

# BARCELONA STUDY VISIT SEPTEMBER 2018



EUROPEAN FEDERATION  
FOR LIVING





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## 25 SEPTEMBER

**On Tuesday 25 September and Wednesday 26 September, a group of 13 housing professionals from the EFL member community visited the City of Barcelona. The group was composed of housing practitioners from our members (Eigen Haard (Amsterdam), Paris Habitat (Paris), Villogia (Lille), Polylogis (Paris), 1892 (Berlin), supplemented with a few academic researchers from EFL's university community. This is the second study visit after last years study tour to Vienna.**

### Housing situation Barcelona

The total housing stock of Barcelona counts 684.000 homes, with a population of about 1,7 million people (2,4 person / home). In the metropolitan area the population counts more than 3 million people.

The total share of rental homes is 30%, trend up. Alarming is the situation on the housing market. About 42% of the households pay more than 40% of their income on housing. The rental prices went up by 24% to 28% between 2014 and 2017 (after the crisis). The average rent is about 900€/ month, but most published listings go nowadays for an average of 1.300€/ month as newly market price. As result

of this price increase, which vastly exceeds the rise of income, leads to a high number of home evictions. The last four years have seen 42.000 house evictions, affecting 125.000 people.

In Catalonia there are about 60,000 affordable rental housing, that is, 2% of the total park, which is still clearly "inadequate". The figures indicate that 230,000 social housing units are needed to reach European average standards. It is estimated that there are 450,000 empty homes (100,000 in the hands of financial entities, 80,000 homes for new construction and 270,000 homes for private individuals). This forms a potential base for enlarging the social housing stock.



# 1. PROJECT FOUNDATION CASA BLOC 3

The first day started with a visit to Casa Bloc Habitat 3, during which the realisation of affordable homes within the existing housing stock was explained. The municipality of Barcelona supports the temporally transition of vacant homes into affordable and social housing as one of the means to respond to the huge need for affordable housing in the city. The foundation Habitat 3 acquires empty homes – many left by evictions – from private owners for a period between 3 and 5 years. The homes are acquired for circa 80% of the market value and subsequently rented out to people with low incomes. The candidates are provided by the municipality. The foundation Habitat 3 collects the rents of the residents and takes care for both technical, social and administrative management. The private owner of the properties receive each month the rent.

The HABITAT Foundation<sup>3</sup> has as a fundamental objective, according to its Statutes, to seek and obtain rental housing at prices below market price:

- To be used for people or families in situations of serious difficulty in accessing a home or at risk of residential exclusion.
- To facilitate the entities of the social sector and their residential care projects aimed at people at risk of social exclusion. One of the goals is to collaborate in labor insertion programs of specialized entities, through rehabilitation projects by collaborating in accompanying programs through the provision of housing for these purposes. Still the organisation has difficulties to fulfil their task in the future. Due to sharp increase of prices, also the acquisition of vacant homes becomes more and more expensive. With a fundamental lack of governmental funding, solutions offered by Habitat 3 and other comparable organisations are only a drop in the ocean to accommodate people in need of affordable housing.

