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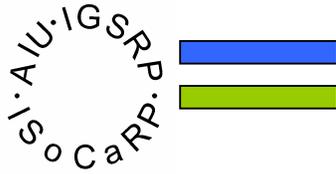
UNESCO-MOST
Management of Social
Transformations



15th Young Planning Professionals' Report

**BILBAO LA VIEJA AS A SPACE FOR
THE CREATIVE ECONOMY**

ISoCaRP Congress 2005
Making Spaces for the creative Economy
Bilbao, Spain
October 2005



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**International Society of City and Regional Planners
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Internationale Gesellschaft der Stadt- und Regionalplaner
Asociación Internacional de Urbanistas**

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Foreword

by the President of ISoCaRP (Jan. 2003-Jan. 2006)

One of the objectives of ISoCaRP is to encourage the participation of Young Planners in the annual Congresses. Since 1991 our Young Planning Professionals' Workshops (YPPW) have brought together young professional urban planners from all parts of the world. The Workshops provide them with an opportunity to work together as a closely-knit team on a specific subject, to establish a good hands-on working relationship and achieve results in a very short period of time. For the Workshop participants, they are unique opportunities for international exchange of not only technical and scientific knowledge, but also social and human experiences.

In 2005 the city of Bilbao hosted the 41st Annual ISoCaRP Congress with the theme "Making Spaces for the Creative Economy". Instantly recognised for its Guggenheim Museum and enjoying its new-found status as a "renaissance city", Bilbao is channelling the socio-economic spin-offs of the "Guggenheim Effect into a clear vision for the urban future of the greater metropolitan region. While there is a shift towards a more technological and digital economy, there is a corresponding interest and investment in art, culture and other creative industries. Therefore, ISoCaRP brought together outstanding young professional urban planners from all around the world to Bilbao to focus on planning issues and sites related to the overall theme of the Congress: "Bilbao La Vieja as a Creative Space: Strategies for Urban Redevelopment". This workshop was organised with the support of UNESCO.

The Workshop took place before the Congress itself, and the results were presented at a Special Session that also celebrated 15th years of ISoCaRP Young Planners Workshops.

I am very grateful to everyone involved in the very successful Workshop in Bilbao. In particular, I would like to thank Fernando Brandão (VP) and the Workshop coordinators: Héctor Floriani and Juan Luis de las Rivas Sanz. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of UNESCO for sponsoring the Workshop, Bilbao Arte for hosting it, and the support of the Bilbao LOC.

Alfonso Vegara

Preface

“Thinking of a creative future for Bilbao *La Vieja*”

by the Young Planning Professionals' Coordinators
Héctor Floriani, Argentina; Juan de las Rivas Sanz, Spain

During four days of intense work, a very motivated group of nineteen young planners coming from a most diversified number of countries faced the challenge of elaborating –in a very quick way- some urban proposals for the improvement of Bilbao *La Vieja*, a part of the Basque Metropolis' Old City, born slightly later than –and right outside the boundaries of- the very original, founding area of the “seven streets”.

The work was guided by two experienced professional planners –one from Argentina, the other from Spain, both University professors as well-, and was developed in the framework of this year's ISoCaRP International Planning Congress: “Spaces for the creative economy”.

Since the very beginning of the Workshop, the young planners committed themselves to the task putting to work their knowledge, their observing capacity, and their interest for Bilbao *La Vieja*. After a presentation by Juan Luis, in which the history of the city as a whole, and of the study area in particular, was outlined, a “field trip” through the neighbourhood was organized. All the members of the group -young planners and coordinators- made a study walk through the streets and the squares of the quarter, stopping frequently to make comments, ask questions, and take photographs. In doing that, the group had the invaluable company of Pedro Marcos, from Bilbao *Ría* 2000.

The information and the impressions taken from the presentation, from the opinions of different experts and actors, and from that direct contact with the area, made up the “raw material” for the studio work, which started immediately in the official seat of the Workshop, *Bilbao Arte*, located right in the middle of the study area.

