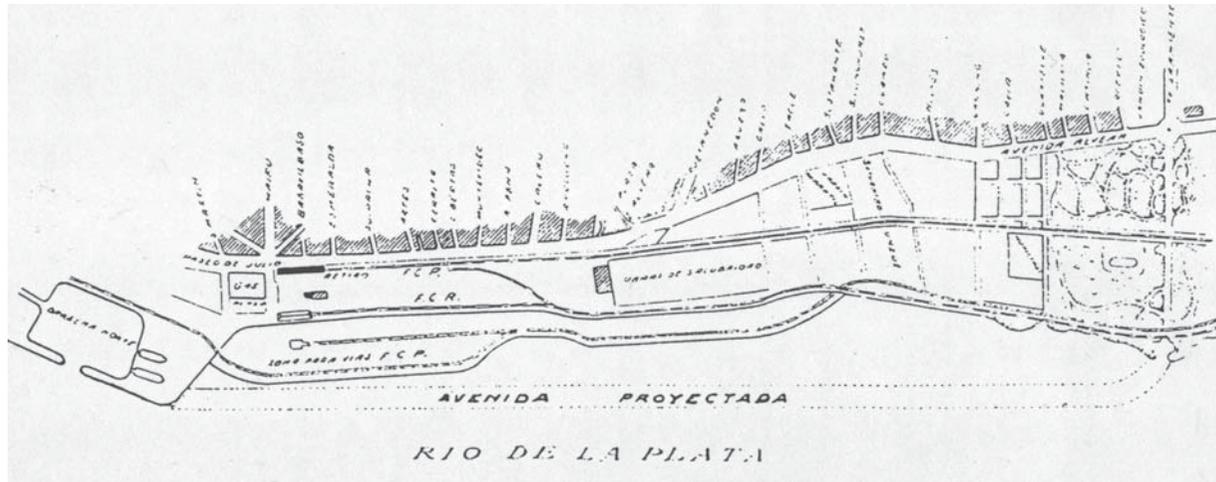


figure 4-61 - 1895-Plan de Mejoras de Buenos Aires

author: Carlos Maria Morales

source: Morales, Carlos Maria, *Las mejoras Edilicias de Buenos Aires, memoria presentada al segundo Congreso Científico Latino-Americano, reunido en Montevideo*, Anales de la Sociedad Científica Argentina, Buenos Aires, 1901.

The infrastructure consisted on an exterior protecting wall, an avenue with roundabouts and sidewalks. The park elements included trees, paths for cyclists and riders, statues and flower kiosks. It also provided a series of hotels. However, these elements of programme do not appear in the design presented by Morales in his report of the project (figure 4-61). This drawing shows barely the actual situation of the waterfront, the infrastructure of existing railways and the added ones, plus the tracing of the avenue.

Nevertheless, the text addresses many more ideas and proposals. Regarding leisure ideas there is a constant mentioning of the promenade as a space of diversion in the crowding city, following the ideas of European urbanism. On the other hand the mentioning of the building of hotels in the area shows how, for the first time in Buenos Aires, the aspect of leisure as tourism is included in the thinking of the city.

The social aspect of the project shows a double discourse regarding the social group for whom these projects are intended. Morales, in his discourse to the City Council spoke about "beautiful houses, modern constructions, preferred site of people of good taste and fortune"<sup>188</sup>. On the other hand he says:

"Once this avenue is built the population will be able to enjoy the spectacle of the river which is today inaccessible, we could say, to the majority of the people, who cannot travel by coach to Palermo."<sup>189</sup>

So there is a double intention, if not necessarily contradictive, to provide private leisure space for the upper classes and public leisure space for the lower ones.

The work of Morales develops at a time in which urban ideas are changing all over the world and

a system of international exchange is developing due to the World Exhibitions and the international urban conferences. At the same time the social structure in cities is also rapidly changing in Europe and America, which automatically affected leisure time and quality of recreation habits.

Continuing the work of Alvear, Morales included new concepts in his projects for the city, especially issues of hygiene ruling the morphology of urban architecture can be related to the work of Josef Stübben<sup>190</sup>. There are many points in common between the text of Morales of 1895 and the one presented by Stübben to the meeting of *Deutsche Vereine für Öffentliche Gesundheitspflege*, held at Freiburg in 1885. Issues about the dimensions of buildings to provide a healthy and aired environment are remarkably similar. In general ideas of the distances and measurements of streets and boulevards and the use of trees for the solving problems such as those of flooding are present in both texts. Despite the morphology of the cities addressed by Stübben is not the one that Morales uses, the principles of circulation are rather similar.

A movement that was present internationally in the period in which Morales was working on the city of Buenos Aires was the City Beautiful movement. There is no real evidence of Morales being aware of the World Columbian Exposition of Chicago of 1893, or the urban conference celebrated in the same city in this year, but some of his ideas reveal a certain influence of this movement.

Even though Morales was not an architect and was less concerned in the morphology of the city than in the functionality of the elements that compose it, when it came to the proposal

of the waterfront avenue there is no doubt that he was concerned in the aesthetics of the space. The fact that the Chicago Exposition was placed on the waterfront and there were projects for the waterfront sprawling throughout America must have had some influence on the decision of Morales of actually building this waterfront avenue.

### Realisation

The project was not built at the time but Joseph Bouvard would include this project almost as presented by Morales in the plan of 1909. Later, Carrasco would also use it as a reference for his waterfront project.

<sup>188</sup> Morales, Carlos Maria, *Memoria presentada al Concejo Deliberante por el Intendente Municipal Sr. Emilio V. Bunge*. Año 1895. Establecimiento de Impresiones G. Kraft, Buenos Aires, 1896.

<sup>189</sup> idem

<sup>190</sup> Stübben, Josef, *Handbuch des Städtebaues*, Berlin, 1890, 1907, 1924.

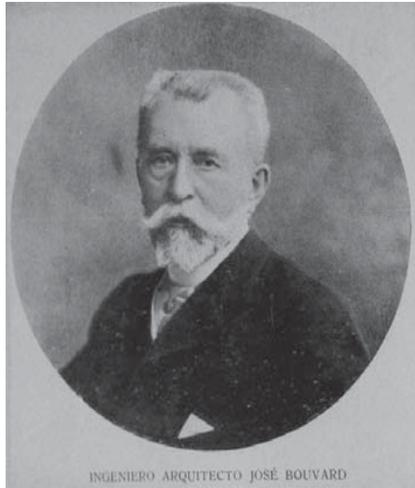


figure 4-62 - Joseph Antoine Bouvard

author: Cao

source: caricature from Caras y Caretas, Buenos Aires, n.447. April 1907



#### 4.2.2.2- Bouvard – waterfront as part of a transportation network

##### Joseph Bouvard – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

After a long and fruitful career in public architecture and exhibition design, Joseph Antoine Bouvard (1840-1920) (figure 4-62) was hired by Mayor Carlos de Alvear to formulate an urban plan for the city of Buenos Aires.

Bouvard was born in Paris, and one of his first works in the French capital was his collaboration with Constant-Dufeux (1801-1870) in the construction of the church of Saint-Laurent in Paris. He also worked as an architect, supervising the public works of the Parisian neighbourhood of Belleville. Bouvard followed his work with Alphand, who was at the time the municipal architect of Paris. Bouvard was later named *Architecte de l'Administration Centrale des Beaux Arts* and with this role he worked on the building of dozens of schools and the museum of Carnavalet.

One of his most outstanding roles was that of Exhibition design. He participated as the designer of the French pavilion in the World Exhibitions of Paris of 1878 and 1889. Later, in 1900 he took over the important role of *Directeur des Parcs et Jardins* in the Paris Exhibition. He also worked on other World Exhibitions as the one of Brussels (1897), Amsterdam, Chicago (1893), Anvers (1894) St. Louis (1904) and Melbourne. In 1892 Bouvard replaced Alphand in the position of *Comisaire Generale des Fetes Officieles*. Five years later he was named *Directeur et Administrateur du Service d'Architecture des Promenades et Rues de Paris*. Bouvard's principles of park design show a clear contrast to those of previous designers in Buenos Aires and also throughout America and

Europe. The use of public space as a space of representation replaces the ideas of public space as a place of passive and active recreation.

For Bouvard the public square is a:

“...meeting point, a pleasant place, where feasts and ceremonies are held, a centre of profit of fresh air, an appropriate location for monuments and a reference point in the labyrinth of streets. It is a place of rest, of regulating movement. They will have to be created profusely throughout all areas of the city”<sup>191</sup>

Bouvard was neither an independent professional nor a leading one. He lacked written works and his municipal career was opaque, as compared to other contemporary figures like Henri Prost, León Jaussely, or Eugène Hénard, who had studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and were all highly successful in international competitions. Bouvard's main merits were owed to his activities at the Paris Municipality and his participation in exhibitions<sup>192</sup>.

Bouvard's activities in Buenos Aires have been studied thoroughly<sup>193</sup>, so it is not the intention here to deeply analyse his work but to give an overview of his ideas and his role as a planner in Buenos Aires.

The end of the nineteenth century brought a period of progress for Argentina and for the city of Buenos Aires. The increase in immigration brought demographic explosion. The steady growth in production and foreign investment in the whole country and therefore growth of commerce and trade set for a transformation in the city and in its population. The accumulation of local capital was a consequence of all these factors and produced economical, social and political change. This process could be called a process

of modernisation of the state, which obviously brought a steady growth and transformation of the city of Buenos Aires. These factors also led way to problems such as housing deficit. Therefore, administration of the city was also transformed and organised in a more efficient way. Two major events were the consequence of all these influences: the urban plan of 1909 and the Celebration of the Centennial of Independence of 1910. Both enterprises were justified by ideas of representation, circulation and hygiene. Between 1905 and 1906, the different proposals were analysed by the Congress and the Municipality Council, placing within the scope of the debate the significance of *expropriations* and *public interest*, as well as ways of financing public works.

Upon the difficulties in selecting the projects and the urgency required to start the constructions for the celebration of the centennial, the city mayor, Carlos de Alvear, employed the French architect Bouvard as an external consultant. Both Argentina and France endorsed Bouvard's contract, having it acquire the status of a diplomatic agreement contemplating bilateral interests. Carlos de Alvear was the son of Torcuato de Alvear, previous mayor of Buenos Aires between 1880 and 1886, and responsible of the first project for baths on the waterfront. The Alvear family, as many other families of the elite, had a tight bond with France and especially with Paris. This was tightened by the fact that some members of the family were set as ambassadors in the French capital. The Alvears consulted thoroughly the urban archives of Paris with the aim of investigating aesthetics and administrative tools for their use in Buenos Aires.

Briefly in 1907, Bouvard travelled to Buenos Aires and drew several projects. Namely the urban plan for Buenos Aires and the International Exhibition's layout. The *New*

*Plan*<sup>194</sup> (figure 4-63) limited itself to fixing limits of streets and plazas, according to the canons of the emerging *art urbain*. From there on, the location of railway stations, infrastructures and housing for workers were beyond the scope of action and were debated in other spheres. He passed on his experience in producing the descriptive report, his knowledge in the use of bibliographical references, and in general decision making, which enabled him to present urban proposals in a new way. These contributions were articulated with the high level of the problems as a reflection of the ample experience of the local architects.

His proposals were criticised in the local specialised press, which pointed out his ignorance of local reality and the lack of an adequate amount of time for preliminary studies. This opposition, mainly carried out by local architects, was aimed at recovering their role as decision-makers, and set against the mayor and his possible personal interests. The critics exposed the official attitude of ignoring the contributions of a technical body of solid background in spite of belonging to a "new country". On his first assignment, Bouvard acted as a project technician, resolving "from scratch" all the projects, and not as an expert. In spite of this, and under pressure from the city mayor Carlos de Alvear, who was in office only for a year, the general plans were sanctioned by the City Council.

While Bouvard was working in Buenos Aires, a company for public works was being formed with headquarters in Paris. The Company's objectives were "to attract French capital towards highly profitable businesses offered in Argentina to our economic activities: Railways, Tramways, and mining, banking, and public works enterprises"<sup>195</sup>. This Company was a consulting firm who aimed at joining together European and Latin-American shareholders of influence in

possession of information concerning potential business. The role of these urban technicians was to secure investments in unstable markets such as Argentina. Indeed, Bouvard, in view of his performance in Argentina, was named Director of one of these companies.

There are diverging opinions about the role of Bouvard in the development of the city of Buenos Aires. Berjman is rather critical about the work of Bouvard and its implications for the city. She states, and we agree, that having only spent six weeks in Buenos Aires it was extremely difficult to formulate an accurate diagnosis of the problems of the city, and this was obviously the case. Another weak issue in the hiring of the French architect were the political mechanisms followed for this purpose. Having completely capable local professionals for the developing of the plan, the government decided to summon a French architect, whom they paid accordingly. However, his hiring had more to do with a will for international recognition of prestige than for an actual improvement of the conditions of living in the city of Buenos Aires.

<sup>191</sup> Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, *El Nuevo Plano de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires*, Talleres Graficos de la Penitenciaia Nacional, Buenos Aires 1910. Pg.10

<sup>192</sup> Chatelet, Anne-Marie, "Joseph Antoine Bouvard (1840-1920)", *Seminario Internacional Vaquerias*, Documento de trabajo N° 1, Córdoba, Argentina, 1996.

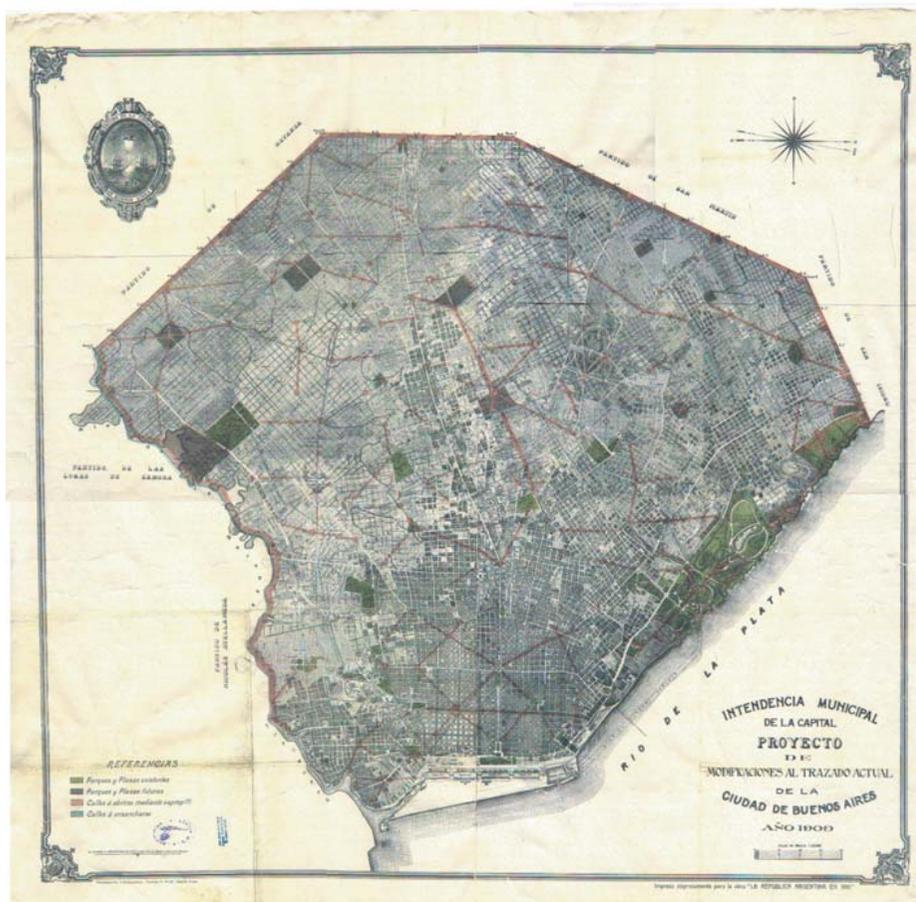
<sup>193</sup> Berjman, Sonia (1997), *Plazas y parques de Buenos Aires: La Obra de los paisajistas franceses. 1860-1930*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Buenos Aires, 1997.

Tartarini (1991), "El Plan Bouvard para Buenos Aires (1907-1911). Algunos antecedentes", in *ANALES* N° 27-28, IAA-FADU-UBA, Buenos Aires.

<sup>194</sup> Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, *El Nuevo Plano*. Pg.10

<sup>195</sup> Archives. Ministere Des Affaires Etrangeres. *Nouvelle série. Sous série: Argentine. Volume: 17. Industrie, travaux publics, mines. Mission dans l'Amérique latine. Direction des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales. Date: 9 décembre 1909.*

**figure 4-63** - 1909- Proyecto de modificaciones al trazado actual de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires  
author: Joseph Antoine Bouvard  
source: El Nuevo plano de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, Informe del Arquitecto J. Bouvard, Intendencia Municipal de la Capital. Talleres Gráficos de la Penitenciaría Nacional, Buenos Aires 1910.



Already in the quotation previously cited, the morphology of Buenos Aires and its history are highly disregarded. When Bouvard writes about the labyrinth of the city in his report on Buenos Aires, he is oblivious of the fact that this is not a French or European city with a history of a medieval town with intricate streets and a labyrinthine layout. Buenos Aires' morphology was that of the gridiron layout set up by the Spaniards with some slight changes of direction and modifications.

Bouvard - project - 1909 - urban plan

*Bouvard's project was extremely discussed in all contexts in the city of Buenos Aires. His project was mainly a compilation of previous local projects plus an extended system of avenues and parks that followed the lines of previous plans. His project for the waterfront avenue does not differ from that of Morales except in the interest on the aesthetic principles of spaces of civic representation for the city.*

### Context and administration

The political situation in which the plan of Bouvard was developed was explained previously. With Carlos de Alvear as mayor and his tight bonds with Paris and the French urbanism, the inclusion of the project of Bouvard was well received by the authorities and approved by the city council without much ado.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The plan of Bouvard proposed two particular projects apart from the waterfront parks in the whole northern coast of the city. One of these projects was a northern waterfront avenue and another was to open the Plaza de Mayo to the river.

The waterfront avenue project (figure 4-64) within the urban plan of Bouvard was almost directly taken from the project of Morales of 1895, but it included ideas more literally inspired in French urbanism. Already, ideas of Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier, French park designer, were included in the design of all avenues in general and the waterfront one in particular. Still, the

main idea of the whole plan was not to provide a series of isolated projects, but a whole system of parks and avenues that would change the use of the city.

Bouvard focused on one of his main ideas for Buenos Aires: the need to open the city towards the Rio de la Plata.

“The decisions taken so far, particularly in relation to the more dense parts of the city, have set aside the beautiful features of the incomparable river surrounding it.”<sup>196</sup>

This idea surpassed the effects of a previous project proposing a ring avenue — riverside avenue (1898), and aimed at alleviating the effects on the coast of the construction of the port facilities. This proposal was inspired by Bouvard’s own Parisian project to liberate the banks of the Seine after the Exhibition of 1900. The innovation consisted in establishing a new relationship between the city and the river, an idea that was to be repeated in future urban proposals like those of Benito Carrasco, J.C.N Forestier and Le Corbusier. Nevertheless, when it comes to his project for the extension of Plaza de Mayo (figure 4-65), the disregard for the local conditions was also clear. In the drawing we can see an axial composition, with a perspective that reaches the location of the Congress building, through Avenida de Mayo. However, the Government building that was *blocking* this perspective is eliminated and the whole system of buildings of the power structure of city and country are eliminated. The avenue and park are giving high priority to vehicle circulation and less to pedestrian. The use of green is relegated to a geometric enhancement of the axiality and the square does not provide any sense of nature or natural environment.

The waterfront parks, on the other hand, are practically not mentioned in the text and for his map Bouvard uses the already existing drawings of parks that were already there or that came from projects of other local professionals. However, there is more to it than just the waterfront avenue taken from Morales project. Bouvard draws, with the same technique as he did the rest of diagonal avenues, red transparent lines, a series of connecting avenues or boulevards that link the different existing streets in the park of Palermo and further north, producing a system of circulation that homogenises the whole waterfront area.

This plan in general, like the following ones, would mainly use new instruments rather than present new ways of urban transformation. With the exception of the opening towards the river, it is a sort of synthesis of a process along which many different projects for the city had been drawn. Upon the drawing of the plan, these other projects formed part of a systematised scheme of the changes taking place in the city. In this sense, the New Plan, with the assistance of Bouvard’s know-how, condensed the proposals of modernisation of Buenos Aires at the turn of the century.

In Bouvard we find an obvious follower of the new concepts of urbanism in which public space and its aesthetics become more important than the already partly achieved aims of hygiene and infrastructure of the city. Even though his few texts do not refer to the City Beautiful movement, the fact that he was an active participant in World Exhibitions starting with the ones of Paris and following especially with the North American ones shows at least a sympathy for the City Beautiful movement.

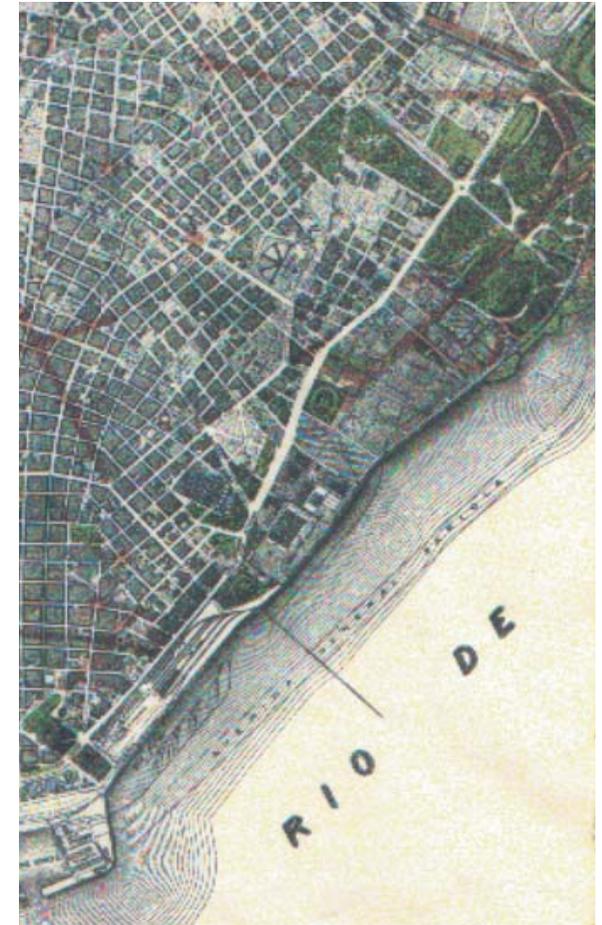
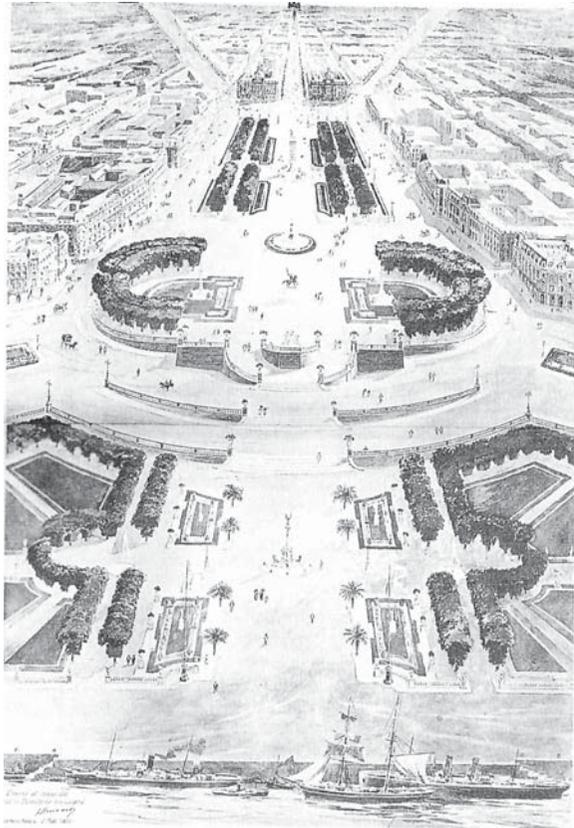


figure 4-64 - 1909- Proyecto de modificaciones...- detail waterfront avenue  
author: Joseph Antoine Bouvard  
source: El Nuevo plano de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1910.

<sup>196</sup>Bouvard, Joseph Antoine, Intendencia Municipal, *El nuevo plano de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires*, Buenos Aires, 1909.pg.17



**figure 4-65** - 1910 Plaza Colon y Plaza de Mayo  
author: Joseph Antoine Bouvard  
source: Censo Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1910.

Bouvard is an example of a professional who prioritises aesthetics and civic centres as representational areas of the city that articulate and shape the urban landscape. Trying to forget the fact that his plan for Buenos Aires disregarded many of the aspects of the needs of the city and the real history and morphology that was to be dealt with, we can compare his projects to other contemporary ones in the international scene.

If we focus on the drawing of the project for the extension of Plaza de Mayo up to the river there is a lot to read through it. If we compare it with the projects of the previous period it is already evident that the concept of public space has changed. There is no regard for a green picturesque landscape to be cut out from the city, for the experience of nature in contrast to the urban conditions. Instead, the open space becomes an integrated part of the city. The civic centre includes architecture, preferably in the lines of a neo classical style. Trees and lawns of grass are minimal and almost inexistent compared to the area given to traffic and the already reduced space for the circulation of pedestrians. This is inevitably related to the City Beautiful movement and the concept of urban landscape as an art that can have a serious influence in the behaviour of city dwellers.

As in the words of Charles Mulford Robinson<sup>197</sup>:

“Social problems are to a large degree problems of the environment... with municipal art the utilitarian advantages and social benefits become so paramount that they are not forgotten... This art, which serves so many social ends, is municipal, in the sense of communal... It is not a fad. It is

not merely a bit of aestheticism... Altruism is its impulse”<sup>198</sup>

Once again the use of urban landscape as a tool for the manipulation of behaviour of urban society is explicit, but the morphology used for this purpose had changed internationally as well as in Buenos Aires.

We can relate one of Bouvard’s issues to the City Beautiful movement. This is the search for a change in leisure attitudes also, in which active leisure became more important than passive in the planning of open spaces. This is explained in Bouvard’s discourse on the qualities of public space, where they have to be places of exposition and celebration in which the citizens actively participate.

### Realisation

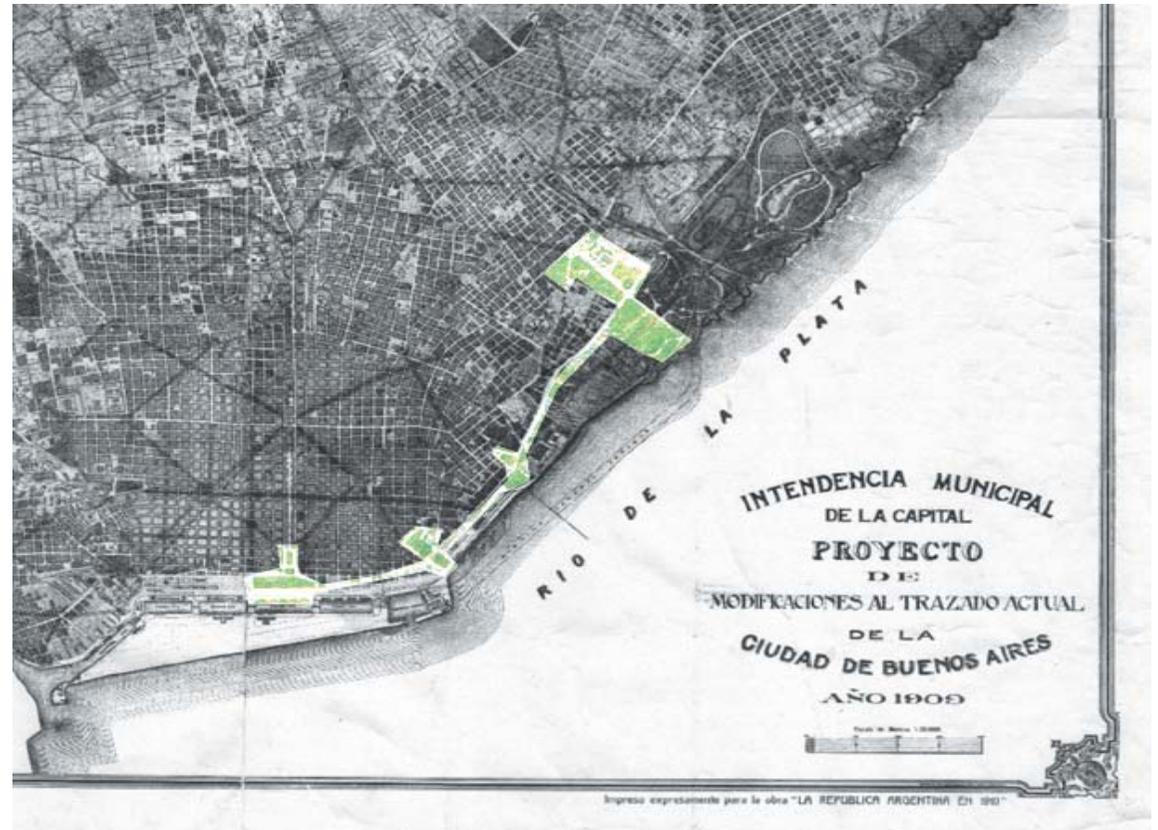
Some of the elements of the project by Bouvard, such as some diagonal avenues, and a couple of parks and squares were effectively built, but those of the waterfront were not. However, the avenue project for the northern waterfront would still stay on the table of project leaders and decision-makers to finally be developed in the 1930s.

4.2.2.3-**International Exhibition** - didactic leisure, international representation and contemplative recreation

### The exposition – relevant facts, intentions and urban landscape principles

The Centennial was a moment of consecration for the city and for established culture. The celebration of the 100 years of independence from Spain had many meanings and repercussions. A series of factors allowed for a moment of change in Buenos Aires. Official optimism, economical progress, social change, inequality and social conflict made of this a suitable time for a moment of celebration. With the celebrations of the centennial the government had various aims. One of them was to achieve a network of visual tools to set the feeling of belonging and provide an identity and a feeling of place for the mixture of cultures that populated the city of Buenos Aires at the time. Another important objective of the governing bodies was to put Buenos Aires at the level of European cities. With the anniversary of the May Revolution the commemoration of the past became the celebration of modernity, progress and future of the nation, symbolised in its capital city.<sup>199</sup>

The International Exhibition of 1910 was not specifically concentrated on the areas of the waterfront, even though part of it had the river as a limit (figure 4-66). However, it is relevant to analyse this event here for the important role it had in the ways of thinking the city and in the leisure ideas it introduced. The need of international recognition and the insisted comparison of Buenos Aires with the European metropolis produced a strong influence in the ways of thinking and living the city.



**figure 4-66** - 1909- Area of the Exposition on the Plan of Bouvard

author: Joseph Antoine Bouvard

source: El Nuevo plano de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1910.

<sup>197</sup> Charles Mulford Robinson (1869-1917) was a journalist and a writer who became famous as a pioneering Urban Planning theorist. He was the first Professor for Civic Design at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Robinson wrote *The Fair of Spectacle* in 1893, an illustrated description of Chicago's World Columbian Exposition, a watershed event for the City Beautiful Movement, and went on to write the first guide to City Planning in 1901, titled *The Improvement of Towns and Cities*.

<sup>198</sup> Mulford Robinson, Charles, *The Improvement of Towns and Cities. Or the Practical Basis of Civic Aesthetics*. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1901.

<sup>199</sup> Carmen Sesto y Maria Ines Rodriguez Aguilar, 'La hispanidad en la esfera urbana: despliegue y festejos en el centenario', in Gutman, Margarita, Reese, Thomas, *Buenos Aires 1910, Un imaginario para una gran capital*, Edudeba, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires 1999. p.241

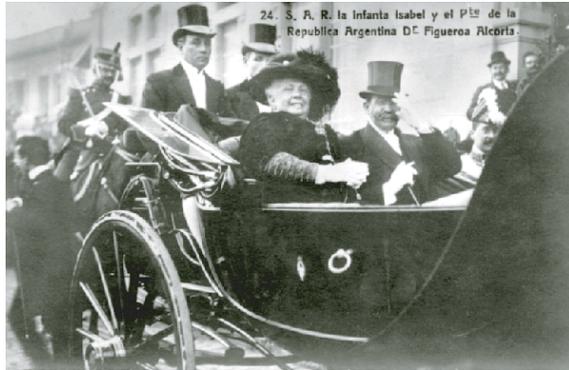
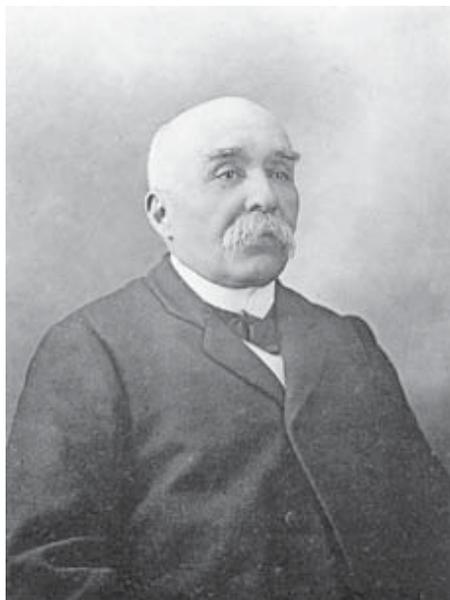


figure 4-67 - 1910 -Infanta Isabel and President Figueroa Alcorta  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caras y Caretas, 1910.

figure 4-68 - 1910 -Georges Clemenceau  
source: Archivo General de la Nación.



The exhibition, as a didactic tool, worked as a precedent for conceiving leisure spaces in the future.

By 1910 the country would abandon its quality of exclusive provider of meat and grains to become a focus of multiple interests. As many commentators state, the year 1910 was not only one of local celebration:

“1910 is much more than the Centennial of the May Revolution; it is the key year of the Argentina that extends between 1852 and 1916; it is – to say it in someone else’s phrasing - the most glorious hour of the project of the 80s”<sup>200</sup>

The first decades of the twentieth century were those of urban reform, the idea was to modernise the traditional city in similar terms to those of Alvear.<sup>201</sup> There was a need for monumental compounds that responded to a rationalist logic. The urban debate and the need of representation of the government led to the urban plan of Bouvard previously mentioned. One of the problems that would mark the urban planning of the beginning of the twentieth century in Buenos Aires was the competition and conflicts between the national government and the municipal one. This conflict would continue throughout the century reaching the city still today.

### International influence and attraction

The beginning of the twentieth century was internationally a period of faith in progress and capital, and Buenos Aires sought to be part of these ideas and proposed the International Exhibition as a way of demonstrating its position to the rest of the world. At the same time, the

transformation and transplant of international influences were building this particular image. Monuments and urban landscape were imported from France and Italy, caricatures and drawings came from Spain and commercial albums from Germany, England and the United States.

The role of the image of Spain was transformed from the 1880’s onwards. Towards 1880 there was still a Hispanophobic feeling. Alberdi and Sarmiento represented this tendency, criticising Spain for the historical years of domain over Argentina. The following thirty years changed this perspective. One of the main reasons for it was the rise in proportion of Spanish population in the country, which was mainly concentrated in the cities. In 1865 there was a 1.8% of Spanish in the country; by 1914 these were already 10.5% of Spanish born citizens.

From 1882 this image started to change. That was the year of the commemoration of the discovery of America and a literary event called *Juegos Florales* took place. Later, during the first decade of the twentieth century a construction of the Hispanic imaginary took place. The aims were the construction of an identity, the process of *Argentinisation*, the revalorization of modern Spain, and the legitimisation of the Spanish collectivity.

The confraternity between Spain and Argentina begins to take shape in 1900:

“The generosity of our motherland is rescued. She gave the gigantic birth and then donated the land to us, and a section of the European race, establishing an indissoluble community by the racial ascendance and a language as forces of harmony in a nation constantly renovated by the immigration masses.”<sup>202</sup>

Other Nations were also valued as good influence in the building of the local image. There was a will to try to copy the North American model, for the United States kept good relations with Great Britain and this gave great results.

“...has formed a moral alliance in whose virtue they do not obstruct each other but they co-operate because they have managed to transpose the honour of the Nation to a vaster field of the race”<sup>203</sup>

Regarding the international representation and the idea of the simulacra, the presence of certain foreign visitors is very relevant. Important characters visited the city during 1910. The Infanta Isabel de Borbón (figure 4-67) was received with parades and celebrations. The main celebration held on May 25<sup>th</sup> started with thousands of school children singing the anthem to the flag. At night, buildings in the central area were decorated with electric lights.

There was an evident will to show the best face of the city:

“As it becomes obvious, the visitors – except for the jurist Adolfo Posada, of socialist militancy, and the writer Santiago Rusiñol, who even spent some days in jail, detained along with anarchist sympathisers – saw almost exclusively what was shown of the city.”<sup>204</sup>

Visitors such as Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929)<sup>206</sup> (figure 4-68) or Jules Huret (1863-1915)<sup>205</sup> (figure 4-69) had nothing but praise for the city, for the hygiene in the streets, the parks and promenades, squares and gardens, Palermo and the zoological and botanical gardens.

### Social conflicts around the Centennial

The whole environment of the Centennial was not only that of euphoria and positive comments. It was also a moment of strong social conflict and this was also seen in the Centennial celebrations. A rise of nationalist thought took place. Apart from the real search of roots it was the irruption of fear of the different given by the high immigration rates in those years. Immigrants populated the leftist parties and formed a resistance to the establishment. The law of residence 1902 had allowed the government to expel *undesirable foreigners* from the country. The implementation of this law led to a strike organised by workers organisations to demand the suppression of the law. Leftist newspapers and the socialist party building were burned and even the Jewish neighbourhood had some shops burned.

Some isolated events also showed, in this case in the leisure field, how social conflicts impregnated the environment in Buenos Aires. In one case groups of University students from the Jockey Club<sup>207</sup> burned the Frank Brown Circus, located in Cordoba and Florida. The circus presented spectacles and theatre for free or for very low prices, so that the less well off people could also enjoy the celebrations. The act of burning it was praised by the mainstream newspapers, which criticised the circus for their public, did not comply with the image expected to show to the visitors of the city. Authors such as Posada saw this other face of the city and wrote:

“The area of the port has to be visited and the other neighbourhoods, and penetrate the dwellings called conventillos (figure 4-70) and the centres of promiscuity of tight space and filth to get an idea of the grey



figure 4-69 - 1910 -Jules Huret  
source: Archivo General de la Nación.

<sup>200</sup> Horacio Salas, ‘Buenos Aires 1910: La Capital de la euforia’ in Gutman, Margarita, Reese, Thomas, *Buenos Aires 1910, Un imaginario para una gran capital*, Edudeba, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires 1999. p.41

<sup>201</sup> Gorelik, Adrián. *La Grilla y el Parque. espacio público y cultura urbana en Buenos Aires, 1887-1936* Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1998.

<sup>202</sup> Carmen Sesto y Maria Ines Rodriguez Aguilar, ‘La hispanidad en la esfera urbana: despliegue y festejos en el centenario’, in Gutman, Margarita, Reese, Thomas, *Buenos Aires 1910, Un imaginario para una gran capital*, Edudeba, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires 1999. p.353

<sup>203</sup> Gonzalez, Joaquin V., *Obras Completas*, Buenos Aires, Camara de diputados, 1935, T.IX, p.90

<sup>204</sup> Carmen Sesto y Maria Ines Rodriguez Aguilar, ‘La hispanidad ... p.51

<sup>205</sup> Celebrated French journalist. He worked in several Parisian journals, such as L’Echo de Paris and Le Figaro. He was specialized in interviews and worked all over Europe due to his writing of the *Enquête sur la question sociale en Europe*.

<sup>206</sup> French statesman, physician and journalist. He served as the prime minister of France from 1906-1909 and 1917-1920. He led France during World War I and was one of the major voices behind the Treaty of Versailles.

<sup>207</sup> a high class club located in the rich neighbourhood of the city

<sup>208</sup> Carmen Sesto y Maria Ines Rodriguez Aguilar, ‘La hispanidad ... p.52



figure 4-70 - 1910 -Conventillo  
source: Archivo General de la Nación.Caja 10 sobre 1023

figure 4-71 - 1910- Immigrants descending from the ship  
source: Gutman, Margarita, Buenos Aires 1910, memoria de un porvenir, Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2000.



note there are steps of life that touch depth in the lowest layers of society, that cry for a ray of light, of clarity, of a more intensive social policy, more, more, much more of this than of a hard intervention of the police.”<sup>208</sup>

As it had been seen in other cities such as Barcelona, anarchist groups chose spaces of leisure of the higher social classes to protest for the social inequalities of the country. A bomb in Teatro Colon, the main theatre of the city, exacerbated xenophobia and made the law of residency more extreme.

1910 was also a year of some extent of social reform. The first two congresses of women took place then: The *Congreso Patriótico* and *Congreso del Centenario*. Neither was very innovative and they did not claim vote for women, but they set a precedent for the following reforms in the next decades. On the other hand the *Primer Congreso Femenino Internacional* counted with the participation of some of the first female professionals of the country. Subjects addressed were mainly the teaching of history, secular and mixed education and social influence of the mother, the battle of the sexes, problems of the working woman, prostitution, civic and political female rights, divorce and alcoholism.

The urban transformations that accompanied the celebrations of the centennial were not isolated in Buenos Aires. Other capitals such as Mexico, Santiago de Chile, la Habana and Bogotá used the celebration of centennial of independence as a pretext to show a new image of the country and city as much as to develop new urban ideas in the cities.

**The image of the city and the invention of an**

## identity

Approaching the time of the Centennial of Independence the state had never made such a systematic effort for giving identity and tradition to its citizens, of which a great proportion were immigrants (figure 4-71 and 4-72). This identity was therefore more created than discovered. The mixture of urban European cultures created a specific environment that was in need of its own identity.

As stated by Tulio Halperin Donghi:

“A city in construction is a city searching for its form; and the Centennial seems to almost impose a term for the final transfiguration of Buenos Aires. The action of the governing elite, who has directed the urban transformation since 1880, has been oriented towards this transfiguration”<sup>209</sup>

The Centennial of Independence brought the need of searching for a new image for a city that was beginning and pushing for recognition. This is what has been called by some authors the *imaginario urbano*<sup>210</sup>. This image as explained by Foucault can be interpreted as a kind of discourse. One of the premises for this image was that the image of Argentina was different to that of Buenos Aires, its capital. Buenos Aires was to be a place that produced *delight and emotion*<sup>211</sup>.

The Exhibition allowed three ways of access to representation: objects, performances and simulacra. These interactive fields were understood through hyper textual fields. Thomas Reese understands these interactive fields as *things* that are material and linked with professional

activities that create spatial representations; *actions* that are ephemeral, social, linked with spatial practices of the everyday life; and *images*, mental and cognitive illusions, linked to spaces of representation and to symbolic meanings.

“Almost every object or space reproduces, reflects or transforms the expressive behaviour, as much in the past as in the present”<sup>212</sup>

In this quote the relation between spatial transformation and urban behaviour becomes evident, the transformation of space influences behaviour and social behaviour can also influence the transformation of space.

In the particular case of Buenos Aires of 1910, as Reese accurately states, the Celebrations of the Centennial played a fundamental role in the identification of Argentina and Buenos Aires. This took place through the commemoration and construction of the memory of a city made by immigrants that had few concrete memories and few or no nostalgia for the historical moment of the origin of the Argentine Nation.

According to Hobsbawm<sup>213</sup> the social practices between 1870 and 1914 were filtered socially downward. In the case of Buenos Aires there were some exceptions. Music and dance such as tango had the opposite mechanism, a tradition born in the poorest neighbourhoods of the city was adopted by higher social classes and even exported to Europe later. This can be called an invented tradition.

The image of the city by 1910 was represented textually and visually (figures 4-73, 4-74, 4-75 and 4-76). Textual images were: travel tales, travel guides, almanacs, political memoirs, autobiographies, poetry and novel, facsimiles

and anthologies, essays, history and textbooks, official reports, literary awards were, as in the rest of the world, the images shown. On the other hand the visual were maps, models, panoramic views, architectural and urban drawings, drawing notebooks, paintings of the city, photographs of the city, transparencies and cinema. All these constructions served, as in many other World Exhibitions, to show an image of what was supposed to be a city in development, progress and aiming to modernity.

Literature shows this envisaged image through the writings of local and foreign authors. Peace, the pampa, an optimistic look towards a future of unlimited wealth and prosperity marked the tone with which the writers of the Centennial wrote.

**figure 4-72** - 1910- Immigrants at the dining area of the Hotel de Inmigrantes

source: Gutman, Margarita, Buenos Aires 1910, memoria de un porvenir, Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2000.



**figure 4-73** - 1910- “Spain discovers America for the second time”  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Revista Caras y Caretas



**figure 4-74** - 1910 - Open air  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Revista Caras y Caretas

<sup>209</sup> Halperin Donghi, Tulio, ‘La ciudad Entera en el siglo XX’ in Gutman, Margarita, Reese, Thomas, *Buenos Aires 1910, Un imaginario para una gran capital*, Edudeba, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires 1999. p.65

<sup>210</sup> urban imagery

<sup>211</sup> Reese Thomas, ‘Buenos Aires 1910. Representacion y construccion de identidad’ in Gutman, Margarita, Reese, Thomas, *Buenos Aires 1910, Un imaginario para una gran capital*, Edudeba, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires 1999. p.22

<sup>212</sup> Reese Thomas, ‘Buenos Aires 1910. Representacion y construccion de identidad’ in Gutman, Margarita, Reese, Thomas, *Buenos Aires 1910, Un imaginario para una gran capital*, Edudeba, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires 1999. p.25

<sup>213</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: inventing traditions” In Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds. *The invention of tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp.1-14.

**figure 4-75** - 1910-  
Billboard of the  
Railway exhibition  
source: Gutman,  
Margarita, Buenos  
Aires 1910, memoria  
de un porvenir,  
Municipalidad de la  
Cuidad de Buenos  
Aires, 2000.



