

**Requena: "Avenida de las Reinas" to give a new life to the quarter of "Las Peñas"**

by Stefano Bruno

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The Spanish town of Requena is about 70 Kms from Valencia, in the direction Valencia-Madrid; it used to be a military outpost at the time of the Arab domination and it was an important trading centre till few decades ago, thanks to its location on the border between Castilla and Valencia plain.



*Requena, still clearly visible the walls of the Arab fortifications*

The project-work of this degree thesis has been aimed at the requalification of an historical area in Requena, which up to now has been neglected: Las Peñas. This quarter was built in the 17th century by "moriscos" (Arabs who were converted to Christianity and remained in Spain after the "Reconquista").

Driven out of the town walls, the Arabs built their own houses on an upland area not far from the city; there they planned their buildings so as to create a defence barrier: "la Spina", a row of houses piled one above the other, without an opening towards the slope. There are no studies on this quarter, neither historical researches nor architectural reliefs, in spite of the importance of the area; its relevance is confirmed by the presence of ancient architectural typologies and by the strong character the quarter confers on the surrounding scenery, distinguishing the whole area; the town-planning scheme itself does not care about this quarter.

The current building of an important highway, "Avenida de la Reinas", might hide the quarter itself, because of a neglected process of urbanization, imposed by the new zone regulations.

This study offers another alternative, turning the building of the new road into an opportunity to bring the quarter to new life.

The thesis is going to show a project to keep the character of the quarter and its surroundings unchanged, also including the new buildings planned by the new town-planning scheme.

This project-work has been concerned with the analysis of the above-mentioned area, according to the following aspects:

- historical:the history of the quarter in relation with its town and the history of Spain
- geographic-economic-environmental:their influence on the construction of the quarter, the materials used, the use and *structure of the ground*
- socio-cultural:how much costoms and traditions have influenced the building process and how much they have been influenced by the context
- town-planning:the gradual development of the town and its new lines of expansion, the role of "Las Peñas" quarter through the centuries
- architectural:building typologies, building systems, the main elements charaterizing the constructed area;in particular, some charts for each building of la Spina have been worked out.

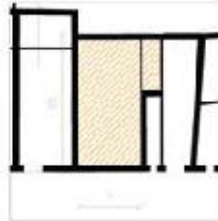
The project-work has followed two main objectives:first, the requalification of la Spina, secondly the proof of a possible intervention with new buildings in the area at the foot of the slopes, between the fort and the new Avenida, without spoiling the image of la Spina itself.

La Spina, schede degli edifici: n.23

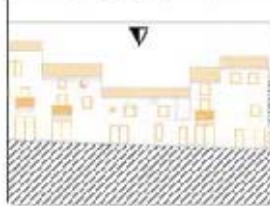


Note

Edificio facente parte del nucleo originario. Mantene la tipologia tipica a tre piani: stalla, abitazione e fienile.  
Sul retro è stato adossato un edificio che originariamente era più grande, come denunciano i segni dei vecchi muri portanti.



Numero edificio	sistema costruttivo	numero piani	destinazione d'uso pian terreno	destinazione d'uso piani superiori	stato di degrado	stato di abitato	altezza (m)
<b>23</b>	muratura portante	2 + 1	residenza	residenza deposito	I/O	si	7



Prospetto lato strada

Scale  
1 : 500



Prospetto lato scarpata



*data card concerning one of La Spina's buildings*

This project is an alternative to the local council one, which implies a neglected urbanization of the area contiguous to La Spina, denying its rural character and hiding both the fort and La Spina from the eyes of those going along the new "rambla"; as regards Las Peñas, a treasure still to discover, the local council plan suggests a kind of future already compromised, which will definitely relegate it to a marginal role, despite the new chances developing these days with the building of the Avenida.



*La Spina and its fort, according to the new project*

The project of this thesis wants to be a spur to the renovation of La Spina, its fort and the whole quarter of Las Peñas, respecting its historical, architectural and environmental values, as well as giving it new life.

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