From the very beginning of that studio work an agreement was reached regarding a general understanding of the situation: participants were facing not only a space with problems, but also a space full of extraordinary opportunities, mainly derived from the fact that the area is in the heart of historical Bilbao, with so many potentialities. The first idea that appeared, then, was to try to overcome the quarter's relative isolation –due to the presence of some important physical constrains, like the *Ría*, the topography, and the railway-, trying to reconnect it with Bilbao as a whole, so vibrant and prosperous. There was consensus in considering positive actions - the construction of *Cantalojas* square, the street openings in continuation of *San Antón* bridge, the improvements in the *Ría* embankments; but all this was deemed to be not enough.

Looking for the maximum of efficacy in the work, five teams were organized within the general group, each one of them having to deal with one of the five components of the situation identified through the analysis and the recognition of the area. Such components – defined both as *problems* and *opportunities*- were:

- The *Ría* waterfront, with all its actual and potential interactions
- The railway station, and its borders to the city and to the neighbourhood
- The *Corazón de María* square, in connection with *San Francisco* street
- The *Cantera* square, and the possibility of a positive relation with the new *Miribilla* quarter
- A general view and the insertion of the area in the urban and metropolitan context.

Focusing each team on a specific, partial matter was not an impediment for the implementation of general discussions and group interactions. In fact, the work carried out by each group in itself was complemented by several collective sessions, in which everyone had the occasion of exchanging ideas, impressions, and reflections, in order to feedback the whole process.

In spite of cultural differences and time constrains, on the last day of the Workshop the task was *complete*, although *open* to further developments. The results showed that not only it is possible to work with small “surgery” interventions in Bilbao *La Vieja*, but that it is also necessary to act on the borders, on their interactions and connections (from the neighbourhood outwards and from the city inwards into the neighbourhood). In other words, a correct attitude seems to be the simultaneous search of (a) improving the inner quality of the quarter, and (b) profiting from the borders’ potential to improve the insertion of the quarter into the city as a whole; and this is what young planners did.

The future transformation of the *Abando* railway station, due to the arrival of the *AVE* (the high-speed train), and the reorganization of the railway spaces, offer a great opportunity for Bilbao *La Vieja* to definitely get integrated into the city. A very good basis for that is the quarter’s excellent, well preserved urban front. But, since this action is only viable in the mid-term, it is possible to start immediately improving the quarter’s connectivity with the rest of the city: the *Ría* should be enhanced (assuring its continuity, even with the development of an efficient water transportation), and the neighbourhood should get inserted into the public transportation network, perhaps through a tram line going along *San Francisco* street. *La Vieja* should get much closer to the “seven-streets ” Bilbao and to the *Ensanche*.

An intelligent and coordinated action between the *Corazón de María* square and the *Cantera* Square, with more or less “radical” interventions –that is, incorporating all possible lots- offers the opportunity to regenerate simultaneously the neighbourhood’s form and activities. The development of initiatives and tendencies already present in the neighbourhood -restaurants, workshops, studios, art; all with a strong participation of young people, in a multicultural atmosphere, and with the support of public social assistance- may give this part of Bilbao a system of public spaces in connection with the new constructions, from the slopes of *Miribilla* down to the *Ría* through the *belvedere* of *Corazón de María* square; spaces that are at the service of an urban life that is progressively rehabilitated, a system of spaces conceived as infrastructure for urban creativity.

The group of young planners who participated in this Workshop looks with optimism at the future of Bilbao *La Vieja*. The group offers their proposals with the only aspiration of motivating local people, in the understanding that people are the main resource of a creative city.

Lastly, let’s make some remarks regarding the working atmosphere during the Workshop. It must be said in that regard that there was a very positive environment, characterized by a permanent, constructive exchange among young planners and between them and the coordinators. Besides, participants showed an extraordinary dedication to face the challenges that were in front of them in such a short time. For that dedication the Workshop coordinators are sincerely thankful to all the participants.

1.

General View La Vieja: Problems and Proposals



Contents:
Introduction
The context of La Vieja
La Vieja now
Proposals



Craig Gilbert (Australia)
Sybre van den Busken (Netherlands)
Jon Asua Aberasturi (Spain)

Introduction

The concept of the general view on Bilbao La Vieja, “Bilbi” as we say, is based on two predetermined intentions.