**figure 4-76** - 1910-  
Billboard of the Art  
exhibition  
source: Archivo General  
de la Nación. Caja 281.  
Sobre 7



Famous international characters wrote about the city of Buenos Aires during the Celebrations of the Centennial: Enrico Ferri, Italian criminalist; Vicente Blasco Ibañez, Valencian novelist; George Clemenceau, French politician and Adolfo Posada, Spanish jurist. All of them gave their image of the city. Ruben Dario, Nicaraguan poet was full of praise for Buenos Aires.

In various books published, the euphoria about the city was described until some start to recognise the negative side. Local authors such as Ricardo Rojas found it necessary to wake Argentina up off its unconsciousness, break the celebration of its cosmopolitan mercantilism and force the people to review the old ideas of Sarmiento and Alberdi.

The architect Christophersen considered that within the Centennial of Independence the best celebration to be made would be the transformation of the city, as monument and legacy, in an unquestionable equation in the period for the official view, that of Capital city and image of Nation.

The book<sup>214</sup> that was officially published for the Celebrations of the Centennial is very clear in its intentions of enhancing the image of Buenos Aires. The role of Paris as a source of inspiration for the developments of the new city is insisted upon, especially in the literature of the time.

“Paris, sovereign of the cities of the earth’s sphere, your yet very young sister, until today hidden will present itself to the world in May 1910! You can be proud! Humanity, while contemplating it, engrossed upon its superb beauty, will see that it belongs to your same ancestry. It is like you in everything. Only age

makes you different. When you were little, remember? They called you Lutecia, you were not so beautiful; but afterwards splendid mother, your name Paris, has filled and will fill the world. As it will be filled by your sister, Buenos Aires, which as young maiden, conserving still fresh the orange blossom, admires and enchants with its young and radiant beauty”<sup>215</sup>

This book focuses extremely on the foreign, mainly European influences on the city and praises it for such influences. Buenos Aires was built by Argentine and foreign architects, sculptors, engineers and decorators: Italian, French, Spanish, Swiss, Belgian, German, English, Danish, Austrian and Russian.

The author does have a different view toward the United States. The difference between European and North American cities was mainly that uses customs, law and recreation were different. Cities in North America, compared to Buenos Aires are similar in luxury, richness and splendour. But the attention is set on the similarities to Paris more than to New York, for in both of them there is the Latin spirit.

The comments also concentrate in the level of development of Buenos Aires compared to Europe, giving an idea of the level of realisation of projects in this new city which could not be achieved in already established cities as those of Europe.

“The widening, transformations, modernisation of big cities in Europe are very far from giving an idea of the proportions that edification has in Argentina and especially in Buenos Aires. The average of building permits, settled by the municipal offices of the

great capital, is over fifteen hundred a month which is 18.000 a year.”<sup>216</sup>

Buenos Aires was accused of being flat and monotonous. According to the author this is not true for around its main square and all through the new avenues buildings of 3 or 4 stories appear and stand out.

On the other hand regarding sport, 1910 was also a landmark for activities such as football. The first South American tournament took place, won by Argentina even though some of the players had to be replaced by foreigners for part of the original team were sick for the excesses of the previous celebrations. The first road car race took place between Buenos Aires and Cordoba. These issues were also important in the building of an image and an identity for the city and the country.

**figure 4-77** - 1910 - Ships on the harbour decorated for the celebration of the Centennial  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 281. Sobre 5.4



#### Exposicion Internacional – the project – 1910

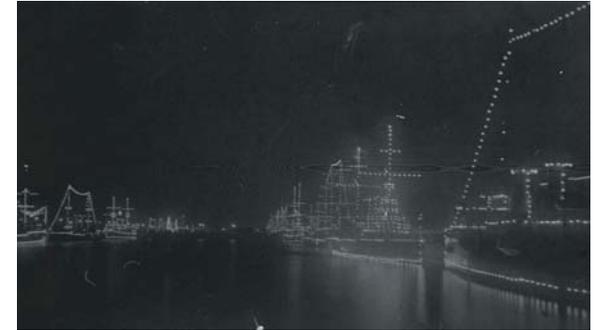
*The Exposición was mainly a platform for didactic development and international representation, a space for the city to show itself to the world. On the waterfront this was also the case, as in Barcelona in 1888 the waterfront turned out to be a ceremonial part of the exhibition, where ships of different countries were shown to the public for admiration. The combination of passive leisure and didactic recreation marked the principles and realisation of the Exposición.*

#### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The Exhibition took place on different locations mainly in the centre and north of the city. The Northern areas were focused on the parade circuits and the southern and most neglected areas of the city were the site of the protest circuits (figure 4-66). The location of the exhibitions was a circuit that would start in the ceremonial centre of Plaza de Mayo and finish in Pacífico, where the Industrial exhibition was held.

The programme of the exhibition included many disciplines.

The main ceremonial events were realised in the centre of the city, namely on Plaza de Mayo, where the square was redesigned by Carlos Thays for the event. The whole square would be illuminated for evening occasions. The harbour was also used as a space of celebration, having ships from different parts of the world exhibited day and night (figure 4-77 and 4-78).



**figure 4-78** - 1910 - Ships on the harbour decorated for the celebration of the Centennial  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 281. Sobre 26

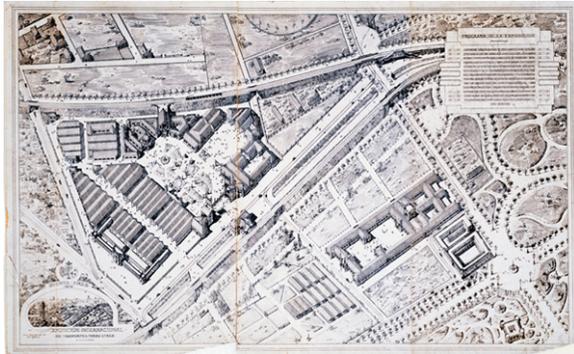
**figure 4-79** - 1910 - Pabellon Argentino. Exposicion InterNacional de bellas Artes  
source: Archivo general de la Nación. Caja 269. Sobre 4.



<sup>214</sup> Chueco, Manuel. 1910. *La Republica Argentina en su Primer Centenario*. Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco. Buenos Aires.

<sup>215</sup> Chueco, Manuel. 1910. *La Republica Argentina en su Primer Centenario*. Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco. Buenos Aires. p.613

<sup>216</sup> Chueco, Manuel. 1910. *La Republica Argentina en su Primer Centenario*. Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco. Buenos Aires. p.622



**figure 4-80** - 1910 - Exposición InterNacional de Transportes Terrestres  
source: Gutman, Margarita, Buenos Aires 1910, memoria de un porvenir,  
Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2000.

The Art Exhibition had the largest international representation. It had representatives of most European countries, the United States and some South American countries. This was held on the Pavilion that was used for the World Exhibition of Paris of 1889, designed by French architect Albert Ballú, which measured 1,600 squared metres distributed in two floors (figure 4-79). The building was made of iron and glass, which allowed its transportation and re-assembly, for it was planned that it would become the fine arts museum of Buenos Aires. At its arrival to Buenos Aires, it was located in the higher ground of Plaza San Martín, one of the main squares in a wealthy section of the city, close to the centre and to the main railway station and harbour. The Pavilion was restructured for the International Exhibition in 1910, but it kept all its main features.

The international Rail and Transport Exhibition was located in the end of this circuit, closing it in a new monumental area of the city, Pacífico (figure 4-80). The exhibition complex was

formed by two groups of buildings and a series of gardens and lawns separating them. Between the two groups of buildings there ran the railway line with a station that connected the exhibition with the centre of the city. The main centre of the exhibition was the northern one; a group of buildings organised around a square provided with a garden. This area was considered a civic centre, embellished by the presence of the pavilions. Most of the buildings of this complex were made of iron and glass, and held exhibitions of all kinds of means of transportation. Specifically, the Italian pavilion was designed by Palanti and Moretti (figure 4-81), Italian architects. This was a very light iron and glass structure; with a main entrance in the centre of the complex, a squared floor plan with two semi circular extensions on both sides. The building was ornamented with sculptures and had a metal dome in the centre. Other amenities of this part of the exhibition included a ferris wheel (figure 4-82) and a cable car, which led from the ground of the British section to the top of one of the main buildings.

The southern part of the exhibition, on the other side of the railway line, was just one building, of a more permanent character, with patios and corridors.

The rest of the Exhibitions were located in the Parks of Palermo, closer to the river. The Industrial Exhibition was placed in front of the Transport one, across avenida Vertiz. This was a much more landscaped area than that of the transport exhibition. The main area was green and there was a lake that surrounded part of the pavilions. The area adjacent to the avenue was much more built, holding the pavilions of the workers galleries, raw materials, foodstuff, and other minor pavilions. These were of a more monumental character than those of the transport

exhibition, stuccoed and painted white, such as the Spanish pavilion (figure 4-83). Closer to the lake there were the pavilions of various provinces of Argentina, as Mendoza or Córdoba, which pavilion was an austere structure made of wood (figure 4-84). The Hygiene (figure 4-85), National agriculture and Livestock expositions were also placed in the parks of Palermo. These areas did not have as much international representation as the Art or transport exhibition but were part of a circuit of strategic qualities that allowed the expected spaces of representation. This was enhanced by the fact that the environment in which they were placed was a park designed by Carlos Thays, French park designer (figure 4-86).

The government authorities were not in charge of expenses of building the exhibition, they were though in charge of the decision of the location of the pavilions and exhibitions. This decision shows a clear preference for the northern part of the city and an agenda for the development of certain areas.

World Exhibitions have been studied thoroughly<sup>217</sup> but the work of Pieter van Wesemael<sup>218</sup> is most relevant referring to the architectural and landscape issues of these. In his work he analyses the objectives and motives of these events.

The main objectives of the International expositions were the modernisation of Western Society in three main aspects: production, trade, consumption and socio cultural aspects.

The motive for these events was based on the possibility of enhancing the country's international status abroad. The genesis of world exhibitions came from the conviction that humanity as a whole would improve the continual flow of new practical applications,

the development of modern communication techniques and the social need for a medium that could acquaint the general public with changes in technology, economy and society.

All of these issues were present in the Exposition of Buenos Aires.

“By a means of a world exhibition a small elite of reformist organisers creates an ideological, didactic and spatial framework: a chance for their own programme but also a platform for a global selection of exhibitors who follow their own agendas. Supported by a coherent whole of attractive and entertainingly designed media, they attempt, in a multi sensory fashion, to convey the best and most recent products, achievements, skills, ideas, norms and values from every conceivable walk of life to the public at large. Visitors to the exhibition came due to a mixture of practical interest, inquisitiveness and desire for amusement”<sup>219</sup>

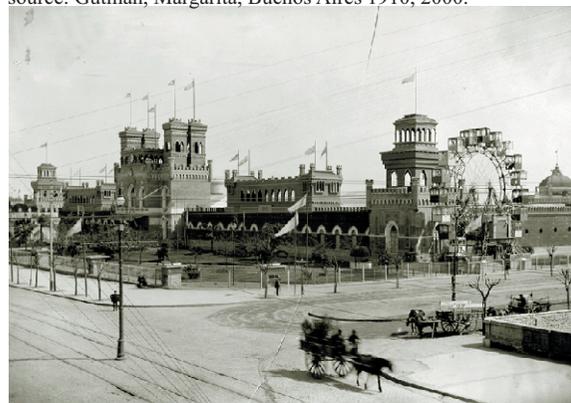
Motivation wise, the exhibition that can be most comparable to the one in Buenos Aires of 1910 was that of Paris of 1900. Scale wise they are incomparable, for the exhibition in Buenos Aires could absolutely not compete with the scale of that in Paris, in amount of exhibitors and public as well as in the quality of the exhibitions. However, the principles that moved them and the fact that Bouvard participated in the landscape and layout of both of them are relevant.

According to van Wesemael the exhibition of Paris was influenced by those of Paris 1889 and Chicago 1893. The exhibition was aimed at creating playful, beautiful and spectacular didactics aimed to a larger public than the previous expositions.



**figure 4-81** - 1910 - Pabellón Italiano. Exposición ferroviaria.  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 276. Sobre 6.

**figure 4-82** - 1910 - Exposición Internacional de Transportes Terrestres.  
View of the ferris wheel  
source: Gutman, Margarita, Buenos Aires 1910, 2000.



**figure 4-83** - 1910 - Exposición Industrial. Pabellones de España.  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 276. Sobre9.

<sup>217</sup> among others

Aimone, Linda, Olmo, Carlo, *Les Expositions Universelles, 1851-1900*, Belin, Paris, 1990, 1993.

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<sup>218</sup> Van Wesemael, Pieter, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight, A socio-historical analysis of World Exhibitions as a didactic Phenomenon (1798-1851-1970)* Rotterdam, 010 Publishers, 2000.

<sup>219</sup> Van Wesemael, Pieter, *Architecture of Instruction and Delight, A socio-historical analysis of World Exhibitions as a didactic Phenomenon (1798-1851-1970)* Rotterdam, 010 Publishers, 2000.



figure 4-84 - 1910 - Exposicion Industrial. Pabellon de Mendoza  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 276. Sobre 4.



figure 4-85 - 1910 - Exposicion de Higiene  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 279. Sobre 6.

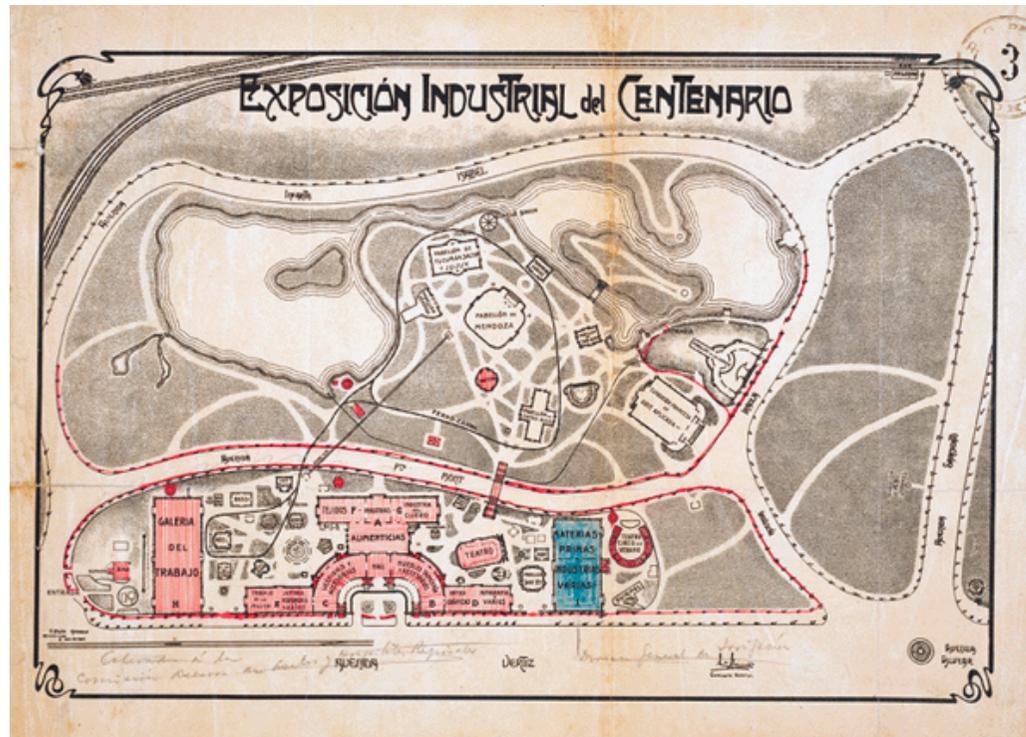


figure 4-86 - 1910 -  
Exposicion Industrial del  
Centenario  
author: Charles Thays  
source: Gutman, Margari-  
ta, Buenos Aires 1910,  
memoria de un porvenir,  
Municipalidad de la  
Cuidad de Buenos Aires,  
2000.

The social target of the one in Buenos Aires is not very clear, but even though it was organised by an elite there was a rather high turnout, despite the geographical location of the exhibitions. In Buenos Aires the parades were a much more popular phenomenon than the exhibitions themselves.

### Realisation and Repercussions

Both the analysed urban plan of 1909 and the International Exhibition of 1910 created and determined the limits between the centre and the north and south of Buenos Aires. This led way to a new infrastructure and the development of these urban areas.

The issues not addressed in the implementation of the exhibition and in the materialisation of the urban plan were mainly based on this difference between north and south of the city. The northern side was the site of celebration and the bourgeoisie and the southern the space of the working class and protest. Regarding the promenade and baths of the south behind the harbour they were properly addressed by the urban plan but not by the Centennial commission.

The Exhibition worked then as a catalyst and tool for the implementation of urban transformations, it worked as a tool for international recognition of a city worth visiting and working with. It developed the northern areas of the city and it finally deepened the segregation problems of the city that are still present today.

#### 4.2.3 – 1912-1930 – The urban leisure waterfront – Carrasco (1914) Carrasco (1919) Forestier (1925)

*The projects of Carrasco and Forestier show a much more complex set of principles, activities and programmes than the projects analysed in the previous sections. These projects cover issues of health, hygiene, public space, systems of parks, systems of circulation, and mainly what interests us, a much more complex system of leisure activities, which are reflected on each project. In their projects leisure becomes a more active part of the citizens life and the combination of spaces for learning, strolling and being involved in active leisure are parts of this complex system that open space was becoming.*

In the first years of this period, between 1912 and 1920 the focus of the urban debate shifted towards the issue of social housing. Finally the rise in population due to economical growth and immigration was being dealt with in an institutional way. Social reform and the presence of new political parties that represented the lower social classes produced a transformation in the attention of the authorities and planners. Architects and the government were working together with the intention of providing housing especially in the areas of the city where the grid was not yet consolidated. In this way they constructed most of the grid of the capital. These transformations affected the position towards urban planning and the more relevant presence of technical associations and social reformers. A need arose for a more extensive reach of urban organisation and control of the production of

urban spaces.

Public works of infrastructure such as the entubamiento<sup>220</sup> of the Maldonado River were rapidly being done and architecture in styles imported from Europe was transforming the city.

By this period the Capital City government was stable and institutionalised. The CD was in charge of all the decisions concerning the jurisdiction of the city. However, and this is where one of the conflicts arises, the harbour area was still under the jurisdiction of the National Government. The change of jurisdiction of the area behind the harbour in 1915 was what allowed the city to finally intervene in that area to commend, project and build the much sought for *balneario* or waterfront promenade and baths.

The 1920s was the decade in which a new integral plan for the city of Buenos Aires is developed and finally made concrete in the *Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio*<sup>221</sup>. This plan was developed in the context of the leadership of Mayor Martín Noel. The *Comisión de Estética Edilicia*, commission appointed for the development of the Plan, was in charge of giving a diagnosis of the problems within the city and the previous plans as well as proposing a set of projects in strategic areas of the Buenos Aires. This plan counted with elements of administrative as well as physical reform. It used elements of the *Garden City*, the *City Beautiful* movement and a system of hierarchical parks and civic centres that had the intention of reorganising the rapidly growing and changing city. One of the main issues to be dealt with in the Plan, which received relevant attention was the chapter dedicated to *Barrios obreros, jardines y stadiums deportivos, embellecimiento suburbano*<sup>222</sup>. This concept was linked to the Anglo-Saxon

neighbourhood units as a ring of dwelling neighbourhoods embellished by a system of parks around the centre of the city. Within this plan the projects for both southern and northern Costaneras<sup>223</sup> were designed by Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier.

The three projects to be analysed in this section are those of Benito Carrasco (1914- Costanera Provincia de Buenos Aires)<sup>224</sup>, Benito Carrasco (1919- Costanera Sur)<sup>225</sup>, and Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier (1925- Costanera Norte and Costanera Sur)<sup>226</sup>. Although these three projects follow a line of development that can not be cut off from the previous ones, it is necessary to differentiate them from those. The main two reasons for this were that the projects of Carrasco and Forestier became more complex and started adding principles and functions that had not been used until that time, and that these projects were built, and great part of them is still present today in the city.

<sup>220</sup> The underground canalization of Maldonado river.

<sup>221</sup> Organic Project for the Urbanisation of the Municipality

<sup>222</sup> Working class neighbourhoods, gardens and sports stadiums, urban embellishment

<sup>223</sup> waterfront avenues

<sup>224</sup> Waterfront Avenue – Province of Buenos Aires

<sup>225</sup> Waterfront Balneario and Avenue – South of the Capital

<sup>226</sup> Northern and southern waterfront avenues in the Capital



figure 4-87 - Benito Javier Carrasco  
source: Archivo General de la Nacion. Album Witcomb 1898.

#### 4.2.3.1- Carrasco – new programs and local identity

##### Benito Javier Carrasco – biographical facts and urban landscape principles

Benito Javier Carrasco (1877-1958 (figure 4-87) was an agronomy engineer dedicated to urban issues during the municipal governments of Gramajo (1914-1916) and Joaquin Llambias (1916-1919) with the role of Director of Parks and Promenades of the city of Buenos Aires.

Carrasco was born and died in Buenos Aires. He studied agronomy engineering in the Faculty of Agronomy and Veterinary of the Province of Buenos Aires. He graduated in 1900 with a thesis on *Fitografía de varios árboles indígenas cultivados en el Jardín Botánico Municipal*<sup>227</sup>. This thesis was directed by Carlos Thays (1849-1934), extremely influential urbanist in the development of the city, commented on the previous chapter. Carrasco would follow his mentor in the idea that it was necessary to retrieve the rich flora and fauna of the country and make it part of the urban environment of Buenos Aires.

Carrasco shared other ideas about landscape and urbanism with his mentor such as the *garden-city* praised by Thays. The *Garden City* of Ebenezer Howard was subject to a series of translations from its origin to its arrival to Buenos Aires that reached a very different concept, especially in the application of it to specific projects. As mentioned earlier, French urbanism had been influential in Buenos Aires, and the texts that arrived from abroad came frequently in their French translation. Architects such as Leon Jaussely had translated English texts such as Unwin's *Town Planning in Practice*<sup>228</sup>. The way in which the *garden city* of Howard was translated into

the *cité-jardin* of French urbanism, influenced the use of this concept in Buenos Aires, transforming it, from the garden city as an ideal independent element to the residential areas named *ciudad jardín*. However, Buenos Aires did not have as much problems of lack of hygiene, congestion and lack of space as some cities in England had, but the steady and fast growth of population and industry allowed the thought of a potential for these problems. Therefore the problem was considered before it became unmanageable. Carrasco considered an important issue to develop workers neighbourhoods ruled by the ideas of the *barrio parque* (park neighbourhood), probably also derived from the translation of the original concept of *garden city*.

There is no written evidence of this but the ideas of Josef Stübben (1845-1936) showed in the Chicago International Engineering Congress of 1893, seem to have been influential also in Carrasco's ideas of park design and suburban neighbourhoods. The need for air and open space for hygienic reasons that had been present in most of the gatherings of urbanists at the turn of the century were present in Carrasco's discourse. Issues as the dimensions of streets, sidewalks and other lanes within boulevards were also similar in Carrasco's and Stübben's treatises.

In 1908, after a study trip to Europe, Carrasco published his first article in the popular magazine *Caras y Caretas*<sup>229</sup>. Among other premises, in this article he stated that the future city or *ciudad del porvenir* should no longer be developed in its centre but in the available areas where there was the opportunity of new urbanisation.

In the same early article in *Caras y Caretas* he states the basic principles of his strategy for the city. These were: first to offer practical, economic

and founded ideas opposed to the “fantasmagorías tan costosas como irrealizables”<sup>230</sup> which the municipal authorities were keen on until then. Second was to use any possible tribune, such as the municipality, his class at the university or the mass media to expose his ideas. Finally he always made a point of criticising the way in which the municipality would insist in hiring foreign professionals as the French, when there were perfectly capable and well trained local professionals that could do the work even better. Even years after the formulation of the plan of Bouvard of 1909 he would criticise it for being a ‘light empirical sketch’<sup>231</sup> and not a strategic technical plan that was to be expected.

In 1900, the same year that he finished his university degree, he began working in the municipality of Buenos Aires. He began as an employee but would eventually in 1914 be assigned as Director of Parks, which he would later, in 1918, abandon because of pressures based on his political sympathies clearly committed with the Progressive Democracy and his friendship with Lisandro de la Torre. Benito Carrasco was replaced by his brother Eugenio, who had been educated in Belgium. This provoked some distance between the brothers.

The ideas of Carrasco for the development of the city of Buenos Aires consisted on various issues that he applied in different instances of his career. In his plan of 1921, he proposed a system of 4 parks placed strategically within the capital, linked by already existing avenues, advised the municipality to buy land that was not developed and not ruled by the grid so that they would be turned into parks. The open space system of Carrasco has little to do with the previous scheme of Bouvard for a system of open spaces with civic

qualities. The park system of Carrasco reminds us of those proposed by Fredrick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) earlier in the nineteenth century, parks linked by boulevards and promenades that would include nature in the urban tissue, trying to avoid the perspective of the city. The cases of Boston’s Emerald Necklace and Chicago’s waterfront come to mind. The tracing of some of these parks within the urban tissue do remind us of some of Adolphe Alphand’s designs for the Parisian parks, Carrasco respected the virgin untouched parts of nature in the city and used them in his park designs. However when Carrasco works on waterfront parks the design seems to be more geometrical, symmetrical and rational.

An important document is left from his years as a Director of Municipal Parks: “La Memoria de los trabajos realizados en los Parques y Paseos Públicos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Años 1914, 15 y 16.” In this text he describes in detail his position toward park design and planning and many considerations about the function of parks in different fields of urban environment. Some of these issues refer not just to aesthetic but also social function of parks, saying that parks and gardens have to fulfill their social *mission*. Children would be also highly considered in the principles of park design.

“... a piece of culture, driving away and separating bad habits, forbidden games to a great amount of children that until a short time ago did not know the benefits nor the joy of the healthy practices.”<sup>232</sup>

This reminds us of the rational recreation movement that developed in Britain and the United States during the nineteenth century.



figure 4-88 - Parques y Jardines. Book cover

author: Benito Carrasco

source: Carrasco, Benito Parques y Jardines, Peuser, Buenos Aires, 1923. Instituto Historico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires.

<sup>227</sup> Carrasco, Benito “Phitography of various indigenous trees cultivated in the Municipal Botanical Gardens”

<sup>228</sup> Unwin Raymond, *L' Etude Pratique des Plans de Villes (Introduction a l' Art de Dessiner les Plans d' Aménagement et d' Extension)*, Trans to French Mooser W & Jaussely L, Librairie Centrale des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1922.

<sup>229</sup> Carrasco, Benito, ‘La ciudad del Porvenir’, *Caras y Caretas*, Febrero 1908.

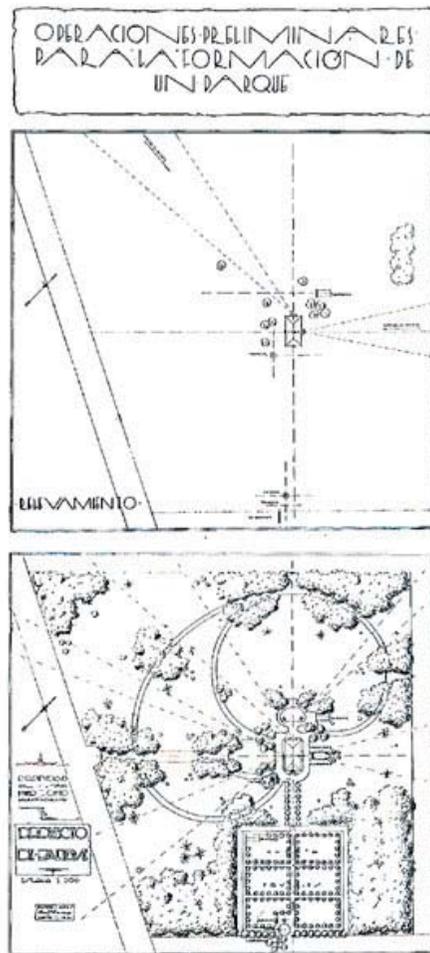
<sup>230</sup> phantasmagorias as expensive as unrealizable...

<sup>231</sup> Carrasco Benito, “Como debe estudiarse un plan de transformación urbana” Parte V. En: *La Nación*, 22.8.1926

<sup>232</sup> Carrasco, Benito Javier, *La Memoria de los trabajos realizados en los Parques y Paseos Públicos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Años 1914, 15 y 16*. Buenos Aires, 1916.

<sup>233</sup> Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing Inc. PA, 1990.p.98

<sup>234</sup> idem. P.99.



**figure 4-89** - Parques y Jardines. Park design  
 author: Benito Carrasco  
 source: Carrasco, Benito Parques y Jardines, Peuser, Buenos Aires, 1923. Instituto Historico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires.

Most interesting within this movement is the remark that Cross makes: “Park commissioners also believed it their duty to reform leisure time as well as space.”<sup>233</sup> This caused the first mass cultural centres to become the hallmark of rational recreational movement.

“ these trends, along with regulated sport contributed to cultural uniformity and reduced the disorder associated with both rural popular leisure and the degrading pleasures of the new industrial cities.”<sup>234</sup>

So, even though Carrasco does not mention literally in his texts that he was influenced by the Rational Recreation Movement, there is evidence in his designs that he is taking these variables into account. The playgrounds appear in his park design, as well as sports facilities, which were issues that had not been used in waterfront park design previously.

The social aims of Carrasco can also be traced to the words of Stübben, considering the importance of open space and urban planning as an instrument to manipulate behaviour of city dwellers, with the rational aim of providing a better living environment.

“The art of city building (...) is more than any other branch of art practice an art for the people. (...) the associated influence of heart and soul be aimed at, we may anticipate from the aesthetic perfection of the building plan of a city, a rich and blessed influence upon the stratum of city population inclined to rudeness”<sup>235</sup>

Other concerns of Carrasco were based on the productivity of public space. This led to the proposal of producing milk, honey, olive oil

and wool in the municipal parks to be given to benefit foundations. These ideas in Buenos Aires date back to the proposals of the productive park by Sarmiento. Later on, this would become a more relevant issue in Europe, especially with the work of Leberecht Migge in Germany.<sup>236</sup>

Carrasco’s two main planning interventions in the city were his studies on the reorganisation of parks of Buenos Aires in 1916 and the plan for parks of 1921. Out of the project of 1916 only 3 parks were realised (Rosedal de Palermo, Parque Lezama and the Costanera sur or waterfront baths and promenade). His other important intervention, even if it was not realised was the plan for the city of 1921. The main issue in this plan was the zoning: the division of the city into 171 zones, each with its own park which size would vary regarding the size of the zone. He addressed the strong need of open spaces for the lack of them gave the risk of having an “unhealthy and sad city in the future”. In this plan he showed his preoccupation for the empty municipal lands, proposed the Ring Avenue as a green belt and recommended the financial and legal analysis for the realisation of the plan.

After his work at the municipality he continued working on a private firm for park design and planning and he also worked as a university professor. Within this context he published two leaflets, one in 1920 and another in 1938. In the first one he talks about the reform of the study plan and makes evident the international influences:

“The unanimous opinion incites to follow the modern tendency and requires that the orientation is guided to practical aims. Regarding this, the

United States of America give the final note. This current is followed all over the world, starting with France, that has been our intellectual mother and whose plans have always been the norm."<sup>237</sup>

The second leaflet (1938) is relevant because it responds to the request of students of the Faculty of Architecture of Universidad de Buenos Aires to open the study of parks and gardens in it. He says that to his concern the architects are in charge of the more permanent structures that are built, and not the parks and gardens. So this subject should be taught in the school of Agronomy taking into account that the one who is in charge of the study of parks and gardens should unite the technical issues of agronomic preparation with artistic aesthetic questions.

While preparing the programme for the study of landscape design he said to have considered the works of professionals such as André Le Nôtre (1613-1700), William Chambers (1723-1796), William Kent (1685-1748), Jean Pierre Barillet-Deschamps (1824-1873), Edouard André (1840-1911) and many others.

Carrasco was also the founder of an association that is still relevant today: *Los Amigos de la Ciudad* was founded together with other distinguished characters as artists, architects, politicians and writers of the scene of Buenos Aires such as Ernesto de la Carcova, Pedro Luro, Miguel Cané and Alejandro Bustillo.

It is doubtless<sup>238</sup> that his most well known and important piece of writing was his book *Parques y Jardines*<sup>239</sup> (figure 4-88/89/90) published in 1923 by the publishing house Peuser, in which *Proyecto de la Ciudad Moderna* was included. In this new city, the formal tracing mixes the orthogonal, the concentric and the radial, some diagonals

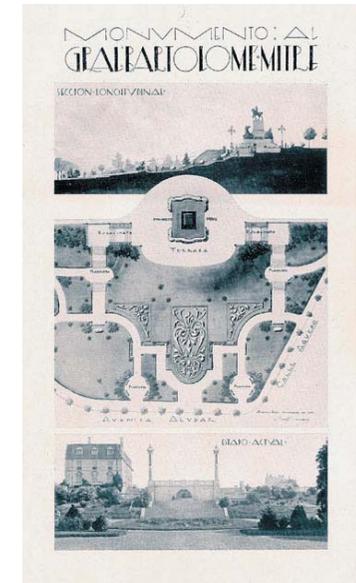
conveniently disposed and the irregular landscape for the green zones. The city's structure was divided into commercial centre, industrial neighbourhood, garden neighbourhood and sports zone. The variables of orientation, vehicle traffic, park system and workers neighbourhoods were considered.

The book *Parques y Jardines* is organised the way the books on *Art des Jardins* such as those of Alphand or André of the nineteenth century were organised. It starts with short historical considerations on the art of gardens, it continues with a description of the Modern Garden and goes into a classification of the type of garden. The classification regarding extension was divided into gardens, parks and dominions, for their purpose they would be private, public or scientific (botanic and zoological) and for their style they would be divided into *Classical* or French, *Romantic* or English and Compound, a combination of both. The following was a technical chapter that focused on the diagnoses of place considering the geography, climate, seasons, perspective, elements of the garden, statues, water as ornamental element, trees and bushes, grass, paths and floral decorations.

The ideas of Carrasco were based on the need for accessibility, park spaces that were accessible to the population of the city; the importance of the provision of open green spaces for all strata of population of the city; and the rational and effective relation of the parks with the rest of the city. Carrasco's concepts were imported from abroad, but his preparation and long study on the city made these ideas a suitable strategy for Buenos Aires, which would later ignore the observations and possible interventions of Carrasco to prefer those of the foreign professionals such as Forestier in 1923-

25.

However, his most outstanding projects and those who show his ideas in full are the projects for the waterfronts that will be analysed next.



**figure 4-90** - Monumento a General Mitre. *Parques y Jardines*  
author: Benito Carrasco  
source: Carrasco, Benito *Parques y Jardines*

<sup>235</sup> Stübgen, Josef, 'Practical and aesthetic principles for the laying out of cities', *Transactions*, American Society of civil engineers, Chicago, 1893. Translation by W.H.Searles (original in German from 1885)

<sup>236</sup> This phenomenon has been recently reproduced in the applied concepts of community gardens and green guerrillas. These movements provide green spaces in urban centres where open space is not only used as a space of recreation but also as a space of production. The development of land for food production is mainly in charge of gardeners, and not planning or landscape professionals.

<sup>237</sup> Carrasco, Benito Javier, *La Memoria de los trabajos realizados en los Parques y Paseos Públicos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Años 1914, 15 y 16*. Buenos Aires, 1916.

<sup>238</sup> according to Sonia Berjman, specialist on the study of Carrasco. Berjman, Sonia, *Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires, la Obra de los paisajistas franceses, 1860-1930*, Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, 1998.

<sup>239</sup> Carrasco, Benito Javier, *Parques y Jardines*, Peuser, Buenos Aires, 1923.

Carrasco Project 01 – 1914 – Waterfront project in the northern outskirts of Buenos Aires

*Carrasco's first project for the waterfront of Buenos Aires is not only the most attractive graphically but also in content. Even though it was not built, it carried great meaning in the transformation of leisure activities and open space. The project is basically a park system on the waterfront where different nodes were connected by an avenue. Each of these nodes had different character and were designed with the purpose of different leisure activities that included passive and active leisure and spaces for children as well as for adults. All kinds of programme and vegetation formed these spaces, nautic sports and bathing areas were part of a new relation to the waters, where active participation was as important as contemplation.*

### Context and administration

In the first decades of the century, the centre of the city of Buenos Aires was already getting overcrowded, and as explained in previous pages, there was a need for open space that could not immediately be provided in the centre of the city.

This is why, when Carrasco proposed his first waterfront project, he worked on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, where there was free land to be exploited with the aim of providing planned open spaces for the growing population.

The project that Carrasco proposed was called *Proyecto de Embellecimiento*<sup>240</sup>, and was located outside the northern limit of the city given

by General Paz Avenue, the ring-avenue that still provides the physical and jurisdictional limit of the Capital City.

The project was presented to the government of the province of Buenos Aires, to the Minister of Public Works. It was to be realised in the Partidos<sup>241</sup> of Vicente Lopez, San Fernando, San Isidro and Las Conchas. These were all areas adjacent to the waterfront that up to that date was just barren low lands with a road that would get constantly flooded. The waterfront had no technical facilities such as harbours or piers. It did count with a railroad that would communicate these areas of the north with the centre of the city. This was one of the issues that gave the most potential to the choice of the area.

“The coast of the river remained abandoned, without a thought on taking advantage of its multiple beauties and the unavoidable opportunity that some new works on it would offer, which would make it outstanding within any works of its sort”<sup>242</sup>

The executive power of the province then called for a special commission to council and direct of the project. This commission designated Benito Carrasco to design and direct the works. Carrasco, in a letter elevated to the Minister of Public Works, said:

“Without loosing the local character that by its origin it should have, the waterfront avenue has been projected based on necessities that would have been impossible not to acknowledge. Besides, it is influenced by the paved paths commended to be constructed by the province to communicate Buenos Aires with La Plata and the

villages of the north.

It is clear that those paths will be used mostly by the population of the capital of the Republic. But the narrow community of interests existing from that perspective between the capital of the Nation and the province explains the sacrifices the last has made to improve its traffic, producing benefits that should return to them. For what concerns the coast avenue, those necessities are originated in the absolute impossibility of giving Buenos Aires the great open spaces it needed”<sup>243</sup>

The lack of possibility of providing open spaces close to the centre of the city would be proved wrong by Carrasco himself with the project and realisation of the southern waterfront avenue, in 1919.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The projected avenue was to have a length of 17 km, extending from the limit of the Capital City up to El Tigre, area in which the Luján River opens to Rio de la Plata. One of the main issues for taking this area into account was that new neighbourhoods were being developed in this zone, and the presence of the train would allow an easy accessibility to each of the nodes proposed for the avenue.

A project for a waterfront avenue starting in the limit of the new harbour within the capital city of Buenos Aires stretching up to the General Paz avenue was considered here as the link with the rest of the city. This would form what can be considered a park system, a series of linked avenues with park nodes with different programmes that in this case would take over the whole waterfront within and outside the limits

of the city. It is impossible here not to compare with the park systems of Olmsted. However, the complexification in program and content and the addition of significant leisure and didactic activities shows how this park system was developing,

In the memory of the project the avenue is compared with that of Beiramar in Rio de Janeiro. However, though this one is praised by the *exceptionally beautiful panorama*<sup>244</sup>, the one projected in Buenos Aires is said to be superior to the last due to the variations of programme and shape.

The aesthetics of the project are continuously mentioned and the word picturesque tends to appear repeatedly in the text written by Carrasco describing the project. He talks about the avenue continuing the sinuous shape of the waterfront, so that it would “conserve its rustic and picturesque aspect.”<sup>245</sup> He also talks about the need of variety to provide a harmonic and pleasant landscape. To be able to achieve this variety he proposed a series of different *events*<sup>246</sup> in each of the nodes (figure 4-91).

<sup>240</sup> Embellishment Project

<sup>241</sup> Neighbourhoods or areas

<sup>242</sup> Carrasco, Benito, *Plano y Memoria Descriptiva de las obras de embellecimiento de la costa* (Elevada al Señor Ministro de Obras Públicas de la Provincia de Buenos Aires por la Comisión nombrada por decreto de fecha abril 22 de 1912) Buenos Aires, Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco, 1914.

<sup>243</sup> idem

<sup>244</sup> idem

<sup>245</sup> idem

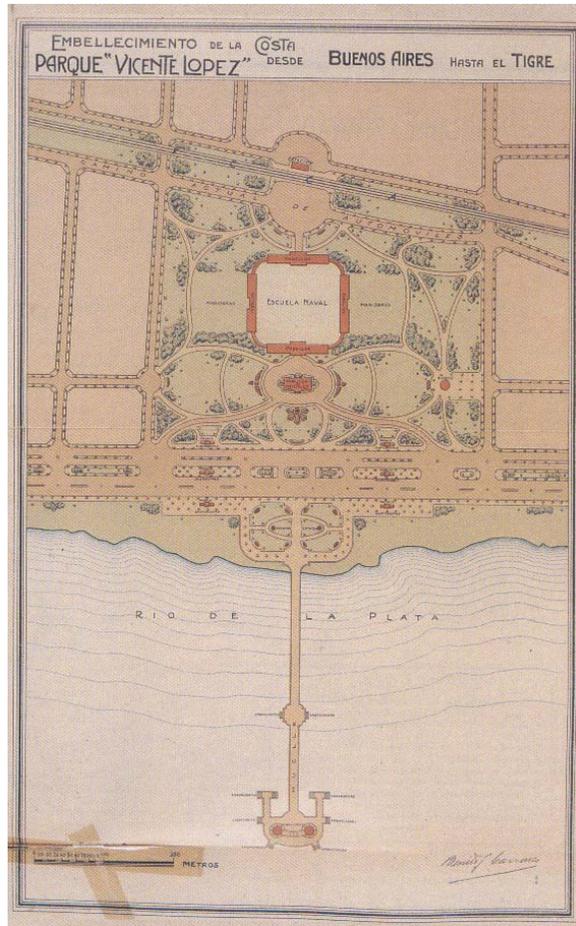
<sup>246</sup> Event is here understood as a particular programme for a particular place in the park system.

**figure 4-91** - 1912 - Plano de Embellecimiento de la costa desde el limite de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires hasta el Tigre.

author: Benito Javier Carrasco

source: Carrasco, Benito, *Plano y Memoria Descriptiva de las obras de embellecimiento de la costa* (Elevada al Señor Ministro de Obras Públicas de la Provincia de Buenos Aires por la Comisión nombrada por decreto de fecha abril 22 de 1912) Buenos Aires, Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco, 1914.





**figure 4-92** - 1912 - Parque Vicente Lopez. Plano de Embellecimiento de la costa desde el límite de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires hasta el Tigre.

author: Benito Javier Carrasco

source: Carrasco, Benito, Plano y Memoria Descriptiva de las obras de embellecimiento de la costa (Elevada al Señor Ministro de Obras Públicas de la Provincia de

Buenos Aires por la Comisión nombrada por decreto de fecha abril 22 de 1912) Buenos Aires, Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco, 1914.

Regarding infrastructure building, the avenue at a height of 4.50 metres would solve the problem of the rise of waters, so that it would be sufficiently protected from the waters of the river. This differs from the Chicago project for the waters of Lake Michigan would have never been as harmful as those of Rio de la Plata.

The node of the park of Vicente Lopez (figure 4-92) for example, would have a *rambla*<sup>247</sup> on the waterfront that would also serve as landing stage for small ships and yachts, which could seek shelter there from bad weather.

This was the closest node to the city within the system. Apart from the pier, one of the main elements in the program of this park was the *Escuela Naval*<sup>248</sup>. This was a national institution that was having trouble finding a suitable site to build its new headquarters. Carrasco recommends the site as a close and accessible one to the city “just minutes away”.

Around the building of the *Escuela Naval* a public park is planned. Morphologically we can already see a development compared to the projects previously commented (Thays and his reform of Parque 3 de Febrero). Even though the park shows a curvilinear tracing, the almost symmetrical floor plan is evident; the mid axis connects the train station with the pavilions of the *Escuela Naval*, following with a small pavilion, the crossing of the avenue and then the pier. This axis is not visual, as with the park design of the French gardens of Le Nôtre, but the abandoning of the intricate and seemingly plan-less garden design of the previous periods appears in this first node of Carrasco’s park system.

The rational location of buildings, statues and the organisation of different types of traffic responds to the shift of thought in the way to use parks, no longer as a natural environment within the urban tissue but as a part of the urban system

with its complexities rationally organised.

The node of la Gran Esplanada de Olivos (figure 4-93) was said to be the most picturesque landscape already, so constructions of higher profile would be located there, in this case he proposes an esplanade of rich style and compares it to those in the waterfront of Nice or Monte Carlo. The tracing of this particular node is the clearest in the rationalisation of space and the return to geometrical tracing of parks, or the *classical park*, as Carrasco would describe it in his book *Parques y Jardines*. It is also extremely clear how the program for leisure activities expands and provides the space for the new needs of the time.

Back to the layout issues of this node, here the roundabout is the main circulation element. As explained in his criticism to the project of Bouvard, the roundabout is not an instrument to make traffic more agile, but indeed to slow it down. Here he is using that strategy to show that the avenue is not a high speed lane but a road in which driving has to be slow and is also a way of contemplating the environment.