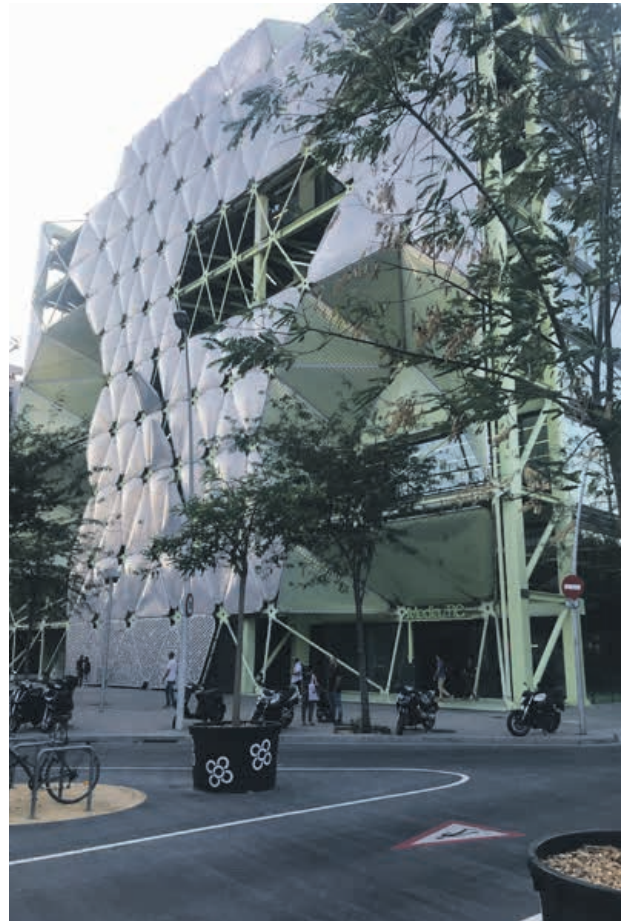


## 2. PROJECT @22 BARCELONA

In the year 2000 the Barcelona City Council approved a new urban planning ordinance aimed at transforming the old industrial area of Poble Nou, with obsolete factories that had long ago been abandoned or were simply not very productive, into a magnet for new activities. This new ordinance allowed for a new land designation called 22@, which substituted the traditional industrial designation 22a. So, terrain in the 22@ zone, which is basically the whole south-eastern quadrant of the city, from Gran Via to the beltway and from the Olympic Village to Rambla de Prim, which is the equivalent of 115 blocks in the Eixample, allows more construction, more public spaces or green areas and subsidized housing as long as the previous industrial activity is replaced by offices or other business services and equipment related to new technology and knowledge. The goal is to encourage land owners to update obsolete urban planning elements from the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries while maintaining economic activity, which would not have happened with a traditional rezoning from industrial to residential designation.



22@Barcelona is building a new compact city, where the most innovative companies co-exist with research, training and tech transfer centers, as well as housing (4,000 new subsidized residences), facilities (145,000 m2 of land) and green areas (114,000 m2). This model city coexists with the neighborhood's industrial heritage thanks to the Industrial Heritage Protection Plan, written jointly by 22@Barcelona and the Barcelona City Council, which conserves 114 elements of architectural interest. The 22@Barcelona project fills the city's need to recover both economic and social dynamism in the old industrial areas of Poble Nou and to create a diverse and compact environment where productive spaces coexist with research, training and tech transfer centers, as well as subsidized housing, facilities and green areas that improve the quality of work and life in the neighborhood.



22@Barcelona provides a new, high quality, diverse, ecologically efficient and economically strong urban model that strikes a balance between production and neighborhood life.

## 2. PROJECT @22 BARCELONA

The 22@Barcelona project is strongly in favor of mixing production spaces with new housing in order to allow people to live close to their workplace, foster the development of local commerce and guarantee vitality in public spaces throughout the day.

This way the project restores more than 4,600 traditional houses that were built in industrial areas and have been affected since 1953, when the Regional Plan established an exclusively industrial use for all the city's productive land. With the new 22@ designation, the presence of these houses has been normalized for the first time in the last fifty years and this allows them to be restored. It also promotes the construction of 4,000 subsidized housing units, favoring social diversity in Poblenou and guaranteeing the vitality of all streets and public spaces throughout the day. In general, for the whole area it is proposed to realize 30% social or subsidized housing. Most of these homes will be in public hands.

### Public spaces

The 22@Barcelona project devotes 10% of the previously industrial land, which was mainly privately held, to the creation of more than 114,000 m<sup>2</sup> of new public spaces and green areas, and establishes a high standard of quality in its streets.

Public space is a support element for the urban fabric, for relationships and activities, and because of this, it is

one of the basic guidelines for the city's configuration. For this reason, the structure of the Poblenou green areas has been proposed according to a sequence of measurements in which the large open spaces - Litoral Park, the future Plaça de les Glòries, Central Park, etc.- extend gradually toward squares and smaller streets with houses, becoming true meeting places for residents.

The street subtly modifies its route in order to improve both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. On one hand, this reduces traffic problems in Poblenou by defining a reduced number of main streets, which carry the majority of private vehicles as well as public transportation, and a larger number of secondary streets, with minimum traffic flow, used to access buildings.