The first one derived from the congress theme *‘Making spaces for the creative economy’*. This motto implies the spatial factor to be at service of the social-economic factor. The goal is a creative economy and points to urbanism as a means to achieve this. Consequently the aspired potential software must be defined before deciding the direction of the hardware. It required thinking about the future of the La Vieja neighborhood in terms of activities, cultures and ambiances before designing buildings and public spaces. This resulted in a discussion about the work domain of urban planners and in particular the sociological aspect of the planning discipline. Should we concentrate upon *urban design* as our core business and leave the sociological aspects to other specialists? Or are they inevitably in our design practice? Interestingly the same controversy could be witnessed in the presented works of two keynote speakers of the congress: Albert Speer and Charles Landry. The first creates a complete new city around the Volkswagen fabric in Anting, China, from the design table. The second states that *culture strategy* should be the master strategy for city development. Taking into account the congress theme and the context of La Vieja we concluded that the assignment should include *social and cultural* aspects in the general view.

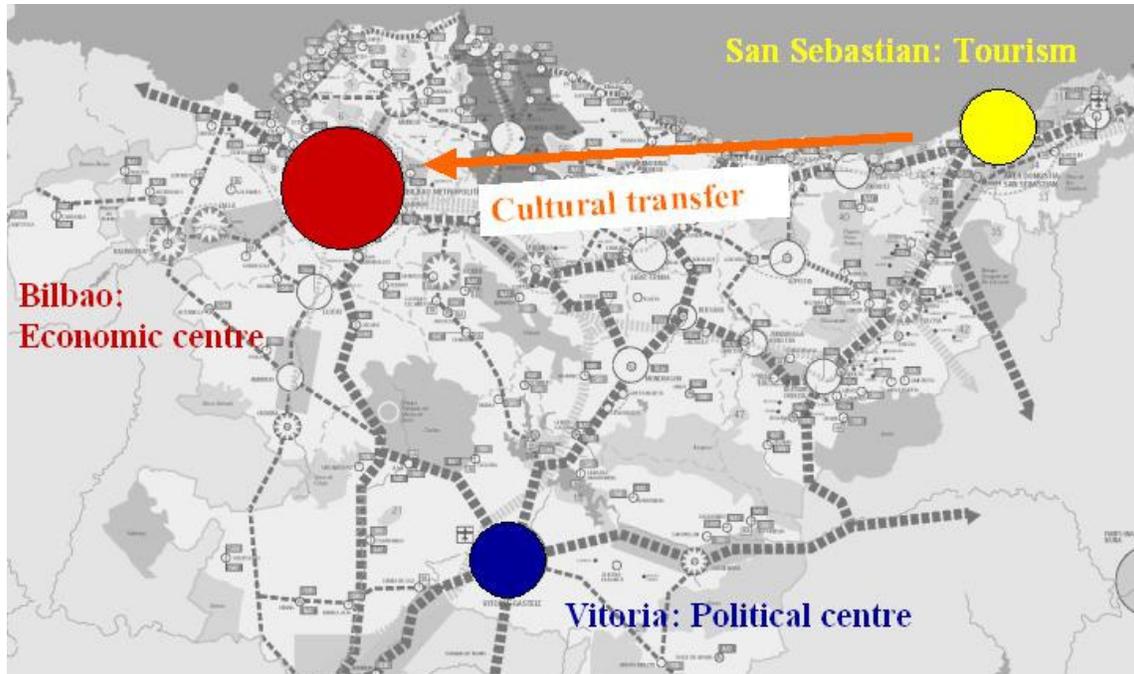
The second intention originates from the awareness that, after the success of the past years, Bilbao needs a *‘second wave’* of regeneration. The city and its policymakers recognise that they cannot keep counting on the impulse of the “Guggenheim effect”. The construction of one icon, combined with the renovation of the city center’s public spaces, put Bilbao back on the map and gave confidence to the city. It resulted in a boost for the local economy and improved the cultural climate. It is not probable that this unique piece of city marketing will be successful a second time. A complete new strategy is more likely to have the desired effect rather than concentrating on what has been successful in the past. Whereas the first wave implied a top-down strategy with large interventions in the urban fabric and the foundation of cultural institutions, the second should be a low-profile cultural strategy which defines the strength of the existing hardware, preserves it and adapts it to the benefit of the software.