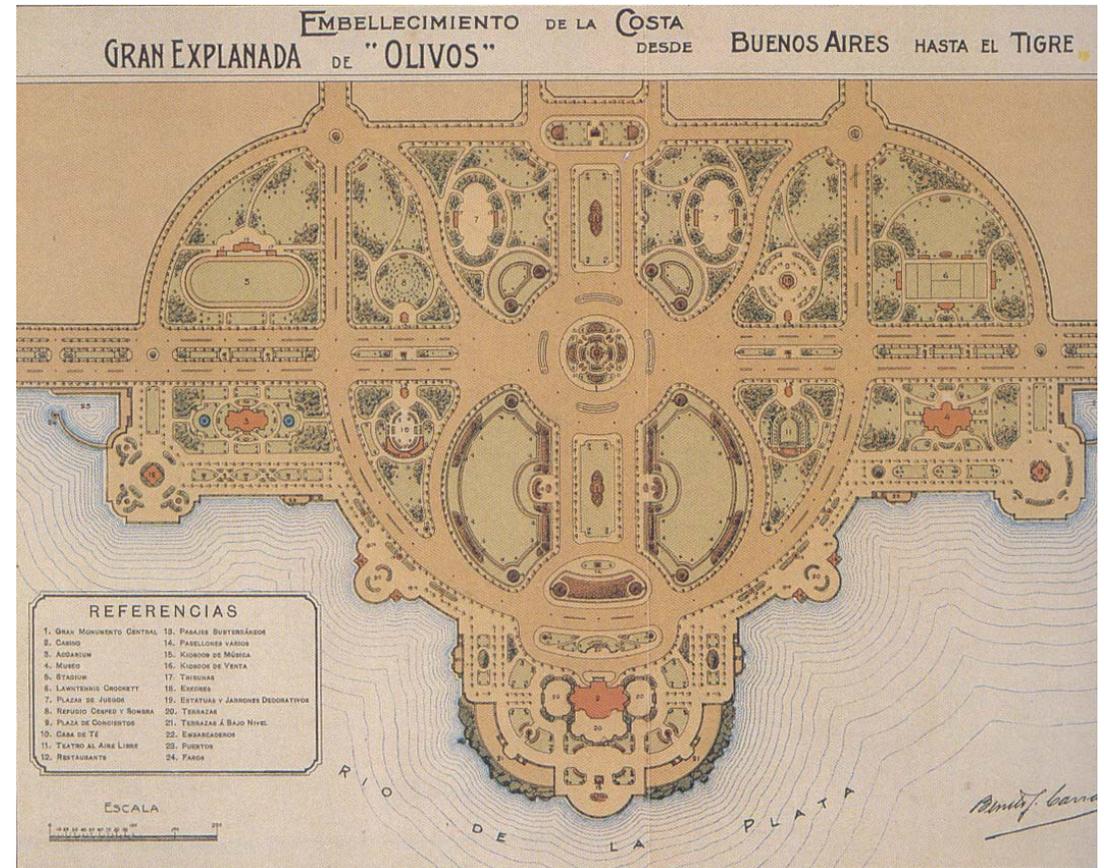
An extensive program is used for this part of the park system. As in Vicente Lopez, central buildings are located in the axis of the park, which allows a symmetrical organisation of the area without having the visual effect of the axial symmetry. Many of the elements of the program are directed to leisure practices, an important issue already in the social, political and urban agendas. Particularly we can see different types of places for different leisure practices. Sports were seen as a moral instrument to alleviate the tensions of urban centres and urban life. Here, on the upper right side of the drawing we can see some lawn tennis and croquet fields and on the left what would have been a horserace track was in this case a stadium, a place for active

leisure. The *plazas de juegos* or playgrounds – with number 7 on the plan, and occupying a significant amount of space – show Carrasco’s concern with childhood and the need of play. Leisure was also considered important in the spectacle scene, for this purpose a series of buildings were also included in the program: an open theatre, music kiosk and a set of decorative art as sculptures and pavilions located strategically throughout the park. An aquarium would be an example of the type of didactic leisure, related to didactic parks as botanical and zoological mentioned by Carrasco in his book. Entertainment as consumption took the shape of tea houses and restaurants spread around the park.

On the waterfront a tendency to active leisure is found in the piers and terraces where the new water sports are to be practised. All this inclusion of program shows a tendency to active leisure, to the participation and change of activities that had no precedent in Argentine park design, especially including the waterfront activities proposed.

Going north, the next node would be Anchorena, and here the programme and aesthetics would slightly change by the replacement of the balustrade with slopes of grass and dirt, so that it would acquire a more rustic feel. There a Dutch windmill (figure 4-94) would be built to hold a bar (confitería) which were in fashion in Buenos Aires at the moment.

The greatest park of the system was that of San Isidro, the last node. It counted with 200 hectares of park and as one of the natural features rescued for the park there was the Sarandí stream that would facilitate the labour of the landscape designer and that would contribute to the variety and pleasantness of the ensemble. This art of the project counted with sporting fields for tennis and football and other outdoor games.



**figure 4-93** - 1912 - Gran Explanada de Olivos. Plano de Embellecimiento de la costa desde el límite de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires hasta el Tigre.

author: Benito Javier Carrasco

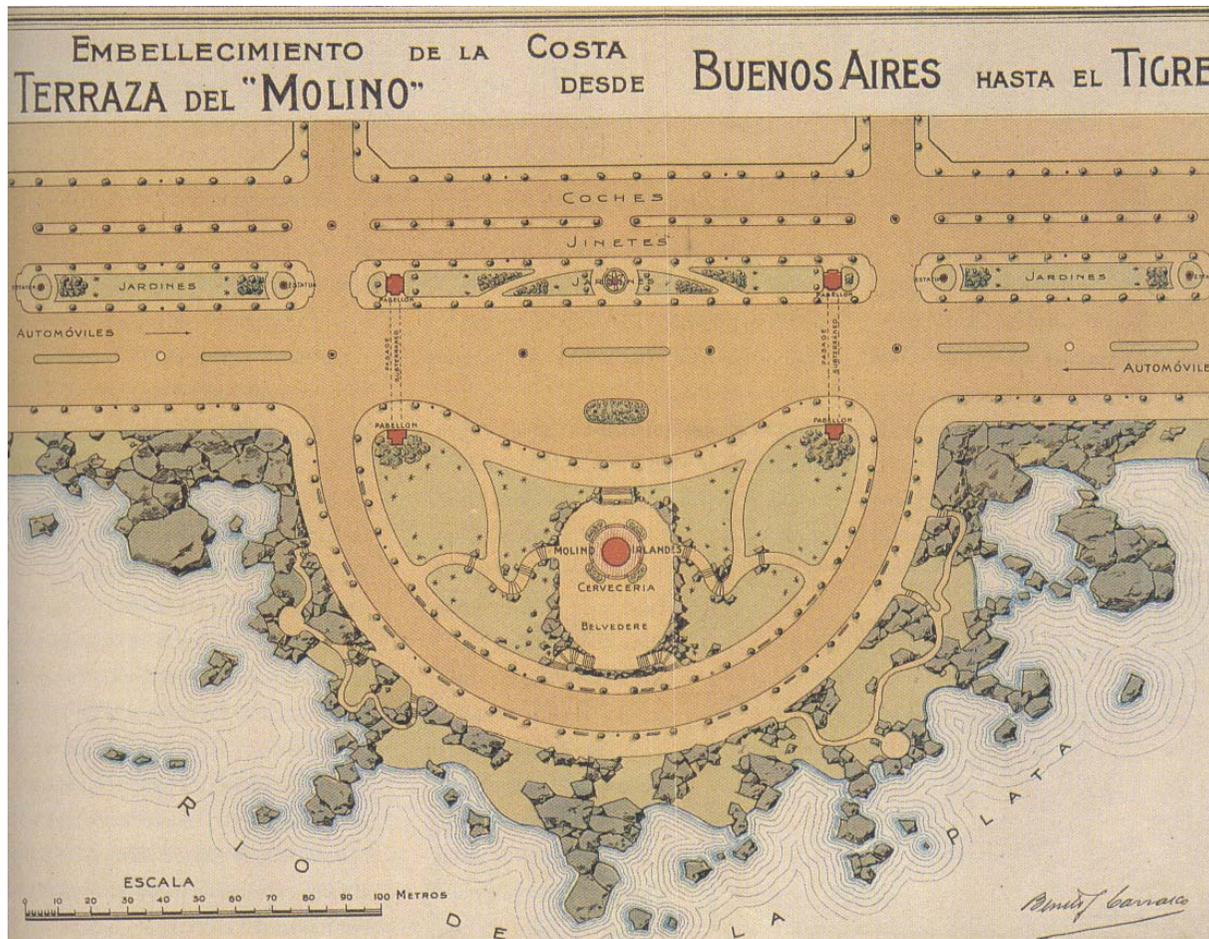
source: Carrasco, Benito, Plano y Memoria Descriptiva de las obras de embellecimiento de la costa (Elevada al Señor Ministro de Obras Públicas de la Provincia de Buenos Aires por la Comisión nombrada por decreto de fecha abril 22 de 1912) Buenos Aires, Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco, 1914.

#### references

- |                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1-great central monument  | 13.subterranean passages           |
| 2.casino                  | 14.various pavilions               |
| 3.aquarium                | 15.music kiosks                    |
| 4.museum                  | 16.sales kiosks                    |
| 5.stadium                 | 17.tribunes                        |
| 6.lawn tennis crockett    | 18.                                |
| 7.play plaza              | 19.statues and decorative elements |
| 8.refuge grass and shadow | 20.terraces                        |
| 9.concert plaza           | 21.lower level terraces            |
| 10 tea house              | 22.embankments                     |
| 11.open air theatre       | 23.ports                           |
| 12.restaurants            | 24.paths                           |

<sup>247</sup> In this case he calls ‘rambla’ a pier, as seen on figure 02, this would be a promenade as much as a leisure space next to the water, and for practicing sports.

<sup>248</sup> Marines Academy



**figure 4-94** - 1912 - Terraza del Molino. Plano de Embellecimiento de la costa desde el limite de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires hasta el Tigre.  
author: Benito Javier Carrasco  
source: Carrasco, Benito, Plano y Memoria Descriptiva de las obras de embellecimiento de la costa (Elevada al Señor Ministro de Obras Públicas de la Provincia de Buenos Aires por la Comisión nombrada por decreto de fecha abril 22 de 1912) Buenos Aires, Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco, 1914.

The main building of the project was that of a Kindergarten, in the centre of the park, which was surrounded by game areas and a swimmingpool.

One of the most outstanding elements in the San Isidro section would be the floating and stable baths attached to the great pier, the belvederes and lighthouses, which revealed the new leisure practices on the water to be applied to urban systems.

It is important to recall that what made this park system was the presence of the avenue that linked each one of the nodes together. The circulation and the presence of a railway station on each node would justify the whole project as worth materialising.

The avenue (figure 4-95) projected would have 70 metres in all its extension. The first lane next to the balustrade or slope next to the water would be reserved for pedestrians, given shadow by trees; "used for *footing*<sup>249</sup> which becomes more fashionable every day."<sup>250</sup> The following lane inland would be for motorcars, this one would measure 25 metres and would have two lanes divided by a refuge of grass, flowers and illumination for the night-time. The following lane would be constituted by flower gardens would have 13 metres wide and would also count with two rows of trees, statues, obelisks and kiosks. The following lane of 8 metres would be covered in sand and would be used for horseback riding "so that the sport of riding has a suitable place, because its one of the most interesting sports, pleasant and national."<sup>251</sup> Next there would be one 3 metre sidewalk, one lane for coaches and cyclists and finally another sidewalk of 4 metres for the service of the buildings that would eventually be raised on the side.

The project of Carrasco proposed a parkway, multiple green dense areas and nodes

as infrastructure of attraction, constructions and buildings concerning the program. A great range of buildings and areas were proposed in this project, which was much more ambitious than that of the southern waterfront. For leisure and entertainment, the program included hotels, cafes, restaurants, a concert plaza, open air theatre, pavilions, music kiosks and even a casino. The didactic intentions of the project become evident with the inclusion of an aquarium and a museum. Sports as a tool of physical enhancement was also present in the proposal of a stadium, lawn tennis courts and croquet fields. This shows the shift in purposes of public parks and park systems.

“the day [the coast avenue] is built, the province will be able to be proud of carrying out one of the greatest works of embellishment done in the world, (...) superior to the works done in Europe, where there has been no river with the characteristics of ours, wide, picturesque in great part of its waterfront and close to important populated centres that with time shall acquire an extraordinary development”<sup>252</sup>

This quote shows that apart from the rationalisation of open green space and the social aims reflected in new leisure activities in the program there was still a the need of prestige and comparison with European capitals, which is still strong in he discourse of the makers.

### Realisation

The project that had been initially presented to the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires in 1912 was not even begun in 1923 when it was presented by Carrasco on the occasion

of the *Primer Congreso Nacional de Vialidad*<sup>253</sup>. And it would not be until the end of the 1980s that the project would be rescued for the building of a waterfront avenue and a park in San Isidro. The project’s ideas and concepts, function and form are revealed in a more austere and limited way in the project for the southern waterfront-avenue and balneario.

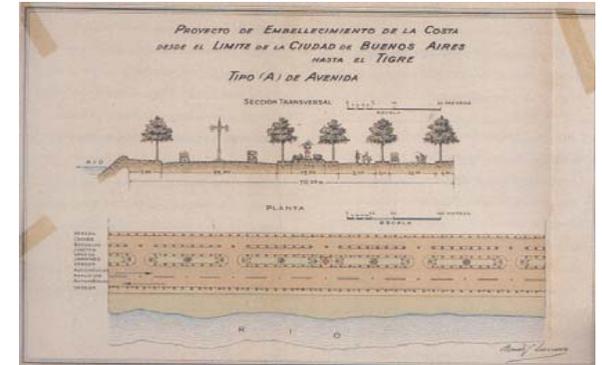


figure 4-95 - 1912 - Tipo A de Avenida. Plano de Embellecimiento...

author: Benito Javier Carrasco  
source: Carrasco, Plano ....

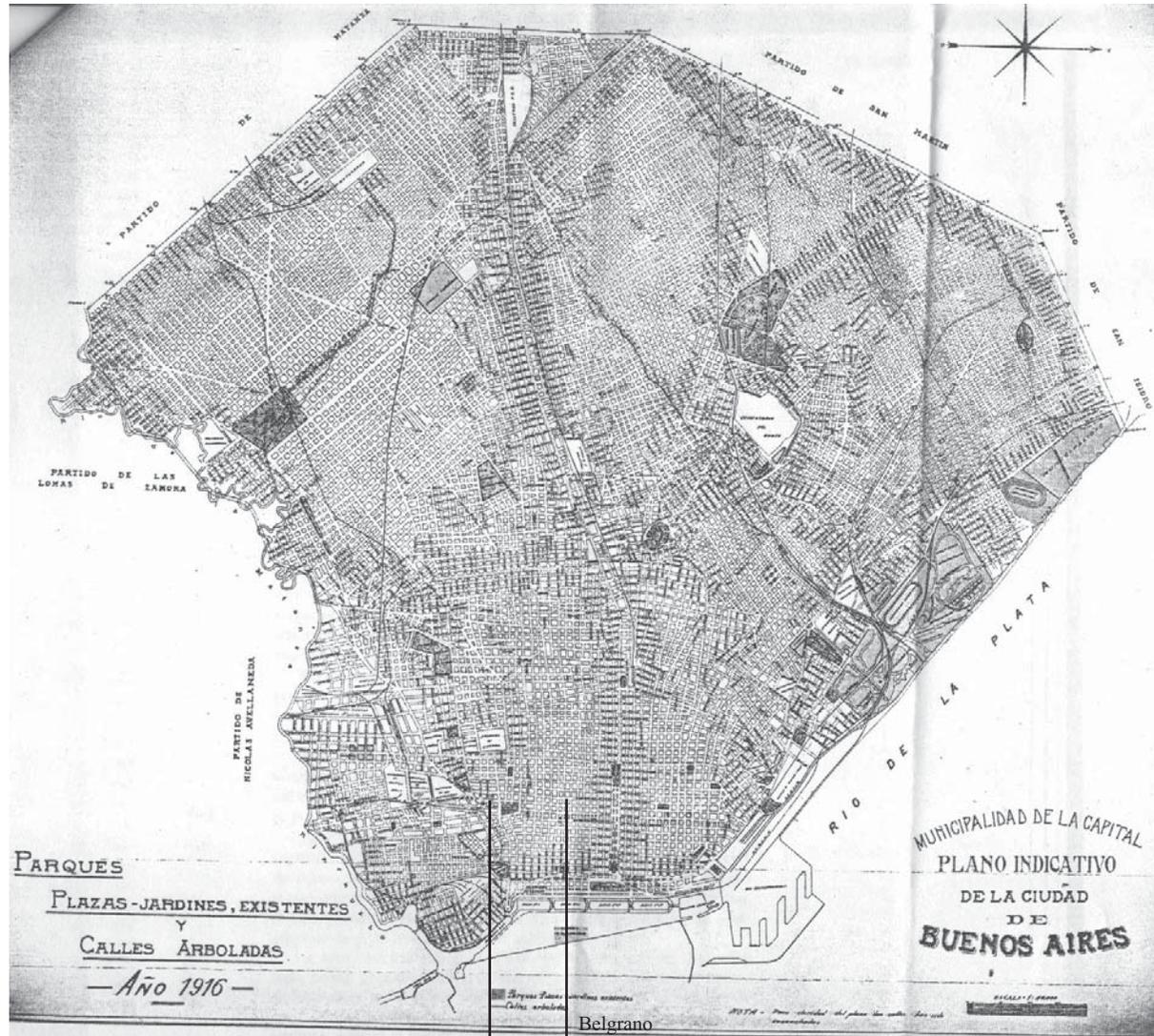
<sup>249</sup> the english word is used in the original, probably meaning strolling

<sup>250</sup> Carrasco Benito Javier, “Avenida Costanera de la Capital Federal al Tigre”. In *Memoria General del Primer congreso Nacional de Vialidad* (mayo 1922). Buenos Aires, Talleres Graficos Argentinos, 1923, p.205.

<sup>251</sup> Carrasco Benito Javier, “Avenida Costanera de la Capital Federal al Tigre”. In *Memoria General del Primer congreso Nacional de Vialidad* (mayo 1922). Buenos Aires, Talleres Graficos Argentinos, 1923, p.205.

<sup>252</sup> Carrasco, Benito Javier, *Plano y memoria descriptiva de las obras de embellecimiento de la costa (elevada al señor ministro de Obras Publicas de la Provincia de Buenos Aires por la Comisión nombrada por Decreto de fecha abril 22 de 1912)* Buenos Aires , Compañía Sudamericana de Billetes de Banco, 1914.

<sup>253</sup> First National Congress of Vehicle Traffic



**figure 4-96** - 1916 - Plano Indicativo de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Parques, plazas y jardines existentes y calles arboladas  
 author: Benito Javier Carrasco  
 source: Berjman, Sonia, *Benito Javier Carrasco, sus textos*. Facultad de agronomía, UBA, Buenos Aires 1997.

Carrasco Project 02 – 1916 – Waterfront Project – south promenade and baths

*Carrasco's second project was less ambitious than his first, and smaller in scale. Nevertheless, it followed similar principles. The design of a pier, baths and cabins was part of this new relation with the water, an active one. The rest of the project also proposed areas of sports, entertainment and restoration, apart from the carefully designed green areas. Carrasco was aware of the needs of the population of the city and responded to those needs accordingly.*

### Context and administration

The second project proposed by Carrasco took place between 1916 and 1919 with the intention of building a balneario. This project was located on the landfill behind Puerto Madero, between the streets Brasil and Belgrano. This location (figure 4-96), as we had seen before in projects for the harbour, had been contested between port authorities and municipal ones, for once Puerto Madero was built (1889), the triangle of land that separated the harbour from the waterfront remained barren land.

The first proposal for a *balneario*<sup>254</sup> in Buenos Aires was already presented to the CD in 1900<sup>255</sup>. Some of the members of the CD proposed to commend the plans and proposals for a *balneario* in a *suitable place*. The site was not specified in the session but some details are given about the need of public and private areas in such a place. These areas would be managed by the municipality.

The subject of the baths would not be mentioned in the CD until the commendation for

the building of the waterfront avenue and balneario in 1917. In 1916 the Secretary of Public Works, engineer Aguirre, under the administration of Intendente Gramajo, commended the Dirección de Paseos, led then by Benito Carrasco, to study the project of transformation of the abandoned lands of the waterfront (figure 4-97). The idea was to build a swimming pool taking advantage of the thermal waters that were supposed to lie at the site.

The project was approved by the mayor in June 1916, but due to the poor financial situation its construction was postponed. Finally, and due to the insistence of one of the members of the CD, Dr. Le Bretón, the works for the waterfront project were to be started.<sup>256</sup>

Most of the features of the original project by Carrasco were built on site. The main element that was later added to the project was the *espigón*<sup>257</sup>. It is not clear whether this part was designed by Carrasco's brother Eugenio, who was in charge of the Dirección de Paseos since 1919. What is clear is that the pier was built by the Centro Nacional de Ingenieros and was part of the project. Carrasco was extremely critical of this part of the project. So it is to expect that he was not responsible for it.

### Location, extension, program and accessibility

The project was not as ambitious as the one for the north but it was based on similar ideas and similar program elements (figure 4-98). According to a later text by Carrasco<sup>258</sup> the idea for the project was to build a promenade for the public to be able to walk on the waterfront amongst gardens and *enjoy the fresh breeze of the rivers*.

One of the main inconveniences found by Carrasco for the realisation of this project was

the public access for numerous railways arriving to the harbour would cut off the accessibility to the area. The railways on the bridges would especially narrow the access streets.

The first section of the project from Estados Unidos to Belgrano (figure 4-98a) consisted on a wide *rambla*<sup>259</sup> of 10 metres wide on the river "destined for pedestrians and a stretch of gardens where places for diversions and rest would be established". Football fields and tennis courts, separated from the rambla by a curtain of (alamos) popleaus, to cover the *antheiestic* docks of the harbour<sup>260</sup>.

In this section of the project we can see a very austere and reduced version of similar elements used in the project for the northern part of the city. Two great stretches of park, lawns of grass with some bushes located on the southern part provide a more natural landscape (figure 4-98a).

The section closer to avenida Belgrano holds a pier very similar to that in the Vicente Lopez node of the northern avenue, with a pavilion or lighthouse at the end of the pier. Apart from the sports fields we can also see an important pavilion just before the entrance of the pier, which could be understood as a Casino or another leisure proposed building.

Every terrace, leading from the waterfront avenue to the beach seems to have a staircase leading to the beach, despite the fact that this is not explicitly explained by Carrasco on his texts.

The second section of the project, that going from Belgrano to the north (figure 4-98b) was mainly destined for the circulation of vehicles. As seen in the plan, the street in that area runs parallel to the river, as it arrives to Belgrano it runs diagonally and leads way to the whole section of park and baths program. In the southern the promenade for pedestrians is

parallel to the river.

This section between Belgrano and Darsena Norte consisted on a wide sidewalk of 10 metres wide with a stretch of gardens on both sides so as to avoid the monotony of a wide monochromatic sidewalk.<sup>261</sup> In the intersection of Cangallo a semicircular *plazoleta*<sup>262</sup> with gardens and pavilions would be built. In the intersection of Córdoba's roundabout was set as a finalisation of the avenue that would also serve as a parking lot for automobiles.



figure 4-97 - ca.1900 - El Balneario de los pobres. source: Instituto de Arte Americano. FADU. UBA. Placa de vidrio

<sup>254</sup> Balneario means literally baths, but throughout the project and materialisation this area never became baths as in the traditional European idea, with warm and cold pools and a complex set of infrastructure. This was mainly a place for bathing in the river. This is why for the purpose of clarity we will go on calling it balneario.

<sup>255</sup> Actas taquigraficas de las Sesiones del Concejo Deliberante 18-07-1900. P.770-773

<sup>256</sup> Ordenanza Municipal 24 de Abril 1917, 30 de septiembre 1917.

<sup>257</sup> a wide pier with gardens

<sup>258</sup> Carrasco, Benito Javier, "El Balneario Municipal", 27-12-1925, Recopilacion de articulos publicados por el Ing. Benito Javier Carrasco durante los años 1923 y 1926. Buenos Aires, Los Amigos de la Ciudad, 1927.

<sup>259</sup> again 'pier'

<sup>260</sup> He is talking about the docks building of brick of Puerto Madero so praised today and revalued by the restoration of the area and buildings

<sup>261</sup> Carrasco, Benito Javier, "El Balneario Municipal", 27-12-1925, Recopilacion de articulos publicados por el Ing. Benito Javier Carrasco durante los años 1923 y 1926. Buenos Aires, Los Amigos de la Ciudad, 1927.

<sup>262</sup> small square

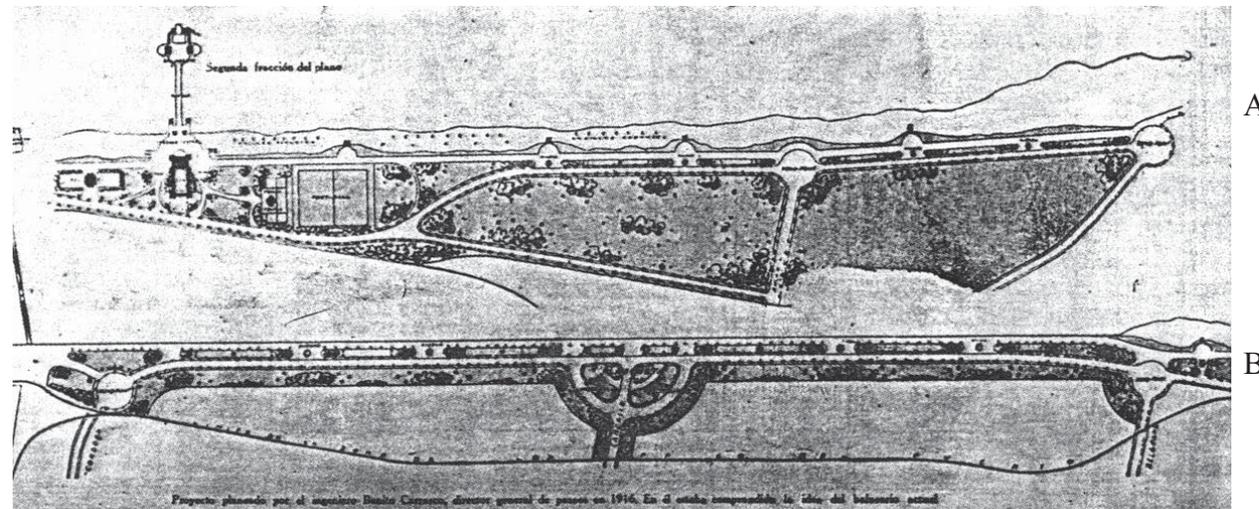


figure 4-98 - 1920 - Anteproyecto de ensanche y modificación del Paseo del Puerto. En *La Nación*. 21.3.1920  
 author: Benito Javier Carrasco  
 source: Berjman, Sonia, *Benito Javier Carrasco, sus textos*. Facultad de agronomía, UBA, Buenos Aires 1997.

## Realisation

The tracing of the avenue, streets and roundabouts was materialised in the first years after the project was approved in 1917. So was the pier which project was materialised by the *Centro Nacional de Ingenieros*.

Despite the criticism by Carrasco to this project, judging it of anti-aesthetic and expensive, it received a good response of the public. But before going into that it is relevant to describe with detail, as the engineers did in their report, the program of the pier and surroundings.

The document<sup>263</sup> was written some months after the inauguration of the pier. The first section of the article was dedicated to explaining the need of a space of hygiene and entertainment for the population of the city.

“The recent inauguration of the Municipal Baths and the incidences occurred around it in the city council, have maintained the attention of the public alive about this establishment done by the municipal government for the entertainment and hygiene of a section of the urban population.

This population was lacking these services as well as a waterfront park destined to those who, for lack of pecuniary elements, are not able or keen on moving to Mar del Plata or other Argentine or Uruguayan bath resorts.”<sup>264</sup>

This shows once more a will for providing public leisure space to all kinds of city dwellers, especially the less economically fortunate. Accessibility and nearness to the city centre is a key element in the discourse and in the facts.

“Regarding the situation, it is clear that the proximity to the urban population is the undeniable advantage for the public. However, it presents an inconvenience – unavoidable in the whole southern waterfront up to the Riachuelo – of forcing the people to use the turning bridges that communicate the regions of the west and the east of the harbour of the Capital. Therefore, the popular movement will be interrupted by the harbour one.

Fortunately, in the holidays, in which the attendance of the public is wider, the harbour does not work, or almost. Then, given its location in front of the harbour in the southern part of the city, the situation is suitable. However, we are sure that the city government and its technicians, in case of building another baths in the northern part of the city they will locate it far from the new harbour. Even if this one does not have a permanent service of the turning bridges projected by Haukshaw Son & Hayter, arguing the unanimous opinion of the national engineering, to which – sensitive post factum triumph – the facts gave support.”<sup>265</sup>

Problems of accessibility given by the city harbour are mentioned but no apparent solution is given to the problem of the south, instead the prediction of the solution of the problem for the expected works in the northern part of the city are stated.

The second part of the document is dedicated to the description of the whole pier as a building in itself and the process of construction for that purpose. The pier had little to do with the piers of European continental and British piers such as those of Eugenius Birch. Those pleasure piers were light structures of wood and iron, raising high over the ocean, and eventually with jetties for small ships. This one was a heavy concrete structure with integrated changing cabins that were art of the pier itself.

The pier was planned and realised as follows: A massive rectangle of 121, 30 metres of length by 72 metres of width plus a semicircular hummock of 36 metres radius. So, little more than one hectare in total. The balneario was limited by Belgrano on the north and Brazil Street on the south, by the river on the east and by the harbour railway on the west. The axis of the espigón (figure 4-99/100/101/102) was at 118 metres of Brazil Street, normal to the east avenue. The pavement covered a surface of 22,017 sq.metres and 120,947 sq.metres of gardens.

The buildings of the balneario described in this article are only those for the cabins and baths. 199 rooms of 1x1 metres, 4 bathrooms with 5 showers each and 8 toilets with one sink each. These were divided into 1 big women's pavilion of 103 rooms and 8 baths with showers each one. The three pavilions for men were divided into 26 rooms each with 2 baths each with a shower.

The article is very specific about the materials for the construction of the pier and all the tests that had to be done to make it resistant to the

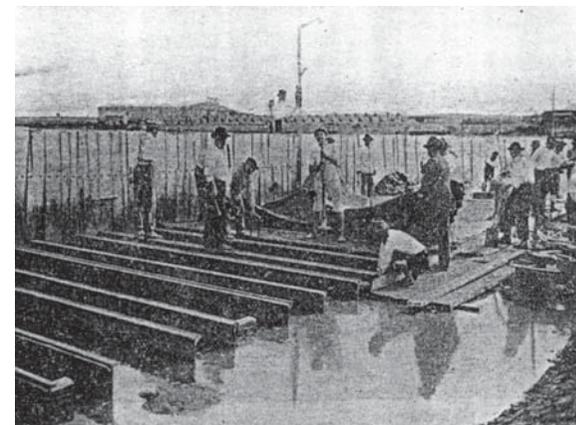
forces of the river. Finally the material used was reinforced concrete, for the whole pier structure and also for the pavilions for men and women that served as a structure for the promenade with trees on top of the pier. In the pictures of this article it is possible to see the evolution of the works and even the appearance of a children's playground with a slide and hammocks.

This whole project took some years to be built and was realised by different entities, but throughout it was faithful to the original project of Carrasco.

### Repercussions

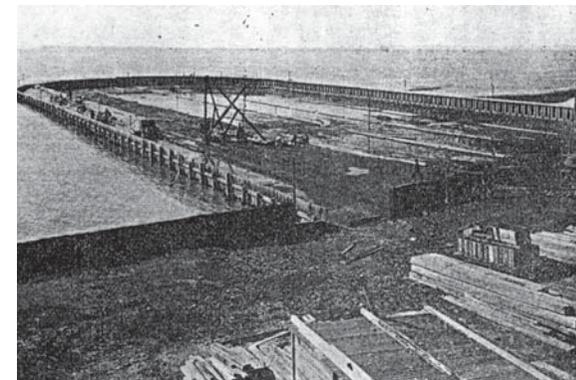
The waterfront area built until the inauguration of the project in December of 1918 was apparently very well received by the public. José María Quartino, who was director of parks at the time, performed the inauguration. It appears that he took credit for this project, for Carrasco had recently been fired from his post as the head of the Organisation. In 1919 the one to follow as director of parks was Carrasco's brother Eugenio, who was later in charge of the redesign of the project for the waterfront from Darsena Sur to Darsena Norte. The rest of the project was built based on his design. The inauguration of the balneario and pier was a success, as two main newspapers of the time revealed. These articles show the weight of leisure ideas reflected in built space, in this case in the waterfront.

The enthusiasm with which the project is received shows a certain extent of success in projects within this idea of a system of urban entertainment and leisure that was so needed at the time.



**figure 4-99** - 1919 - construction of the pier by the Instituto de Ingenieros  
source: Revista de Ingeniería. Planes Balneario 1919, No503 Año 23 No 9 Semestre 1 pg.568-578, No504 Año 23 No10 Semestre 1 pg.672-677, No505 Año 23 No11 Semestre 1 pg.729-738.

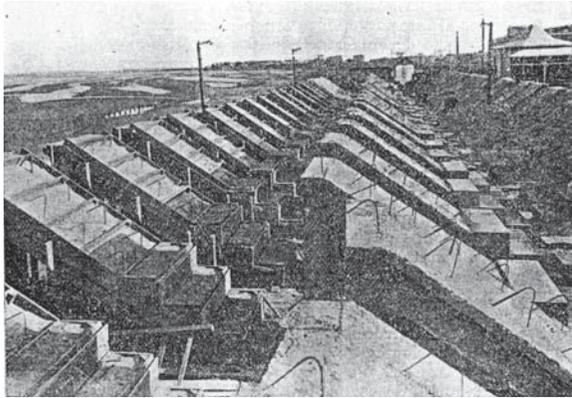
**figure 4-100** - 1919 - construction of the pier by the Instituto de Ingenieros  
source: Revista de Ingeniería. Planes Balneario 1919, No503 Año 23 No 9 Semestre 1 pg.568-578, No504 Año 23 No10 Semestre 1 pg.672-677, No505 Año 23 No11 Semestre 1 pg.729-738.



<sup>263</sup> Revista de Ingeniería. Planes Balneario 1919, No503 Año 23 No 9 Semestre 1 pg.568-578, No504 Año 23 No10 Semestre 1 pg.672-677, No505 Año 23 No11 Semestre 1 pg.729-738.

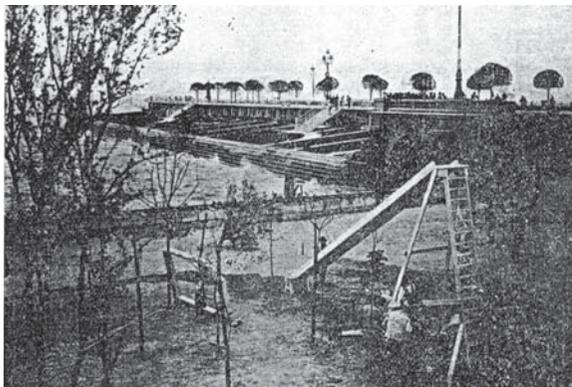
<sup>264</sup> idem.

<sup>265</sup> idem.



**figure 4-101** - 1919 - construction of the pier by the Instituto de Ingenieros. Structure for stairs and cabins.  
source: Revista de Ingeniería. Planes Balneario 1919, No503 Año 23 No 9 Semestre 1 pg.568-578, No504 Año 23 No10 Semestre 1 pg.672-677, No505 Año 23 No11 Semestre 1 pg.729-738.

**figure 4-102** - 1919 - finished pier by the Instituto de Ingenieros.  
source: Revista de Ingeniería. Planes Balneario 1919, No503 Año 23 No 9 Semestre 1 pg.568-578, No504 Año 23 No10 Semestre 1 pg.672-677, No505 Año 23 No11 Semestre 1 pg.729-738.



This promenade joins the characteristics that were previously presented in other projects, as parks and avenues, but for the first time there is a project for baths for the southern Costanera, with equipment for baths and cabins, not only with a hygienist proposal, but also with entertainment purposes. Other programmatic elements such as cafes, restaurants and tea-houses appear. This new aim is observed also in the position of the public opinion or in its reflection: the press.

The public was expecting the arrival of the special Committee announced for 5 in the afternoon. But as their waiting seemed in vain, at 5:40pm an affluence of public broke the police cord and occupied completely all the spaces of the pier. An official and 4 squad security soldiers followed the public on their horses and they even reached the tip of the pier, with the purpose of emptying the pier of people. They could not complete their task, even when their attitude provoked scenes such as those of demonstrations. At 6 in the afternoon, in numerous coaches of the Lacroze company, the official committee arrived to the border of the pier, which, presided by the governor doctor Llambias, had left the municipal palace.

Monseñor Alberti began the ceremony of the blessing of the waters, from the pier. While the ceremony was celebrated, policemen gave way through the crowd to the Ministers of Public Instruction and Interior, doctors Salinas and Gomez, respectively.

“The passengers would stop at the old rambla, on the wooden runway, that limits the children game park, in the retail stores and especially where the external ramblas and the pier converge. The whole extension that acts as an axis for the internal rambla, stairway and both entrances to the

tunnel were occupied by the public while the police guarded the entrance to the pier.

The public remained in plain disposition of the dependencies. They occupied the totality of the sidewalks of the rambla, the gardens of the plains, the stairs of the pier, the exterior promenades, giving a really beautiful image of totality. Meanwhile five or six people were adventurous to take a bath.”<sup>266</sup>

It is relevant to say that his project for the southern baths, especially its pier, fulfilled its needs of leisure space close to the city. This can be read in the articles of the inauguration day. The result of the design and building of the avenue and baths was stunning. The city dwellers were evidently welcoming the recovery of the shore.

“The river was very low, giving a more outstanding role to the old beach of the resort, with the beautiful perspective of the workshops of Riachuelo and the crossing of some ships in the canals of the harbour. Numerous persons dived in the river. The circles of children that would defy the imminent tides were numerous. More than one severe person, in the enthusiasm of the pleasure of bathing would take off their shoes and walked ceremoniously, with their top hat well on their heads.”<sup>267</sup>

“Today the south zone of the capital receives, in equal proportion to that of the north, the benefits of municipal action. This new baths zone, built on the sand banks that until recently were deserted, is a clear demonstration of the new order of things opening for the neighbourhoods of the south. The proud promenade shows its elegant

silhouette to the horizon of the Rio de la Plata. (...) What a great spectacle the waterfront promenade will give, with its thousands of souls strolling in the wide avenue that borders the estuary!<sup>268</sup>

Finally, a whole project for the waterfront could be used as leisure space in its totality, close to the city. Despite the lack of an intention of social reform the project provided, because of its geographical location, a meeting space of different social classes at the picturesque landscape of the waterfront.

From a financial perspective, the investment made in the building of the pier and bath houses was justified by the benefits of the project and was to be recovered in 4 years by the rent of spaces in the area.

“Regarding the necessity of baths for recreation and hygiene for the people, it was a conviction that floated in the environment, for which reason its realisation, not only has not originated one single protest, but it has received a general applause. So much so that the desire has been heard to build another bath on the northern side of the waterfront, as was the idea of doctor Le Breton, and we still believe that the government of the city is already busy with its project, which we approve without claims.”<sup>269</sup>

Still concentrating on the following project for the north the benefits of the southern baths for the population are described and praised.

Some conflicts arose within the CD regarding the construction of the Costanera Avenue during the years between 1919 and 1923. Later, most of the mentions of it in the sessions

of the CD regarded the construction of different elements of the area. In 1919<sup>270</sup> there was a conflict regarding misappropriation of funds for the paving of the avenue. In 1923<sup>271</sup> many issues are discussed on the subject. The discussions in the CD went on throughout the decade, but this corresponds already to the period that follows and the interventions of JCN Forestier, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

The work of Carrasco in the parks and promenades of Buenos Aires is essential. This is yet more relevant in the case of the waterfront projects. This man, a local professional, with strong and decided ideas and a sensitive feel for the needs of his city was able to develop projects despite the criticism and lack of recognition of authorities and peers of his time. His solutions for the problems of his city were complete and detailed. The variables he considered and the process he used were complex and developed. In his book *Parques y Jardines* for example, he explains his process of design as follows. He would consider the preliminary operations for the formation of the park, he would gather all relevant information about the site, the project, the influence of weather and seasons, perspectives, elements that compose a garden, placing of statues, water as ornamental element, different kinds of trees bushes, foliage, grass, paths, floral decorations, etc.

Carrasco was the “first Argentine theoretician of green spaces”<sup>272</sup>. He shows to have been extremely concerned, not only with the aesthetic improvement of the city but also especially with the needs of the dwellers. The presence of such a wide range of leisure activities in his projects shows a deep interest in the development of human behaviour.

Even though in his texts there is no evident relation to the leisure ideas present in

the rest of the world, with his project he shows a new approach to park design. He considers all these new forms of leisure as contemplation, activity, entertainment, spectacle and a didactic tool for the expansion of citizen’s behaviour. Added to this, is the fact that he proposes this type of program on the waterfront, and manages to have his project realised, which is quite an achievement. The inclusion of sports facilities shows an early interest in the fact that in Europe, as Corbin<sup>273</sup> states, gymnastics were becoming a civic duty.

Concerning the international influence within his projects it is shown that he received and studied the foreign examples of his discipline, but he was able to combine this with his own capacities and his knowledge of the local scene.

A good way of understanding the significance of his work lies on the fact that in the last 10 years his project for the southern waterfront has been rescued, his promenade restored and the plans used for this restoration were indeed those made by Carrasco himself. This is now a space that is extremely appreciated by the public as well as by the critics.

<sup>266</sup> ‘Inauguración oficial. Balneario Municipal’ *La Razón*, Jueves 12 de Diciembre de 1918.

<sup>267</sup> “Balneario Municipal. Inauguración Oficial”, *La Prensa*. Jueves 12 de Diciembre de 1918.

<sup>268</sup> “Balneario Municipal”. *La Razón*, 24 de Diciembre 1926, pg.8

<sup>269</sup> Revista de Ingeniería. *Planes Balneario 1919*, No503 Año 23 No 9 Semestre 1 pg.568-578, No504 Año 23 No10 Semestre 1 pg.672-677, No505 Año 23 No11 Semestre 1 pg.729-738.

<sup>270</sup> Actas Taquigraficas del Concejo Deliberante. 28-1-1919, pg 112-126/4-2-1919, pg.194

<sup>271</sup> Actas Taquigraficas del Concejo Deliberante. 8-6-1923, pg.870-871

<sup>272</sup> Berjman, Sonia, *Benito Javier Carrasco, sus textos*. Facultad de agronomía, UBA, 1997

#### 4.2.3.2- Forestier – civic life and the lure of the waterfront

##### Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier – biographical facts

Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier (Aix-les-Bains 1861 - Paris 1930) was an extremely influential landscape designer of the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first ones of the twentieth. He dedicated his life to public works, to the liberal profession of garden design, to writing texts and to the foundation of various institutions.

Forestier studied in the *École Polytechnique* and the *École Forestier* of Nancy. He also received some training from Adolphe Alphand. This experience was an influence on his principles and motivations as a landscape designer, even though the formal and programmatic aspects of his park design differed from that of his mentor.

Since 1887 he worked for the Municipal Service in Paris as *Conservateur* of Bois de Boulogne and Bois de Vincennes, as *Inspecteur d'Eau* of Paris and later as *Conservateur de Parcs* of Paris.

In Paris his main works were: the first riders ring in the city, Avenue Breteuil, the arboretum at Bois de Vincennes and the gardens of Champs-de-Mars below the Eiffel Tower. Forestier was also responsible for the organisation of Exhibitions such as the 1913 retrospective *Exposition d'Art des Jardins de France* in the *Musée des Arts Decoratifs* and the 1925 International Exhibition of Decorative Arts in which he was in charge of the garden section.

He was a founding member of the *Musée Sociale*, which was created in 1894 as an organisation to group young French architects. From his position in the *Musée Sociale* he was

named in 1908 founding member of the section of urban and rural hygiene. He was in 1911 a founding member of the *Société Française des Architectes et Urbanistes*; in 1916 a founding member of the *Ecole d'Art Publique*, in 1919 a founding member of the *Ecole d'Hautes études urbaines* and president of the *Ligue Urbaine* in 1928.

The foundation and participation in the mentioned *Musée Sociale* and the *Société Française des Urbanistes* (SFU) founded in 1914 were paramount to his work as a landscape designer and as an urbanist. In the SFU Forestier was one of the founders with among others, architects such as D.A. Agache and Leon Jaussely<sup>274</sup>. The aims of the association were the following: to gather technical documents; encourage and enhance communication with similar organisations in other countries; to centralise the proceedings of international conferences and to study its practical realisation, to participate in exhibitions in France as much as in foreign countries and to have material available for consultation.

Given these conditions it is understandable then that Forestier's work was not limited to Paris or France, he also intervened in many other cities. Foreign authorities and professionals sought for his visits. He visited the United States in 1908, where he criticised Central Park, saying that there was a high price New Yorkers had to pay for having a single park instead of a system of parks.

He visited England in 1909, and Sevilla in 1911 for which he designed the famous *Parque de Maria Luisa*, an Andaluz Park. In 1913 he visited Morocco and for this country his project for a park system in Rabat, which was a landmark in his career and in the park development of the city. The idea of park system is revealed in one of his quotations.

"Cities have understood which elements of hygiene and beauty a developing city can find in a century through land expansion, numerous well distributed reserves. They have understood that the 'plan de ville' is insufficient if it is not completed with a major program and a special plan of interior and exterior open spaces for the present and the future – through a system of parks"<sup>275</sup>

Forestier was also a prolific writer in specialised magazines such as *La Gazette Illustrée des Amateurs des Jardins*, *La Vie Urbaine* and *L'Architecture*.

Forestier visited Argentina in 1923, where he formulated the plan for the city of Buenos Aires, which we will be analysing later. He visited Mexico in 1928 and Barcelona in 1929, where he was very active in the designs of the Gardens of Monjuich, the terraces of Miramar, Avenue America, Amargos Garden, Font del Gat and Parc Laribal. For these projects he worked with the architect of the World Exhibition of Barcelona Puig i Cadafalch<sup>276</sup>, under the lead of the Director de Parques y Paseos Rubio i Tuduri.

Another significant project of his was that for La Habana. For this purpose he travelled three times to the Cuban capital and proposed a centralised system of parks and avenues in which the main element was a civic centre located in the geographic heart of Habana.