On the other hand, it introduces a new standard in urban planning that optimizes pedestrian routes, improves visibility and security conditions at crosswalks and increases accessibility for those with reduced mobility. At the same time, it widens sidewalks to seven meters in order to encourage foot traffic and help develop commerce near the corners, since they form a wider octagon than the traditional Barcelona corners in the Eixample.

(source: [www.22barcelona.com](http://www.22barcelona.com))

## 26 SEPTEMBER

On the second day, 26 September, the city council for housing Mr Josep Montaner and the general manager of the housing department of Barcelona, Mr. Javier Búron, went into detail about the current housing situation in Barcelona and the newly created public housing company Metropolis Habitatge Barcelona. Given the high demand for social and affordable housing, and a low supply of only 2% of the whole housing stock, the city adapted a new policy to fight this situation.

One of the instruments the city created was the creation of a public housing company. Metròpolis Habitatge Barcelona is a public company, created by the municipality and region of Barcelona. At the end of 2018/ beginning 2019, 50% of the shares of the company will be sold to a private partner who is able to co-finance the creation of 4500 homes, develop them and manage the stock.



### 3. METRÒPOLIS HABITATGE BARCELONA

**The newly created housing company Metròpolis Habitatge Barcelona (MHB) has ambitious goals to develop a supply of new affordable homes. The city itself contributes particularly by providing land for construction; the financing of the construction challenge will be provided by loans (EIB European Investment Bank), other banks and investment equity from a new investor.**

#### **Goals of MHB:**

- Generate between 3.000 and 4.500 new dwellings targeted to the affordable rental housing sector.
- To launch a new rental sector: affordable rentals, a non existing supply, different to social and market rental.
- Partners:
  - 25%. Barcelona Municipality (AjBCN)
  - 25%. Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (AMB)
  - 50%. Private partner, which will join both as shareholder and manager.

Currently (autumn 2018), the city of Barcelona is looking for a private partner to take over 50% of the shares of the public housing company. This partner is also to be expected to plan the realisation of 4.500 new affordable homes, manage the properties and take care for the rentals. A tender has

been published to find an interested and capable investor with experience in setting up and managing a portfolio of affordable housing. The homes to be built will have an average used surface area of 70 sqm. A parking space and storage room will also be built for each house, as well as retail spaces. The main purpose of the project is to increase the amount of affordable rental houses. Therefore houses will be rented for affordable rental prices with an average rent of 7 €/month/m<sup>2</sup> (75% units) and 10 €/month/m<sup>2</sup> (25% units). Parking and storage room will be at 50% of this rental price. Further development will be achieved through future capital injections into the company. The expected private partner's volume of investment can be ranged around 100 millions (for the first 3000 houses). To be provide in years 1, 3 and 5 of the undertaking.

More info: <http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat>





## 4. LA BORDA HOUSING COOPERATIVE

**Cooperatives are present in almost all sectors of the economy: agriculture, finance, labour, goods consumption or services, and housing. All kind of cooperatives have something in common: a group of people working together in collective to solve their social and economic needs and concerns.**

Housing cooperatives are one of the opportunities to create affordable housing. La Borda, a cooperative project located in the south part of Barcelona, is such an example. They have taken examples from other housing cooperatives, in particular from Denmark and Uruguay.

Residents have the status of cooperative partners and can live there for life. The building itself is owned by the cooperative. The General Assembly of the cooperative is the main sovereign institution where the decisions are made. This model eliminates property speculation and profiteering on a fundamental right like housing. Members can not sell or rent the flat. It is an alternative model of housing access to the traditional ownership and rent, with a strong commitment with the use value above exchange value.

### **Financing structure.**

The construction costs of the La Borda building are approximately 3 million euro's, for 28 apartments. This includes also the ground. Future residents pay up to 20% of their new home as downpayment. The rest, 80%, is financed via the cooperative. To be fully independent from bank financing, other financial sources have been used, including crowd funding.

The residents pay a monthly fee, not a rent, for about 400€ per month. This income is also used to pay back the private investors and payment of the leasehold of the ground. If in the future residents leave the home, they get back their downpayment. Value increase will not be refunded within the project to prevent speculation.