Above this, what we want to add to Bilbao is a neighborhood that exhibits spontaneity - this kind of flamboyant, authentic or dazzling place which some cities possess. Places of which people say: “that’s the place to be”: Like Navigli in Milan, La Latina in Madrid, De Pijp in Amsterdam or Soho in London. We aim to define what needs to happen for La Vieja to become such a place. During the following analysis we indicate what direction we sought for a solution and formulated a 10 point strategy which brings forward this approach.

The Context of La Vieja

Regional

Before the nineties the roles between the three main cities of the Basque country were clearly divided. Vitoria was the administrative and political capital with the siege of the Basque parliament and government. San Sebastian was seen as the cultural and tourist centre with its famous film festival as a major attraction and Bilbao was the economical motor of the region, with its financial district and active port. After the magic transformation of Bilbao the city became a major center of attention in cultural activities. This led to a relative cultural transfer or shift from San Sebastian to Bilbao (Figure 1). This momentum of attention towards cultural institutions and activities is still ongoing in Bilbao and should be exploited in the regeneration strategy.



The perceived character of the cities in the Basque Country and the cultural transfer from San Sebastian to Bilbao.

Metropolitan

Due to its morphological settings the metropolitan area of Bilbao stretches out along the *Ria de Bilbao*. The historical development of the city can be described as a series of urban areas around this axis; from the Casco Viejo to the seaport. A brief view on the map (Figure 2) also shows a clear pattern of cultural institutions and attractions along the river. Therefore the river could be considered as the connection between the old and the new economy; between the port and the cultural institutions. For the regeneration strategy of La Vieja, it is relevant to conclude that the relation between the river and cultural development in the neighborhood has a mutual benefit: The river connects La Vieja to the rest of the city attractions and La Vieja is the next stepping-stone in the expansion of cultural hubs in the city.

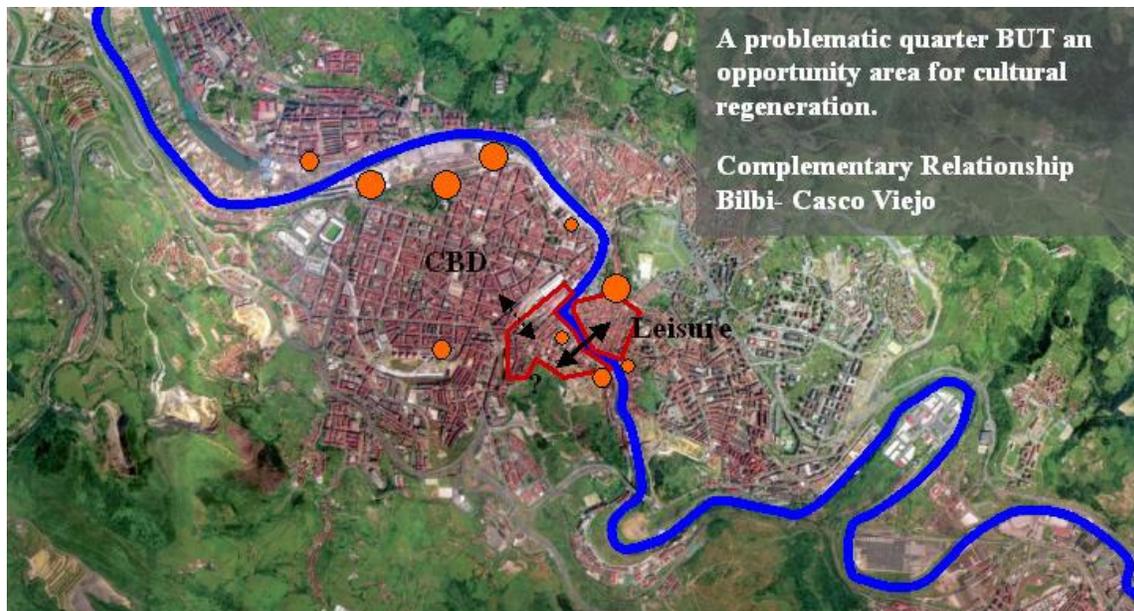


The layout of Bilbao along the Ria. The points indicate existing cultural nodes or centres.