Concerning his influence in Buenos Aires, an article of his was published in the popular magazine *Caras y Caretas*<sup>277</sup> in 1907. There, he expressed his principles of garden design, which were briefly the following: they should be simple, without ornaments or colours, not very big,

inhabitable, with straight and curved lines, which would be only arcs of circles for “all other curves are useless and complicated”. In this article he states one of the social objectives of park design by saying that: “All impression of beauty has a moralising element to it”.

In 1920 he wrote a volume<sup>278</sup> on his works between 1912 and 1920 where he mainly described his designs for parks of Andalucía, Cataluña, Madrid, Morocco and Habana. His concerns here were associated with the social use of green spaces, the garden city ideas and the modern garden based on regularity.

Another significant book on his bibliography was *Grandes Villes et Systemes de Parcs*<sup>279</sup>. In it he is articulate about those who influenced him. He analysed the *garden city* using Adelaide and Washington of L’Enfant as examples. Evidently his concept of *garden city* has little to do with the concept of Ebenezer Howard, for Forestier refers to much earlier examples for his study. Then his concept of *garden city* is a more general idea, which has more to do with the general need of green spaces in the city than with the real concept later developed by Howard.

Forestier also talks about parks in Boston, Chicago, Baltimore, Vienna, Köln and London giving a wide perspective of European and North American park design. The main elements for the park system he describes are great reserves and protected parks, suburban parks, great urban parks, small parks or neighbourhood gardens, recreation terrains, children’s gardens and promenade avenues.

In another book of his<sup>280</sup> he follows the principles of Alphand and André by saying that “Free nature is a raw material, the garden is a work of art”.

Regarding the morphological design of his parks, Forestier can be more compared with

the park design of Le Nôtre than with that of Alphand. He uses geometry and symmetry for tracing most of his parks and gardens, he creates a monumental approach to the design providing axial perspectives and buildings within his park system.

<sup>273</sup> Corbin, Alain, ‘Backstage’ in Aries, Phillippe and Duby, Georges (ed.) *A history of private life, from the fires of the revolution to the Great War*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London 1990.

<sup>274</sup> Who was essential in the urban planning of Barcelona

<sup>275</sup> JCN Forestier, *Grandes Villes et Systemes des Parcs*, Hachette, Paris, 1906.

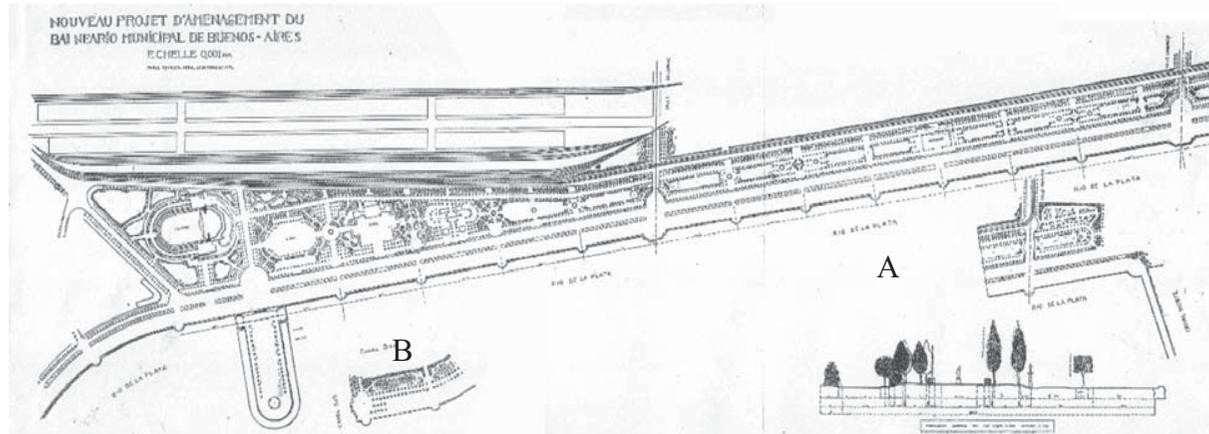
<sup>276</sup> One of Barcelona’s most outstanding architects of Modernismo

<sup>277</sup> Forestier, JCN, ‘Jardines Modernos’, *Caras y Caretas*, no. 465, 31 Agosto 1907.

<sup>278</sup> Forestier, JCN, *Jardins, Carnet des plans et desins*, Paris, Paul Freres Editeurs, n/d. Numbered edition.

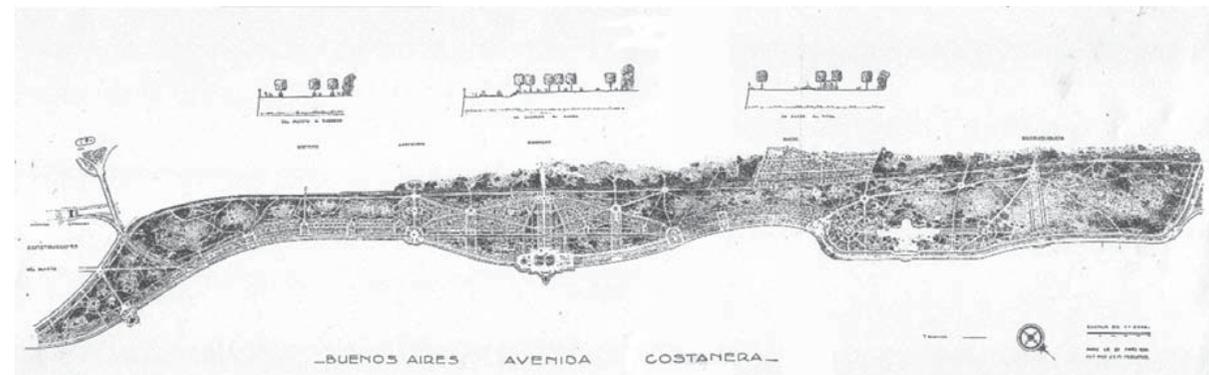
<sup>279</sup> Forestier, JCN, *Grandes Villes et Systemes de Parcs*, Paris, Hachette, 1905.

<sup>280</sup> Forestier, JCN, *Bagatelle et ses jardins*, Paris, Librarie Horticole, 1910.



**figure 4-103 - Costanera Sur**  
 author: JCN Forestier  
 source: Comisión de Estética Edilicia, Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925.

**figure 4-104 - Costanera Norte**  
 author: JCN Forestier  
 source: Comisión de Estética Edilicia, Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925.



Forestier project – 1925 – Northern and Southern Costanera

*We can say that being designed and developed some years after the project of Carrasco, Forestier's project adds but also subtracts from his predecessor. The programme in Forestier's project becomes more complex for he added housing in the northern area, but at the same time the design of green spaces is simplified and the complex set of activities proposed by Carrasco do not appear any more in Forestier's project. There is a more geometrical design of gardens and the use of the parks, promenades and avenues seems to be a more passive one, with less sports activities.*

### Context and administration

In October 1922 the administration of the city of Buenos Aires changed and in the hands of Intendente Carlos Maria Noel, the city went through a period of relative peace and renovating prosperity. The municipal budget of that year provided specially for the building of the Municipal baths and the Coast Avenue. The change in legislation allowed for autonomy in the construction of federal government buildings placed in the city. This provided more control and homogeneity in the planning of the city. The sessions of the CD reveal a high interest in the building of recreational areas such as parks and baths and the development of public works on hospitals and the rising of salaries.

Carlos Noel was mainly responsible for the growth of the centre of the city, the paving of streets, the extension of municipal projects and the improvement of municipal parks.

The city was in need of a structural organisation and a couple of plans for the city focused on a park system were formulated. One of these was the plan proposed by Carrasco in 1921, which we already mentioned in the previous chapter. Then, in 1923 there was the plan of the *Dirección de Paseos*, proposed by Carlos Noel in which the leader was Carlos Thays (jr), son of the famous landscape designer and head of the *Dirección*. The main issues on this plan regarded the observation and catalogue of the existing parks, the zoning, similar to that of Carrasco's plan but this time adding 43 new parks in the south and 45 new parks in the northern part of the city. It also considered the extension of the ring road General Paz and as in Carrasco's plan the using of free land and expropriation of small portions of land for the creation of public parks.

The growth of surface of public space would go from the existing 1,042 hectares of 1923 to the future proposed 2,422 hectares. The waterfront parks, north and south were also considered in this plan as a part of the Ring Avenue.

A general plan for the city was needed, and for this purpose in 1923 major Noel named the *Comisión de Estética Edilicia*<sup>281</sup>. Some of the most relevant characters in the city of Buenos Aires were chosen for the commission: arch. René Karman, a French architect who was assigned to the School of Architecture's workshop since 1912; arch. Carlos Morra, President of the *Sociedad Central de Arquitectos*; Sebastian Ghigliazza, Director of the Ministry of Public Works, representing the national institution in charge of the great building projects; arch. Martín Noel, President of the National Commission of Beaux-Arts; eng. Victor Spotta, Director of the Municipal Public Works Department. Emilio Ravignani, an historian and Secretary of Finance of the City,

was named as Secretary, in charge of writing the chapter on urban evolution.

Marcelo T. De Alvear, who was the president of the National Government at the time accused Carlos Noel, the mayor of Buenos Aires, of spending more in public works of high profile than in the real problems of traffic, floods and sub urban spaces. According to this statement it is understandable that Marcelo T. de Alvear proposed the invitation of a foreign professional for the formulation of this plan, to be included in the commission.

For this purpose he hired the French park-designer and urbanist Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier, who was mainly in charge of the design of the parks and public areas of the city, which included the waterfront areas of the north and south of the city.

Once again, a French landscape designer is hired for the projects in Buenos Aires: Bouvard was the one in charge at the time of the Centennial of Independence and Forestier in the 1920s. However, the context and the circumstances, as much as the professional profile of the characters involved were different in this period of time.

The role of France in the project was also different, Paris had no influence in the material development of the plan; instead it did export the know-how and methodology in the hands of Forestier. Forestier was hired by Marcelo T. De Alvear, brother of Carlos de Alvear, mayor of Buenos Aires in the planning for the Centennial, this shows that there is still a diplomatic relationship between France and Buenos Aires kept by the Alvear Family. They still had an important role in the urban transformation of the city.

Carlos Noel and his brother Martin Noel, architect who had also studied at the *Ecole Spéciale d'Architecture* in 1911 also had an

important influence in the formulation of the projects. Actually, Martin Noel and Forestier had previously met in Spain, where they were both working in the planning of Exhibitions.

The Commission is set then to formulate the plan. This was called: *Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización de Municipio. El Plano regulador y de Reforma de la Capital Federal*<sup>282</sup>. It carries a lot of meaning in its title. It was an *organic project*; this reflects the ideas of modern urbanism while presenting a project, not a plan. It is not to be read as a two dimensional plan but as a project that includes variables of many kinds and aims to the reform of the population, "not just its material well being"<sup>283</sup>. In fact, in practice this is a series of projects strongly linked between each other with a set of concepts and ideas imported from France and combined with local expertise and administration. The idea of urbanisation is the one that regulates a complex set of conditions and variables that include social, economical, physical and everyday life issues. This includes the measured study of the situation at the time and the response to these problems by regulations and physical projects alike.

<sup>281</sup> From now on CEE or Commission

<sup>282</sup> Organic Project for the urbanisation of the Municipality. The Regulation and Reform plan for Capital Federal. Intendencia Municipal, Comisión de Estética Edilicia, *Proyecto orgánico para la urbanización del municipio*. Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925.

<sup>283</sup> Intendencia Municipal, Comisión de Estética Edilicia, *Proyecto orgánico para la urbanización del municipio*. Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925. p.362

The main issues addressed by the CEE were based on the network capacity of the city, but were limited to proposing a web of parks and a web of civic centres linked within the city of Buenos Aires. With this they proposed to give a balance to the structure of the city while providing with the needed spaces for the new or updated behaviour of the city dwellers. Another issue that was attended in the Proyecto Organico was the worker's dwellings. There was attention put not only on the provision of dwelling for industrial workers but on the embellishment of these areas. This issue was also considered as a network included in the structure of the city.

In the analysis and study of proposals, one of the members of the commission, René Karman had an outstanding role. He was also French and a professor in the Faculty of Architecture of Universidad de Buenos Aires. According to Novick<sup>284</sup> his direct referents for the Proyecto were the *City Beautiful Movement*<sup>285</sup> and the manual of *Civic Art*<sup>286</sup> proposed by Hegemann and Peets, which are included in the bibliography of the project.

The project was quite criticised at the time, of being too focused on the aesthetic features and not on the real problems of the city. But it is relevant to say that this was not supposed to be the plan of reform but a proposal for this plan that would have required another commission and a more developed set of deeper studies. Nevertheless some particular projects such as those for the waterfront were sufficiently developed and carried out in the years after the proposal.

Forestier was a well-known character in Buenos Aires. Some of his publications were distributed in the city, such as a series of his articles on open spaces<sup>287</sup>.

Despite the recognition of the invitation of such a professional to the city by most of the members of the City Council, there was some dissidence especially from the socialist party. They considered that there were some local professionals who were as able to do the work as Forestier and it was nonsense to bring somebody from abroad. Some members of the council even favoured the hiring of Léon Jaussely, who was the Director of the School of Urban Art of Paris, and considered to be: "the right person to come from Paris to give advice and general directions"<sup>288</sup>.

Forestier's role in the *Proyecto Orgánico* was of relevance and part of the recognition to the whole project given by the public was the fact that he was partly in charge of it.

Forestier was invited in 1923 for one month to study the situation of the parks of Buenos Aires, and it was considered a short time in the eyes of most of the Commission, the city council and the public. But this was not holding the project back. Thanks to the aid of Carlos Thays (jr), who spent all the time Forestier was there, and showed him all he needed to know about the city he was able to do a sufficient diagnoses of the problems of the city.

During his visit he spent the first week walking through the city parks, the second week studying the plans and maps of the city to determine the urban surface. The third and fourth week he dedicated to making sketches and drawings, gathering photos and documents for his work to follow. The fact that Forestier dedicated 6 months of time for his project at his atelier in Paris also helped for this to be an achieved work, at least as a project for a plan.

In Forestier's first report he focused on the need of green open spaces, from 6% the city had to a projected 12% of the city's surface. He said these

parks should be linked by avenues with trees; these could be related to the parkways of North American urbanism. The avenues were to be divided into commercial ones and promenades. In this report he also referred specifically to the Balneario and the waterfront avenue.

Within the publication of the CEE, Forestier published a chapter regarding the general planning of parks and promenades<sup>289</sup>. In this report were his clear proposals. In general he proposes the transformation of areas of the city to reach the 14% of parks in the total surface. He proposed suburban parks, urban parks, commons, greenhouses and municipal game fields, gardens for children, private gardens, cemeteries and gardens for workers. These last were asked for by Intendente Noel, for he argues that municipal parks were not only to be projected for an elite but also for the working classes).

The most important of Forestier's interventions in the city of Buenos Aires were the projects for the waterfronts, both north and south within the limits of the Capital.

### **Location, extension, program and accessibility**

The introduction of the waterfront chapter by the CEE is clear in the intentions or principles applied to this waterfront area.

"The natural conditions of the capital and its own tradition suggested finding the way of recovering its most beautiful quality, to return its physiognomy of city situated on the border of a great estuary"<sup>290</sup>

"...the realisation of a great avenue that would be a real work of aesthetic beautifying, as the similar cases of Nice, Rio de Janeiro, as the promenade of Coney Island and the beautiful

Maritime avenue of Posilipo in the bay of Naples"<sup>291</sup>

Regarding the projects themselves we can start to analyse with his drawings for the Balneario or Costanera Sur. The extension of his project was similar to that of Carrasco's project (figure 4-103). The project is limited by Cangallo and Brazil streets. It consists mainly of one avenue next to the river.

The northern area of this avenue (corresponding to the northern section of Carrasco's project (A)) the avenue was designed as follows. Throughout the drawing of the section we understand that reading from the river inwards there is first a wall that protects from the river, a 20 metre wide sidewalk, then a line of trees occupying 3.5 metres. The first vehicle-street appears at 23.5 metres from the river and it is slightly elevated. The width of this vehicle lane is 12.5 metres. Next would be the main promenade, of approximately 40 metres wide, with two lines of trees on each side and finally one lane that seems like a sidewalk, though it could also have been for horses, just next to the railways.

The southern area section was different, and also followed the dimensions presented by Carrasco (B). The first part next to the river followed the same sidewalk and tree lane as the northern one, but the vehicle street runs diagonally to the river allowing the programmatic part to develop. These elements differ slightly from Carrasco's project.

In general there is less built space and pavilions than in Carrasco's project. There are no lawns or signs of natural environments as in Carrasco's proposals. Instead, the tracing of the trees shows a strong geometrical positioning of natural objects and symmetrical perspectives.

The sports fields proposed by Carrasco

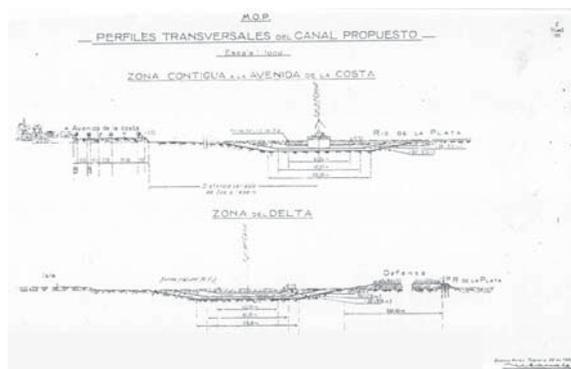
disappear to leave space for a theatre. The space for children is kept but it seems not to be specifically designed, even though through the pictures of the last chapter we saw that there already was a space for children's play with slides and hammocks. Another building that seems to be added is that of the ball room, placed in the middle of the park triangle surrounded by trees. An element that remains from previous projects is that of a double line of trees on the western limit of the park to separate the railroad and a vehicle street running next to it.

Stepping to the more complex and complete project for the Costanera Norte or Northern Waterfront (figure 4-104) we can start by saying that it was limited by the new harbour on the south, the ring avenue on the north, the riverbed on the east and the railroad on the west.

figure 4-105 - Sections of Costanera Norte

author: JCN Forestier

source: Comisión de Estética Edilicia, Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925.



<sup>284</sup> Novick, Alicia, 'Planes versus proyectos: Algunos problemas constitutivo del Urbanismo Moderno. Buenos Aires (1910-1936)'. Revista de Urbanismo, Universidad de Chile, Agosto 2000. <http://revistaurbanismo.uchile.cl/n3/index.html>.

<sup>285</sup> Progressive reform movement in North American architecture and urban planning that flourished in the 1890s and 1900s with the intent of using beautification and monumental grandeur in cities to counteract the perceived moral decay of poverty-stricken urban environments. The movement, which was originally most closely associated with Chicago and Washington, D.C., did not seek beauty for its own sake, but rather as a social control device for creating moral and civic virtue among urban populations.

<sup>286</sup> Hegemann, Werner, Peets, Elbert, *Hegemann and Peets American Vitruvius*, Princeton Architectural Press; Reissue edition 2006, original 1922

<sup>287</sup> Forestier, JCN (1905), "Los jardines obreros" (reseña de la experiencia francesa), *Revista Municipal*, Nro 59, 6 de marzo.

<sup>288</sup> Intendencia Municipal, Comisión de Estética Edilicia. *Proyecto orgánico para la urbanización del municipio*. Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925. p.142.

<sup>289</sup> Forestier, JCN, "Memoria sobre el arreglo, la proporción y la distribución de los sitios públicos al aire libre, de las avenidas-paseo, de los parques, de los jardines públicos y particulares de los barrios de residencia en Buenos Aires (de Noviembre 1923 a Mayo de 1924)" in Intendencia Municipal, Comisión de Estética Edilicia. *Proyecto orgánico para la urbanización del municipio*. Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925.

<sup>290</sup> Intendencia Municipal, Comisión de Estética Edilicia (1925), *Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal*, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, p.203.

<sup>291</sup> Intendencia Municipal, Comisión de Estética Edilicia (1925), *Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal*, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, p.205.

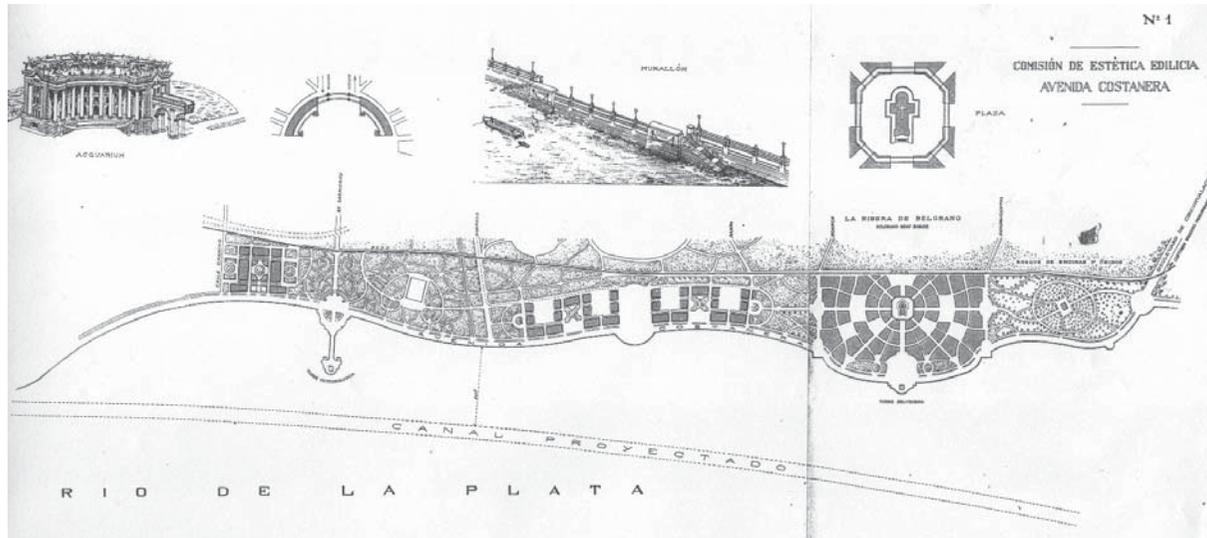


figure 4-106 - Project for Costanera Norte

author: CEE

source: Comisión de Estética Edilicia, Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925.

One of the main features of the project is the fact that it relied on the landfills on this area of the waterfront. The landfills were supposed to be gotten from the canalisation of waterways but it is said that this fills came from the digging of the subway network, which were in plain development in the 1920s.

The layout of this project is much more complex and the programme more varied than that for the southern Costanera. Meanwhile, it reveals many more of Forestier's ideas about urban and landscape design.

In the introduction to the chapter the economical feasibility of the project is addressed, this includes an important part of the program, which was that of the dwellings. The Commission had to justify such an ambitious project, and as in other cases before, they used the strategy of proposing a great portion of the land to be developed as real estate. This way the selling and renting of land for dwellings would cover the expenses of the parks.

The typology chosen for these dwellings was that of *barrio parque* or park neighbourhood.

This idea, according to the words of the Commission<sup>292</sup> mentioned these areas would form a *ciudad-jardín* or *garden city*<sup>293</sup> and it proposed to have a majority of these houses with views to the river. According also to the introduction, Forestier was able not only to provide a beautiful concept for the area but also achieved a good communication of his project with the rest of the projects related proposed in the Proyecto Orgánico.

Regarding the problems encountered for the construction of this waterfront area, one of the most important found was that of the presence of the railway on the lands that were to be used for this new development. The project for the moving of the tracks and the addition of another track were already formulated and approved by the authorities. The Commission complained that this project was in extreme conflict with the waterfront avenue and its materialisation is questioned in this text.<sup>294</sup>

Two waterfront neighbourhoods were proposed, the *Barrio Parque de la Ribera* east of Palermo and Belgrano neighbourhoods, and the *Ribera de Belgrano* or *Belgrano Beau Rivage*. The selling of these plots would allow the building of the following elements of the project.

1-the construction of a wall of defence for the Costanera avenue.

2-the construction of the Aquarium Municipal at the Roundabout of Palermo.

3-the construction on the same esplanade of the Beau Rivage restaurant or Municipal Casino

4-the construction of a music kiosk, a building for the municipal music band

5-a 150 metre malecón in which end the meteorological tower would be placed

6-the esplanade of Belgrano with the Belvedere tower

There are two sets of plans and drawings for this project. One presented by the CEE and described by them in the *Memoria* and another, much more detailed and complete done by Forestier (figure 4-104). The one of the CEE (figure 4-106) produces also a tentative budget of both the potential income of the selling of plots and the expenses for the building of all the infrastructure and program, which Forestier does not adventure himself in.

Looking at both sets of plans they seem quite similar at first sight, they both have an avenue next to the river, sections of parks and dwelling areas, crossing avenues, the passing railroad, but looking at them closer many differences are revealed. The one of Forestier seems more detailed and on-scale. The tracing looks more complete and it seemingly includes a more complex program.

In the case of the plan of the CEE the tracing of the gardens is reduced to a formal layout. The streets coming from the city continue to limit different sections of the area. These sections are very defined and have a certain character that distinguishes them from the others, but this character seems to be focused on a formal issue, not functional and not fundamental. In the case of Forestier each area has a determined use, the specific location of trees allows for more detailed distinction of areas and their uses.

The park design in the case of the plan of the CEE is full of those *curvilinear* lines that according to Forestier were complicated and unnecessary. The typology of building except for a couple of examples is not specified and the built area is also not described in detail or even in drawing.

The tracing of the section of the avenue is differently described in the introduction and in the text by Forestier<sup>295</sup>. The description of the

CEE avenue is more focused on the longitudinal trace of the avenue, describing its upward and downward lopes. The transversal section of the avenue contains, from the river: the containing wall, 4 metres of sidewalk for pedestrians, with granite seats each 50 metres and lamps each 15 metres, the following lane is that for vehicles, 40 metres wide, then another sidewalk as the previously mentioned, of 4 metres. The following lane would be 2 metres wide and contain trees every 7 metres, then a sanded lane of 6 metres for horseback riding. Next to it would be another wooded lane, as the one symmetrically opposite to it and finally a 10 metre lane for vehicles and pedestrians belonging to the waterfront neighbourhoods.

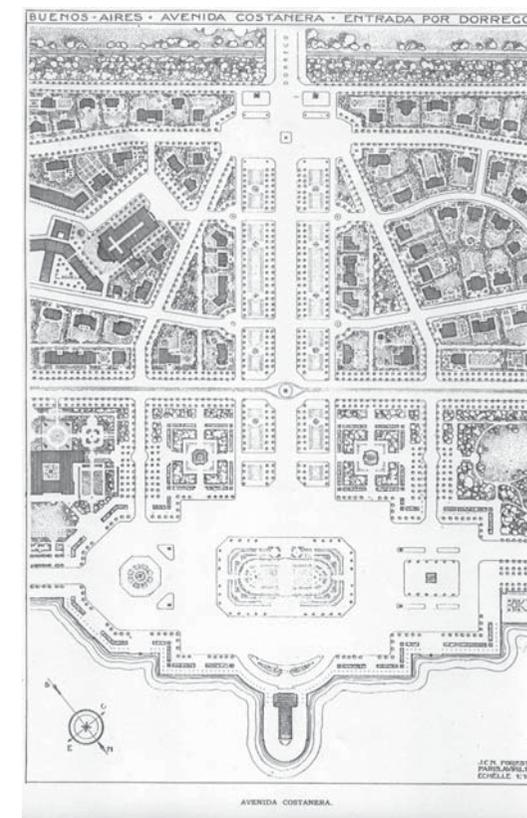


figure 4-107 - detail Costanera Norte  
author: JCN Forestier

source: Comisión de Estética Edilicia, Proyecto Orgánico, 1925.

<sup>292</sup> Intendencia Municipal, Comisión de Estética Edilicia (1925), *Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal*, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, p.203.

<sup>293</sup> As mentioned earlier, the concept of garden city had little to do with Ebenezer Howards proposals.

<sup>294</sup> 'Memoria Descriptiva. Proyecto Inicial de la Comisión de Estética Edilicia', in Intendencia Municipal, Comisión de Estética Edilicia (1925), *Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal*, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, p.207.

<sup>295</sup> *idem*, p.210.



figure 4-108 - perspective Costanera

author: CEE

source: Comisión de Estética Edilicia, Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925.

figure 4-109 - detail Costanera Norte

author: JCN Forestier

source: Comisión de Estética Edilicia, Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925.



The avenue designed by Forestier (figure 4-105), was more complex and addresses the issue in different ways regarding different sections of the avenue. The avenue is here divided in 3 sections, as is the rest of the project. The first part, from the harbour to Dorrego would have a total width of 55 metres. The transversal profile would be organised as follows: 15 metres of sidewalk next to the river, shaded by a row of trees, a 22 metres wide street for cars and a secondary avenue of 14 metres wide with two rows of trees. A secondary avenue for tramways is considered here, which is quite a contribution, given that this was not even mentioned in the plan by the CEE. The second part of the avenue is that of the curve at Dorrego street. This section is spared of the tramway line which follows a straight line and the avenue separates from it. This section was to be separated into two levels, one lower one with terraces along the river, without trees. The higher part was composed by a 26 metre terrace/sidewalk with 3 lanes of 6, 12 and 6 metres wide each and 4 rows of trees. A road for horseback riding is also provided here, to allow access from the parks of Palermo. Finally the vehicle lane of 21 metres and a sidewalk of 6. It is important to note that Forestier states that between both avenues there should be no constructions, only park areas. The third and final part of the avenue was that from Sucre to the ring-avenue. This is the section in which the avenue joins the tramway tracks and dwellings appear next to the avenue, in the remotest part of the project.

The next issue addressed in the description of the project by the CEE is the roundabout of Palermo. According to the *Memoria* this would be in the intersection of av. Sarmiento and av. Costanera and have a diameter of 195 metres. It would have two twin buildings with a colonnade

linking them and would permit the passage of people from Palermo going to Costanera. This esplanade was supposed to end on a pier on the river and contain a music kiosk. In the plans by Forestier this roundabout does not appear as such, and there is no pier to end it. He proposes an avenue continuing the trace of Sarmiento, with indeed two colonnade buildings but further away from the river and the street does end on a smaller roundabout.

The pier projected in the version of the CEE does not appear in the project of Forestier, instead there is a wider pier looking extremely like the espigón of the southern Costanera, so criticised by Carrasco previously.

In the subject of the new neighbourhoods the CEE is not very specific about the code related to this built areas, both in the *Ribera de Palermo* area and in the *Belgrano Beau Rivage* area. It does mention that for the *Ribera de Palermo* the blocks had to have 60m x 120m, and all be empty in the middle, so that they could have gardens and provide a *hygienic*<sup>296</sup> environment for this new part of the city, it also insists on the decorative and pleasant effect of the gardens. Three *squares* were to be inserted into that dwelling area. The Belgrano Beau Rivage neighbourhood is clearly drawn in the plan, a concentric tracing, with a church in the middle, and street starting from it diagonally, and 4 streets surrounding the church that form irregular blocks. As this part of the neighbourhood touches the river there is a Belvedere and a set of gardens between the buildings and the river.

Forestier's version of these neighbourhoods is somewhat more detailed. The first section of buildings is that located about 1,250 metres before the intersection of Sarmiento and the river is to be used for houses and villas that have to be compulsorily surrounded by gardens in their

front, back and sides. The area of dwellings after Sarmiento is to be denser, to take advantage of the land gained to the river. Here there is authorisation of the constructions of houses for rent, especially for commercial aims, so that the dwellers of this area would be well provided. There follows a detailed description of how the contract for the sale of these lots for construction should be built. The heights and colour of fences, time of construction, the proportion of masonry and fence on the municipal street line are all specified. To what concerns the construction of the houses it talks about the exclusive destination to dwelling or commercial aims, and excludes any kind of industrial functions. The distances between house and fence are specified, as well as the maximum width of balconies, staircases and terraces.

One of the main issues that appeared in the chapter by Forestier that was not even mentioned in that of the CEE is the problem of accessibility. The first subchapter of his text is dedicated to describe the access to the area from each part of the city. Almost all of the accesses proposed are bridges that cross the railroad and reach the area in different ways.

Other programmatic elements in Forestier's proposal include the aquarium to be established in the first section next to the harbour. Forestier finds the area ideal for the placing of a hotel that would be surrounded by gardens and the breeze of the waterside. Finally he proposes a pavilion for restaurant, meetings and parties located on the pier at the end of Dorrego, instead of a great monument.

Forestier was one more of the many French professionals who intervened in the urban and landscape design of the city of Buenos Aires. He was the fourth one to be present in the

configuration of the riverfront. He highlighted the beautiful condition of the place and studied the need for accessibility as one of the main points of his paper. Nevertheless, his proposal was based on beauty and hierarchy of spaces, as he did in most of his other urban projects such as those of La Habana and Barcelona.

The part of the 'Proyecto' that concerns us here is one of the elements of the park system, one of the most discussed and conflicted of parks, the riverfront park. As we have seen in previous chapters this issue was addressed in general in previous plans and in particular by local projects. The most significant of them was the project of Carrasco, which was carried out in stages by different institutions, but that was successful in the provision of public space in the years previous to the Proyecto Orgánico. Forestier based his project on previous projects and studies for the area, but his contribution was mainly based on the articulation of these spaces with the rest of the city. However, at the time he was strongly criticised by members of the commission of being too ambitious in the dimensions and budget of his projects<sup>297</sup>.

His designs for open green spaces, parks, squares, boulevards and *barrios parque* were differentiated and hierarchical. As we saw in the enormous project for the northern waterfront (figure 4-104) the areas dedicated to parks are open spaces with scattered trees and curiously, full of those complicated curves for paths, which he so much criticised. These paths do have some kind of rational condition to them, for they all seem to lead to one point of interest, which could be an attraction point at the waterfront or a node in the middle of the park. The smaller parks are more rational and geometrical, even though some parts

of them have lawns and trees that do not follow any geometry. On the other hand, the squares and boulevards in both northern and southern avenues are completely rational, symmetrical and geometrical spaces (see figure 4-103 and 4-104). In both northern and southern areas the avenues perpendicular to the river have a clear axial perspective, with a regular organisation of parks, boulevards and buildings around them. Also the avenues tangent to the river form an artificial layout of trees and lanes, criticised by Carrasco of being boring and monotonous.

The case of the *barrio parque* is particular. Considering that the tracing of the whole city of Buenos Aires was that of the grid it must have been a breakthrough to see this rather organic layout of space. It is relevant to say that in a general view the proposal for the *barrio parque* of Forestier does not differ too much from that of the CEE. However Forestier shows a more detailed study of each plot. The influences of the idea of the *garden city* as interpreted by Forestier or the suburban neighbourhoods of Stübben are here applied to the waterfront project. The houses with a considerable amount of garden around them in the proposal of Forestier, as much as those of the CEE (figure 4-107) with gardens in the middle, show this need of open green space also next to the river.

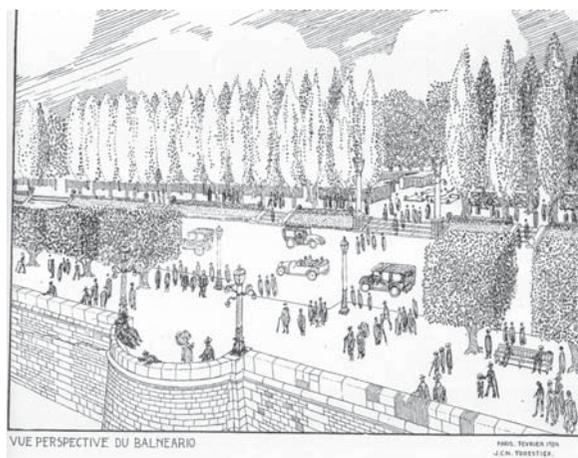
<sup>296</sup> Intendencia Municipal, Comisión de Estética Edilicia (1925), *Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital Federal*, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, p.210.

<sup>297</sup> Novick, Alicia (1992), "Técnicos locales y extranjeros en la génesis del urbanismo porteño", in *AREA, Revista de Investigaciones*. FADU-Escuela Politécnica de Laussane. Berjman, Sonia (1997), *Plazas y parques de Buenos Aires: La Obra de los paisajistas franceses. 1860-1930*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Buenos Aires, 1997.



**figure 4-110** - Avenida Costanera. Gran Plaza  
 author: JCN Forestier  
 source: Comisión de Estética Edilicia, Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital Federal, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925.

**figure 4-111** - detail Costanera Norte  
 author: JCN Forestier  
 source: Comisión de Estética Edilicia, Proyecto Orgánico para la Urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital federal, Intendencia de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Talleres Peuser, 1925.



Regarding this representation issue we can see through the drawings that the project presented by Forestier had a much more green character than that by the CEE. One of the few illustrations of the project by the CEE (figure 4-108) shows a completely different image of the waterfront. The images of Forestier (figure 4-109/110/11) show a great amount of green, especially in the northern area, but also in the southern balneario. On the other hand, that by the CEE show a much more barren space, where architecture is more present and monumental buildings such as that of the aquarium and other unidentified buildings are much more present than green space. Scale wise, on the drawings of the CEE the trees are relegated to narrow lanes next to the much wider vehicle avenues.

Regarding previous projects it is evident that the hygienist needs of the city are not in the most essential agenda any more, even though it was occasionally mentioned in the sessions of the CD. Also the idea of public baths seems to be out of the question in Forestier's project, and Carrasco says angrily that the southern waterfront should not be called a balneario, but a waterfront avenue, for it could not be compared with the baths of any other city. However, in the sessions of the CD the place is continuously described as baths and seems to be used for that purpose. Some ideas presented previously remain, and as strong as ever, as the need of communication of the city with the River, this issue appears as much in the discourse of Forestier, as in that of Carrasco and even constantly in the sessions of the CD.

Forestier's contribution was not only limited to the physical development of certain areas. He provided a set of laws and regulations previously developed in Paris, which were useful for the expropriation and enlargements, dealing with laws of property and administrative

boundaries.

The focus can be set on the programme and extension of the project proposed by Forestier. Studying his maps and descriptions, we can see that, compared with the previous projects, it includes a slightly more complex programme and a more developed and attentive connection and access with the rest of the city.

The infrastructure, as in previous projects, contained a river defence wall and a pier, but this time the technological developments and advances and the complexification of city needs allowed for the appearance of more elements such as a yacht and a boat pier and a meteorological tower.

The entertainment facilities are not as developed as those proposed by Carrasco for the northern waterfront out of the limits of the city. Forestier does include a Casino, an aquarium and some spaces for restaurants and party halls, but he is not as detailed as Carrasco in his layout or particular functions of these and other buildings. Regarding the issue of leisure he does not even address the problem of sports, even though it was one of the main issues to deal with when coming to the leisure behaviour which was in constant change and development.

Socially, it is evident that the development of the northern waterfront was directed to the traditional concept of the area, as said by Concejal Tedín Uriburu in March 1923, still seen as an *aristocratic* area. The proposal for the *barrio parque* was one focused on the richer section of society.

## Realisation

Starting with the project of Forestier for the Southern Costanera we have to say that it is not completely clear whether it was his project

that was followed or the one of Eugenio Carrasco of 1919. They might even have been combined under the direction of Carlos Thays (Jr.) who was head of the Dirección de Parques at the time. What is clear is that during the whole administration of Carlos Noel the subject of both the southern Balneario and the Northern Waterfront Avenue appeared in the CD repeatedly.

The first mentioning of the *Balneario Municipal* in 1922 appears as an extraordinary expense that did not appear in the budget of 1919. This concerns part of the infrastructure for the balneario and the amount added to \$ 186.058,28.<sup>298</sup>

In any case the southern balneario was built and all kinds of rules and regulations were being developed for it. Before the summer of 1923 the CD was active in the organisation of the Balneario and its surroundings. In March<sup>299</sup> the timetables schedules and rules for the balneario were developed. The balneario was described as free to use by the population within the allowed hours. This shows how regulations were active to control the masses that were beginning to use this area. Even some moral issues appear on behaviour, when bathers are said not to be supposed to talk or make any sort of gestures to those outside the water 'to observe strict morality'.

Also in March 1923<sup>300</sup> the issue of the need of more seats in the balneario makes Concejal Tedín Uriburu talk about the need of air of the porteños<sup>301</sup> saying:

"It would be convenient that the people of the city of Buenos Aires, numerous in fact, that has few lungs where to breathe the breeze of the Rio de la Plata, be given all the facilities for them to do it. The Park of Palermo is not enough and it is still considered aristocratic."

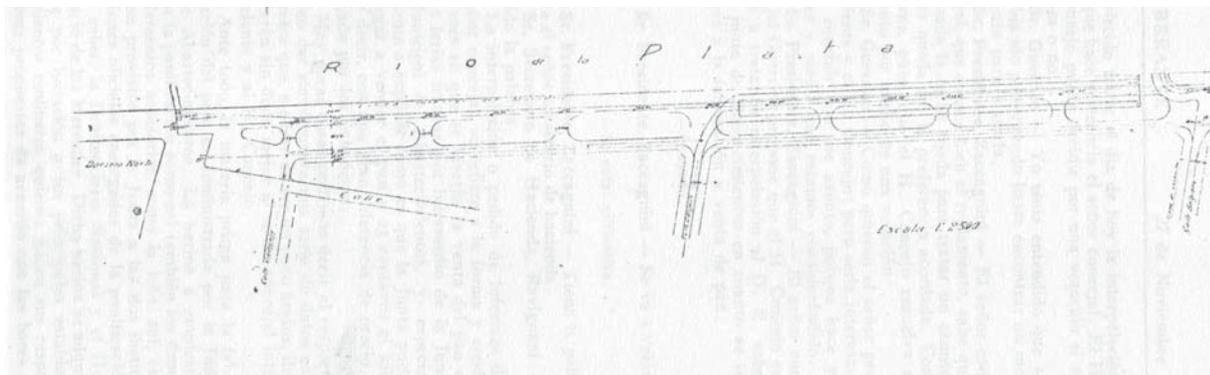
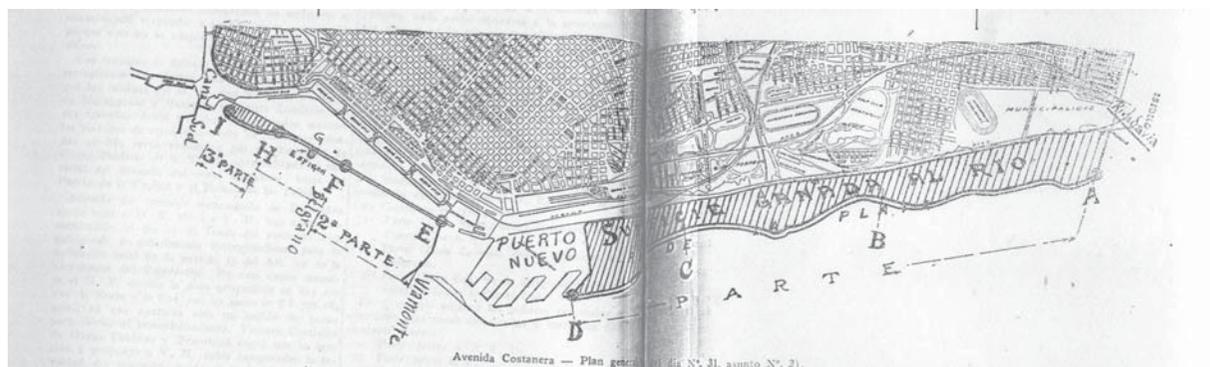


figure 4-112 - Proyecto de Avenida Costanera  
source: Actas Taquigraficas del Concejo Deliberante. November 1923

figure 4-113 - Proyecto de Avenida Costanera  
source: Actas Taquigraficas del Concejo Deliberante. December 1924



<sup>298</sup> Actas Taquigraficas. Concejo Deliberante. (ATCD) 26-6-1922. Gasto balneario. There are multiple ways of calculating the equivalent in amounts of currency. Considering the exchange rate from pesos to dollars of 1914 as 2,36 pesos= 1US\$, then the amount spent would have been 78.838 US\$. The equivalent to that in American dollars at present time would be: \$1,640,220 using the Consumer Price Index for the conversion.

<sup>299</sup> ATCD. 2-3-1923.pg46

<sup>300</sup> ATCD. 23-3-1923.pg195

<sup>301</sup> inhabitants of Buenos Aires



figure 4-114 - 1930s - Balneario Municipal  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 3234 sobre 6

figure 4-115 - 1930s - Balneario Municipal  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 3234 sobre 4



In this date another more important issue is considered, and that is the potential opening of another access to the balneario apart from the existing two. One of the main issues of conflict was that the national government was to give right of passage to make any access to the balneario from the city, for the harbour and the railways, national jurisdiction were in the middle. In any case it is clear here, in the discussions of the local authorities, how the free time of the citizens is being considered and how these open spaces and the presence of the river are so paramount in the city agenda.

In April 1923<sup>302</sup> the list of locators of the balneario was presented and sent to the *Comisión de Hacienda*, government body in charge of the renting of municipal property, among other functions. This shows that somehow the free condition of the bathing facilities was subsidised by the renting of these areas for commercial use. This way the funding would be covered for the maintenance of the area.

In June 1923<sup>303</sup> two important issues are treated on the CD. One of them is the forbidding of provisional constructions on the area and the other is the issue of the concessions. This will be a subject that appeared constantly on the table of the CD. Contracts of 11 years were given to those who rented land for their commercial buildings, they had to be made of brick and follow the conditions set by the CD. This was not the case and for years these improvised buildings would be the headache of some members of the CD. In this session it was also established that after the 11 year concessions the buildings would have to pass the hands of the municipality.

The fact that summer was approaching made this a relevant period for the CD to have this area ready and working for the city dwellers to be able to enjoy it. "with the only objective of not

leaving the balneario without the commodities for the public during the summer."<sup>304</sup>

The next session dedicated to the balneario was that of November 1923<sup>305</sup>, there, a plan is included in the records of the session for the definite building of the Avenida Costanera between Belgrano and Viamonte, what we have been recognising as the northern part of the avenue. This drawing (figure 112) does not follow neither the tracings of Carrasco nor those of Forestier (too early for this). It is mainly a scheme of pavements and heights without any design details to it. It is nevertheless approved and later built.