## Plan details

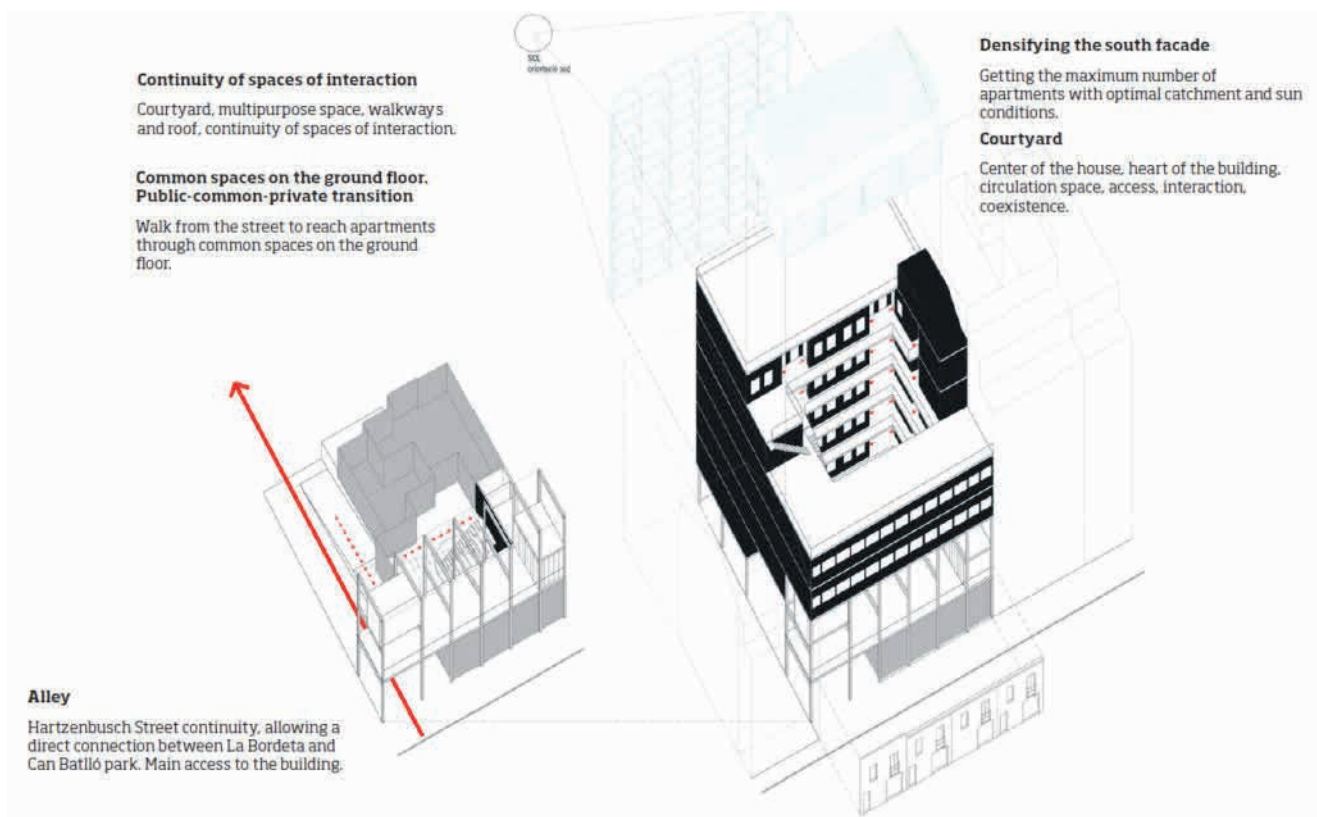
On November 30, 2015, a leasehold by the Barcelona City Council in favor of La Borda was established. It is a plot located in Constitució Street –one of the limits of Can Batlló– classified as State-Subsidized House (HPO). This right lasts for 75 years and involves paying an annual fee. Rating the land as HPO involves that potential members cannot exceed a maximum income to benefit from the right of use of a flat in the cooperative. It also establishes a maximum fee to be charged for the housing use, in order to allow humble people to have access to them, one of the main purposes of the cooperative.

From the very beginning, participation has been organized through various work groups, workshops and discussions at the General Assembly. There is a technical support team that energizes and includes proposals regarding imaginary, program, environmental and project strategies or types of housings and spaces.