City

The scale of the city shows the strategic position of La Vieja (Figure 3). It lies between the 'Ensanche' (the 19th-century city-center) and Casco Viejo (the old city). The former has a primary function as Central Business District and the latter as a center of shops, galleries, bars, restaurants and nightlife.

The general view lays emphasis on the functional relationship between the various parts of the city. Between La Vieja and Casco Viejo there exists a great opportunity of a complementary relationships. Whereas Casco Viejo contains merely *consumption* functions, La Vieja could work as an area of cultural *production*. The galleries and craft-shops at one side of the river can be supplied by the works of the artists and manufacturers who found their spaces on the other side. In return, the creative workers will make use of the facilities of the Casco Viejo, to meet up with each other in one of the many bars or galleries for example. This brings us closer to a defined vision of the cultural climate and the social structure we aim at: an environment of creative interaction and inspired production which is accessible to anyone willing to participate.



Aerial photograph of Bilbao showing the relationship between La Vieja and the Ensanche and Casco Viejo. The points depict existing cultural nodes or centres.

La Vieja now

Before we discover how the software, defined above, could be attracted, the existing hardware has to be analysed. Despite its favourable topographic position, La Vieja is poorly connected. This is partly due to the physical constraints at its borders that isolate the area: the river, the lay of the land and the railway (Figure 4). Main traffic movements pass around the neighbourhood rather than moving through it. A clear example is the tramway along the riverfront: from the city center it crosses the river to the old city as soon as it approaches La Vieja. The railway platform, which penetrates deep into the city, forms a great barrier for interaction between La Vieja and the city center.

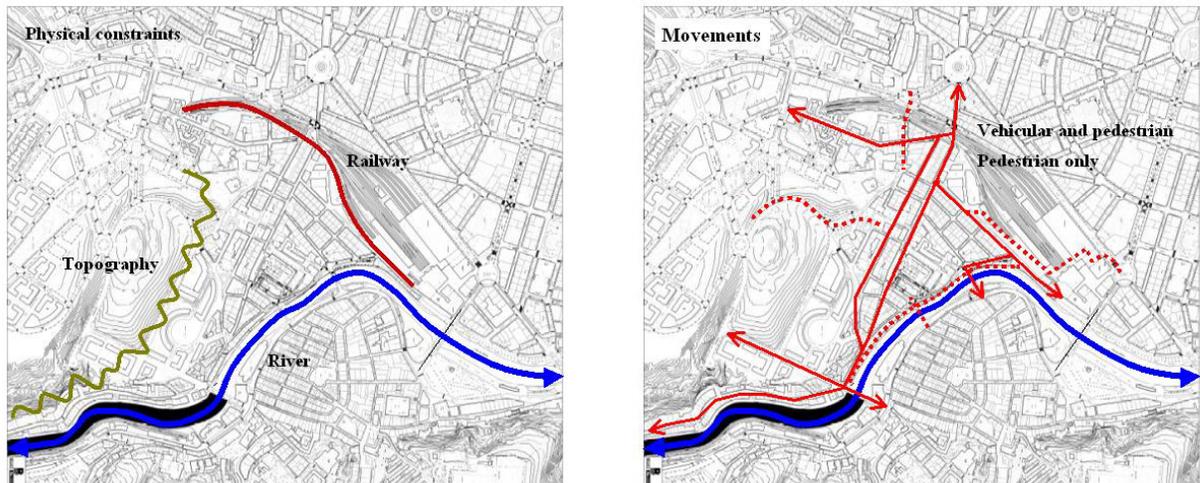
The consequence of these constraints is that the pattern of both public and private transport movements through the area is very incongruent. Both pedestrian and vehicular traffic is concentrated on a few routes and at some crossing points (Figure 4). The situation around the

train station can be called chaotic; cars are being squeezed into the wedge between the river and the station, pedestrians are using shortcuts *through* the building and the train platforms. We propose at least to extend the tramway to La Vieja. More solutions to these problems in terms of *connectivity* are mentioned in the detailed plans further on.