In the Municipal budget of the end of 1923 the importance of the Balneario and the Northern Costanera is evident for the amount spent on them. The budget for them raised to \$ 15.000.000, which is an enormous amount, considering the budget of all other green spaces for the Capital was \$11.000.000<sup>306</sup>.

By 1924<sup>307</sup> Concejal Guerrico - one of the most influential in the matters of the balneario - calls the attention of the CD because the proposal he had made for the commercial section of the balneario was not being dealt with and was also impeding locators of commercial buildings already there to continue with their contracts. This problem is solved in the following session and even though there was a proposal for "the removal of establishments of the zone, to build there more pleasant and beautiful ones" this is not carried out at the time.

Between September and December 1924<sup>308</sup> and just at the beginning of the summer there is a proposal for the expansion of the balneario. This includes a drawing, not very detailed (figure 4-113), but that shows specifically the three sections of the waterfront, the landfills of the northern Costanera which would be called the first part

and the second and third part to continue building the areas around the balneario, south (2<sup>nd</sup>) and northwards (3<sup>rd</sup>). This project must have been based on the project of 1923 by the Dirección de Paseos, though it is not specified anywhere.

During 1925 no significant sessions occurred on the subject, but during 1926 and 1927 many constructions were presented, approved and built. Issues such as the cleaning of the beach<sup>309</sup> and the building of the defence wall of the avenue<sup>310</sup> are solved rapidly.

In May 1927<sup>311</sup> the figure of Forestier finally appears on the sessions of the CD. On this session the main problem discussed is that there is no correspondence between the construction and landfills built in the southern Costanera and neither the plans of Forestier or those of the CEE. Issues such as the construction or not of the espigón, for financial reasons arise.

It is interesting to analyse the protocols of the meetings of the CD, for some crucial information about the leisure program in the area is revealed. In the session of June 28<sup>312</sup> the destruction of the improvised commercial structures is addressed and there is a list of these *precarious buildings*. The *Villa restaurant* that took 206 m<sup>2</sup> of land, the restaurant of Mr. Rovira that took 536 m<sup>2</sup> or the *Biekert Beerhouse* with 242 m<sup>2</sup>. These were not improvised buildings, they were extended enough and made good business at the location. A skating rink was also placed in the area, which took more than 1500 m<sup>2</sup>. This is a part of the program that did not appear in Carrasco's or Forestier's project and reveals the needs of the public. In this session the concession for several well known buildings such as the *Confitería Munich* by Andrés Kalnay are set as examples of how the aesthetic aspect of the Balneario should change, getting rid of the wooden improvised

buildings to give way to more beautiful and durable ones.

By December 1927<sup>313</sup> the budget and construction of the whole defence infrastructure of the Costanera Norte were being approved. A very important issue at this session was the fact that it is recognised that by decree the National Government commits not to expand the new harbour northwards, so as to leave the free land for the municipal project of waterfront avenue. It is mentioned that the decree was not kept and that the harbour was supposed to be expanded. Due to this the CD proposes not to expand the harbour but to move it to the south, out of the limits of the capital, next to the Riachuelo.

Throughout 1928 many buildings were discussed in the CD. A bridge to cover the Maldonado stream for the north Costanera is presented and approved. The building of restaurants on the balneario was also approved. Finally, the roman theatre, that had appeared on Forestier's plans for the area was approved and built in 1930. This project is said to have been first presented in 1921, so this must have been part of the plans of Eugenio Carrasco.

Finally, to wrap up we can say that the companies *Siemens Bauunion* and *Mauricio Kinbaum* were in charge of the final materialisation on the construction of both southern and northern Costaneras that were finished in 1932 (figures 4-114/115/116/117/118/119/120). Their work was limited to the building of defences but they also presented drawings that showed the overall design of the area.

So after more than a decade of projects and works, both avenues were at citizens' disposal. These projects hardly followed Forestier's drawings or guidelines and this will be addressed in the following section.



figure 4-116 - 1927 - Confeitería Munich  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 3234 sobre 4

<sup>302</sup> ATCD. 6-4-1923.pg228

<sup>303</sup> ATCD. 8-6-1923.pg.870-871

<sup>304</sup> ATCD. 8-6-1923.pg.871

<sup>305</sup> ATCD. 27-11-1923.pg.276-278

<sup>306</sup> Using as before, the consumer price index for the conversion of currency, the budget for the balneario would be the equivalent of US\$132,234,870 and the budget for the rest of the green spaces of the city US\$96,971,888

<sup>307</sup> ATCD. 20-5-1924.pg.301-303

<sup>308</sup> ATCD. 30-9-1924.pg 1214-1221 /29-12-1924. pg2615-2619

<sup>309</sup> ATCD. 21-12-1926.pg.2078

<sup>310</sup> ATCD. 17-125-1926.pg.2002

<sup>311</sup> ATCD. 31-5-1927.pg.621-652

<sup>312</sup> ATCD. 28-6-1927.pg.1378-1379

<sup>313</sup> ATCD. 30-12-1927.pg.3361-3365



**figure 4-118** - 1930s - Balneario Municipal  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 3234 sobre 6

**figure 4-119** - 1930s - Balneario Municipal  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 3234 sobre 1



**figure 4-117** - 1930 - Balneario Municipal  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 3234 sobre 6



## Repercussions

As we have seen in previous pages the projects of Forestier for both southern and northern Costaneras were not built according to his plans, but some reduced parts of them were. The theatre, originally not his project but included in his drawings was finally realised. The avenue proposed for the northern waterfront was realised following his tracing and programme, even the espigón was built, but the whole neighbourhood area was never even discussed, much less built.

On the subject of the sidewalk of the southern waterfront (northern section) which was built by his project, according to Carrasco's texts, he was strongly criticised by the local engineer. The sidewalk, which was given 15 metres wide next to the river is considered by Carrasco to be excessive and unnecessary, "for it is never occupied by the public and has a monotonous character due to the grey colour and uniformity of its surface"<sup>314</sup>. Another of the innovations considered inappropriate by Carrasco were the *gardens*<sup>315</sup> that were simple stretches of grass surrounded by Alamos, uniformly disposed 'lacking the aesthetic beauty that is obtained when the resources for the composition of landscape are known and applied'. Carrasco appeals to the rich flora present in this country and criticises Forestier for not being familiar with it and therefore not applying it in his design.

According to the plan for the city Carrasco also criticises Forestier saying that

"It regards a matter that has to interest all the inhabitants and has to put things in place. (...) Except for the ideas about general issues that are already known, the visit of Mr. Forestier has left us nothing. The plan claimed by Buenos Aires' progress is still missing"<sup>316</sup>

Thays (Jr.) remarked that when Forestier made his proposals and designs and comments for parks in the city those were already done in part or were about to be finished, in this way making the French designer's work less relevant.

This is to be said also for the Costaneras, even though his project for the northern Costanera was not realised, in general he provided the necessary attention to be put in the parks and promenades of the city, so that they would be in time developed.

The project of Forestier was the last in a series of projects for the waterfront that in a somewhat controllable environment considered the issues of hygiene, aesthetic, accessibility and especially the provision of leisure space for a city that was still limited.



**figure 4-120** - 1949 - Balneario y Espigon  
source: Archivo General de la Nación. Caja 3234 sobre 1

<sup>1314</sup> Carrasco, Benito Javier, "El Balneario Municipal", 27-12-1925, Recopilación de artículos publicados por el Ing. Benito Javier Carrasco durante los años 1923 y 1926. Buenos Aires, Los Amigos de la Ciudad, 1927.

<sup>1315</sup> in quotation marks in Carrasco's text

<sup>1316</sup> 'Los proyectos de M Forestier para el embellecimiento de Buenos Aires' Recorte sin identificar proveniente del archivo Thays, posiblemente del diario La Razon, Buenos Aires, 1925. Quoted on Berjman, Sonia (1997), *Plazas y parques de Buenos Aires: La Obra de los paisajistas franceses. 1860-1930*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Buenos Aires, 1997.

## Conclusions on Chapter 4 – Buenos Aires

Within a history of cycles of development and relative evolution there are times, in certain places and under certain circumstances, which provide surprisingly rapid transformations. This is caused by the appearance of phenomena that, combined, allow the subsequent movement that causes social, economical, political and urban change. Buenos Aires in the last decades of the nineteenth century is seen as one of these cases. The waterfront is particularly observed as a place of application of these transformations and a space of experimentation of urban ideas and leisure practices.

The waterfront of Buenos Aires shows a compendium of projects that configure an evolution of leisure ideas and of urban possibilities. Most of the urban and leisure concepts dealt with internationally in the western world regarding waterfront leisure spaces were applied in one way or another to this South American city. The great outstanding quality of most of these projects, compared to similar ones developed in Europe, was that they were materialised, in a short period of time, given the very favourable circumstances.

The interaction of professionals from different parts of the world, as seen in the previous cases of Chicago and Barcelona, allowed a rich series of projects to be conceived. The combination of foreign ideas with professionals who were

moving from project to project, from country to country from exhibition to exhibition, left traces internationally that can still be seen today in the restoration of some projects for waterfronts, such as that of Costanera Sur in Buenos Aires.

These projects have given us some answers regarding the evolution of leisure practices; the relation between them and the urban planning instruments; and the way they are materialised in the waterfronts. We have seen how civilising ideas were shown in the proposals of parks and promenades at the waterfront; we have seen how the traditional uses of certain waterfront areas were replaced by organised and prepared leisure spaces. We have seen how harbour areas and leisure areas went through conflict after conflict to find a balance and share a space that is still in constant modification.

Certain typologies have been found in the study of these projects and they will be analysed next.

### Riverfront Parks

The three periods chosen for this research show an evolution and change in perspective both in the issues of leisure and landscape, responding to theories and practices that were being applied world-wide, but that in Buenos Aires were particularly applied to the waterfront.

Starting with the period between 1870 and 1895 the cases of Sarmiento, Alvear and Thays are different from each other but share some general ideas and applications that make them belong together.

Sarmiento's ideas of civilisation and progress affected the way he conceived the Parque Tres de Febrero, and his proposal of a landscape for production reflected a new approach to some ideas of the Rational Recreation Movement. In the realisation of the park, instead, the influences that appear have more to do with the picturesque landscape introduced by Repton and later interpreted by F.L.Olmsted, who was a definite and explicit influence in Sarmiento's conception of landscape. The main innovation of Sarmiento's project has to be the proposal of the first waterfront park, despite the lack of attention in his texts to this quality of the park, the geographical position of it would set a precedent for the following projects.

Torcuato de Alvear was the following one to be in charge of the leisure waterfront development as the first mayor of Buenos Aires. Even though his urban policies in the infrastructural development of the city were directed to all social classes it is evident that when it came to the development of leisure areas he was more focused on the leisure class. Thorsten Veblen was a thorough researcher of this social group and a harsh critic of its condition as a



leisure class, even though he was describing the phenomenon in the United States, the equivalent of this class was also developing in Buenos Aires. Many of the leisure activities of this social stratum in the US were shared with those of Buenos Aires. Alvear has been compared with Haussmann for the major urban transformations he realised in the city. This relation does not seem very accurate because the urban conditions of Paris, an already developed and populated city, with many complexities of all kinds would not compare to a city like Buenos Aires, where the urban tissue was a monotonous grid and the physical aspects of the city were all yet to be developed. It is true though that when it comes to cultural transformation through the city's structure this was indeed the case. Buenos Aires, a city with a strong Spanish tradition was transformed to receive a whole set of international influences that would change the morphology of the city and the cultural context in which it was built. When it comes to landscape on the waterfront the work of Courtois shows a very strong influence of Alphand and André, for the French landscape designer used their theories and concepts for the design of his park and baths. The issue of hygiene also played a very important role on the development of this project and it was not casual that the park was to be placed next to the water treatment plant in Recoleta. Back to the landscape issue, it is also remarkable that early in time, 1879, especially for Argentina, Courtois is

the first to address the issue of children and the importance of play in their lives, in this issue he is already anticipating the playground movement that developed in the US in later decades.

Within the same period we find the work of Thays, who is also considering leisure as a civilising tool, and starting to combine the use of this landscape for active recreation as well as contemplative one. His landscape design is definitely informal, having very little architecture and a layout that reminds definitely those of the informal parks of Alphand. Another element that appears in Thays design that is innovative for the city, especially being a city in development was that of the piers from the park on the river. This element shows some influence of the sea resorts of England and France and especially of Eugenius Birch, despite the fact that the design of the piers themselves are not very detailed in Thays' drawings. Another element that makes this project special was the addition of the avenue that connecting the river with the city, would provide a perspective on the spectacle of the river.

This first period was definitely that of the waterfront park, a space of predominantly passive and contemplative leisure, with some attempts of providing a space of production that did not finally take place. The picturesque qualities of the landscape are evident in the drawings as much as in the discourse of their makers, the healing qualities of water are used as one of the issues

on the hygiene of the city and the first baths are proposed. The civilising powers of the green areas are highlighted and the physical development of the waterfront as well as the rest of the city is remarkable.

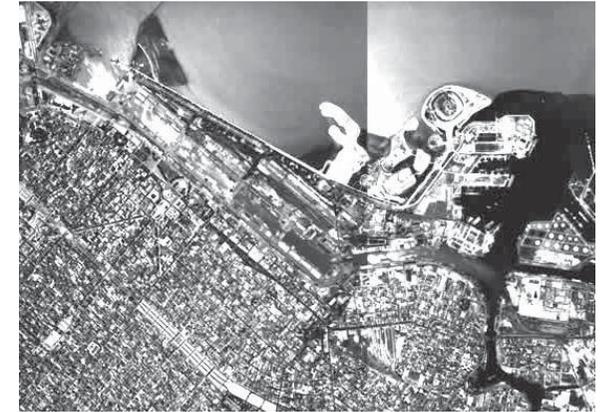


figure 4-121 - 1975 - Foto Aerea Buenos Aires  
source: Archivo Alicia Novick

figure 4-122 - 2001 - Panoramic view Costanera Sur  
source: photo by the author



In this period the Government of the city had a very high intervention in all the decisions taken for the development of the city, where the role of the mayor was paramount and the city council tended to ascribe to it without much discussion. The social differences in the city are still felt in the location of the waterfront parks, these still remain to be places for the elite and a couple of decades would have to pass for this issue to change.

The following period (1895-1912) with the projects of Morales, Bouvard and the *Exposición Internacional* saw a shift in interests of leisure and landscape that reflected them. Parks were beginning to be used more as a space of didactic activity and representation than of passive leisure.

The project of Morales was not a park but an avenue. This makes already a typological difference compared to the projects in the previous periods. His urban landscape principles were those of the *City Beautiful*, the urban principles to which he was adhering were those of Josef Stübben and Daniel Burnham. The inclusion of a certain set of measurements for the width of streets, sidewalks and gardens reflect the rationalisation of urban circulation space that was being discussed in international conferences and within local authorities. Morales proposes also a series of programmatic elements for his

avenue and one of this, the hotel, reflects the first inclusion of tourism in the configuring of the urban environment. The influence of Thomas Cook is not explicit, but the idea of tourism that was rising internationally was here applied to the city of Buenos Aires as a potentiality. Morales also refers to the spectacle of the river in a similar way to the way Burnham referred to that of the lakefront in Chicago.

The following project was that of Bouvard, that though it was practically a replica of the project presented by Morales he had a yet stronger and more explicit influence from the *City Beautiful* movement. The idea of Civic Art that Bouvard might have inherited from Charles Mulford Robinson is more than present in his drawings of the waterfront project. In these the vehicle takes a much more important place and the city becomes a place to observe, open spaces become places of representation of power and civilisation, and the green landscaped parks fall into the background. Bouvard's waterfront avenue becomes one single element into a network of civic centres and a network of parks and squares, despite the lack of awareness of the real needs and problems of the city, the ideas of reform of the city of Bouvard are clear.

The *Exposición Internacional* also makes the role of the citizen turn into that of the spectator. In this way didactic leisure is prioritised and the first hints of using these spaces as commercial

enterprises as well as spaces of representation becomes clear. In the exhibition the ideas are literally those of the *City Beautiful*, those had already been adapted in Paris by Bouvard as he was the landscape designer of the Exhibition of 1900. In Buenos Aires, despite the premises had a different morphology, the layout of pavilions and parks, the perspective of buildings and open spaces followed the principles of the *White City*. The influence of Burnham and even Hegemann is here noticed throughout the whole exhibition.

The different qualities of the waterfront projects of this second period are evident. The Waterfront Avenue becomes a place for didactic leisure, for the public to be spectators of the spectacle of the river and nature as well as of the urban tissue. The civilising qualities of civic centres expressed by Bouvard begin to shape the city in a different way and change the perception of these spaces. In this period there is a high intervention of the city government, but as the system became more democratic, the city council began to have more authority and the mayor slightly less. The location of the waterfront developments was still targeted at the higher classes, the southern area of the city was not yet developed in its open spaces and it would not be until Carrasco that the southern waterfront park and baths would be developed.

The last period studied is that of Carrasco



and Forestier (1912-1930). Even though these two characters had different landscape principles and definitely a different knowledge of the city they can be studied together for they share the main issue of the complexification of these waterfront areas.

In the case of Carrasco is it almost impossible to include him in one single category when it comes to leisure or to landscape. His projects show the influence of very different currents present and past. He developed in his parks issues of the picturesque by the inclusion of winding paths and waters and scattered groups of trees. On the other hand his parks also have qualities of the city Beautiful Movement, with its pavilions for different activities, and the civic art quality of some of these projects. He also includes the piers that definitely remind us those of Birch in England. The figures of Olmsted, Alphand and even Burnham appear in the layout of his parks as well as in the descriptions in his texts. All these issues also reflect his idea about leisure and how the city dwellers were to use these open spaces. Active and passive leisure activities, the stroll through the wide areas and lawns, the horseback riding and bicycle riding through the avenues, the contemplative nature of the spectacle of the river. Apart from these we can include the new program such as the theatre and the casino, the commercial turn of these waterfront spaces. Sports fields not only for observing as the hippodrome

but also for practicing sports were present and important in Carrasco's projects. Finally the inclusion of children and their playgrounds as structural parts of the parks and promenades show a complete development of these spaces that saw no precedent before that. The park system is an evident reflection of those of Olmsted for Boston and the waterfront of Chicago. The use of an avenue to tie all these different open spaces together is completely innovative in Buenos Aires and though it was not carried out as a whole it is outstanding in its projectual qualities.

Forestier's projects for Buenos Aires, even though toughly criticised do reflect his work internationally and had a strong influence in the conception of open space of the city. The quality of his spaces can be related to the ones of Bouvard. Forestier seems to give less attention to the leisure part of his projects and sees the parks as a system of hierarchical spaces. The morphology of his projects has few precedents at the time, and the geometry of them can be more related to the previous figures as for example Le Nôtre or later to the modern movement. Forestier simplifies the landscape; he gives geometrical form to the floor plan, layout and even shape of the natural objects. He has been considered one of those to do the step towards the modern conception of landscape. In this process, for the case of Buenos Aires, his simplification makes the landscape loose many of its qualities, like the diversity of

flora that used to be included in the parks and the diversity of programme that had been developed by Carrasco. However, his proposals also include a program that allows for a more active leisure and the conception of a network of parks that give a more general image of the city to its dwellers.



figure 4-123 - 2000 - Foto Aerea Buenos Aires  
source: Archivo Alicia Novick

figure 4-124 - 2001 - Panoramic view Reserva Ecologica  
source: photo by the author



This last period sees the complexification of program, therefore a complexification in the uses of these waterfront spaces, in the type of buildings proposed and built and leave space for later development in the future. The combination of passive, contemplative, active, didactic and commercial leisure appear in the projects for the waterfront, especially in the ones of Carrasco. The spectacle of the river is finally raised to a higher level.

### Riverfront avenues and boulevards

Within the first period studied there is little to say about the lakefront avenue. The project of Sarmiento, as the case of Olmsted and Vaux in the south parks of Chicago, does not deal with this limit with the water as an avenue. There are natural concerns about the technology used for protecting the land from the waters, but this limit is provided by an informal limit made by the local flora, willows and bushes.

The projects of Alvear show a different perspective towards this, especially in the project that was projected by Maraini. His position as an engineer makes him concerned more about the technical needs of this space and the main premise that this riverfront avenue is supposed to close the circuit of the ring avenue that would surround the city. Regarding this, he proposes a complex project of protection and an avenue that

is hardly described in its aesthetic perspective. The projects of Courtois, on the other hand, give little attention to the technical characteristics of the waterfront and there is no mention of a waterfront avenue; the street that is closest to the water can not be considered an avenue, for its characteristics are very similar to the rest of the winding paths of the project. The limit with the water is given again by land with trees and bushes.

Thays' project for Parque Tres de Febrero coincides with the previous projects in the development of the limit with the water. There is no avenue to be considered in this project, for the street closest to the waterfront is another winding path, and the view of the river is blocked by trees and bushes, except for two punctual areas where there are two piers.

As we have stated before, the second period was mostly dedicated to the waterfront avenue. Morales, an engineer, was deeply concerned about the technical and infrastructural conditions of his project. The waterfront avenue is only one in the large project for urban improvement he was in charge of. Regarding the waterfront avenue he is explicit about its characteristics, providing exact measurements of the distribution of the lanes of the 100 metre wide avenue. This axis was not only a circulation element but, given its characteristics, also provided spaces of leisure in the seventy

metre wide roundabouts, strategically placed, such as hotels and kiosks for refreshments. This was a carefully projected avenue that presented a new perspective on the use of the waterfront and public space in general. The City Beautiful movement seems to be a strong influence in the project, which transforms the urban landscape concept of the previous period.

After Morales, Bouvard gave a very similar approach to the waterfront avenue, but even though his project was not as detailed as the one of Morales, his drawing presents a combination of approaches to the waterfront avenue, using both Morales project for the area between Darsena Norte and Avenida Sarmiento. However, when it comes to the northern area the project resembles more the previous projects for Parque Tres de Febrero, where the avenue is a part of a system of winding streets, and the limit with the water is given by landscaped land that configures this border.

As previously mentioned, the projects of Carrasco and Forestier were much more complex than the previous ones and the avenues in them were part of this complexity, becoming the central axis around which the projects were developed.

Carrasco's avenue for the northern waterfront articulates the whole project, it is the link and connection of each of the nodes and gives meaning to the whole project. This is not an isolated



leisure space but is conceived as a system and the main backbone of this system is the waterfront avenue. Carrasco gives detail about each node and about the characteristics of the avenue. The avenue was said to follow the sinuosity of the landscape, so as to preserve its picturesque aspect. The section of this avenue resembled the one projected by Morales previously but it was slightly narrower, with seventy metres wide and considered the automobile instead of the carriage, which becomes a great difference of the conception of circulation. Carrasco's project for the south was less ambitious in general, but his conception of the distribution of the width of the avenue remains. In this case the avenue followed a straight line, and was the main element of the project. The avenue was placed in the border of the water and only a beach would be located under this avenue, which could be accessed through the staircases of the terraces. Lanes for cycling and horseback riding were proposed as well, and two lines of trees on each side would close the composition. This avenue was finally realized much faithfully to Carrasco's project.

Forestier's waterfront avenues were slightly different from each other. The southern one, following the project of Carrasco did not propose anything too innovative. The main difference, which can be seen in his drawings, was that the trees that delimited the avenue were planted and cut in a much more geometrical

way than those of Carrasco, providing a more controlled space. On the northern project, the avenue is a much more complex system, which changes width and distribution regarding the program that surrounds it. In this case, the fact that the project includes also housing apart of parks makes a difference in the morphology of the avenue. One of the main features was that each time the characteristics changed, there would be a node or attention point such as a roundabout with different types of program in it.

### Piers

The first one to propose a pier on the Buenos Aires waterfront was Charles Thays. The only two accesses to the water on his project were these two piers. Their morphology is not particularly specified in his project, apart from the drawing, which scale only permits us to conclude that these were narrow piers, probably built of wood with a wider platform on the end of each one. The purpose of these piers was that of contemplative leisure, according to the ideas of Thays, it was a place to observe the beauty of the river as a spectator.

The following project that provided a pier was that of Carrasco for Costanera Norte. The piers were located in the node of Vicente Lopez, close to the Escuela Naval and in the node of San Isidro. They were both placed perpendicular to

the waterfront avenue. The one in San Isidro was very narrow and had a belvedere in its end. The one in Vicente Lopez was also built perpendicular to the avenue and in the intersection of them a series of geometrical gardens was projected.



figure 4-125 - 2006 - Foto Aerea Buenos Aires  
source: Archivo Alicia Novick

figure 4-126 - 2001 - Pictures of Costanera Sur  
source: photos by the author



The Vicente Lopez pier was a narrow and light structure; it had two pavilions in its end and several stairs descending to the water, where there would be access to sporting boats. As in the rest of the project, we can see an approach to active leisure, and a much more present use of the water for active purposes.

The project of Carrasco for the Southern Costanera also provided a pier as a main articulating element of design. This pier, which appeared in the project of Carrasco, of his brother and later of Forestier was one of the most transformed and discussed pieces of design in the whole period studied. In Carrasco's project this pier appeared to be similar to that in the northern waterfront, a light structure, resembling those of the European baths and spas. The second project, which was eventually constructed, was that which appeared in the project of Benito Carrasco's brother, extremely different formally, for it was a heavy and wide structure. This pier was built by the School of Engineers and included all the facilities necessary for the bathing of the public. These were cabins for ladies and gentlemen, stairs that surrounded the whole pier to descend to the water and gardens with trees to provide shadow in the hot summer days. Forestier just included this pier in his project for the souther Costanera.

In Forestier's project for the Northern Costanera there also appears a similar pier to that

constructed in the south, but given the scale of the whole project this pier was much less prominent and it actually had a great pavilion in the middle used for a restaurant and café. The pier would be the focal and closing point of the area designed for dwelling that has been commented before.

### Inland lakes and ponds

Almost every project for the waterfront has had an inland lake or pond. Even though in the project of Sarmiento the waterfront was not an important issue, the inland waterways were indeed relevant. The presence of water was mentioned in the corresponding chapter and its importance for Sarmiento as an ideal for civilization was clear in his first proposals. However, the lakes in his project would be used for more leisured purposes than what Sarmiento had originally thought of. The ponds were used mainly for rowing and this activity would be kept up to this date.

The ponds and streams of the Alvear-Courtois project remind us strongly of those of Olaf Benson in the 1887 version of the project for Lincoln Park. Formally, even though the park of Chicago was bigger, the lakes have a similar layout, having a complex system of bridges and paths going over the water system. Even though it is not specified, it seems, due to the location

of the cabins, that the greater pond was used for bathing, it was not done in the river, but in the pond. In the second drawing of Alvear's project it is more evident that the pond is used for bathing. There is only one pond and it is directly connected with the river, here bathers could use the water calmly having one single service building in the entrance of it.

The lakes and ponds in Thay's project for Parque Tres de Febrero are once again similar to those in the first project of Alvear-Courtois, there is an intricate web of lakes and streams, crossed by bridges and paths. There was an explicit request for widening the main lakes, but no specific program for them, they would have to be surrounded by trees and avoid regularity but there is no specification if they were to be used for rowing or only for contemplation.

One of the main elements in the industrial exhibition of 1910 was the lake, this part of the exhibition was much more landscaped than the rest of the Fair, and the lake was central and surrounded great part of the exhibition of the provinces. The fact that this area was designed by Thays ties together his project of Palermo of 1895 and the project for the exhibition.

The only area with inland water in Carrasco's project was that of San Isidro, there is a stream that crosses the park inland. This stream provided an inland harbour, probably meant for



sporting boats. The fact that there were very few inland lakes in these following projects shows how the parks were finally facing the waterfront; the element of water was completely faced to the river as would be the case of the project for the southern waterfront and practically the same in the case of the projects by Forestier.

### Riverfront Buildings

The buildings on Buenos Aires waterfront, as in the case of Chicago, followed a progressive expansion and complexification throughout the period studied.

In the project of Sarmiento, at least in what was built of it there were hardly any buildings. Even though in his project for production he had proposed a series of buildings for the instruction in natural sciences, what was built had none of those. The project of Alvear-Courtois is the first to propose a series of buildings, made especially for bathing and recreation. The cabins, latrines, restaurants, cafes and concert hall were located in strategic positions and were part of the landscape, without standing out. The condition of the buildings in the project by Thays is similar to that of Courtois project, but more buildings start to appear closer to the avenue. One main building, the hippodrome, takes over the northern part of the project. Apart from this great building, all the

rest of the structures were surrounded by trees, almost hidden within nature.

Obviously, as in the case of Chicago, one of the projects which was most built was the International Exhibition. As mentioned earlier there were different complexes of buildings, for each part of the exhibition and they were separated into more landscaped areas and areas that were only considered as civic centres.

In Carrasco's project for the north the presence of buildings within the parks is much more prominent. In his project there were not only buildings for leisure and entertainment but also buildings for instruction and didactic aims, such as the escuela Naval and the Kindergarten, in Vicente Lopez and San Isidro respectively. The buildings in this case, as it would be the case of Forestier later, are a predominant part of the park structure; they belong to the same system as the streets, parks and all other elements. They are no longer isolated structures in a predominantly green informal landscape but crucial elements in the morphology of the waterfront parks.

### Bathing and Beaches

Bathing in the Buenos Aires riverfront was never a very popular matter. The combination of the contamination and the lack of infrastructure made local people reluctant to use

this as a bathing space. However, many projects were done to implement this custom and some of them achieved the goal of using the river as bathing space. The designers under Alvear's administration were already proposing the use of the waterfront as bathing space. At this point bathing was being proposed for almost strictly hygienic uses. The hygienic conditions of the city were not reliable and the need for a bathing space was imminent. This campaign went hand in hand with the process of water filtering and sewage provision for the whole city. Both projects by Courtois had as a central element a bathing facility. Still these were not located on the open riverfront, for it is supposed that the works of protection from the tides would have been much more difficult and costly.

Beaches were not proposed for Buenos Aires until the project of Carrasco of 1919. Carrasco's main objective was not to build baths, but under the pressure of the CD this had to be part of his project. The southern part of the project, which had the pier as main structuring element had a series of beaches around it and cabins for ladies and gentlemen located on the beaches. As mentioned earlier, the transformation of the project of the pier and the real evolution of the space allowed the public to use this area as a bathing space with all the necessary facilities.

figure 4-127 - 2001 - Aerial view of Puerto Madero  
source: archivo Alicia Novick



The situation would change when, due to the high contamination of the river by the industrialisation of the 1930s it became impossible to use Costanera Sur as a bathing space and it would turn into a mere promenade.

## Epilogue

The urbanised area of Buenos Aires in 1930 was limited to its Ring Avenue, not surpassing the 2.5 million inhabitants, and was still proposing projects only for this population. After the 1930s the development of the suburban area, which grew dramatically in the following 50 years established the need of a much more complex system of open spaces for the metropolitan region. Many issues have deteriorated the use of these waterfront areas, as the contamination of the river that has banned people from bathing in it, the landfills that have blocked the view from the waterfront promenades and the private developments that have left little space for public leisure. However, these waterfront spaces that were projected in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first ones of the twentieth still appear today as main leisure spaces for the community and are still used very much as they were when they were planned.

A good way of understanding the significance of Carrasco's work lies on the fact

that in the last 10 years his project for the southern waterfront has been rescued, his promenade restored and the plans used for this restoration were indeed those made by Carrasco himself. This is now a space that is extremely appreciated by the public as well as by the critics.

This research still leaves some open questions. It is true that the internationalisation of ideas of urbanism is not exclusive to the period mentioned. Later on, only to mention the case of Buenos Aires, characters such as Le Corbusier in the 1930s or Joan Busquets in the 1980s would be crucial in their intervention in the urban planning of Buenos Aires, including the development of the waterfronts. The idea in any case is to mention the importance and reach of this first generation of international collaboration and the consequences it had from such an early time. Here we could still ask some questions of judgement of value: are these projects a positive influence in the evolution of urban life? Is internationalisation a standardising instrument that does not allow the identity to be revealed? Is this period the beginning of a globalising process that has no way back?

Maybe each project in itself is not able to answer these questions. However, seeing the whole picture, we could conclude that these projects could give us an idea of what

is still used and what was left behind. Urban waterfronts throughout the world are currently being developed in a rather standardised way, using similar programmes and facilities that are mainly focused on commercial development. It would be useful to look at issues such as productive landscapes, playgrounds, piers, open sports grounds, open-air theatres, museums and markets, spaces that may also reflect in some way the identity of these cities.

## Chapter 5. Conclusions



## Chapter 5 - Conclusions

The aim of this research was to answer critical questions about the origin and development of the urban leisure waterfront, exemplified with the support of maps and charts. These questions regarded the relation between leisure, landscape architecture and the urban waterfront. We will now address each hypothesis that was stated in the introduction to try to give precise answers to these questions. These conclusions will not provide generalizing answers that could be applied universally. Instead they will provide possible guidelines on how to study these kinds of objects in an analytical way, trying to stay away from commonplaces and prejudice, showing the objects in their context and with a multi-disciplinary perspective.

There are four main hypothetical statements in this research.

The first one refers to the origin of the urban leisure waterfront, as a phenomenon that took place more than a century ago. We will look at the beginnings of the use of the waterfront for leisure confronting the case studies with the general context, contradicting the hypothesis that this is exclusively a current phenomenon.

The second referred to the much more advanced and diverse development of these spaces in North and South America, compared to their counterparts in Europe. Here we will look mainly at the extension and accessibility of these projects in the case studies, comparing with the extension of industrial and port facilities.

The third referred to the influence of leisure ideas and practices on the projects of the waterfronts. We will address the different currents of thought and the different activities practiced and how these and the projects influenced each

other reciprocally.

The fourth and last hypothesis consisted on the possibility of challenging the established idea that urban case studies in Europe and North America are central and those abroad peripheral. We will focus on the case of Buenos Aires as a crossroad and analyse the design character of each project of the case studies to provide a wider perspective on the concept of the pioneering ideas and their realisation.

## 5.1 - Origins of the planned leisure waterfront

Current literature has addressed the redevelopment of the urban waterfront for leisure space as a post modern phenomenon related to the disuse of harbour facilities. If we take, for example, the texts recently written such as Busquets and Alemany:

“The transformation of the urban ports is, without a doubt one of the biggest chapters of renewal for the last 15 years and it is sure to be a crucial topic in the next decades.”<sup>1</sup>

Even though it is not stated that this is the first time this phenomenon happened, it is considered by the authors a new phenomenon. In this case we observe this is considered a contemporary phenomenon, which it actually is, but especially in the cases of Buenos Aires and Chicago this phenomenon has its origin much earlier, as we have seen in the analysis of the corresponding chapter. Following the position, Costa writes:

“The impact of technological innovation in transport has been with no doubts, one of the fundamental aspects in the emergency of the renewal and transformation of harbour areas”<sup>2</sup>

Once again, this refers to the period after 1970, and we affirm that technological transformations began much earlier and they also had consequences on the configuration of the waterfront urban areas. The multifunctional condition of these areas, so commented and encouraged by current authors is found in many cases, not as a current but as a historical phenomenon, especially outside Europe. Even

when we look at the study of Breen and Rigby<sup>3</sup>, that serves more as a catalogue than an analytical study, the idea of the post industrial ‘new’ waterfront is predominant. When Bruttomesso<sup>4</sup> calls the waterfront a ‘new urban frontier’ and explains thirty cases of waterfront development he is focusing only on current experiences of waterfront redevelopment. The *Centro Internazionale Città d’Acqua*<sup>5</sup> led by Bruttomesso is also focuses only on current development. The wide list of contacts and information on the subject has barely any information on academic historical research, which is an important tool of analysis for these new developments.

These studies are also mainly concerned with harbour development leaving little space for the analysis of leisure space and the other possible multifunctional spaces. Incidentally, in the large list of countries which participate in the programme, Latin American participation is very scarce, with only Rio de Janeiro, Rosario and Montevideo representing the area, while Asia and North America are widely represented.

We argue here that the multifunctional use of the waterfront, especially to what regards leisure in cities outside Europe, dates back to the times of the industrial revolution. As we observed in chapter one the use of the waterfront for leisure purposes began in the last decades of the eighteenth century, once the fear of water was overcome. This use began as a source of health and developed later into a pleasurable experience with the appearance of the Grand Tour in Europe and the development of baths and spas in France, England and Italy. The ideas of Enlightenment and Romanticism allowed these transformations to take place. This phenomenon has been properly analysed by Corbin, among others. However, at the time, this use of the waterfront did not take

place in cities, but in peripheral towns. These towns were mono-functional and did not have the complexity that cities in the industrial revolution would face. Most European waterfront cities used their coastal spaces as spaces of transport, merchandise and storage. Harbours and the incipient industrial activities took over these areas of the cities, leaving only some space for waterfront ramparts used simply as spaces for strolling. There would be little more programme and ornament than rows of trees to give shadow and seats and lamps in some cases.

Approaching the end of the nineteenth century, industrialisation advanced in the fringes of the cities, as productive industries surrounding urban areas and as trade and transportation systems on the waterfronts. Especially in European cities, harbour areas began to be separated from the cities. In most of these cities harbour facilities prevailed and there was little space left for leisure facilities and development. This did not imply that the popular and traditional uses of the waterfront were interrupted. It actually meant that there were no policies strong enough to regulate and propose leisure space that would compete against the powerful development of harbour activity.

This leads us to the cases we have studied. The last decades of the nineteenth century saw the development of pioneering urban projects for the waterfronts in North and South American cities. The importance given to hygiene in these industrialising centres, the origin of urbanism as a science and new ideas regarding urban space affected the development of the waterfront as a new space of leisure.

We can observe this phenomenon especially in the cases of Chicago and Buenos Aires. Chicago, even from its origins as a town, in 1839 the city did reserve a determined amount

of space on the waterfront to be 'forever open, clear and free', stating the need of the waterfront as a distinctive space, different from the rest of the city. This space did suffer continuous conflicts between the population, city authorities and the development of infrastructure, but it ended up being the spot for the construction of Grant Park (map CHI-06). This park is now one of the main parks of the city and has been so since its construction. Lincoln and Jackson parks (map CHI-01 and CHI-02) as early as the 1860s and 1870s provided planned park land on the waterfront, giving great importance to different aspects of landscape and leisure. Even though the relation with the water was apparently natural, without particular design elements to relate water and land, there was an intention of providing a space that would differentiate the path from the city to the water. Despite the fact that these two parks were far from the limits of the city, the vision was clear in the concern for growth and the possibility of a direct connection between the city and its waterfront.

The case of Sarmiento's *Parque Tres de Febrero* (map BA-01) was very similar in this aspect to those of Chicago. The park was located far from the city limits, but Sarmiento's idea was that the city would eventually reach the park in a short period of time. The programme for the park was limited to paths for strolling and lakes for rowing, but the vegetation and landscape architecture provided new spaces on the waterfront that would continue to develop in the following decades, foreseeing the future growth of the city.

## 5.2 - Pioneering American Case Studies

We proposed in the introduction that the development of the leisure waterfront took place earlier, more rapidly and more effectively in North and South America than it did in Europe. We will study this hypothesis by analyzing the extension and typology of waterfront land and the accessibility issues, stating the difference between European and American urban waterfronts.

As we have seen throughout the case studies, urban ideas were being developed in all areas of the western world, since the mid nineteenth century, as cities were growing at an unprecedented pace. Great part of these ideas were originated in Europe and the landscaped public park developments were part of every city in process of industrialization. Before the sprawl of industrialization, waterfront boulevards were present as a connection between the city, the harbour and the waterfronts in European cities. The fronts of rivers, lakes and sea had different characteristics, but the relation between those urban elements remained interconnected and slightly differentiated.

As industrialisation developed, most European harbour towns transformed and the port areas became independent from the city, with an increasingly restricted access to city dwellers. In this process, great part of the city's waterfront became predominantly a space of production and commerce. European cities had a much heavier burden to carry regarding the relation between the city and the harbour and the long tradition of harbour towns, comparably with younger – American – cities. Very few cities in Europe were able to overcome this process, so it were American cities that took the lead in the development of the urban leisure waterfront. We have to add that this applies to cities, not to leisure

towns, as we explained in the introduction, for leisure towns were indeed pioneer in Europe in the development of leisure waterfronts. When it comes to industrialising cities, American cases were ahead in programme and especially in the realisation and construction of projects. We can use the case studies as models of this process.

<sup>1</sup> Busquets, Joan, Alemany, Joan, *Plan Estrategico de Antiquo Puerto Madero*, Tubsá. Barcelona 1990, pg.5

<sup>2</sup> Costa Joao Pedro, *Multifunctional land use in the renewal of harbor areas: patterns of physical distribution of the urban functions*, IFPH, Conference 2001 Barcelona.

<sup>3</sup> Breen Anne, Rigby Dick, *Waterfronts; cities reclaim their edge*. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Bruttomesso, Rinio, *Waterfronts: a new frontier for cities on water*, Venice, International Centre Cities on Water, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> [www.citiesonwater.com](http://www.citiesonwater.com)

There were several general reasons why Barcelona did not develop its waterfront as leisure space. Barcelona, as many other Mediterranean cities, had a very open coast, which made any sort of development difficult. Commerce was the main activity of the city's waterfront; the railway was an early element that blocked the relation between the city and the sea; finally, as early as the mid nineteenth century, the city had found Paseo de Gracia and the Ramblas as its main leisure spaces. Barcelona, as many other European harbour cities, had an extensive use of coastal leisure space between 1870 and 1930, but this came exclusively from unplanned private developments. Private bath houses were located on the northern waterfront, while the southern was taken over by harbour facilities. Some plans for providing leisure space were proposed since the beginning of the twentieth century, but none of them were built. These projects didn't even propose an extensive use of the waterfront for leisure.

In the plans of Rovira i Trias and Cerdà in the 1850s (map BCN-01 and BCN-02) the port perimeter took more than 80% of the waterfront (chart 5-01), having great part of the perimeter occupied by industry. In both cases the railway acted as a blocking element between the city and the waterfront, having few nodes of connection to the sea. In the case of Cerdà and Soler i Gloria (BCN-03) the park of Besòs occupied an important part of the waterfront, but this was only a project and would never be built as a park. Soler i Gloria (map BCN-03) did impose the moving of the railways further into the city, so as not to block the communication with the seafront. However, this would also stay only as a project and did not have a proposal for the use of the waterfront, apart from the extension of the city and the industrial area. The great park he proposed was detached

from the waterfront.

In the plan of Fontserè and Garriga (map BCN-04) we do see an intention of giving some landscape architecture to the waterfront, but this intention was still limited to a ring avenue that would surround the old city and would have only added boulevards with rows of trees on the seafront. The structures of the harbour would still separate the boulevard from the water, with the only exception of the area of Barceloneta, where the harbour was more informal.

In the case of the park of Fontserè in 1871 (map BCN-05) the park was basically an urban park, but the first attempt to have a relation with the water was proposed, the bridge from the park to Fuerte de Don Carlos shows a will to approach the waterfront. This proposition was still weak enough, for it would only take the 1% (chart 5-01) of the city's perimeter, while the boulevard proposed was placed behind the rail tracks, so we can not consider this a waterfront boulevard. The perimeter of the harbour plus that of the residential areas would still take more than 95% of the total.

The case of the Exposición Universal (map BCN-06) was similar to that of the park proposed by Fontserè. The leisure activities proposed for this area were similar to those in the rest of the exhibition, mainly the passive practice of strolling and the didactic element of the exhibits. The harbour in both the city centre and the area of the sección marítima of the Exposición were indeed important places of spectacle in the waterfront area.

The first to propose a waterfront avenue was Alsina Amilsin 1899 (map BCN-07). The avenue would be placed on the waterfront, leaving the railway on the side of the city. By this time the harbour was taking yet more percentage of waterfront perimeter than before, with 45%

of the total (chart 5-01) and the relation between city and seafront was being pushed northwards. Amils also proposed a park in Besòs, which was not built.

The plan of Jaussely of 1905 (map BCN-08) was to follow and proposed for the first time a more complex use of the waterfront for leisure, providing much more leisure area on both the maritime section and the area of Besòs (chart 5-01). This avenue, as well as that of Amils started on the Besòs river, but continued up to the end of Barceloneta, which unified and transformed the use of the area.

Ortega's (BCN-09) project was the first one to include in his drawings the already existing leisure and industrial structures, as establishments of baths and beaches and the new industries that were sprawling on the northern shore. This project showed a closer bond with reality and appropriated these spaces as necessary parts of the waterfront integral project.

As we have analysed in the corresponding chapter, the use of the waterfront in Barcelona followed a continuous struggle between interests of the commercial and technical aspects of the harbour and the traditional bathing uses of the waterfront. The projects that were formulated lacked the strength and the power to overcome the importance of the development of industry and harbour, leaving little or no space for planned leisure development.

The case of American leisure waterfronts was radically different, as for example in Chicago and Buenos Aires. Both cities saw waterfront space as an opportunity, not only as hubs of trade and immigration but also as space for new functions in the city, namely leisure activities.

Starting with Chicago we can say that this city was not only a model of urban development

and architectural innovation, but also a pioneer in the development of the urban leisure waterfront. Since the earliest projects for the waterfront of Chicago there was an explicit will to provide open space on the waterfront. This situation was also possible because of the presence of the river as a part of the city's water system. The river housed great part of the harbour facilities, and the railway was used increasingly as a transport of merchandise, allowing the lakefront to be used as space for leisure.

The project of Nelson (map CHI-01) for the first Lincoln Park was pioneering. Despite the fact that it followed existing principles of landscape design, similar to some park cemeteries, this was one of the first waterfront parks in America and therefore presented a new set of variables in park design. The park was mainly reserved for strolling and taking carriage rides, but the presence of the waterfront and inland lakes gave the park peculiar qualities. By this time the city was still not widely extended, and the harbour and industrial facilities were taking altogether about 25% (chart 5-02) of the waterfront perimeter. However, the 2% of waterfront taken by the park was already appropriate space for leisure and the health conditions necessary for a growing city.