## Key ideas

- participatory design, construction and use
- sustainability // community life
- architecture for the people //courtyard
- adaptability //open building infrastructure
- gender perspective

The building program plans to have 28 apartments on three different types (40, 50 and 76 m<sup>2</sup> on average) and different common areas, which should enhance community life through transitions between the private and the public spaces. They all revolve around a central courtyard, a large social interaction space that refers to “corralas”, a social and popular type of housing. The apartments are spread over several floors of the building, seeking mixture of living units consisting of one, two, three or more people. All apartments have a basic structure (50 m<sup>2</sup>) to which one or two modules are added to make the larger types. In the future, this modular structure will allow some apartments to change its structure and size, according to the needs of the inhabitants.



## 4. LA BORDA HOUSING COOPERATIVE

### Planned Strategies and actions for sustainability

- Collectivization of some facilities (laundry, bath, guest room, kitchen for great meals, ...).
- Increase efficiency – efficient equipment.
- Use of local resources and recycling.
- Renewable energy.
- Use and management of the building and facilities.
- Collective services and consumption are centralized and managed smartly.

### Materials

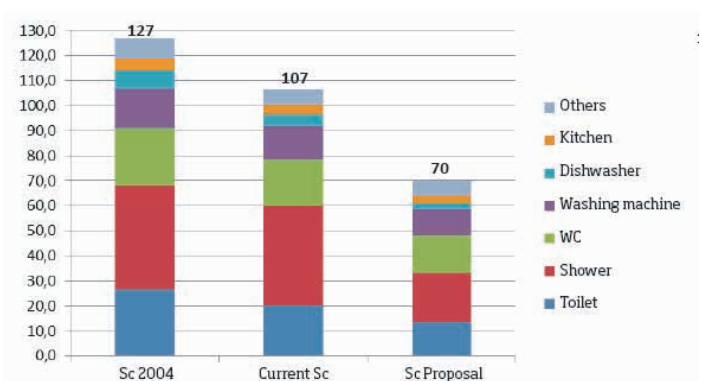
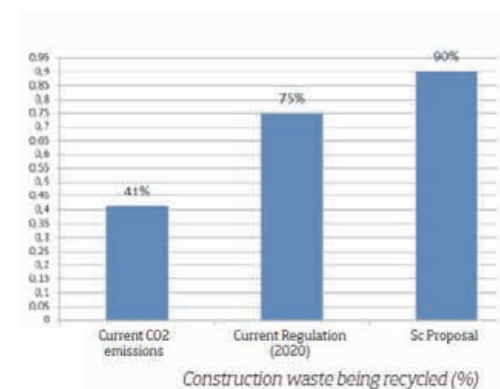
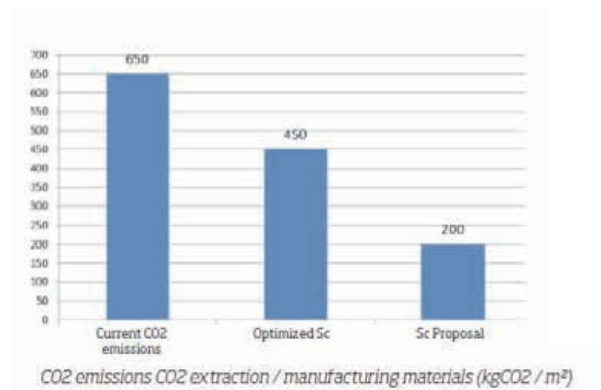
- Optimization of building solutions (less quantity for the same service), use of recycled / recyclable biospheric materials and reuse waste.
- Optimization of building solutions, use of industrialized elements, detailed study and waste management planning, waste separation in work for at least seven fractions and careful monitoring.

### Water

- Efficient systems in water taps, showers, kitchen and other equipment (washing machine and dishwasher).
- It will be possible to save more water by changing habits and unifying uses.
- Reuse of gray water (shower and sink) for the toilet, building cleaning and washing machines.
- Reuse of rain water by infiltration into the subsoil.
- Possibility to use rainwater in sinks.
- Yellow water purification and subsurface horizontal phytotreatment systems.

### Energy

- Demand reduction.
- Bioclimatic building design (insulation levels above regulation, maximum use of solar energy, crossed ventilation, galleries facing south, covered courtyard).
- Appropriate climate comfort (comfort level proposal based on the results of future users surveys).







## EFL PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY VISIT 2018

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