



Barcelona & L'Hospitalet Law Courts

Barcelona, Spain



Location
L'Hospitalet de Llobregat,
Barcelona, Spain

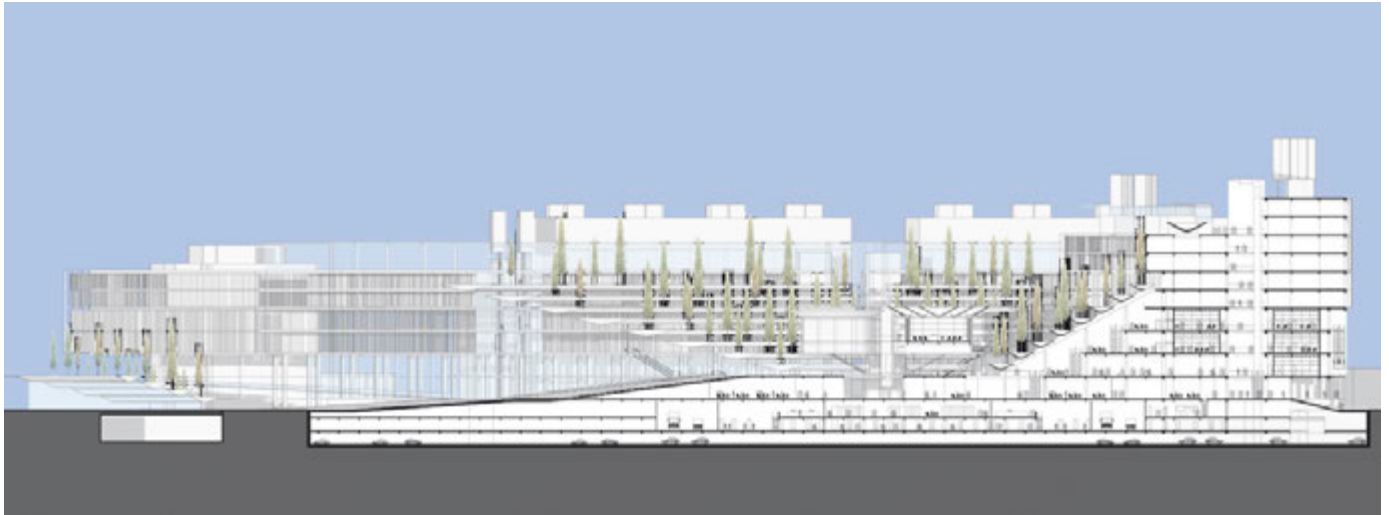
Date
2002

Client
Generalitat de Catalunya,
Regional Government of
Catalunya GISA Gestió
d'Infraestructures SA

Co-Architect
Alonso Balaguer y
Arquitectos Asociados

Structural Engineer
Arup

Services Engineer
Arup



The scheme offers a strong response to the surrounding city context and offers clear delineation of the various functions that it contains.

The law courts complex at l'Hospitalet, a rapidly growing municipality within the Barcelona conurbation, was designed to give the city a striking new landmark that is explicitly a public building, reflecting the practice's perennial concern for public space. The 264,500m² development, designed with co-architects Alonso Balaguer y Arquitectos Asociados, as designed to provide accommodation for the judicial bodies of Barcelona and l'Hospitalet de Llobregat, bringing together activities formerly dispersed across 17 separate locations.

The building accommodated two clearly defined types of spaces: offices (for 15,000 people) and court rooms. Their relationship and the magnitude of the scheme (184 courtrooms) made for a highly complex organisation, with independent circulation systems for public, judges, detainees and juries.

The scheme offered a strong response to the surrounding city context. A series of linked buildings, varying in height from six to 16 storeys, were aligned to the existing street lines. Articulation was dictated by the different urban conditions at the corners of the site.

An inner ring of buildings surrounded a large central landscaped amphitheatre, a contained space at the heart of the proposed scheme that offered a new north-south pedestrian link between the neighbourhoods of Santa Eulàlia and Pedrosa of l'Hospitalet. By creating a level site as the base for the complex, the scheme allowed for a clear delineation of the various functions that it contained. A 'Law Galleria' created the central spine of activity that binds all the buildings together. The court rooms with detainee access were located in the cascading floors of the inner ring under the roof of the landscaped amphitheatre, while nondetainee courts located in the outer ring facing the surrounding streets. Above the tiers of courts, two parallel blocks of offices enclosed the central space with a central atrium to allow natural light to penetrate to the Law Galleria. The amphitheatre provided a dynamic inclined roof enclosure to the inner court tiers with circulation areas around the criminal courts to allow natural light into the very heart of the building. Landscape and planting defined the nature of this central space.