After the 1871 fire the need for leisure space on the waterfront became clearer. The projects of Olmsted and Vaux for Jackson Park (map CHI-02) and of Benson (map CHI-03) for Lincoln Park took already 25% of the waterfront perimeter, providing extensive space for leisure with an already more diverse programme and a system of public transport that facilitated accessibility. Especially in the case of Jackson Park, which was further away from the city, the appearance of the tramway was very important for the development of the park. However, this park would barely be constructed until the last years of

the 1880s. Lincoln Park, on the other hand, being closer to the city, was developed earlier and more successfully. By then the use of waterfront land for harbour and industry was already reduced to 10% of the total giving more space for residential use and the transport network.

By 1893 the city had largely grown and the World Columbian Exposition (map CHI-04) established a stronger relation between the city and the lake. By this time the use of the railway for commerce had replaced great part of the freight traffic on waterways. However, given the growth of the city, a very central area was still occupied by port and industry, with new piers and structures on the lake taking over more than 30% of the waterfront area (chart 5-02). The space of the Exposition added 13% to the already existing 12% of waterfront perimeter, having a great amount of lakefront dedicated to leisure space, strategically placed on the northern and southern shores of the city. The railway built in this period did provide a connection between the centre of the city and the parks. However, this also had a negative effect, for the railway line also provided a limit between the rest of the city and the waterfront. On the other hand this gave a more protagonist role to the parks and less to the waterfront as a continuous system.

The extension of the waterfront had not changed much by 1895 and the industrial and port perimeters remained stable until the beginning of the twentieth century. The project of the Olmsted Brothers for Jackson Park (map CHI-05) did not provide additional waterfront area. Instead it restructured the area to bring it back to morphology similar to the original project of their father. However, the programme for the park was transformed, and new spaces for sports were provided.

The project for Grant Park (map CHI-06) instead, transformed completely the waterfront of central Chicago. The lands that were occupied by the railway company Illinois Central was taken back by the city and Grant Park was designed. Even though it occupied only 5% (chart 5-02) of the waterfront perimeter, it was located on a strategic place, attached to the downtown area and steps away from the residential commercial areas.

By 1909 the city and its waterfront had consolidated and extended more than 45 km long (chart-5-02). The area taken by industrial and port facilities on the lakefront was reduced, especially on the area of Grant Park. Burnham's Plan (map CHI-07), especially the project for the Lake Shore Drive, completely transformed Chicago's waterfront. The Drive and the parks surrounding it were placed between the lakeshore and the railway, which allowed a completely different relation between the city and its lakefront. The perimeter taken by the parks was similar, but the extension of the Drive formed a park system that would provide more value to the lakefront. The later projects of Lincoln, Grant and Jackson parks made the urban waterfront of Chicago unique in extension and diversity of park development, as well as in quality and diversity of leisure activities in them.

Buenos Aires, as a last example to justify this hypothesis, followed a similar development to that of Chicago, having a great amount of realised projects for leisure space on the waterfront. However, Buenos Aires always had a smaller amount of waterfront land occupied by residential areas, compared to Chicago.

Sarmiento's project of 1874 (map BA-01), similarly to that of Jackson Park in Chicago, was placed in the outskirts of the city. However, in

contrast to Jackson Park, Parque Tres de Febrero was built immediately after it was designed and already provided 15% (chart5-03) of waterfront perimeter to the city. Meanwhile, almost half of the waterfront was dedicated to industrial and harbour facilities, while the city was still a small town.

By 1885 Buenos Aires' industrial area on the waterfront was growing, occupying already 76% of the total perimeter. Alvear's projects (maps BA-02/BA-03) were not so relevant for the amount of space they occupied, but more for the innovative character of the parks and baths. However, adding the perimeter taken by Alvear's projects and the one of the existing Parque Tres de Febrero the length reached almost 20% of the total waterfront, which for that period was rather extended. However, these projects did not reach realisation.

Thay's project for Parque Tres de febrero (map BA-04) was an important extension of leisure waterfront space. As the city had already grown in all its fronts the total perimeter surpassed the 15km. The harbour of Madero was already built in the southern shore, giving a determined limit between the city and its riverfront. The northern one was a space for leisure and Thay's project provided a total of more than 3 km of waterfront park with 21% of the total length.

Morale's (map BA-05) was the first to propose a waterfront avenue to link the central area and the northern part of the city. He also proposed a sort of park system that provided 60% of leisure waterfront on the northern area of the city, having the southern one for exclusive industrial and harbour use. By then the railway lines were running through the parks, with systems of bridges to avoid the rail from being a limit between the city and the riverfront.

Carrasco, in 1919 (map BA-07) finally

was able to provide a project that would give back the southern waterfront to the users, adding 20% more leisure waterfront to the total length. This meant that more than half of the waterfront was occupied by parks in the 1920's.

Forestier's projects (maps BA-08/BA-09) were to complete the already existing waterfront parks, providing a long waterfront avenue, only interrupted by the new port. Even though his projects were not completed, they provided an approach to the waterfront as a complete system of parks that would remain in the city until today.

The cases of Chicago and Buenos Aires show a continuous increase of leisure waterfront space compared to the development of harbour facilities that differentiate them from most European metropolises. This importance given to the leisure waterfront space was to be crucial for the urban development and for the presence of green spaces in the city. The qualities and characteristics of these spaces will be addressed in the following two statements.

### 5.3 - Leisure Planning and practices reciprocal influence

In the introduction to the thesis we have stated that there is a relevant reciprocal influence between leisure activities and behaviour and the planning and design of leisure spaces. This statement may be evident, but if avoided in the process of design it may give a lack of response to the actual needs of the users.

We have earlier remarked that leisure activities tend to be traditional and resilient, and that leisure regulations and plans are more related to the administration in turn or to the spirit of the times. This has shown different time frames in the development of both. We have observed that in the period between 1870 and 1930 there was a distinctive development of both leisure activities and the planning of spaces for these activities. Basically, the first waterfront parks showed a special attention to contemplative leisure and the escape from the contamination of the city with health aims. Later, as World Exhibitions were developed in these areas, didactic and instructive elements were added to contemplative activities, making the user a more active participant of the park environment. By the end of the period, active leisure became present in the form of stadia and lawns for tennis, golf, football and other kinds of sports activities.

Leisure activities and their planning are tightly related, the needs of the users have had the tendency to be accounted for, especially in the cases where the realisation of the projects has been immediate. Leisure activities in the period studied were deeply influenced by the socio-economical changes produced by the industrial revolution. The transformations in leisure activities were caused basically by the birth of

capitalism. The regulation of times for work and leisure made these activities opposed and the Rational Recreation Movement provided a boost in free time activities that were basically created to provide the market with more efficient labour. As Marcuse argued<sup>6</sup> the standardisation of work and leisure experience has created 'one dimensional societies' in which pleasure is equated with a donatory culture of amusement, with fee-paying activities, distraction and social control. Adorno<sup>7</sup> and Kracauer<sup>8</sup> commented on the *culture industry* as a collection of entertainment industries, dedicated to the masses in their non work time. This cultural studies' approach to leisure defines itself in opposition to the traditional sociology of leisure that defines it as freedom, choice, creativity and self determination.

Whatever the approach, positive or negative to the development of leisure since the industrial revolution, in the period studied, these activities were beginning to be widely regulated and proportioned by the state. Leisure activities at home and in private open space remained traditional and resilient, while those practiced in public space were transformed and increasingly regulated. In cities in which planning of public spaces was more effective, these activities were regulated, which is why this relation was clearer in Buenos Aires and Chicago than what it was in Barcelona.

<sup>6</sup> Marcuse, Herbert, *One dimensional Man*, London, Abacus, 1964

<sup>7</sup> Adorno, Theodore and Horkheimer, Max, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London, Verso, 1944

<sup>8</sup> Kracauer, Sigfried, 'The Mass Ornament', *The New German Critique*, 2: pg 67-76. Harvard University press, 1975.

In the case of Barcelona, waterfront leisure activities were not dictated by the planning of public space, for it barely existed on the waterfront. Instead, the popular practices of sea and sun bathing were independent from the instruments of the municipality and state. Bathing facilities barely existed at the end of the nineteenth century. When they started to appear at the turn of the century they were part of private investment, which responded more rapidly and effectively to the increasing demand for structures to practice sports and bathing, as well as places for restoration and passive leisure. This shows how in this case, it was the need of the users for active leisure that was responded to, and not the State that provided new types of leisure activities.

In Chicago and Buenos Aires there was a much stronger relation between leisure practices and the plans for leisure waterfront space.

Starting with Chicago, as the city began to grow in the mid nineteenth century and industries were established in the southern and western sides of the city, it became common to visit the cemetery on the northern waterfront to get fresh air and green space outside of the city. This practice caught the attention of city officials and the first project for Lincoln Park appeared. The project followed basic principles of hygiene, for urban cemeteries were starting to be considered negative for the citizens' health. Hygiene became one of the main issues for the provision of public urban parks and the provision of green spaces for strolling was considered crucial for the caring of health issues. This showed that activities already practiced by the citizens were observed and a specific space for these activities was provided.

In Buenos Aires, the projects of Alvear and Courtois showed a determined concern for

health and hygiene. In a combination of baths and green space there was an attempt to solve hygiene problems for the growing city. However, this project contained other programme elements to satisfy other new leisure needs of the population. Concert halls, theatre, gymnastics and rowing in the lakes show a first attempt to provide new kinds of leisure apart from contemplative one. This is yet more evident in the project of Olmsted and Vaux for Chicago. The rational recreation movement was reflected in this project. As stated by Rojek:

“The park symbolised human control of nature. But as public expressions of the superiority of industrial civilisation and as places of refuge from the teeming metropolis, they had to be carefully divided from the outside world of concrete and traffic”<sup>9</sup>

These spaces were then considered as the antithesis of work and living space, the aim was to demarcate leisure space from everyday life and isolate it from the mundane, industrial world of routine and constraint.

In the case of Sarmiento's *Parque Tres de Febrero*, the principles of rational recreation are also enriched by the inclusion of productive space. The didactic principles of the botanical gardens and farms included in his first project for the park show a different perspective of leisure, in which production is also included. Therefore the isolation of green spaces from the work sphere is not as sharp as it was in the projects of Olmsted, by whom Sarmiento was inspired.

However, in all the projects previously mentioned there is a predominant need for knowledge and control of nature, not only by the location of landscaped areas but also by the cultivation of autochthonous species that would

show in a smaller scale the natural environment of the areas.

In this first period we observe how, on the one hand the needs of leisure spaces of the population were responded by the authorities, and at the same time, these parks provided new opportunities of activities for city dwellers. The use of vegetation provided new kinds of spaces, the population welcomed them and they became popular places for both the higher and the working classes. Just as an example, there used to be no such thing as rowing activities beforehand in the city, and the inland lakes of the waterfront parks made this one of the main recreation practices of the population.

World Exhibitions in all three cases had many issues in common regarding leisure regulations and activities, and they dictated transformations in the leisure activities of city dwellers. These events were led by ideas of civilisation, international recognition and the importance of science and technology. Exhibitions mixed entertainment with didactic elements to provide a different kind of leisure also related to commerce and consumption.

“The entertainment industry refines and multiplies the varieties of reactive behaviour among the masses. In this way it makes them ripe for the workings of advertising. The link between this industry and world exhibitions is well established”<sup>10</sup>

In these spaces the spectator did not only become entertained but also instructed. The exhibitions showed a connection with the world, in cultural, as well as in landscape elements. The visitors were invited to participate

as well as observing the advances of science and the representations of foreign countries. They could be part of this platform, where the city's image and identity were being built. This need to instruct and civilise was also part of the Rational Recreation movement, giving a wider understanding and offer of possibilities of leisure and the enriching of the individual as a part of society.

In Barcelona the materialisation of this leisure space was predominantly a park, where structures for natural landscape and vegetation were almost as important as the buildings of science, industry and technology. Even though it was comparatively a small exhibition it did have all the leisure variables that were present in most universal and international exhibitions.

In Chicago the Exhibition was extended and all kinds of leisure activities were provided, from simple strolling in the natural environment of the wooded isle to the boat rowing on the inland lakes; from the participation in the spectacle of the extensive industrial and technological exhibits to the spectacle of the midway international simulacra; and from the cattle and agricultural exhibit to the waterfront promenades and restaurants. Even children in the Chicago exhibition had their space of participation, for the day care was a space of rational recreation as well, where science was primordial.

The Buenos Aires exhibition of 1910 was smaller and more austere than the one in Chicago, lasting also a shorter time. However, the intentions of its realisation were similar in the idea of boosting the city's image and building a local identity to show the rest of the world.

The landscape aspect of these exhibitions was evidently more geometrical than in the preceding parks. The presence of buildings of monumental character transformed the aspect

of Jackson Park in Chicago and of Parque Tres de Febrero in Buenos Aires. However, the park image was not abandoned, Olmsted in Chicago and Thays in Buenos Aires managed to maintain landscaped areas that combined local vegetation with foreign and exotic vegetation in harmonic combination with the architecture around them. French gardens and Japanese woods started to become part of landscape area on the waterfront.

One of the main issues brought by the exhibitions was the massification of leisure, which would be later commented on and criticised in leisure studies. Consumption was also part of the leisure activities of the exhibition that would later be reflected in urban leisure as a whole.

In this second period the influence of commercial activity that was already present in the central parts of the city was considered by Exhibition organisers. On the other hand, the scientific developments that were starting to be part of everyday life found their place of exposure in Exhibition grounds. The exhibitions provided a specific space for these activities and turned them into leisure practices, and their reach would expand to the city in return. However, the role of the organisers as instruments for the transformation of leisure was relevant. Rational Recreation ideas would spread within the exhibitions, transforming the way people used their free time.

<sup>9</sup> Rojek, Chris, *Decentering leisure, rethinking leisure theory*, Sage, London, 1995, pg.97

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin, Walter, *The arcades project*, the Belknap press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England, 1999. Originals 1892-1940. pg. 201

<sup>11</sup> Cross, Gary, *A social history of leisure*, Venture publishing inc, PA, 1990, pg 143

By the beginning of the twentieth century, as regulated times for leisure were spreading worldwide, recreation became yet more regularised, and spaces for this purpose became diversified. We can observe three main transformations in leisure activities and the use of the waterfront: First of all the massification of sport and the inclusion of sports programme in the parks; second, a new vision of movement with the inclusion of waterfront avenues, as a new 'gaze' on landscape; and finally the entertainment industry of theatres and casinos.

Sport appeared as a practice and as a spectacle. The new forms of rational recreation included sports as a way of enhancing the body. As expressed by Cross:

"A new attitude towards the body emerged. It no longer was understood as merely the source of temptation which had to be disciplined by the mind and spirit, as in the notion of 'flesh' in traditional Judaeo-Christian thinking. Instead the body became an extension of moral power concretely expressed in the display of physical courage"<sup>11</sup>

Some sports had been reserved to the elite, such as horse racing, cricket and golf, which began to be more popularised by the beginning of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, sports and athletics were massified and these activities began to be an important part of the programme of urban parks, and especially in those on the waterfronts. Sports became compulsory in the US and England and then spread to the rest of the western world as a discipline.

This is mentioned in several projects for Buenos Aires and Chicago. In the project of 1895 for Jackson Park the greatest park area was

dedicated to sport. Tennis lawns, ball fields and athletics courses took over most of the park, having little space for passive or contemplative leisure activities. The bathing beaches and the havens for water sports were very important elements of the new park, transforming its use.

In Buenos Aires, though not as present as in Chicago, *Parque Tres de Febrero* by Thays and *Costanera Sur* by Carrasco also had athletic fields and spaces for practicing sports for adults and children.

In Chicago, by 1922, in the more monumental and geometrical project of Grant Park by Bennett, the main structures of the park were two athletics fields, where not only the practice of sport was important but also its spectacle for the public.

Mobility became something that transformed urban life in the first decades of the twentieth century, and this phenomenon also affected urban spaces on the waterfront. The appearance of avenues and faster transportation, such as electric tramways and later the motorcar, changed the perception of urban space. The project of Burnham for the lakefront of 1909, as well as the projects for riverfront avenues in Buenos Aires shows us a new perspective of leisure activity, in which movement becomes primordial. Even though it can still be considered passive leisure, for those avenues were meant for transport and the individual is basically contemplating the landscape, this has to be differentiated from the activity of strolling, where the difference of speed plays a great role. Moreover, these avenues were part of complex transportation systems and park systems in which the waterfront was a great protagonist.

Despite the similarities between these waterfront avenue projects they have one substantial difference. The early avenues

of Buenos Aires, by Morales, were common boulevards, similar to those proposed for the rest of the city, with lanes for carriages, lanes for horses, and pedestrians. On the other hand, the avenue of Burnham was a complex and much wider system of parks and avenue that linked them, with waterways separating the avenue from the city and a series of accesses between the city and the lake. Civic buildings were placed in the nodes of this avenue, denoting the cultural aspect of leisure that was beginning to appear as an important element in urban parks, especially those on the waterfront. The avenues of Carrasco and Forestier resemble that of Burnham in the complexity of the programme proposed for them, including even residential areas in the case of Forestier.

Finally, this complexification of leisure programme included new spaces of leisure as spectacle with theatres and casinos. Restaurants were also added as parts of projects and especially baths and cabins would bring the practice of bathing to the forefront, steps away from the city centre both in Chicago and Buenos Aires.

Children also began to be an important part of the public, and their leisure activities were especially addressed with the provision of playgrounds and athletics fields. All these responded to rational recreation ideas and the conception that sport could be a toll for building a better society.

This third period shows us how, activities such as sports, which were already practiced in private areas, were taken to the public, and included in waterfront parks especially. Children's games were part of the program of these parks, considering their previous practice in the streets or schools; rowing, which was an unregulated activity, gave way to regatta harbours; gymnastics, which would be practiced in special schools, were

given a space with gym halls and athletic fields. These activities were increasingly regulated and standardised, as we have observed in each of the projects for the waterfront parks.

We have seen how, in the cases studied, there was a reciprocal influence between leisure behaviour and the projects proposed for the waterfront. What we basically conclude is that by the end of the period studied there was a great complexification and diversification of leisure activities, which included passive, contemplative, active, commercial, ludic, didactic and productive leisure. All these variables are to be considered in the design of a complete and effective urban leisure space.

#### 5.4 - Translation and transference of urban ideas – Buenos Aires as a crossroad

Throughout the case studies we have seen how urban and landscape principles travelled and were adopted in each case, so that we can trace the origin of ideas regarding leisure, landscape and the waterfront. These ideas, once adapted to the local reality, were transformed and the necessities and activities of each city were reflected in the projects that were only designed as well as in those that were realised. Design tendencies, combined with political processes and adaptations to the urban realities allowed for the appearance of a diverse set of projects in different geographical locations.

As we said in the introduction, an important issue regarding the analysis of the case studies was to place ourselves in a perspective that differs from the majority of literature regarding translation and transference of urban ideas. In general, when addressing the subject, the literature considers exportation of ideas, and not the importation of them, giving a less predominant role to the local context and to local professionals.

Many authors have addressed this subject lately. Nasr and Volait<sup>12</sup> made an important contribution to this perspective with their book: *Urbanism: Imported or Exported?* In it they make their point of view clear stating:

“In particular, the local elements are underrepresented in many recent studies, and where they are present they are often dealt with as recipients of actions rather than as actors”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Nasr, J., Volait, M (eds.) 2003, *Urbanism, Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and foreign plans*, Wiley Academy, West Sussex.

<sup>13</sup> Nasr, J., Volait, M (eds.) 2003, *Urbanism, Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and foreign plans*, Wiley Academy, West Sussex. Pg.vii

<sup>14</sup> Novick Alicia, ‘Foreign hires: French Experts and the urbanism of Buenos Aires, 1907-32’, in Nasr, J., Volait, M (eds.) 2003, *Urbanism, Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and foreign plans*, Wiley Academy, West Sussex. pg. 265

<sup>15</sup> Andreatta, Verena, Porto do Rio, *La nueva interfaz puerto-ciudad en Rio de Janeiro*, Tesis de doctorado, UPC, ETSAB, Dir. Joaquin Sabaté Bel. Pg.13

In this book, Anthony D. King introduces the importance of a new methodology for the analysis of *modern urban planning*, understanding that, while urban ideas are gestated in different parts of the world, the cultural, economic and social situation of each place that adopts them transforms them according to their own needs.

Alicia Novick's hypothesis in her article on Buenos Aires in the same book states her hypothesis as:

"studies in the formulation of such profiles (foreign experts in urban planning) are not complete if the intrinsically cosmopolitan character of the profession is not taken into account."<sup>14</sup>

Even though Novick only studies the influence of foreign professionals in this article and we do include local ones, she gives a contextual perspective on the cases, highlighting the development of urban planning in Buenos Aires as a particular and original development.

Other younger authors are addressing this issue currently, giving this hypothesis more strength. Verena Andreatta studies the case of the port of Rio de Janeiro as a case in which local expertise played an important role in the development of the urban tissue, especially on the waterfront.

"Harbours, in this chain of connections and networks of transportation, have formed a main axis of transformation, with navigation as transport of merchandise and people, have symbolically brought new ideas. They have acquired a key role in this chain, in a process of *transference-absorption* of techniques, projects, ideas and forms of

function and constitution of cities"<sup>15</sup>

With this quote she is not only addressing the issue of transference but also the one of the waterfront and the coastline as a specific space of exchange and importation of urban ideas.

Jorge Alfonso Ferrada Herrera<sup>16</sup>, in his study of the harbour of Valparaíso, he proposes an analysis that focuses on the identity of the architecture of place in the margin of the city. He is as radical as stating that the urban planning and architecture for the harbour of Valparaíso was *invented*, however, this proposes an approach that fits into our hypothesis.

We will apply these arguments to the case studies to understand the complexities of these systems of importation and exchange.

Landscape principles differ in all the cases studied. By the beginning of the period there was a tendency to a more natural landscape design, which in later projects became more geometrical. However, both typologies of park design cohabited on the waterfront. This is the case of the projects of all three case studies. The choice of one or the other typology would not depend on the period when it was designed, but more in the location of the project and the designers in charge.

Through the work and formation of the professional in charge of each project in each case, we can observe the transference and translation of urban ideas and landscape principles applied.

There are basically five lines of thought related to landscape design that were combined in the projects studied: the hygienist and social ideas of the first urbanists such as Cerdà; the Park Movement led by F.L. Olmsted; the French influence of the École Beaux Arts and Adolphe

Alphand; and the German influence of Stübben and Sitte; and the City Beautiful Movement led by Daniel H. Burnham.

First of all we have the principles of the engineers of the mid nineteenth century and Cerdà was a pioneer in this field. Even though his work did not pay special attention to the development of the waterfront, his principles regarding hygiene and social development would be influential in Barcelona and worldwide. Fontserè and Garriga i Roca followed some of the steps of Cerdà, and focused on principles regarding infrastructure and transport connections in the city, which included the waterfront as part of this system. Sewage was an important part of their project and they proposed the use of the waterfront as leisure space separating the city from the harbour and its contamination. In Buenos Aires, Morales, also an engineer was instrumental in the realisation of a more effective tracing of the city, which would allow a fluid transport network, of which the waterfront avenue would be an important element. The hygienist principles of these professionals were demonstrated throughout their projects.

Out of all the professionals studied in this research it appears that F.L. Olmsted was one of the most influential figures in the design and reconfiguration of the urban leisure waterfront. He led the Park Movement and followed the first principles of Rational Recreation, inspired by the combination of ideas of Thoreau, Emerson and Stuart Mill. He was mainly influenced by British landscape ideas, but he was a pioneer in the development of these ideas and the application of these to the waterfront projects as part of a new development of the urban landscape. Olmsted's work with Vaux was influenced by Downing as

well, with whom Vaux had previously worked. Nelson and Benson also belonged to this school of thought, which provided the first waterfront projects of Chicago as spaces of passive and contemplative leisure. Sarmiento, in Buenos Aires was also deeply influenced by the work of Olmsted, as he stated his interest especially in the project of Central Park. However, he was also influenced by the romantic ideas of Thoreau and Emerson. Even though these ideas guided the following realisation of Parque Tres de Febrero, Sarmiento went further and proposed not only spaces of passive recreation, but also spaces of production. He considered science as a crucial element in the education and civilisation of the urban dweller, which could be realised in the park spaces of the city. This gives us one of the first examples of local professionals combining foreign ideas for complying with local needs. Olmsted had an echo in many other designers' work. Courtois and Thays in Buenos Aires declared to be inspired by the work of Olmsted despite being educated in the French *École des Beaux Arts*. Even Fontserè, in Barcelona, far from British influence, quoted Olmsted in using the metaphor of the gardens as *lungs of the city*.

The Parisian School of *Beaux Arts* also had an important influence on the design of waterfront leisure spaces, especially after the turn of the century. In Chicago, Burnham, Bennett and Root were signed by the principles of neoclassical architecture and used these elements as part of their waterfront landscape design. This influence came especially from all the American architects that followed their education in Paris. Nevertheless, Burnham went much further than this influence; he followed a much more complex combination of influences in which the elements such as transportation networks,

housing facilities, recreation facilities and park design were combined in a pioneering manner, also inspired by the urban principles coming from Germany in the figures of Stübben and Sitte. These urban professionals were also a great influence on Carrasco and Forestier in Buenos Aires, being quoted by both of them, especially in the issues of public space and distribution of transportation in streets and paths. The School of *Beaux Arts* was also influential in Buenos Aires. The important presence of French professionals was felt in the input of ideas. However, when it came to the realisation of the projects of the waterfront, the local development of ideas would prove stronger and more resilient. Courtois, Thays and Carrasco followed principles that had more to do with the combination of Anglo-American ideas and especially a response to local needs. Carrasco would show how French visiting professionals were not as suitable to solve local problems as local professionals were.

Bouvard and Forestier in Buenos Aires, and Jaussely in Barcelona came from a similar background, all three being founders of the *Societe Francaise d'Urbanisme*, and applied similar systems for the solution of waterfront leisure spaces. They proposed a monumental development of the waterfront, with much more built space and more limited green areas. This proposals disregarded many issues related to the needs and functions of the city they were working in. However, Jaussely proved to be more in touch with the local reality of Barcelona, than Bouvard and Forestier were to that of Buenos Aires.

This was a period of fast and active exchange of ideas compared to previous ones, but we still see, especially in the cases of Chicago and Buenos Aires how the local characteristics

of place were considered and formed a series of places of identity that can only correspond to their location.

## 5.5 - Closing note

We would like to say that this is an open research. Many studies are being developed and published on the current state of waterfront urban spaces, and fewer on the history of these developments. A problem of standardisation has been found in the recent development of waterfront leisure areas, and the study of historical cases could be helpful for the diversification of these projects.

Currently, in the world we can find various typologies of use of the waterfront. Mainly there is on the one hand the harbour use, where the harbour is generally located in the outskirts of the city, as the old infrastructures became obsolete; on the other hand there is urban waterfront space, which has been used for different functions, such as residential, commercial, leisure, or a mixed use of these. The case of American cities, which have had the tendency to homogenise space can also be applied to certain Asian and Middle Eastern cities, given the effects of globalisation. Cities such as Osaka, Cape Town, Dubai, Hamilton, Miami, New York and Seattle, only to name some of them have developed or are developing areas of their waterfront in a very similar way, with an international typology of building on the one hand or with a constructed theme-like historical image.

Sorkin, Jacobs and Boyer have observed this phenomenon in cities as a whole and have criticised this tendency.

“American cities are being rapidly transformed by sinister and homogeneous design. A new kind of urbanism – manipulative, dispersed, and hostile to traditional public space – is emerging both at the heart and at the edge of town in megamalls, corporate

enclaves, gentrified zones and pseudo historic marketplaces.”<sup>17</sup>

Sorkin appeals to the standardisation of space as a reproduction of the theme park, a space of simulacra of constructed identity. Christine Boyer also describes these spaces as constructed identities for the eye:

“Places like Battery Park City and South Street Seaport are sustained not only by the pleasures of picture writing, but by the expansion of historical tourism, the desire to ‘just-look’ at the replicated and revalued artifacts and architecture of another time. Yet to historicized is to estrange, to make different, so that a gap continually widens between then and now, between and authentic and a simulated experience”<sup>18</sup>

The inconveniences of these spaces as internationalized and standardized lies in the fact that identity of place is lost and there is little difference between a project in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. European cases do not escape standardization. Even though European cities have the value – though not always used – of traditional urban space, new projects for the waterfront have the tendency of standardization. With the sprawl of business parks on the waterfronts such as those in Amsterdam, Bilbao, Hamburg, Liverpool or Vigo, we can see a tendency to build large open spaces with little park design and either standard commercial buildings or landmark buildings, in a quest to identify the image of a city.

This phenomenon is finally starting to be noticed and criticised further from theory and closer to practice. In the competition for Hong Kong’s waterfront<sup>19</sup> it was especially stated that

the ‘standardised designs over long stretches of waterfront should be avoided’. Even in some cases of the UK the commercial success of these developments has been questioned. Such was the case of Bristol, where, according to Mark Jones

“(the projects) have recently been significantly affected by lack of visitor numbers leading to the closure of former flagship projects – those of Wildwalk and the IMAX.”<sup>20</sup>

The real estate speculation in these spaces has also been criticized by commentators following Jane Jacob’s steps:

“Jacobs’ lesson here seems to have been lost in major Australian sites of recent consolidation such as Jackson’s Landing in Pyrmont, Sydney. There, high densities have been increased further by reducing site coverage and increasing building heights (Searle and Byrne 2002), producing waterfront development up to 20 storeys high which has the standardised flavour that Jacobs warned against.”<sup>21</sup>

And we can close with a quotation from Jane Jacobs:

“Well I think that it’s a more dangerous situation – the standardization of what is being produced or reproduced everywhere, where you can see it in the malls, in every city, the same chains, the same products are to be found. This goes even deeper with the trouble with import replacing because it means that new things are not being produced locally that can be improvements or anyway different. There is a sameness – this is one of the things that is boring

people—this sameness. This sameness has economic implications. You don't get new products and services out of sameness."<sup>22</sup>

What we can learn from history has been widely explained in the thesis as a whole, through general remarks and within each specific case study. If we bring historical cases together, especially those formulated in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first ones of the twentieth, we can observe that the programme for these projects was much wider, that different types of leisure were considered, and that waterfront parks were much more present than in contemporary projects. Moreover, morphology of architecture and local species of plants were much more varied than in current projects.

The *Centro Internazionale Citta d'Acqua*,<sup>23</sup> located in Venice, is the only European institution that brings together information and analysis of waterfront developments. However, this institution is focused on current projects and has no historical perspective on them. Moreover, more than half of the worldwide projects presented by them on their catalogue refer to harbor projects and technical facilities that have little or nothing to do with the urban condition. This is why it would be interesting and productive to study a greater and more varied amount of these cases, to develop research that can serve to enhance the local identities of waterfront urban spaces and recover ideas that have been left unnoticed for further development of these particular urban areas. For this purpose it would be interesting to organise a conference to bring this subject into discussion and propose a research group that could deal with these issues in a global level.

<sup>16</sup> Ferrada Herrera, Jorge Alfonso, *Utopía del Margen Arquitectónico, Port Valparaíso*, tesis de doctorado, 2002, UPC, ETSAB, Dir. Marciá Codinachs i Riera.

<sup>17</sup> Sorkin, Michael, *Variations on a theme park*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1992.

<sup>18</sup> Boyer, Christine, "Cities for sale: Merchandising history at South Street Seaport", in Michael Sorkin, *Variations on a theme park*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1992.

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.pland.gov.hk/p\\_study/comp\\_s/harbour/harbour\\_finalreport/ch5.htm](http://www.pland.gov.hk/p_study/comp_s/harbour/harbour_finalreport/ch5.htm)

<sup>20</sup> GTE Conference 2008 - Geography for Weekenders Mark Jones, University of the West of England [http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA\\_PRGTEConf08Jones.doc](http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_PRGTEConf08Jones.doc)

<sup>21</sup> Glen Searle, *The Limits to Urban Consolidation*, Issues Paper No. 14, UFP, University of Western Sydney, July 2003.

<sup>22</sup> [http://curbed.com/archives/2006/04/25/jane\\_jacobs\\_19162006.php](http://curbed.com/archives/2006/04/25/jane_jacobs_19162006.php)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.citiesonwater.com/public/index.php>



**Chapter 6**  
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## Samenvatting

### Vrije Tijd Kust Stad. Een vergelijkende geschiedenis van stedelijke vrije tijd waterkant.

De stedelijke waterkant staat in de schijnwerpers. Tijdens de laatste decennia zijn havenfaciliteiten verwijderd van stedelijke centra. Dit heeft een grote hoeveelheid land dicht bij de centrale gebieden van de stad vrij voor interventie en ontwikkeling gelaten. De projecten voor de terugwinning en het herstructureren van verouderde industriezones door het water spreiden zich over de hele wereld uit. Stedelijke ideeën en acties van diverse types en kwaliteiten zijn toegepast. Deze acties zijn een globaal fenomeen gebleken, maar wij hebben waargenomen dat dit fenomeen niet nieuw is. Het proces van terugwinning van de stedelijke waterkant dat momenteel plaatsvindt begon meer dan een eeuw geleden met de ontdekking van de stedelijk waterkant als ruimte voor vrije tijd.

De transformatie van de stedelijke waterkant heeft sommige processen met de algemene groei van steden gedeeld. Toch zijn bepaalde stedelijke kwesties bijzonder aanwezig geweest op de waterkant. De waterkant, als stedelijke ruimte, heeft een ontwikkeling gevolgd die door andere conflicten wordt gekenmerkt dan die van de rest van de stad. Enerzijds is deze vooral beschikbaar voor interventie geweest omdat hun locatie weinig conflict creëerde met de sociale orde van steden. Anderzijds is deze een ruimte geweest waarin de installatie van havenfaciliteiten en vrijetijdruimte conflicten opriepen, met betrekking tot de problemen van de rechtspraak tussen nationale en metropolitaanse autoriteiten.

Het gebruik van de stedelijke waterkant als vrijetijdruimte was verschillend in Europa en in Noord- en Zuid-Amerika. Urbanisme ontwikkelde zich in de gehele westerse wereld, met Europa en de Verenigde Staten als centra van deze ontwikkelingen. Toen tot de realisatie van projecten aan de waterkant kwam verschilde het proces door geografische streken en andere gebieden en steden werden betrokken bij het globale beeld. In de meeste van de Europese hoofdsteden werd de waterkant bezet door havenfaciliteiten en door de commerciële uitbreiding groeiden deze ruimten en werden afgezonderd van de stedelijke ruimte. Dit proces stond de ontwikkeling van vrijetijdgebieden aan de waterkant niet toe. In Noord- en Zuid-Amerika daarentegen werd de waterkant een kansrijk gebied en de ontwikkeling van havengebied en vrijetijdruimte was eigentijds en flexibel, wat een belangrijke rol gaf aan het landschap aan de waterkant.

Een grondig onderzoek werd gedaan op basis van case studies om de oorsprong van het fenomeen van het gebruik van de waterkant als vrijetijdruimte te zoeken. De cases van Barcelona, Chicago en Buenos Aires schenen het meest geschikt te zijn voor de analyse van dit fenomeen. Zij verschijnen als modellen voor andere steden aan de water kant in de hele westerse wereld. Overigens waren zij ook gastheren van internationale tentoonstellingen in de periode tussen 1870 en 1930.

Dit project bestudeert de kwesties van vrijetijdruimte in de stedelijke waterkanten tussen 1870 en 1930 met een analytische en kritisch blik, zoekend naar primaire en secundaire bronnen om het gebruik van vrije tijd in de projecten voor stedelijke waterkanten en de manier waarop dit in drie bijzondere gevallenanalyses is uitgeoefend te evalueren. De wederkerige invloed tussen vrijetijdsactiviteiten, stedelijk ontwerp en massa-gebeurtenissen zal als een hoofdthema van dit onderzoek worden geanalyseerd.



# Curriculum Vitae

## AGUSTINA MARTIRE

28-7-1975

Buenos Aires- Argentina

### Education

- 1994/2001 **Architect.** History and theory oriented.  
Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo. Universidad de Buenos Aires. Argentina.  
Degree recognized by VROM, the Netherlands. Stichting Bureau Architectenregister. nr: 1.040501.006  
Graduated with thesis-project. Urban project and high rise building in Darsena Norte, Buenos Aires.  
Research scholarship thesis. Urban history. "Proposals for the limit of Buenos Aires (1889-1998)"
- 1987/1992 **Bachiller.** (High School Degree).  
Degree given in Bogotá, Colombia. School: Gimnasio Femenino.

### Research experience

- 2005-2008 **PhD student.** Leisure Coast City. IHAAU. Architecture History. Faculty of Architecture TU Delft. Promotor: Prof. Dr. Franziska Bollerey.
- 2003/2004 **Research assistant.** Watercity leisurecoast. Project for Ph.D. proposal. Department of Architecture History. TU Delft.
- 1999/2001 **Scholarship** "Stimulus" in Research. "Proposals for the limit of Buenos Aires (1889-1998)". Granted by Secretary of Science and technology. Programme: UBACyT. FADU-UBA.
- 1999/2001 **Research Assistant** "Plans and Projects for Buenos Aires and its metropolitan region" Programme: UBACyT. FADU-UBA
- 2001 **Expo-scholarship.** Secretary of Science and technology. FADU-UBA.
- 1999 **Research Assistant.** Analysis of the historical patrimony area "Plaza Irlanda". Director: Arq. Mario Sabugo. Government of the city of Buenos Aires / FADU. UBA.
- 1998/2000 **Research Assistant.** "Buenos Aires: Spaces and times of a Metropolitan City". Multimedia. Direction: Roberto Segre; Alicia Novick; Horacio Caride; Carlos Macchi. UGICAMBA. FADU. UBA.

### Courses taken

- 2006 **Lecture.** March 24, 2006. **Lecture and seminar by Christian Schmid (ETH Studio Basel)**
- 2006 **Lecture.** February 17, 2006, 11.00 DSD **Forum: Conversations with Architects: Joan Busquets**
- 2005 **Seminar. 'lectures and workshops Viktor Kittlausz.'** September 9, 2005 to *October 21, 2005. DSD Studio*
- 2005 **Seminar. 'Masterclass Projective Practice K.Michael Hays.'** Session I: October 3-7, 2005 Session II: Oktober 24-28, 2005. DSD Studio
- 2005 **Seminar. 'Mapping Urban Complexity: Tokyo'** Arie Graafland, Heidi Sohn, Marc Boumeester, Olga Vazquez Ruano, Luisa Calabrese. 29-4-2005, DSD studio.
- 2005 **Seminar.** DSD. Prof. Christine Boyer. TU Delft. Once a week.
- 2005 **Seminar.** Relations and forms. Prof. Patrick Healey. TU Delft. Once a week.
- 2005 **Seminar.** Venturi-Scott Brown. TU Delft. One day.
- 2004 **Seminar.** Relations and forms. Prof. Patrick Healey. TU Delft. Once a week, from September.
- 2003 **Teleconference.** Globalisation urban form and governance. TU Delft. One day.
- 2003 **Team 10 seminar.** History and theory department. TU Delft. 2 days.
- 2001 **Flood workshop.** Coordinated by Hans Venhuisen (Holland). Centre for studies in Contemporary Architecture. DiTella University. Buenos Aires. One week.
- 2001 **Walter Gropius Seminar.** Secretary of postgraduate studies. FADU. UBA. One week.
- 1998/2001 **Monthly Seminar "Critics".** American Art Institute. FADU.UBA. one day per month.
- 1998 **Seminar of introduction to research and investigation.** Arch. Mario Sabugo FADU. UBA.
- 1997 **Course "Method and ethics of monumental restoration".** Arch. Antoni Gonzales Moreno-Navarro (Spain). International Centre for conservation of Patrimony. Bs As. Argentina. One week.
- 1997 **Course "Reading Potosí street".** City Museum. BsAs. Argentina. One day.
- 1993 **Course of english literature "T.S. Elliot".** Prof. Stoichita. University of Friburg. Switzerland. 3 months
- 1993 **Course of art history "Caravaggio".** University of Friburg. Switzerland. 3 Months.

## Grants and Scholarships

- 2006 **Short term travel fellowship.** NWO Nederlandse Organisatie voor wetenschappelijke onderzoek. Research Trip to Chicago USA. June.
- 2001 **Honoric mention. Competition:** "Concurso Parque en tierras ferroviarias en Caballito" publicado en la revista de Arquitectura No 201, Sociedad Central de Arquitectos.
- 1999-2001 **Scholarship** "Stimulus" in Research. "Proposals for the limit of Buenos Aires (1889-1998)". Granted by Secretary of Science and technology. Programme: UBACyT. FADU-UBA.

## Conferences and lectures

- 2008 **Conference presentation.** "The processes of 'translation' on the urban waterfront projects for Buenos Aires. Sarmiento 1870 - Carrasco 1917" EURAU 2008 Paisaje Cultural. 4o Congreso Europeo de Investigacion Arquitectonica y Urbana. January 2008
- 2008 **Conference presentation.** "The discovery of the urban leisure waterfront. Three Case studies. 1880-1920" EURAU 2008 Paisaje Cultural. 4o Congreso Europeo de Investigacion Arquitectonica y Urbana. January 2008.
- 2007 **Conference Presentation.** IV PhD Seminar. The European Tradition in Urbanism – and its future. Delft University of Technology. Países Bajos. Octubre 2007
- 2006 **Conference Presentation.** EURAU'2006 Architecture and Heritage, 3dr European Symposium on the teaching and research in Architecture, Urban and Landscape design. Founding assembly of the European Network in Architecture, Urban and Landscape design. Bruselas. Octubre 2006
- 2006 **Conference Presentation.** Europe in Comparative perspective. Stads-och Kommun – Historiska Institutet. Stockholm. September 2006
- 2005 **Lecture.** Buenos Aires. The becoming of a Metropolis. Lecture for masters course Great Metropolis. TU Delft. December
- 2005 **Conference presentation.** Leisure Studies Association. Presentation: "The mass event as a catalyst for urban development and an instrument of international recognition" Napier University. Edinburgh. July. 3 days.
- 2005 **Conference presentation.** Urbanism and Urbanisation. Presentation: "Leisure Coast City. The Urban leisure waterfront through discursive and perceptive systems". UPC Barcelona. June. 3 days
- 2004 **Lecture.** "Buenos Aires through plans. Density-Complexity-Diversity" Lecture for masters. History. TU Delft. December.

- 2001 **Presentation.** "El espejo y la memoria. Un siglo de proyectos para las costaneras de Buenos Aires" (*Mirror and Memory. A century of projects for the coast of Buenos Aires*). Instituto de Arte Americano. FADU. UBA.

## Published work

- 2008 **Article.** "El balneario de Buenos Aires. Ocio activo y recreacion racional". *Revista Summa* + Febrero 2008. Nr.92
- 2008 **Article.** "Buenos Aires. Real estate and housing as elements of the urban condition." *Boss magazine* Grenzeloos. February 2008. nr.32
- 2008 **Article.** "The discovery of the urban leisure waterfront. Three Case studies. 1880-1920" EURAU 2008 Paisaje Cultural. 4o Congreso Europeo de Investigacion Arquitectonica y Urbana. January 2008
- 2008 **Article.** "The processes of 'translation' on the urban waterfront projects for Buenos Aires. Sarmiento 1870 and Carrasco 1917" EURAU 2008 Paisaje Cultural. 4o congreso Europeo de Investigacion Arquitectonica y Urbana. January 2008
- 2007 **Article.** "The processes of 'translation' on the urban waterfront projects for Buenos Aires" In *The European Tradition in Urbanism – and its future*. Conference proceedings. Delft University of Technology. Delft. October 2007.
- 2006 **Article.** "Leisure Coast City. Waterfront leisure areas as an instrument of social transformation at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century" in Healy, Patrick and Bruyns, Gerhard (eds.) *De-signing the Urban. Technogenesis and the urban image*. 010 Rotterdam. 2006
- 2006 **Article.** "The leisure waterfront as a space of urban identity" in EURAU'2006 Architecture and Heritage, 3dr European Symposium on the teaching and research in Architecture, Urban and Landscape design. Conference proceedings. Founding assembly of the European Network in Architecture, Urban and Landscape design. Brussels. October 2006.
- 2006 **Article.** "The influence of leisure and the mass event in the shaping of the urban waterfront. Buenos Aires waterfront as an urban experiment" in Nilsson, Lars, *Urban Europe in Comparative perspective*. Conference proceedings. Stads-och Kommun – Historiska Institutet. Stockholm. September 2006.
- 2005 **Abstract.** "The mass event as a catalyst for urban development and an instrument of international recognition" Conference Leisure Studies Association. Napier University. Edinburgh.
- 2005 **Article.** "Leisure Coast City. The Urban leisure waterfront through discursive and perceptive systems". Conference Urbanism &

- Urbanization. UPC Barcelona.
- 2003 **Article.** "El espejo y la memoria. Un siglo de proyectos para las costaneras de Buenos Aires" (*Mirror and Memory. A century of projects for the coast of Buenos Aires*). Collection *Crítica* N° 146. junio. Instituto de Arte Americano (*Institute of American Art*). FADU.UBA. (with Alicia Novick)
- 2002 **CD ROM.** "Buenos Aires: Spaces and times of a Metropolitan City". Multimedia. Direction: Roberto Segre; Alicia Novick; Horacio Caride; Carlos Macchi. UGICAMBA. FADU. UBA.
- 2001 **Article** "La Costa en proyectos" (*The coast in projects*), *Revista de Arquitectura* N° 202, Sociedad Central de Arquitectos, p. 58-81. (with Alicia Novick).
- 2001 **Article** "Del loteo especulativo al espacio estratégico". (*From speculative lots to strategic space*) Nuñez, Teresita, Barcelona.
- 2001 **Article** "Ultimas imágenes de Lavalle: la calle de los cines y el área central." (*Last images of Lavalle: the street of cinemas and the central area*). *Revista de Arquitectura* N° 204, Sociedad Central de Arquitectos. (Mario Sabugo).

