

## **Planning the city in expansion. Expansion of the city of Valencia**

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The study period made available to us through the ERASMUS project, which was spent in the Spanish city of Valencia, gave us the opportunity to get to know the city and its inhabitants thoroughly.

Notwithstanding the cultural similarity which unites Italy to Spain, the way of living and the territorial features are quite different. It has, therefore, been most interesting for us to examine different ways of planning in territorial and climatic conditions different to what we were used to facing. All this and the knowledge that planning outside the national sphere would have been an experience that would enrich our professional training, impelled us to choose Valencia for our degree thesis.

During the last few years the city has been relaunching its image through important urban and architectural works and in particular, in order to make the city unique within the European panorama, the transformation of nine kilometres of river bed into a long city park, (the Rio Turia having been diverted following flooding), where one can escape from the urban traffic just by descending a few meters below city level.

One of the most important architectural areas standing along the banks of the Rio Turia is the cultural complex of the City of Art and Science (Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias) planned by Santiago Calatrava and by the more recent Oceanographic Museum designed by Felix Candela.

The neighbouring area around these monumental works has gone from a situation of total abandon to that of rapid urbanization this is quickly reaching an area that, until a few years ago, was in a state of deterioration or was occupied by allotments.

It was, therefore, most interesting to plan on a site near this "cultural city", on the south-eastern outskirts of the city that, however, involves even today considerable problems of urban arrangement.

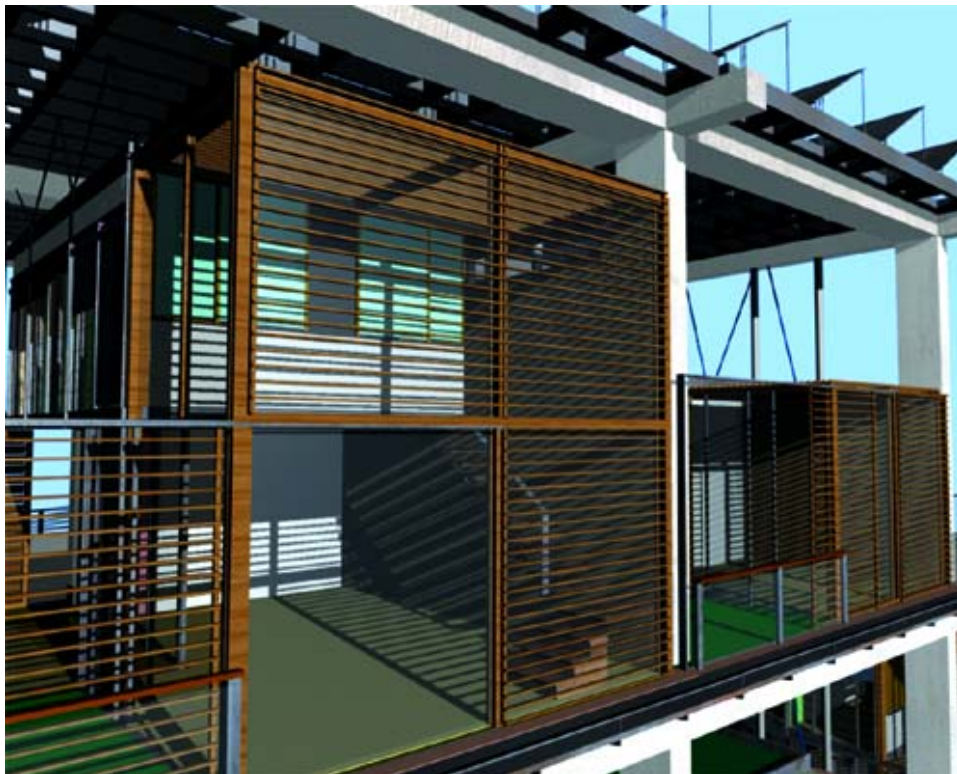
It was almost a challenge to plan a residential complex bearing in mind the presence of the Oceanographic Museum and the edge of the allotment gardens which is a natural landscape patrimony to be preserved and developed, also taking into consideration nature trails, on foot or by bicycle, to be developed out in the area. In connection with nature, we found that one of the outstanding points of this project was that one can enjoy the peace and quiet of a small village, while trying to create a new type of neighbourhood in this abandoned area on the outskirts, even if not far from the historical centre of the city.

The "viviendas", or lets say the residential homes, to be planned are designed for young people and this made us analyse our own particular living requirements and habits.

The position of the site, on the outskirts that need a new look and have no ties with the historical centre, enabled us to experiment with new possibilities of living areas, with the introduction of roads with dwellings whatever the height, assessable with ramps, lifts, stairways, thus transferring the functions of the "calle urbana", city street, to the various floors.



A mega structure, capable of containing residences, services and green areas, but maintaining a great permeability and close contact with park area separating them. These blocks also create a connection between the Rio Turia and the Allotment Gardens, two natural areas to be enhanced.





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