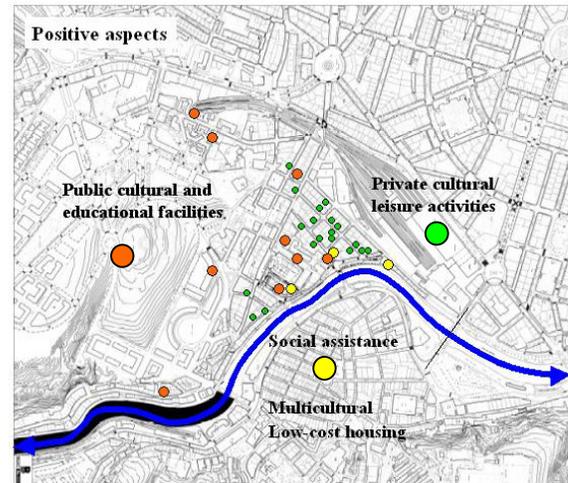
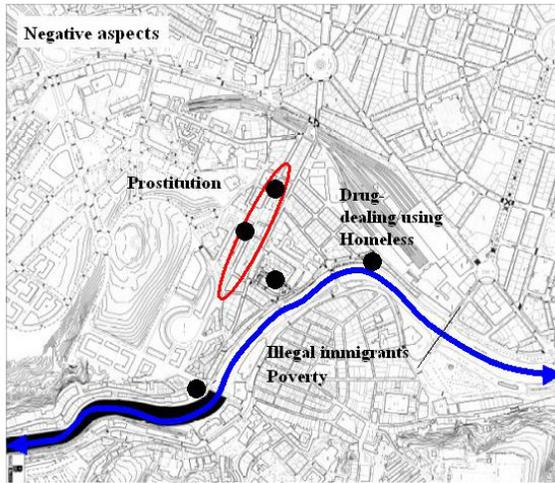
The isolated situation is also related to some actual social problems in the neighborhood, probably both as *cause* and as *consequence*. La Vieja contains all observable features of a downgraded area: street-prostitution in San Francisco Street, drug dealing throughout the area and homeless people sleeping on the street. Less visible is the fact that the population consists, far more than average in Bilbao, of households with a below average socio-economic status and illegal immigrants who are attracted to the low-cost housing (Figure 4).

Habitually we would perceive that the various negative aspects influence each other and accelerate the downgrading process. The answer, put forward by cities throughout the world, is a complete renovation of the housing-stock and services. This may result in a change of population class but usually transfers the problem elsewhere. Here we propose a more specific approach to these aspects and try not to break with the former situation.

Specifically drug addiction and dealing should be controlled in a resolute manner and homeless people should be offered a chance to find a permanent place to live. Unfortunately these elements are inevitable on the scale of the city and difficult to defeat on the scale of the neighbourhood. The symptoms appear in the city's weakest place, which is La Vieja. The facilities to improve the situation with regard to drugs and homeless, such as social assistance services, already exist in the neighbourhood. These facilities should be maintained and improved upon so that in the future La Vieja is not the weakest spot in town.



The plan to the left shows the physical constraints to La Vieja. The plan to the right shows the main existing movements, both pedestrian and vehicular, through La Vieja.



The left diagram highlights some of the areas that give La Vieja a poor image. The right diagram depicts the positive aspects of La Vieja.

Certainly, if La Vieja ought to function like a 'normal' part of the city, one should solve all these problems by combating them until they disappear. Concerning the other 'negative' aspects, this general view states that we should search for the counter side of each and transform or present them in such way that they could be seen *and* serve as positive aspects. To be exact: the great amount of immigrants also means a multicultural ambience. The run-down state of most buildings also offers low-cost housing. Prostitution can also contribute to a night-life image of the neighborhood, if it can be controlled as we see in cities like Amsterdam, Antwerp and Hamburg. The physical isolation also means a silent 'void' in a turbulent city. These are all facts that can be turned to the benefit of La Vieja. This implies a tolerant attitude towards them and an attempt to regulate them.