## Teaching experience

- 2007 **Assistant.** Students Masters Programme. BOSS trip. Buenos Aires –Sao Paulo.
- 2004-2007 **Lecture.** "Buenos Aires, the becoming of a metropolis". Annual lecture. In the series "the Great Metropolis", course for Masters Programme. Facultad de Arquitectura. TU Delft. Under the supervision of Prof. Franziska Bollerey.
- 2006 **First Semester course.** "Bogotá". Coordination course and students Masters Programme. Con Prof. Dr. Franziska Bollerey, Dr. Cor Wagenaar and MSc Camila Pinzón Cortés.
- 1999-2001 **Teaching Assistant.** Architecture history. Head teacher: Arq. Mario Sabugo. FADU. UBA
- 1997 **Tutor.** Architecture 2. Head Teacher: Arq. Miguel Baudizzone. FADU.UBA

## Affiliations

- Since 2006 **Centre for Urban History.** University of Leicester
- Since 2006 **Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme.** Conseil de Paris
- Since 2004 **Delft School of Design.** TU Delft
- Since 2004 **Stichting Bureau Architectenregister.** nr: 1.040501.006

## Selected professional experience

- 2004 **Competitions.** Associated with Josse Popma
- 2002 **Internship.** Three months. NOX/ Lars Spuybroek. architecture office. Rotterdam.
- 2000/2001 **Associated architect.** Gr00. architecture office. Projects and Competitions.
- 2001 **Project for the Exhibition** "Della Paolera: Urbanismo en Buenos Aires". gr00. With Alicia Novick. Museo de Arquitectura. Buenos Aires.
- 2001 **Project for the Exhibition** "Mapa PostArgentino". Gr00.Tropen Museum. Amsterdam. The Netherlands.
- 1998/1999 **Assistant in edition** and graphic design for CD Rom "Buenos Aires: Espacios y tiempos de una ciudad metropolitana".
- 1997 **Project, layout and organisation for the photography exhibition** "Salamone renace: Obras maestras de Art-Decó en la provincia de Buenos Aires". With Edward Shaw. Centro Cultural Borges. Buenos Aires.

## Languages

- Spanish:** mother tongue
- English:** Bilingual **Common European Framework of Reference: C2** TOEFL-257computerbased
- Dutch:** Competent user **CEFR: C1** Niveau 4 NT2 II.
- Italian:** Competent user **CEFR: C1** CILS 2: 92/100. Esame comunale livello C1: 88.5/100
- French:** Independent user **CEFR: B2**
- Catalan:** Independent user: **CEFR:B1**

## Computer assisted design

- Autodesk** Autocad 2000 – 2D & 3D
- Microsoft Office** Word. Excel. Powerpoint. Front Page.
- Adobe** Photoshop. Illustrator. InDesign.
- Macromedia** Flash. Director

**Leisure Coast City. A comparative history of the urban leisure waterfront.  
Ir. Agustina Martire**

**Propositions**

- The study of historical projects can act as a tool for the diversification of urban leisure waterfronts.
- Leisure practices have increasingly been related to consumption and to management and planning, forgetting the relation between leisure and other social practices.
- The development of public space in European cities in recent decades has been focused on the design of dry plazas, which has deprived cities of important green spaces.
- The tendency of urban planning to focus on regional development has caused the dissociation from relevant issues such as the lack of green spaces in cities and especially their conservation.
- Literature on urban design and planning has considered European and North American case studies as central, tagging any other case as peripheral. It is important to challenge this conception and to provide enough tools for the research in those 'peripheral cases', so as to discover the peculiarities and pioneering designs away from Europe and the US.
- There is no such thing as wasted time
- Bureaucracy should not interfere with the course of valuable research
- Theory is nothing in itself and is recognized in the light of historical action
- Urban space must become the work of its users, or be unacceptable
- There are those who say what they know and those who know what they say

**These propositions are regarded as defensible, and have been approved as such by the supervisor Prof. Dr. Franziska Bollerey**

**Vrije Tijd Kust Stad. Een vergelijkende geschiedenis van stedelijke vrije tijd aan de waterkant.  
Ir. Agustina Martire**

**Stellingen**

- De studie van historische projecten kan als hulpmiddel gelden voor de diversificatie van de stedelijke vrije tijd aan de waterkant.
- Het uitoefenen van de vrije tijd heeft meer en meer betrekking op consumptie en op beheer en planning, waarbij de relatie tussen vrije tijd en andere sociale praktijken vergeten wordt.
- De ontwikkeling van openbare ruimte in Europese steden in recente decennia is geconcentreerd op het ontwerp van droge pleinen, waardoor steden minder belangrijke groene ruimten hebben gekregen.
- De tendens van het urbanisme om zich op de regionale ontwikkeling te concentreren heeft tot de verwijdering van relevante kwesties zoals de groene ruimten en vooral het behoud hiervan geleid.
- De literatuur over stedelijk ontwerp en planning heeft Europese en Noord-Amerikanse case-analyses als centraal beschouwd waarbij andere cases als periferisch werden geëtiketteerd. Het is belangrijk om deze waarneming uit te dagen en genoeg hulpmiddelen te verstrekken voor het onderzoek naar die 'periferische' cases, om de eigenaardigheden en de pionierende ontwerpen buiten Europa en de V.S. te ontdekken.
- Er is niet zoiets als verspilde tijd
- Bureaucratie zou zich niet in de koers van waardevol onderzoek moeten mengen
- Theorie is niets op zichzelf en het is in het licht van historische actie erkend
- Stedelijke ruimte moet het werk van zijn gebruikers worden, of onaanvaardbaar zijn
- Er zijn zij die zeggen wat zij weten en zij die weten wat zij zeggen

Deze stellingen worden verdedigbaar geacht en zijn als zodanig goedgekeurd door de promotor Prof. Dr. Franziska Bollerey

## Annex 1 - Maps

BCN01 - 1856 - Rovira i Trias - Eixample de Barcelona



BCN02 - 1859 - Ildefons Cerda - Puerto Jose Rafo



BCN03 - 1859 - Soler i Gloria. Plano de Ensanche



Mar Mediterraneo

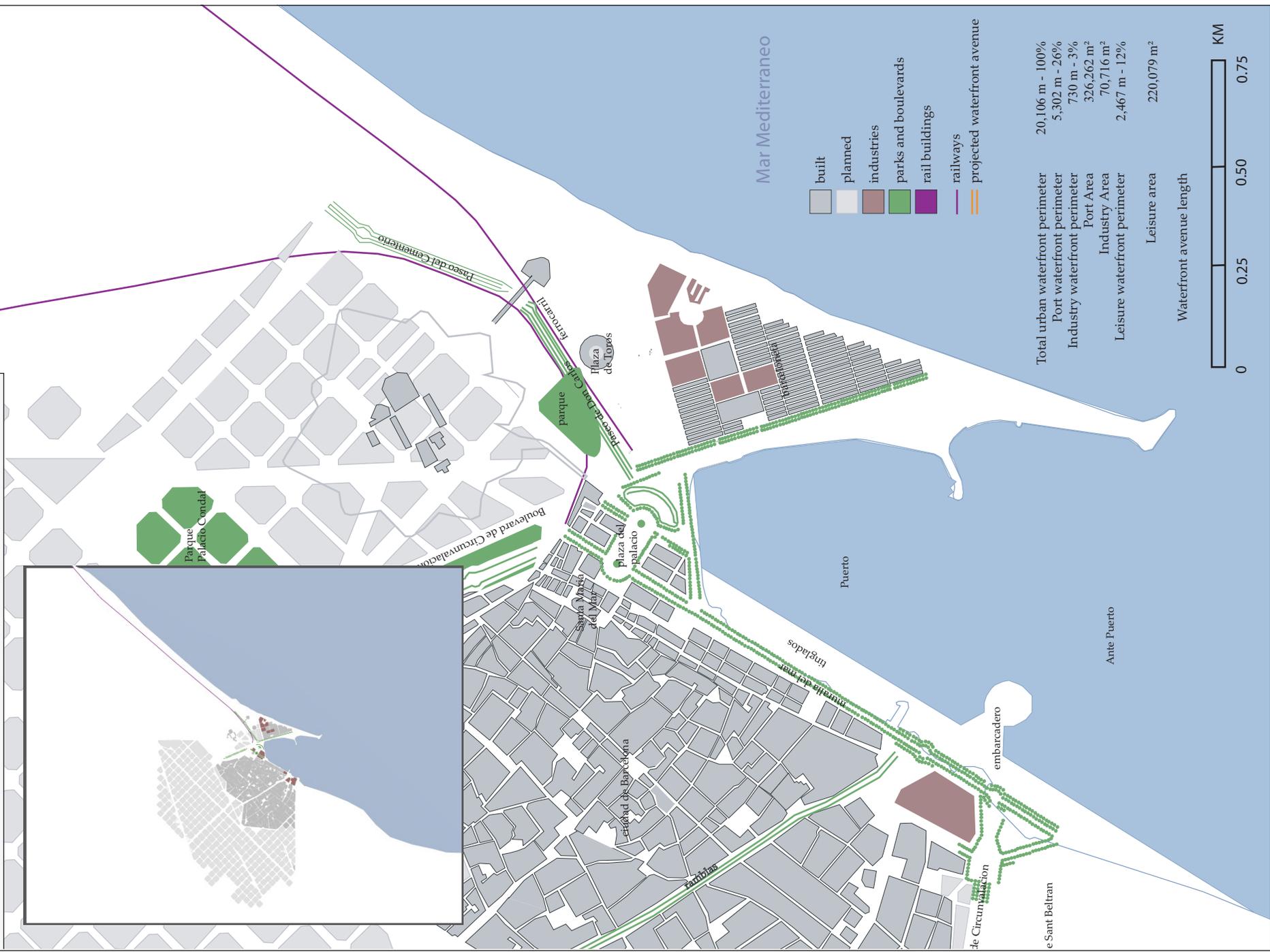
- built
- planned
- industries
- parks and boulevards
- rail buildings
- railways
- projected waterfront avenue

Total urban waterfront perimeter	23,930 m
Port waterfront perimeter	7,800 m
Industry waterfront perimeter	480,867 m <sup>2</sup>
Leisure waterfront perimeter	3,431 m
Leisure area	343,100 m <sup>2</sup>

Waterfront avenue length



BCN04 - 1862- Garriga i Roca-Fontserè.Boulevard Circunvalacion 862- oca-Fontserè.Boulevard Circunvalacion



BCN05 - 1871 - Josep Fontserè i Mestre: Parc de la Ciutadella

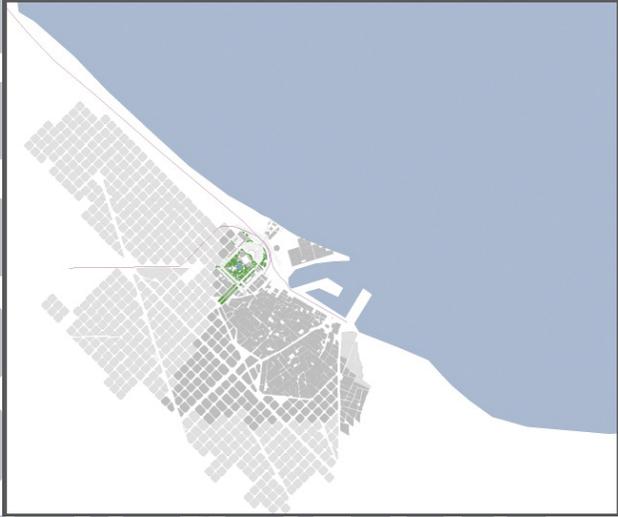


- built
- planned
- industries
- parks and boulevards
- rail buildings
- railways
- projected waterfront avenue

Total urban waterfront perimeter	20,106 m - 100%
Port waterfront perimeter	5,302 m - 26%
Industry waterfront perimeter	
Port Area	
Industry Area	
Leisure waterfront perimeter	486 m - 2% boulevard
	216 m - 1% fort
Leisure area	17,020 m <sup>2</sup>



BCN06 - 1888 - Elies Rogent. Exposicion Universal de Barcelona



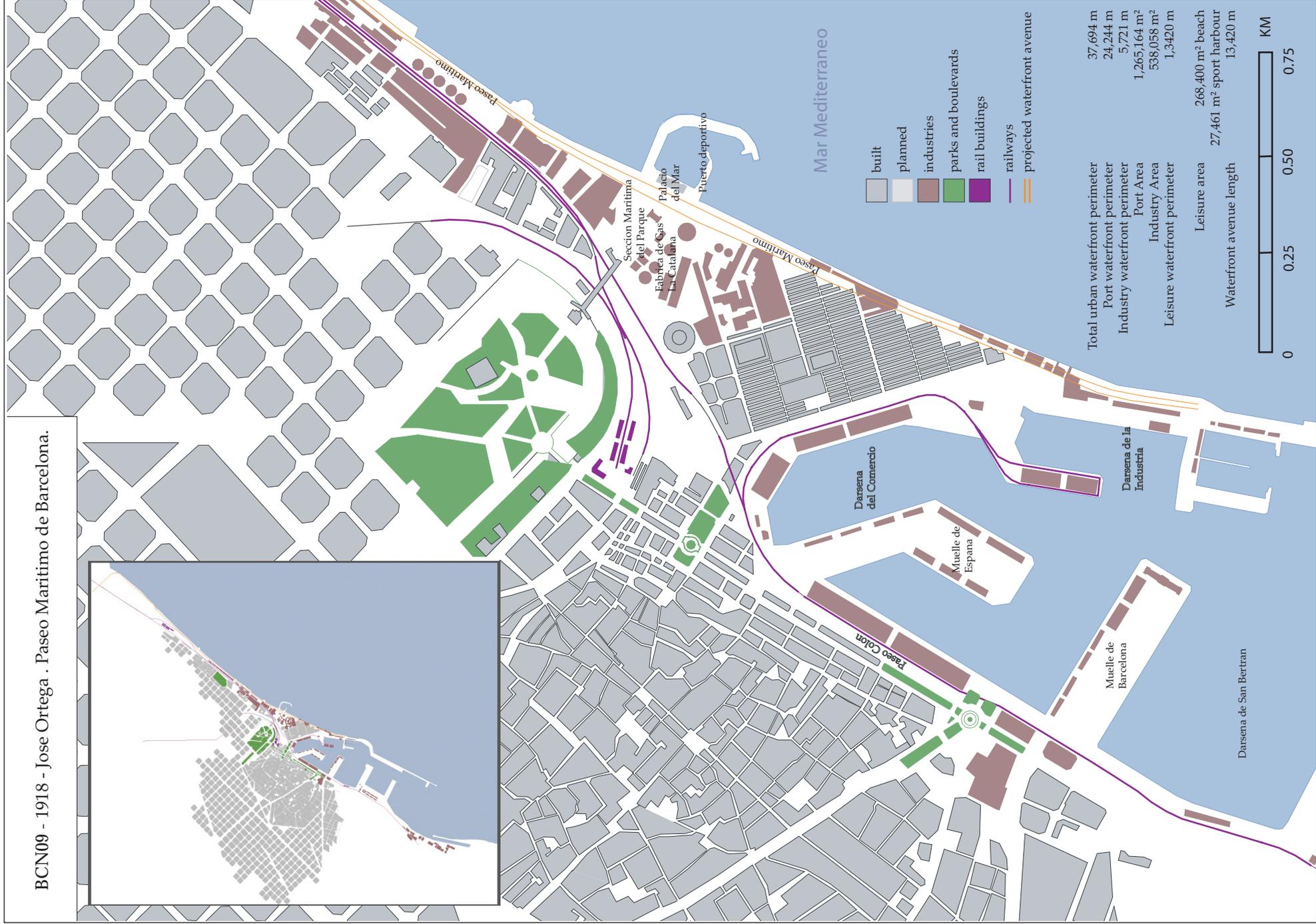
Total urban waterfront perimeter	24,378 m - 100%
Port waterfront perimeter	7,800 m - 32%
Industry waterfront perimeter	
Port Area	
Industry Area	
Leisure waterfront perimeter	947m - 3% avenue
Leisure area	495 m - 1.5% mar.section 48,530 m <sup>2</sup>







BCN09 - 1918 - Jose Ortega . Paseo Maritimo de Barcelona.

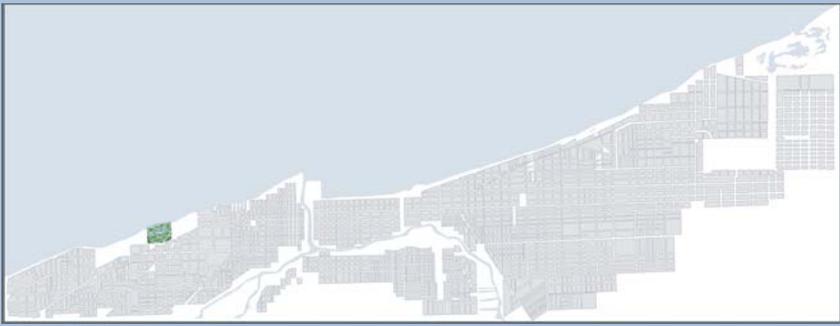


Barcelona waterfront - 2007



# CHI01 - 1867-Swain Nelson- Lincoln Park

Total urban waterfront perimeter ca.20,000 m  
 Port waterfront perimeter 2,862 m  
 Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 2,145 m  
 Port Area 142,851 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Industry Area 249,682 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Leisure waterfront perimeter 539 m  
 Leisure area 19,318 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Waterfront avenue length 0 m



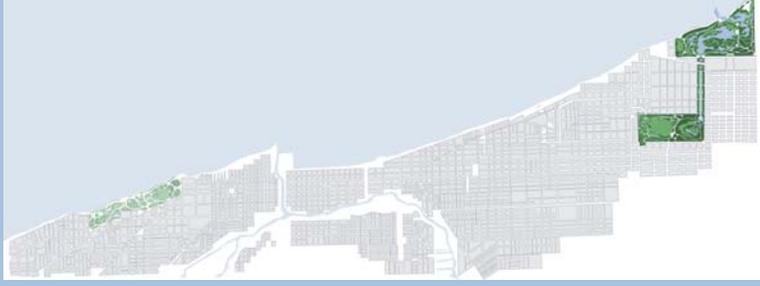
- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways

Lake Michigan



# CHI02 - 1873-Olmsted-Vaux- Jackson Park

Total urban waterfront perimeter ca.30,000 m  
 Port waterfront perimeter 8,691 m  
 Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 7,296 m  
 Port Area 74,281 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Industry and transport Area 38,506 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Leisure waterfront perimeter 4,394 m  
 Leisure area 184,911 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Waterfront avenue length 4,394 m



Cornell Avenue  
 Eastland Avenue  
 Everett Avenue

56th street

57th street

Midway Dr

Midway Dr

Stony Island Avenue

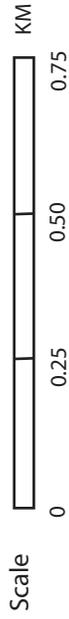
63th street

65th street

67th Street

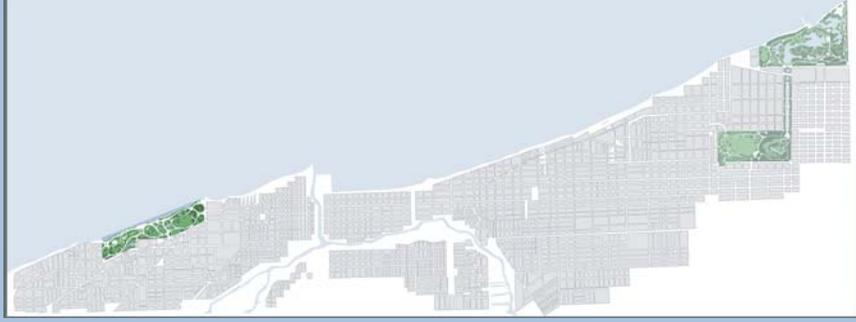
- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways

Lake Michigan

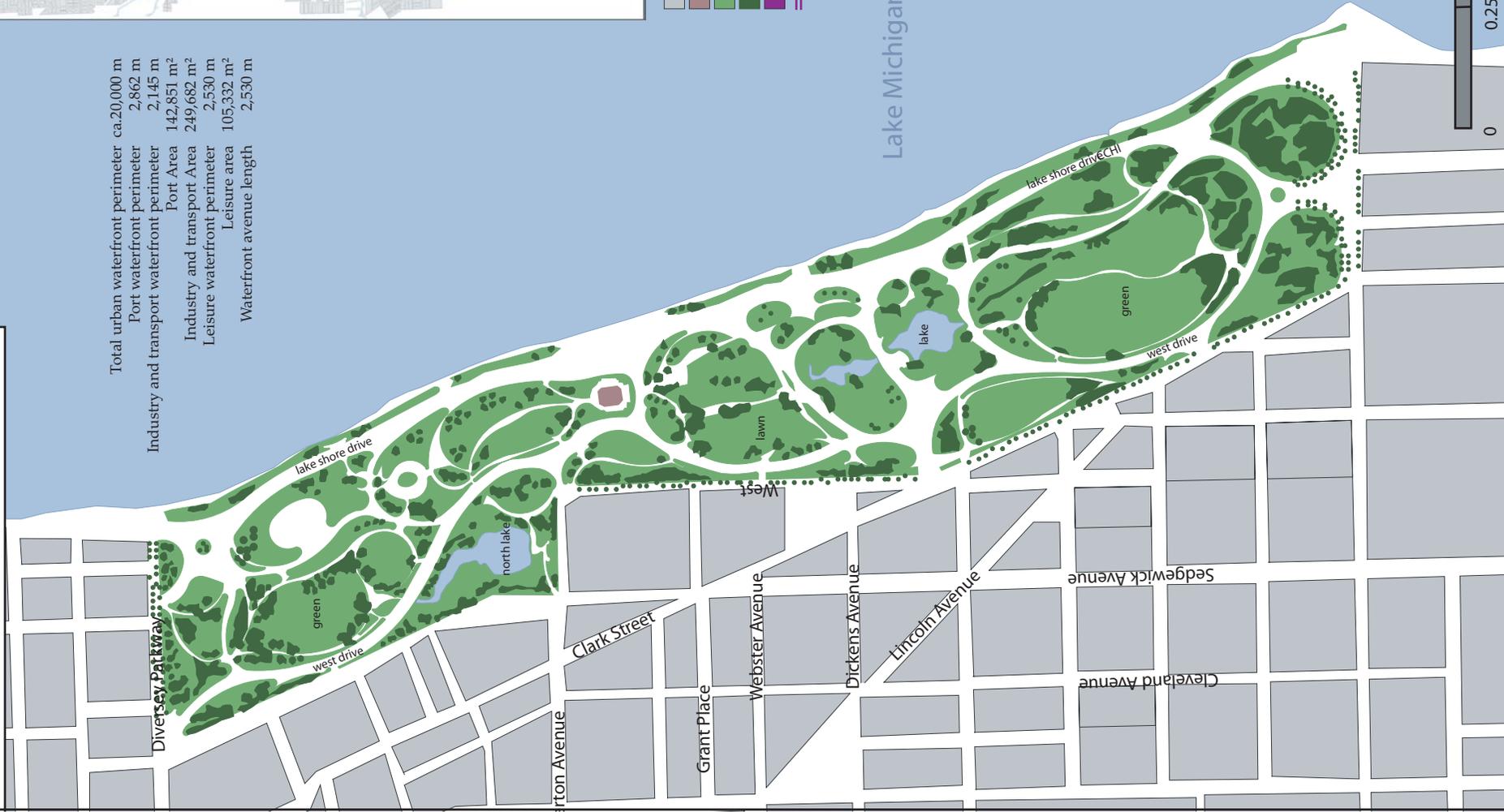


CHI03 - 1877-Olaf Benson- Lincoln Park

Total urban waterfront perimeter ca.20,000 m  
 Port waterfront perimeter 2,862 m  
 Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 2,145 m  
 Port Area 142,851 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Industry and transport Area 249,682 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Leisure waterfront perimeter 2,530 m  
 Leisure area 105,332 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Waterfront avenue length 2,530 m



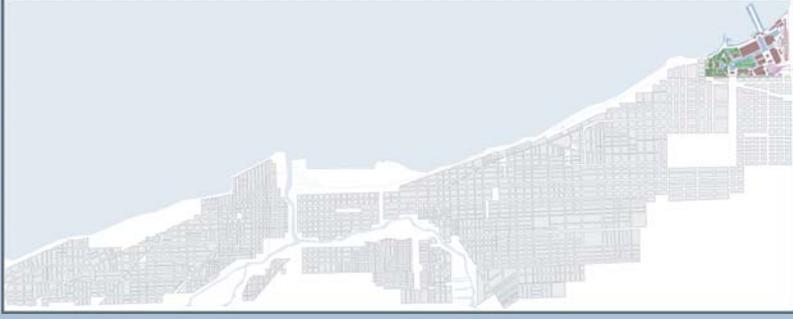
- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways



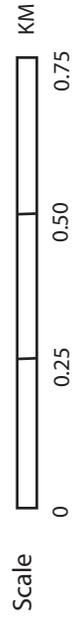
# CHI04 - 1893-World Columbian Exposition



Total urban waterfront perimeter ca.30,000 m  
 Port waterfront perimeter 8,691 m  
 Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 7,296 m  
 Port Area 74,281 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Industry and transport Area 38,506 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Leisure waterfront perimeter 4,394 m  
 Leisure area 184,911 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Waterfront avenue length 0 m



- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways



# CHI05 - 1895-Olmsted brothers- Jackson Park

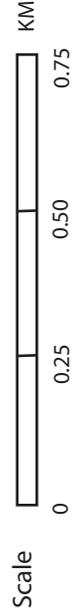
Total urban waterfront perimeter ca.30,000 m  
 Port waterfront perimeter 8,691 m  
 Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 7,296 m  
 Port Area 74,281 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Industry and transport Area 38,506 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Leisure waterfront perimeter 4,394 m  
 Leisure area 184,911 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Waterfront avenue length 4,394 m



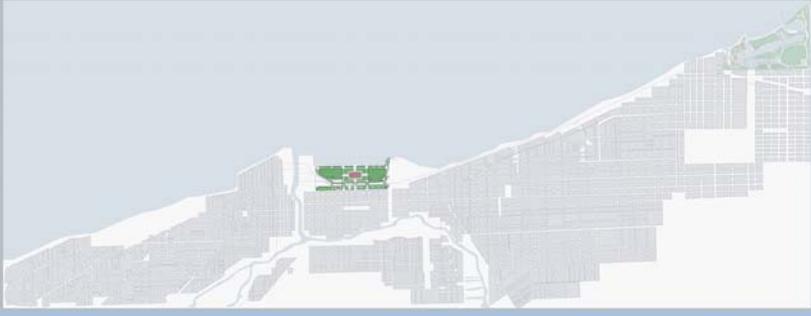
- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways



Lake Michigan



# CHI06 - 1903-Olmsted Brothers- Grant Park



- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railway



## Lake Michigan

Total urban waterfront perimeter	ca.30,000 m
Port waterfront perimeter	8,691 m
Industry and transport Area waterfront perimeter	7,296 m
Port Area	74,281 m <sup>2</sup>
Industry and transport Area	38,506 m <sup>2</sup>
Leisure waterfront perimeter	1,587 m
Leisure area	88707 m <sup>2</sup>
Waterfront avenue length	1,587 m



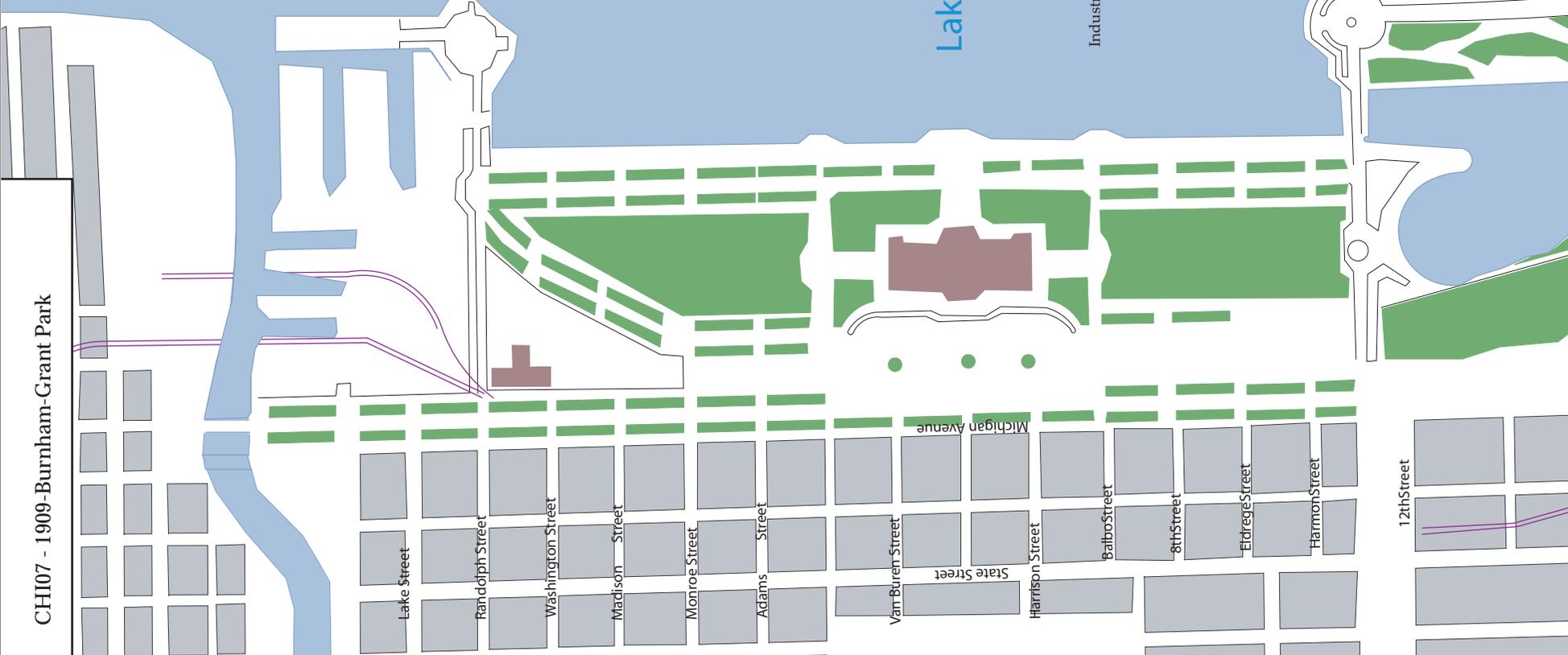
CHI07 - 1909-Burnham-Grant Park



- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railway

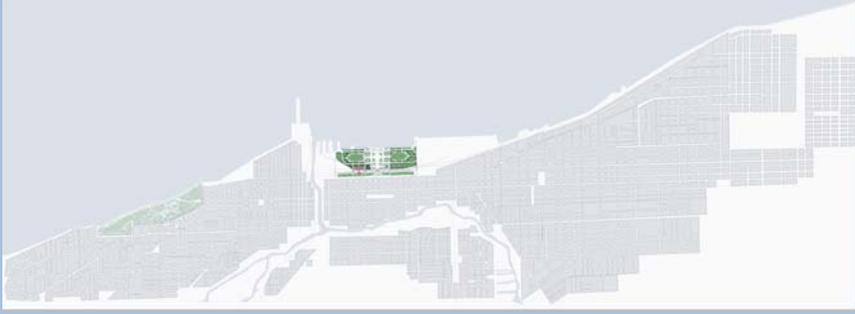
Lake Michigan

Total urban waterfront perimeter	ca.45,000 m
Port waterfront perimeter	7,118 m
Industry and transport waterfront perimeter	0m
Port Area	58,051m <sup>2</sup>
Industry and transport Area	0m
Leisure waterfront perimeter	11,538 m <sup>2</sup>
Leisure area	764,079 m <sup>2</sup>
Waterfront avenue length	11,538 m

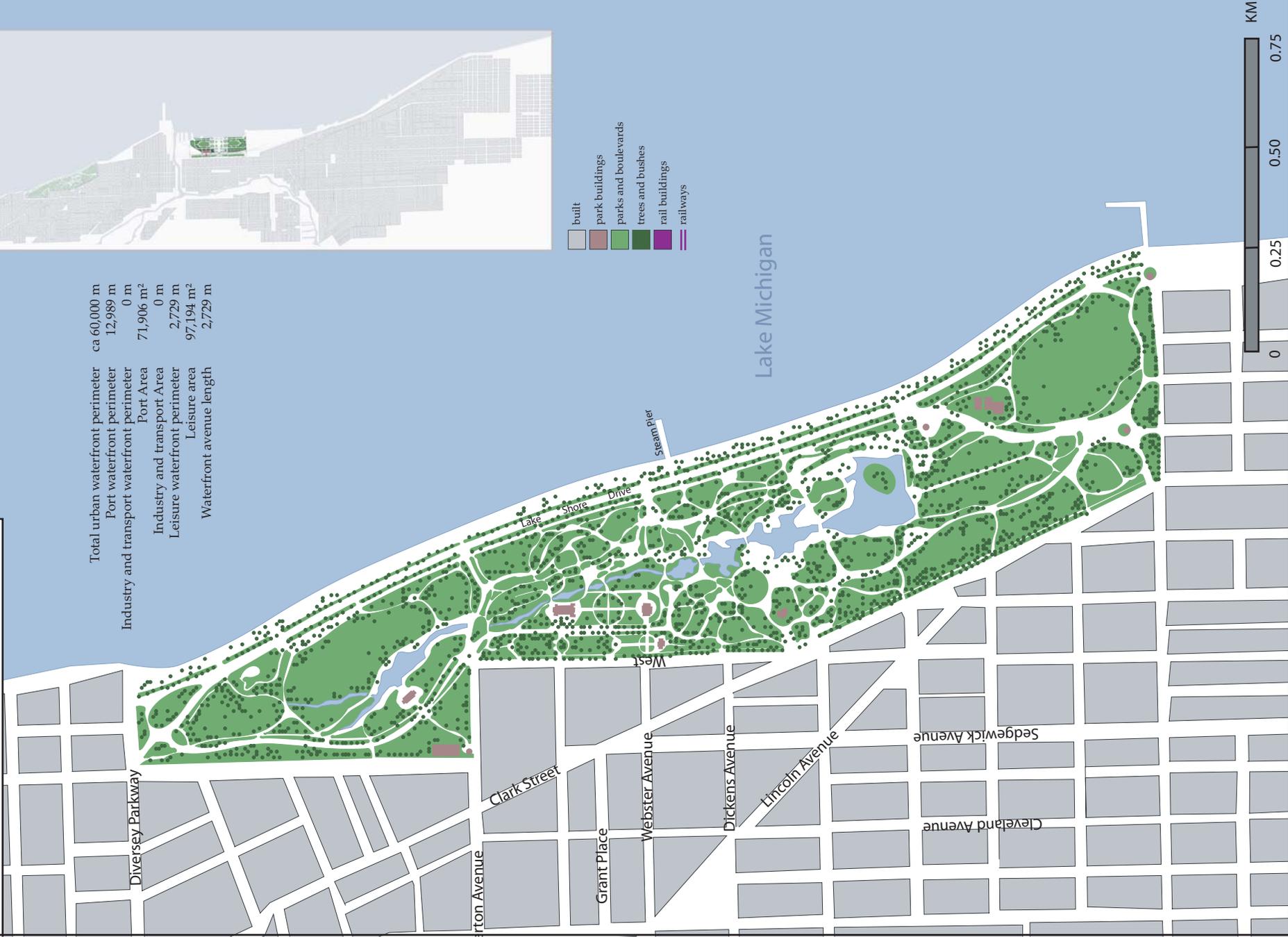


# CHI08 - 1925-Ossian Simonds- Lincoln Park

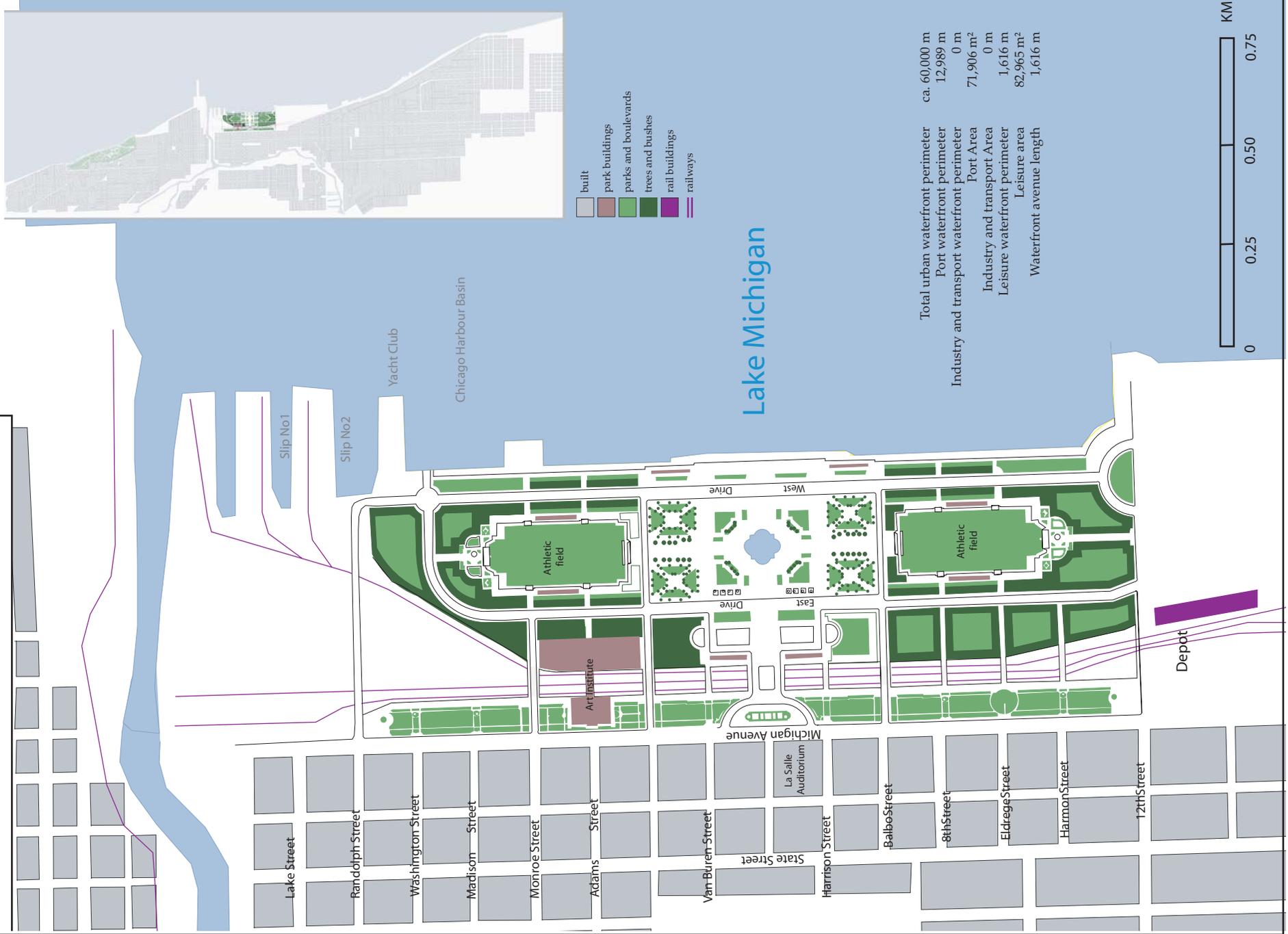
Total urban waterfront perimeter ca 60,000 m  
 Port waterfront perimeter 12,989 m  
 Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 71,906 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Port Area 0 m  
 Industry and transport Area 2,729 m  
 Leisure waterfront perimeter 97,194 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Leisure area 2,729 m  
 Waterfront avenue length 2,729 m



- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways



# CHI 09 - 1922-Bennett-Grant Park

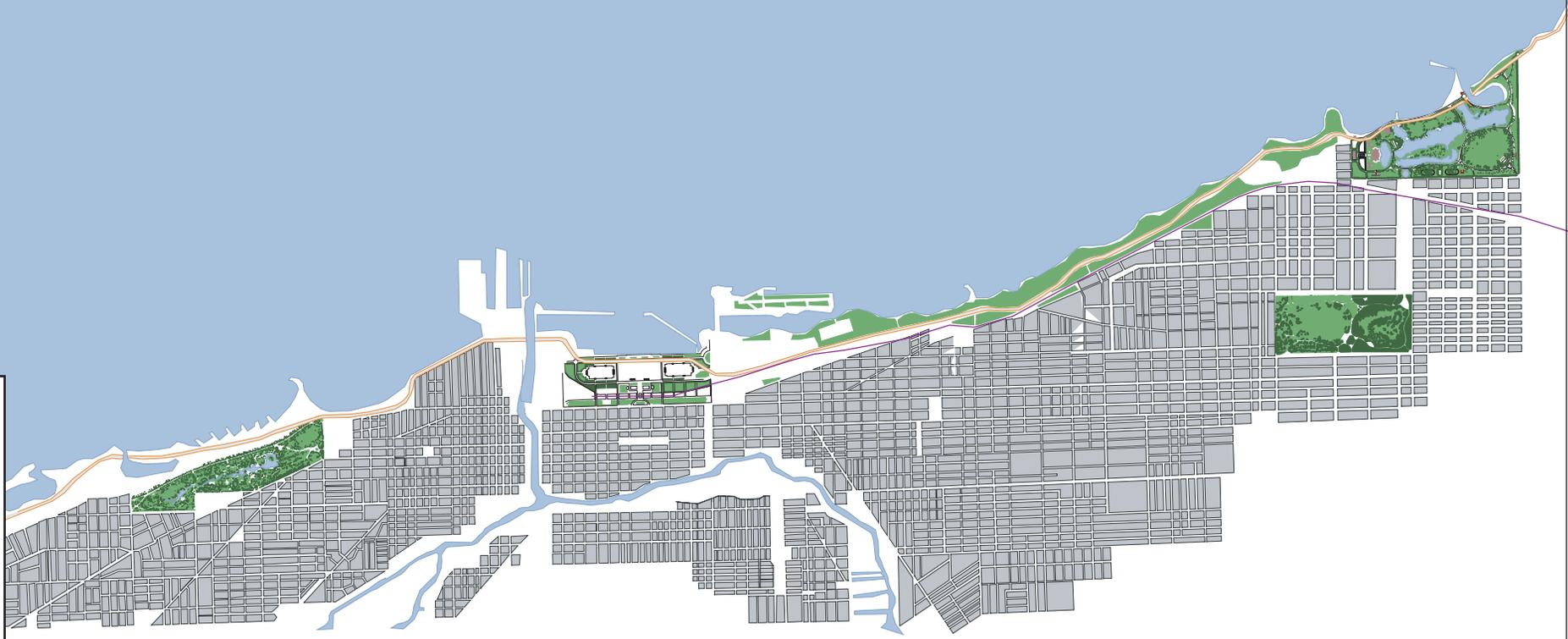


- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways

Total urban waterfront perimeter	ca. 60,000 m
Port waterfront perimeter	12,989 m
Industry and transport waterfront perimeter	0 m
Port Area	71,906 m <sup>2</sup>
Industry and transport Area	0 m
Leisure waterfront perimeter	1,616 m
Leisure area	82,965 m <sup>2</sup>
Waterfront avenue length	1,616 m



# Chicago waterfront - 2007



- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways
- waterfront freeway

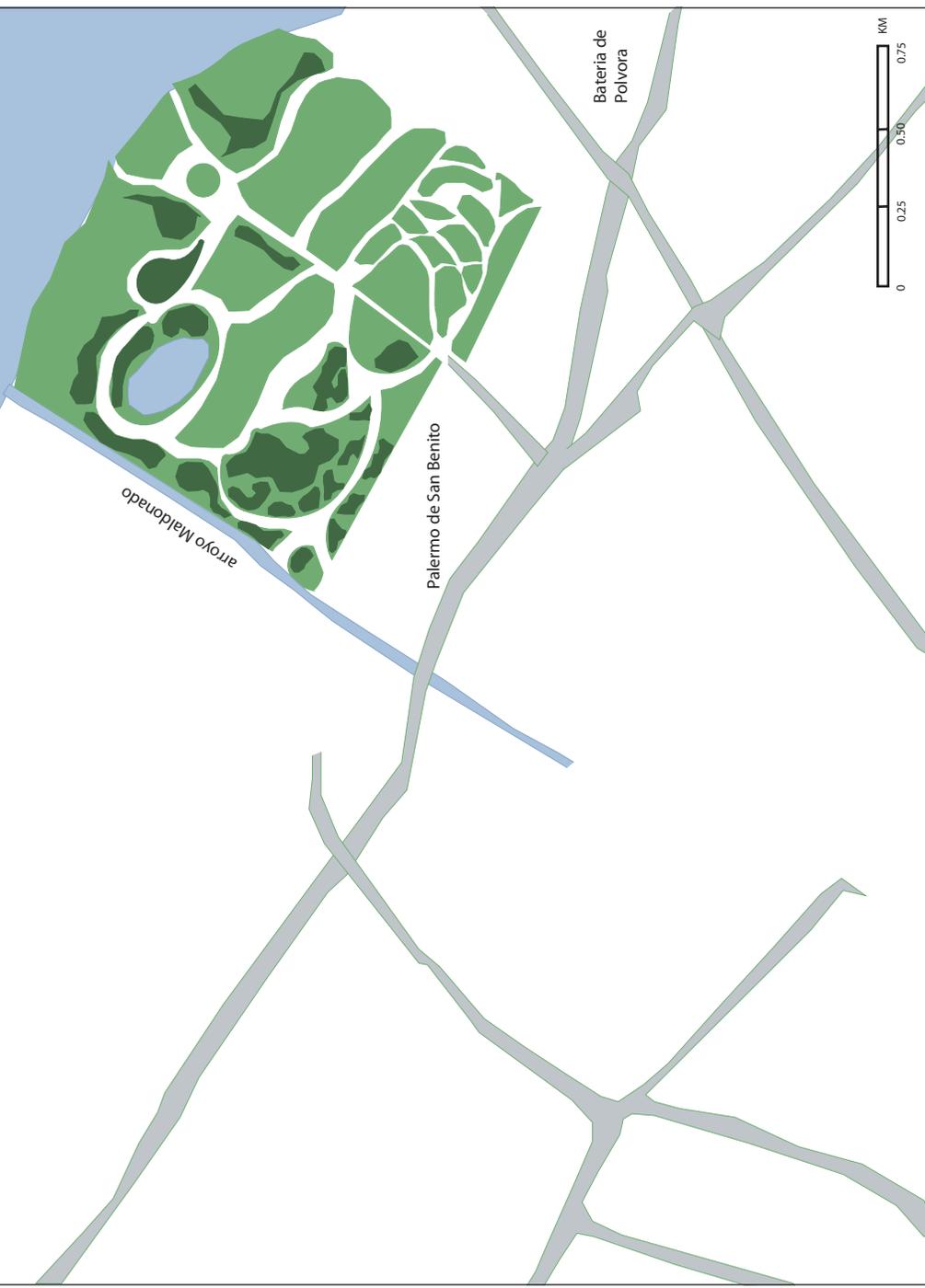
BA01 -1874-Sarmiento-Parque Tres de Febrero

- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways



Rio de la Plata

Total urban waterfront perimeter ca.7,700 m - 100%  
Port waterfront perimeter 3,800 m - 49%  
Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 1,191 m - 15%  
Leisure waterfront perimeter 11,000 m<sup>2</sup>  
Port Area 152,300 m<sup>2</sup>  
Leisure area  
Waterfront avenue length

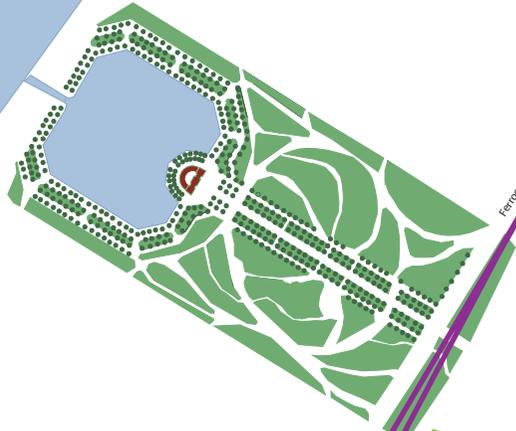


# BA02 - 1885-Alvear- Balneario

- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways



Total urban waterfront perimeter ca. 9,000 m - 100%  
Port waterfront perimeter 3,800 m - 42%  
Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 3,115 m - 34%  
Leisure waterfront perimeter 160 m - 1.7%  
Port Area 11,000 m<sup>2</sup>  
Industry and transport Area 13,339 m<sup>2</sup>  
Leisure area 5,490 m<sup>2</sup>  
Waterfront avenue length



Ferrocarril del Norte

Parque de la Recoleta

Parque de la Recoleta

Cementerio de la Recoleta



# BA03 - 1885-Alvear/ Courtois - Balneario

-  built
-  park buildings
-  parks and boulevards
-  trees and bushes
-  rail buildings
-  railways



Total urban waterfront perimeter ca. 9,000 m - 100%  
 Port waterfront perimeter 3,800 m - 42%  
 Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 3,115 m - 34%  
 Leisure waterfront perimeter 766 m - 8.5%  
 Port Area 11,000 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Industry and transport Area 13,339 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Leisure area 16,720 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Waterfront avenue length



BA04 - 1893-Thays- Parque Tres de Febrero

- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways



Rio de la Plata



Total urban waterfront perimeter ca.15,790 m - 100%  
 Port waterfront perimeter 4,410 m - 28%  
 Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 6,915 m - 44%  
 Leisure waterfront perimeter 3,436 m - 21%  
 Port Area 301,790 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Industry and transport Area 13,339 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Leisure area 406,500 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Waterfront avenue length

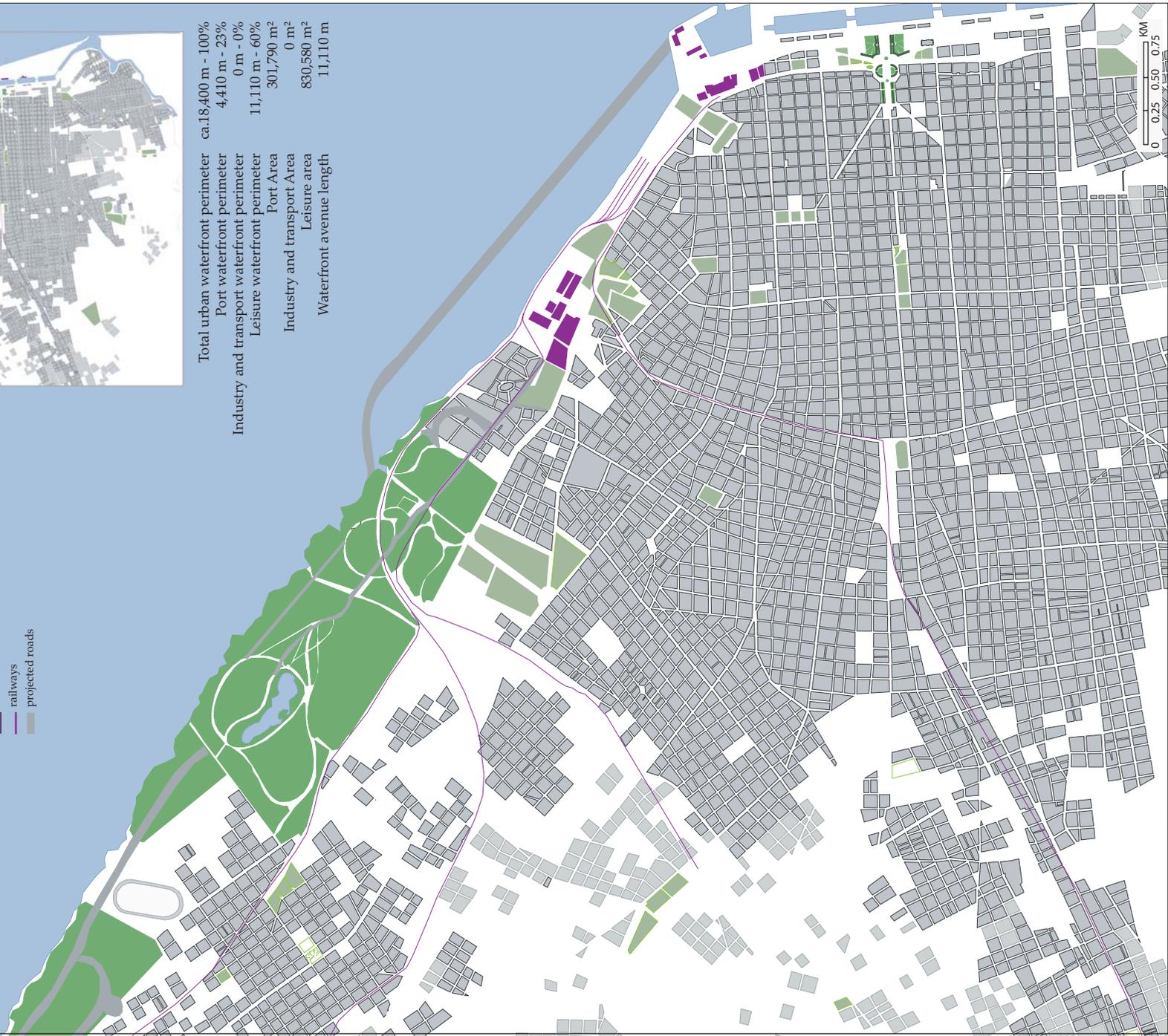


BA05 - 1909- Boulevard - Costanera Norte

- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail and industrial buildings
- railways
- projected roads



Total urban waterfront perimeter ca.18,400 m - 100%  
Port waterfront perimeter 4,410 m - 23%  
Industry and transport perimeter 0 m - 0%  
Leisure waterfront perimeter 11,110 m - 60%  
Port Area 301,790 m<sup>2</sup>  
Leisure area 830,580 m<sup>2</sup>  
Industry and transport Area 0 m<sup>2</sup>  
Waterfront avenue length 11,110 m



BA06 - 1910- Exposicion Internacional

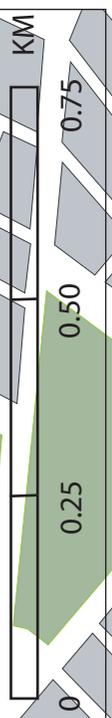
- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways



Total urban waterfront perimeter ca.18,400 m - 100%  
Port waterfront perimeter 4,410 m - 23%  
Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 0 m - 0%  
Leisure waterfront perimeter 11,110 m - 60%  
Port Area 301,790 m<sup>2</sup>  
Industry and transport Area 0 m<sup>2</sup>  
Leisure area 830,580 m<sup>2</sup>  
Waterfront avenue length 14,110 m

industrial exhibition

transport exhibition



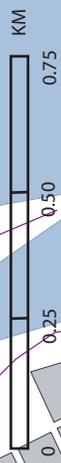
# BA07 - 1919-Carrasco - Costanera Sur

-  built
-  park buildings
-  parks and boulevards
-  trees and bushes
-  rail buildings
-  railways



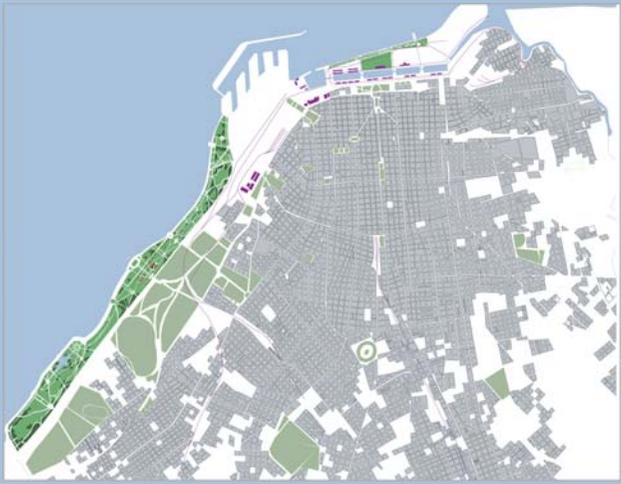
Total urban waterfront perimeter.	18,400 m - 100%
Port waterfront perimeter	6,360 m - 34%
Industry and transport waterfront perimeter	2,877 m - 15%
Leisure waterfront perimeter	3,671 m - 19%
Port Area	431,000 m <sup>2</sup>
Industry and transport Area	12,319 m <sup>2</sup>
Leisure area	57,470 m <sup>2</sup>
Waterfront avenue length	3,670 m

Rio de La Plata



BA08 - 1925-Forestier - Costanera Norte

- built
- park buildings
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail and industrial buildings
- railways
- projected roads



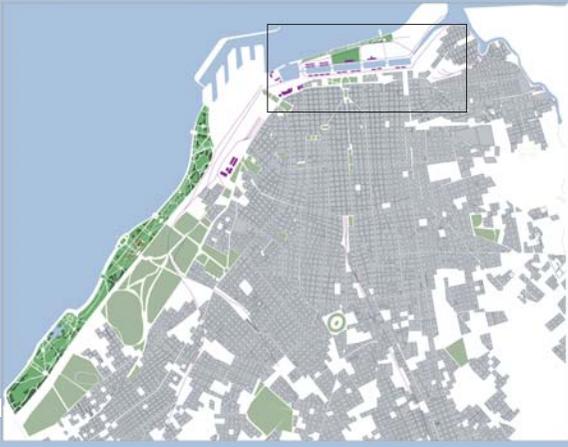
Total urban waterfront perimeter ca. 18,400 m - 100%  
Port waterfront perimeter 6,360 m - 34%  
Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 0 m - 0%  
Leisure waterfront perimeter 8,890 m - 48%  
Port Area 431,000 m<sup>22</sup>  
Leisure area 0 m<sup>2</sup>  
Industry and transport Area 476,550 m<sup>2</sup>  
Leisure area 0 m<sup>2</sup>  
Waterfront avenue length 8,890 m

0 0.25 0.50 0.75  
KM



BA09 - 1893-Forestier - Costanera Sur

-  built
-  park buildings
-  parks and boulevards
-  trees and bushes
-  rail buildings
-  railways

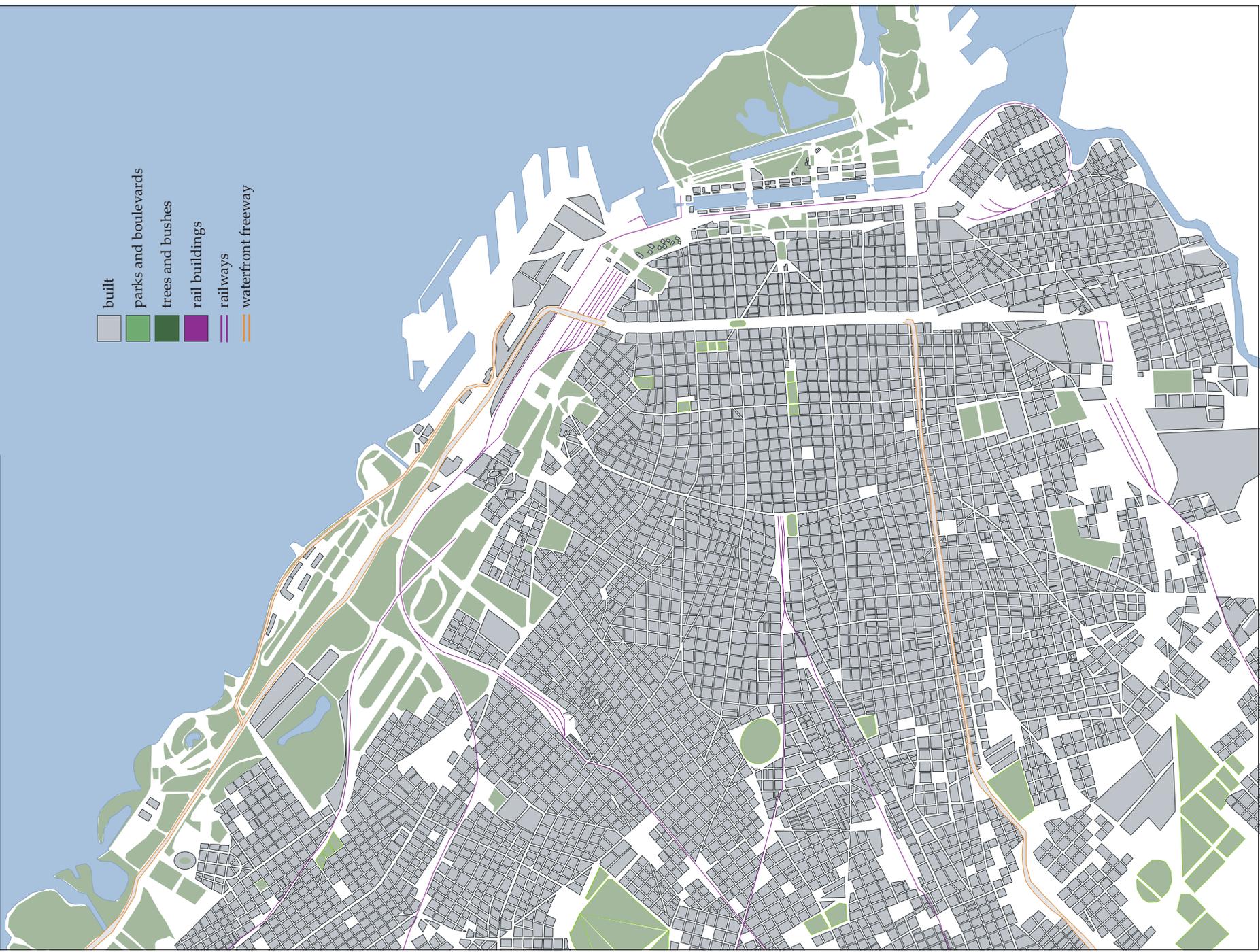


Total urban waterfront perimeterca. 18,400 m - 100%  
 Port waterfront perimeter 6,360 m - 34%  
 Industry and transport waterfront perimeter 0 m - 0%  
 Leisure waterfront perimeter 2,370 m - 12%  
 Port Area 431,000 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Industry and transport Area 0 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Leisure area 24,890 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Waterfront avenue length 2,370 m



# Buenos Aires waterfront - 2007

- built
- parks and boulevards
- trees and bushes
- rail buildings
- railways
- waterfront freeway



## Annex 2 - Charts

Chart 5-01 - Barcelona - Perimeters and areas

	Rovira i Trias 1856	Cerda 1859	Soler I Gloria 1859	Garriga I Roca 1862	Fontsere 1871	Exposicion 1888	Alsina Amils 1899	Jaussely 1907	Ortega 1918
total urban waterfront perimeter	14,593 m - 100%	20,106 m - 100%	23,930 m - 100%	20,106 m - 100%	20,106 m - 100%	24,378 m - 100%	28,606 m - 100%	38,269 m - 100%	37,694 m - 100%
Port waterfront perimeter	12,443 m - 85%	5,465 m 27%	7,800 m - 32%	5,302 m - 26%	5,302 m - 26%	7,800 m - 32%	12,879 m - 45%	26,530 m - 69%	24,244 m - 64%
Industry waterfront perimeter	804 m 5%	2,303 m 11%		730 m - 3%			1,823 m - 6%	3,418 m - 9%	5,721 m - 15%
Leisure waterfront perimeter		2,072 m 10%	3,431 m - 14%	2,467 m - 12%	486 m - 2% boulevard	947m - 3% avenue	2,082 m - 7% Besos	2,479 m - 6% Besos	7,520 m - 19%
		Besos			216 m - 1% fort	495 m - 1.5% maritime section	482 m 1% maritime section	1334 m - 3% maritime section	
existing leisure waterfront (not included in project)	0	0	0	0	0	702 m - 3%	947 m - 2%	0 m	0m
Port Area	562,009 m <sup>2</sup>	466,048 m <sup>2</sup>	480,867 m <sup>2</sup>	326,262 m <sup>2</sup>			1,006,382 m <sup>2</sup>	1,480,106 m <sup>2</sup>	1,265,164 m <sup>2</sup>
Industry Area	64,355 m <sup>2</sup>	157,229 m <sup>2</sup>		70,716 m <sup>2</sup>			168,751 m <sup>2</sup>	319,826 m <sup>2</sup>	538,058 m <sup>2</sup>
Leisure area							80,419 m <sup>2</sup> Besos	2,549,22 m <sup>2</sup> Besos	268,400 m <sup>2</sup> beach
		144,105 m <sup>2</sup>	343,100 m <sup>2</sup>	220,079 m <sup>2</sup>	17,020 m <sup>2</sup>	48,530 m <sup>2</sup>	28,497 m <sup>2</sup> maritime section	143,022 m <sup>2</sup> maritime section	27,461 m <sup>2</sup> sport harbour
Waterfront avenue length							9,378 m	10,512 m	13,420 m

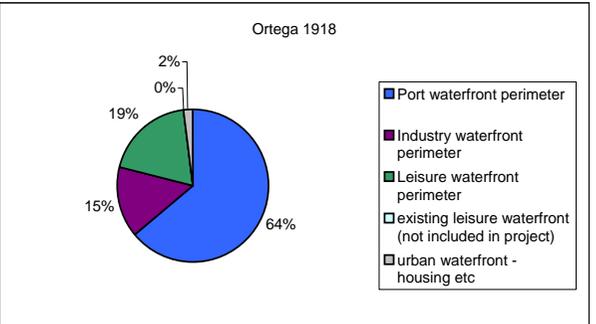
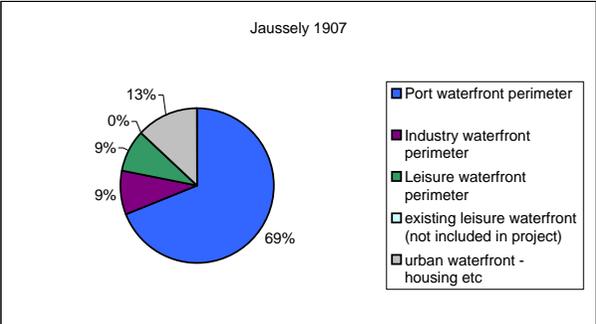
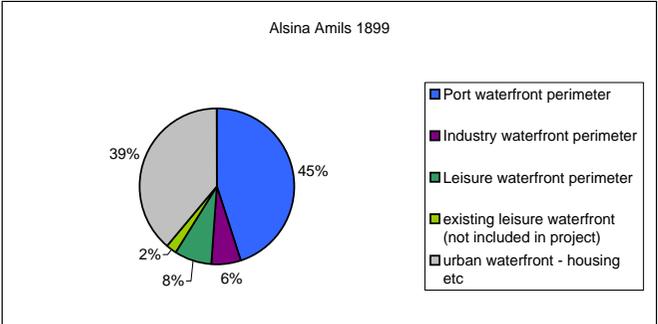
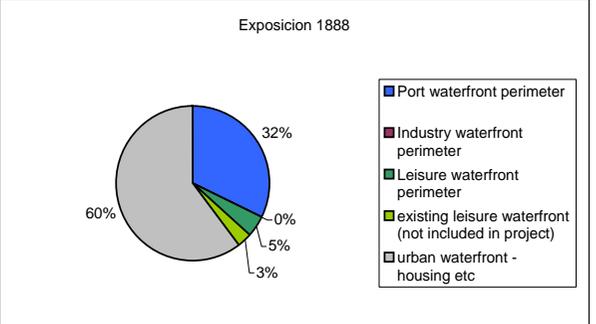
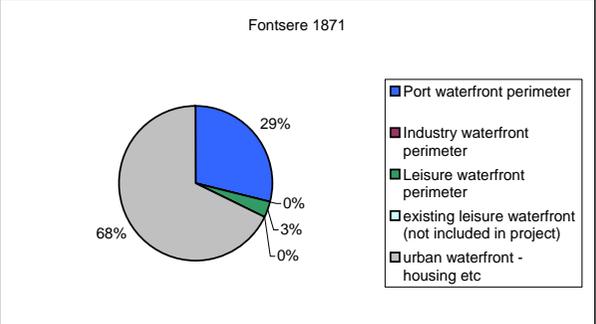
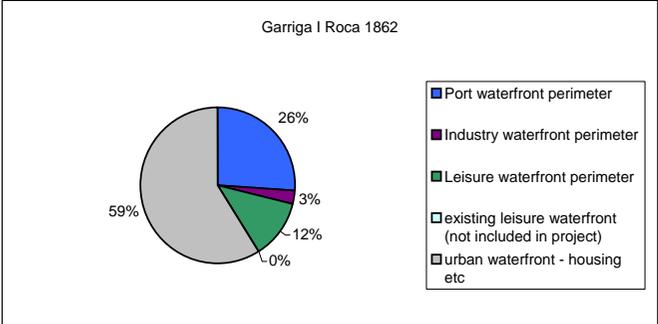
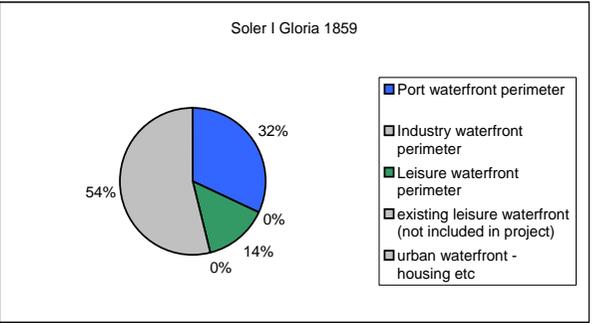
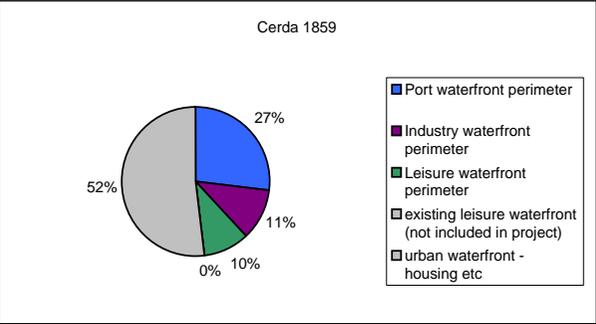
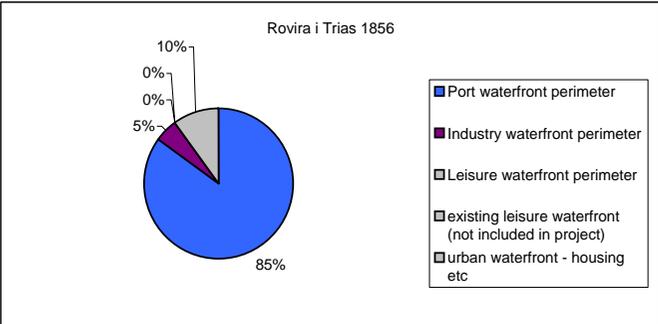


Chart 5-02 - Chicago - Perimeters and areas

	Nelson-Lincoln-1867	Olmsted Jackson 1873	Benson Lincoln 1877	Columbian Exposition 1893	Olmsted Bros Jackson 1895	Olmsted Bros Grant 1892	Burnham lakeshore 1909	Bennett Grant 1922	Simonds Lincoln 1925
total urban waterfront perimeter	ca.20,000 m - 100%	ca.20,000 m - 100%	ca.20,000 m - 100%	ca.30,000 m - 100%	ca.30,000 m - 100%	ca.30,000 m - 100%	ca.45,000 m - 100%	ca. 60,000 m - 100%	ca 60,000 m - 100%
Port waterfront perimeter	2,862 m - 14%	2,862 m - 10%	2,862 m - 10%	8,691 m - 29%	8,691 m - 29%	8,691 m - 29%	7,118 m - 16%	12,989 m - 22%	12,989 m - 22%
Industry and transport waterfront perimeter	2,145 m - 11%	2,145 m - 11%	2,145 m - 11%	7,296 m - 24%	7,296 m - 24%	7,296 m - 24%	–	–	–
Leisure waterfront perimeter	539 m - 2%	2,677 m - 13%	2,530 m - 12%	4,394 m - 15%	4,394 m - 15%	1,587 m - 5%	11,538 m - 25%	1,616 m 3%	2,729 m - 5%
existing leisure waterfront (not included in project)	0m	539 m - 2%	2,677 m - 13%	2,530 m - 12%	2,530 m - 8%	5,207 m - 17%	0m - 0%	5,207 m - 8.5%	8,809 m - 15%
Port Area	142,851 m <sup>2</sup>	142,851 m <sup>2</sup>	142,851 m <sup>2</sup>	74,281 m <sup>2</sup>	74,281 m <sup>2</sup>	74,281 m <sup>2</sup>	58,051m <sup>2</sup>	71,906 m <sup>2</sup>	71,906 m <sup>2</sup>
Industry and transport Area	249,682 m <sup>2</sup>	249,682 m <sup>2</sup>	249,682 m <sup>2</sup>	38,506 m <sup>2</sup>	38,506 m <sup>2</sup>	38,506 m <sup>2</sup>	–	–	–
Leisure area	19,318 m <sup>2</sup>	174,675 m <sup>2</sup>	105,332 m <sup>2</sup>	184,911 m <sup>2</sup>	184,911 m <sup>2</sup>	88707 m <sup>2</sup>	764,079 m <sup>2</sup>	82,965 m <sup>2</sup>	97,194 m <sup>2</sup>
Waterfront avenue length	–	–	2,530 m	–	4,394 m	1,587 m	11,538 m	1,616 m	2,729 m

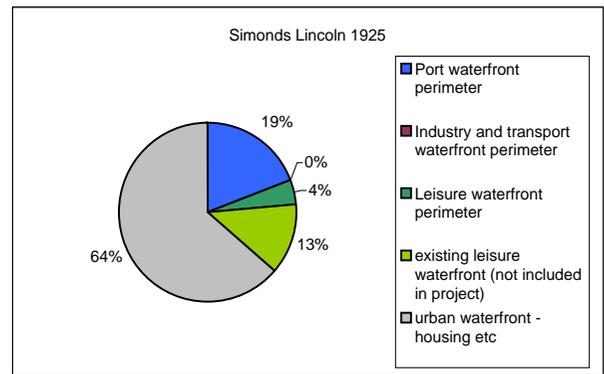
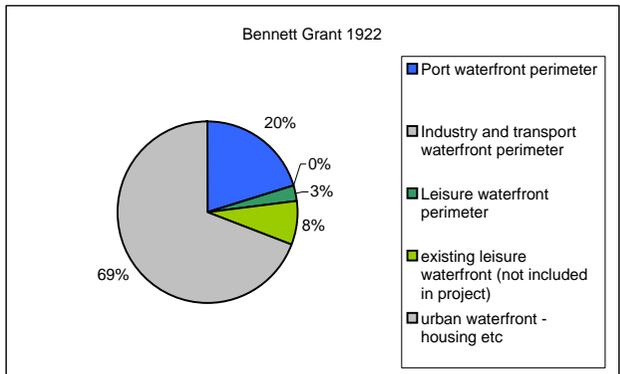
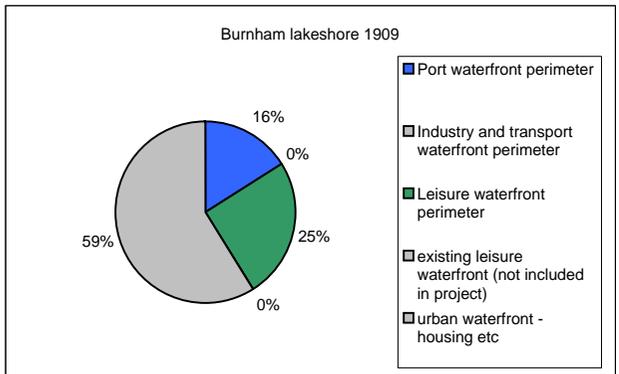
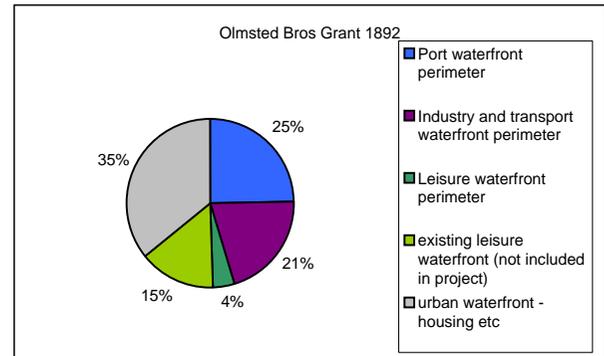
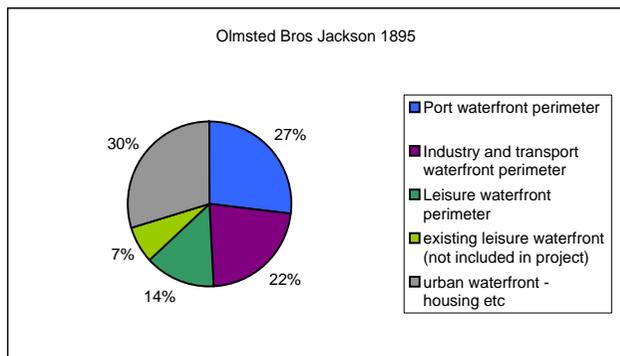
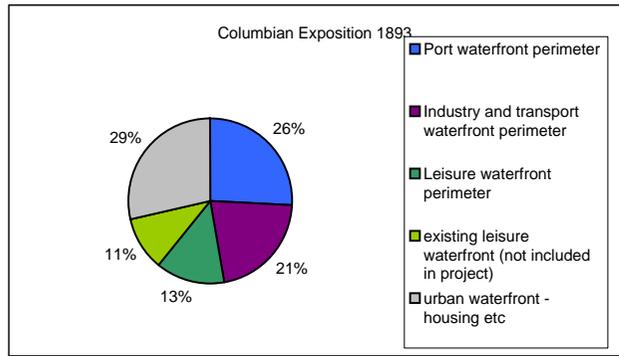
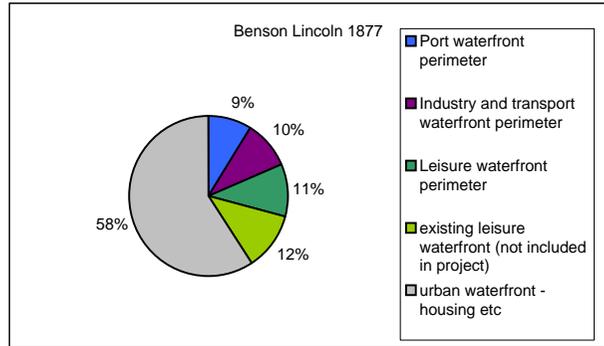
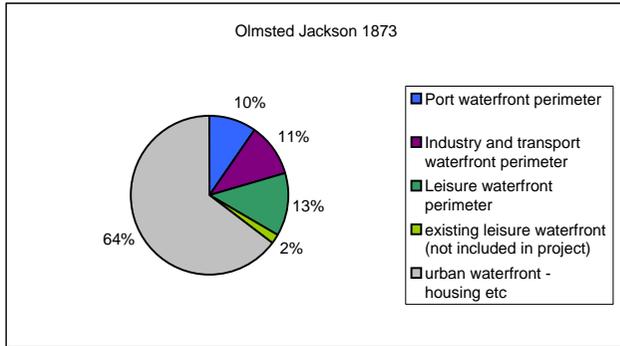
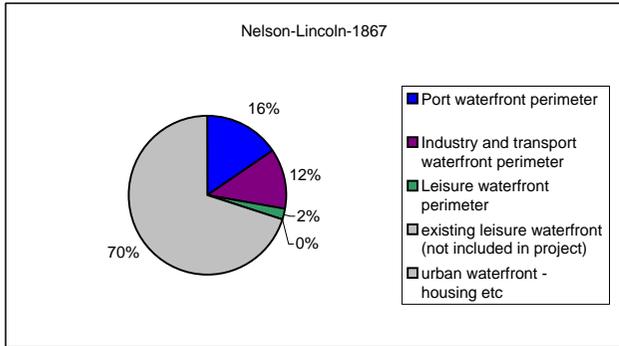


Chart 5-03 - Buenos Aires - Perimeters and areas

	Sarmiento 1874	Alvear 1885 - 01	Alvear 1885-02	Thays 1893	Morales 1895	Bouvard 1909	Carrasco 1919	Forestier 1925 norte	Forestier 1925 sur
total urban waterfront perimeter	ca.7,700 m - 100%	ca. 9,000 m - 100%	ca. 9,000 m - 100%	ca.15,790 m - 100%	ca.15,790 m - 100%	ca.18,400 m - 100%	ca. 18,400m - 100%	ca. 18,400 m - 100%	ca. 18,400 m - 100%
Port waterfront perimeter	3,800 m - 49%	3,800 m - 42%	3,800 m - 42%	4,410 m - 28%	4,410 m - 28%	4,410 m - 23%	6,360 m - 34%	6,360 m - 34%	6,360 m - 34%
Industry and transport waterfront perimeter		3,115 m - 34%	3,115 m - 34%	6,915 m - 44%	3518 m - 22%	0 m - 0%	2,877 m - 15%	0 m - 0%	0 m - 0%
Leisure waterfront perimeter	1,191 m - 15%	766 m - 8.5%	160 m - 1.7%	3,436 m - 21%	4,448 m - 28%	11,110 m - 60%	3,671 m - 19%	8,890 m - 48%	2,370 m - 12%
existing leisure waterfront (not included in project)	0	1,191 m - 12%	1,191 m - 12%	0 m	1,191 m - 7.5%	3,436 m - 18%	3,436 m - 18%	3,671 m - 19%	3,436 m - 18%
Port Area	11,000 m <sup>2</sup>	11,000 m <sup>2</sup>	11,000 m <sup>2</sup>	301,790 m <sup>2</sup>	301,790 m <sup>2</sup>	301,790 m <sup>2</sup>	431,000 m <sup>2</sup>	431,000 m <sup>2</sup>	431,000 m <sup>2</sup>
Industry and transport Area		13,339 m <sup>2</sup>	13,339 m <sup>2</sup>	13,339 m <sup>2</sup>	13,339 m <sup>2</sup>	0 m <sup>2</sup>	12,319 m <sup>2</sup>	0 m <sup>2</sup>	0 m <sup>2</sup>
Leisure area	152,300 m <sup>2</sup>	16,720 m <sup>2</sup>	5,490 m <sup>2</sup>	406,500 m <sup>2</sup>	7,227 m <sup>2</sup>	830,580 m <sup>2</sup>	57,470 m <sup>2</sup>	476,550 m <sup>2</sup>	24,890 m <sup>2</sup>
Waterfront avenue length					4,448 m	11,110 m	3671 m	8,890 m	2,370 m

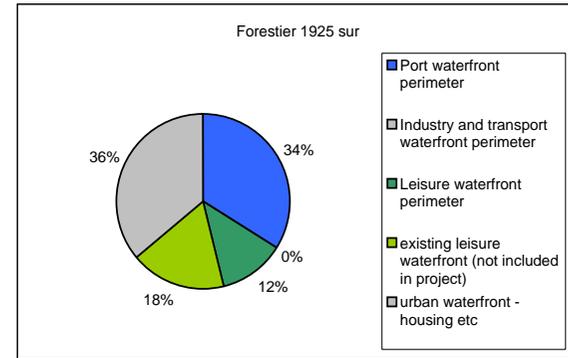
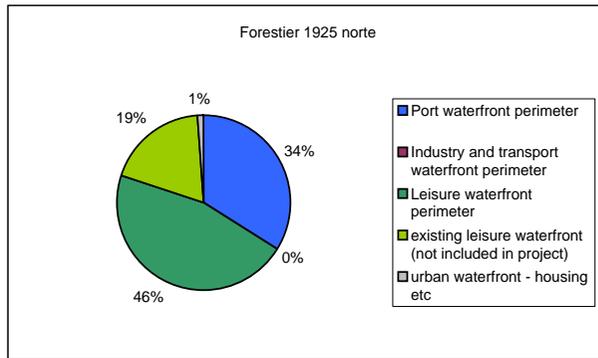
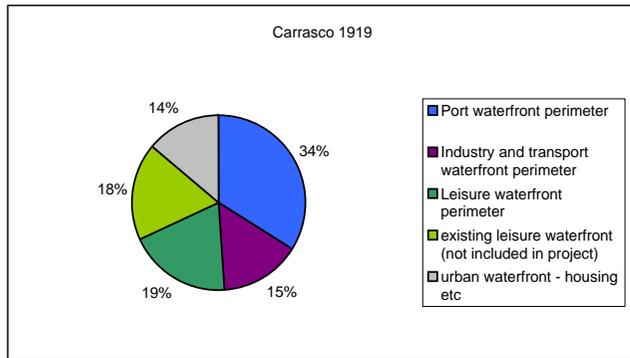
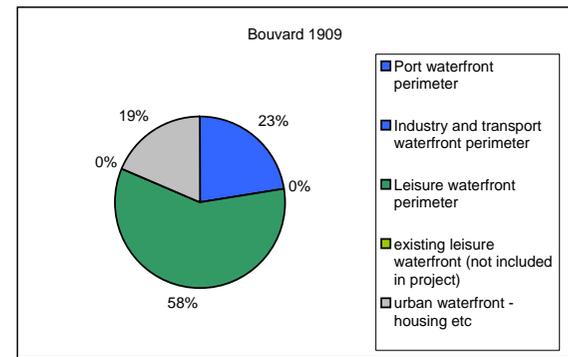
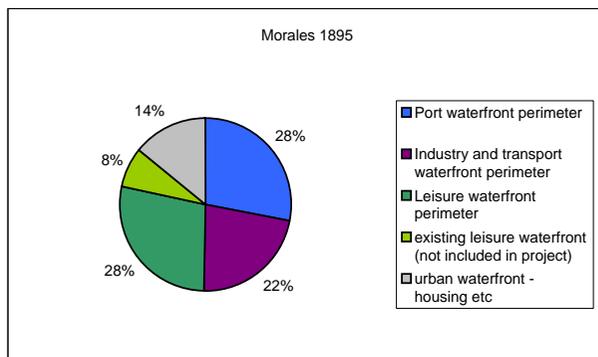
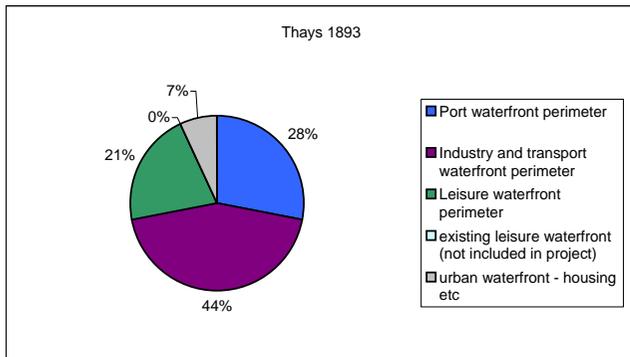
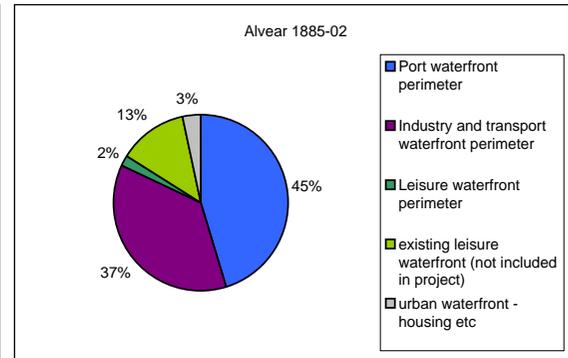
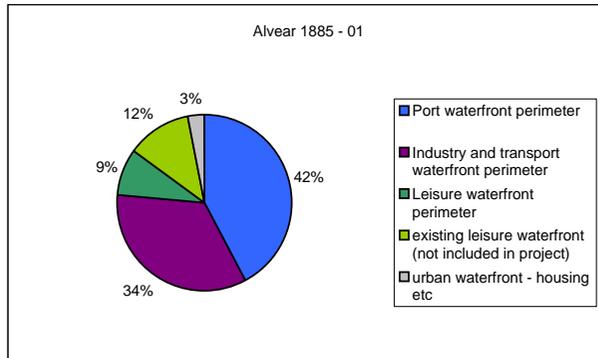
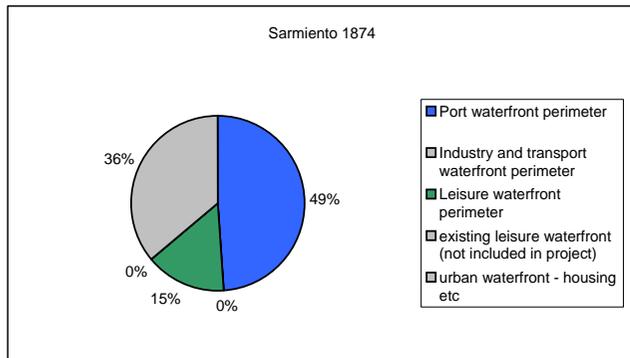


Chart - landscape types in each project

CITY	AUTHOR	PROJECT	YEAR	REALISATION			LANDSCAPE									
				YES	PART	NO	park/square		waterfront avenue		pier		baths		relation to water	
							natural	civic	winding	straight	light	heavy	beach	cabins	natural	artificial
Barcelona	Fontserè	Parque de la Ciudadela	1871													
	various	Exposición Universal	1888													
	Alsina Amils	Proyecto de Unificación	1900													
	Jaussely	Plan de Enlaces	1904-07													
	Ortega	Paseo Maritimo	1908													
Chicago	Nelson/Benson	Lincoln Park	1865-77													
	Olmsted/Vaux	Jackson Park	1871													
	Burnham/Olmsted	Columbian Exposition	1893													
	Olmsted Bros	Jackson Park	1895													
	Olmsted Bros	Grant Park	1892													
	Burnham	Lakefront Drive	1909													
	Bennet	Grant Park	1915-22													
O.C. Simonds	Lincoln Park	1914-1920														
Buenos Aires	Sarmiento	Parque Tres de Febrero	1874													
	Alvear	Parque y Baños	1885													
	Thays	Parque Tres de Febrero	1893													
	Morales	Avenida Costanera	1895													
	Bouvard	Plan + avenida	1909													
	various	Exposición Internacional	1910													
	Carrasco	Proyecto de Embellecimiento	1914													
	Carrasco	Costanera Sur	1916													
	Forestier	Costanera Norte y Costanera Sur	1925													

- parks
- avenues
- exhibitions

Chart - Leisure types and activities in each project

CITY	AUTHOR	PROJECT	YEAR	REALISATION			LEISURE TYPES				LEISURE ACTIVITIES						
				YES	PART	NO	passive	active	didactic	productive	hygiene	cultural	spectacle	sports	children	watersports	commercial
Barcelona	Fontserè	Parque de la Ciudadela	1871														
	various	Exposición Universal	1888														
	Alsina Amils	Proyecto de Unificación	1900														
	Jaussely	Plan de Enlaces	1904-07														
	Ortega	Paseo Marítimo	1908														
Chicago	Nelson/Benson	Lincoln Park	1865-77														
	Olmsted/Vaux	Jackson Park	1871														
	Burnham/Olmsted	Columbian Exposition	1893														
	Olmsted Bros	Jackson Park	1895														
	Olmsted Bros	Grant Park	1892														
	Burnham	Lakefront Drive	1909														
	Bennet	Grant Park	1915-22														
O.C. Simonds	Lincoln Park	1914-1920															
Buenos Aires	Sarmiento	Parque Tres de Febrero	1874														
	Alvear	Parque y Baños	1885														
	Thays	Parque Tres de Febrero	1893														
	Morales	Avenida Costanera	1895														
	Bouvard	Plan + avenida	1909														
	various	Exposición Internacional	1910														
	Carrasco	Proyecto de Embellecimiento	1914														
	Carrasco	Costanera Sur	1916														
Forestier	Costanera Norte y Costanera Sur	1925															

parks

avenues

exhibitions