Example of housing in La Vieja. The colourful and interesting facades create uniqueness.

We might say that these negative aspects are to some extent relative by the way the public opinion conceives this place. At the moment La Vieja draws attention for its problems. Consequently the nice side of the quarter remains unobserved. Nevertheless, a big city marketing campaign makes the spontaneous character of the area incredible. Therefore a low profile publicity operation could help to add value to the appreciation of the neighborhood; starting by the way the municipality itself identifies the neighborhood and ending by mouth to mouth publicity of the city's inhabitants.

The fieldwork demonstrated that the neighborhood already possesses an enormous potential in terms of the *urban fabric*. The architecture is quite diverse and differs from the architecture of the Ensanche and the Casco Viejo. The colorful historic buildings give the place an authentic ambiance (see Figure 5, p.16). Together with the intense morphology and the accidental urban structure it is a very fascinating environment. The riverfront could be developed into "the face" of La Vieja as we will see in the proposals further on. All these elements are probable attractions for a creative environment.

The surroundings are ideal, but which spaces and incentives can be offered to creative entrepreneurs to undertake their activities? A fact is that the neighborhood has numerous empty "*locales*", the small and deep spaces on the ground floor of the inner-city buildings (Figure 6), generally in use as bar or shop. Due to municipal regulations imposed on these locales, which state that these units are restricted to public service or commercial uses only, many of them are vacant due to a lack of demand. At the same time it is a known fact that people in the creative profession are looking for spaces where residence, atelier or shop can be combined, particularly since living and working are continuous circumstances in their process of inspiration and production. A good example can be found already around Cantalojas Street where more private cultural and leisure activities have emerged in recent years. A liberalization of the rules towards the "*locales*" in La Vieja could attract more creative businesses and stimulate the upgrading of the neighbourhood.

The actual relative low prices of the real estate in the neighborhood are favourable for this ambition, but they should be kept low to avoid the neighbourhood becoming trendy which in turn causes the market value to rise. The risk is that it becomes unaffordable for beginning artists or entrepreneurs before the creative environment is produced.

Proposals

To conclude we propose the following ten point strategy to regenerate La Vieja. It combines cultural, social, political, marketing and infrastructural suggestions.

Ten points to turn Bilbi into 'the place to be':

1. The city's "second wave" policy should contain a confirmation of Bilbao as a cultural center. Integrate the plan for La Vieja in the cultural strategy of Bilbao.
2. To visualize La Vieja as the next stepping-stone in the development of cultural centers in the city along the river, its riverfront should be transformed into the face of Bilbi.
3. Attach La Vieja to Casco Viejo to introduce them as the new "Quartier Latin" of Bilbao. Stimulate the complementary relationship between La Vieja and Casco Viejo by the type of functions: creative production next to consumption.
4. Drug problems and other problems will not be solved but will probably transfer themselves. Maintain social facilities for drug addicts and homeless people and increase support.

5. A tolerant policy towards illegal immigrants and the regularisation of prostitution. Regularise their presence to establish the character of a multi-cultural neighborhood with an exciting nightlife.
6. Launch modest publicity for the neighborhood; a 'whispercampaign' that puts the attention to all positive aspects of the neighborhood; the creative ambiance, low-cost housing, the interesting urban environment, the multi-culturality, the particular position in the city etc.
7. Liberalization of the regulation on the function of the "locales" by allowing living and working on the ground floor, which make them attractive as atelier for artists and other creative professionals.
8. Maintain the low costs of rent and real-estate to make it accessible for starting entrepreneurs and artists.
9. Access for public transport; in particular extension of the tramway to La Vieja.
10. Let's say from now on: "Bilbi, the place to be!"



Empty versus used examples of "locales"

2.

The Riverfront (revisited): an Opportunity for Revitalization



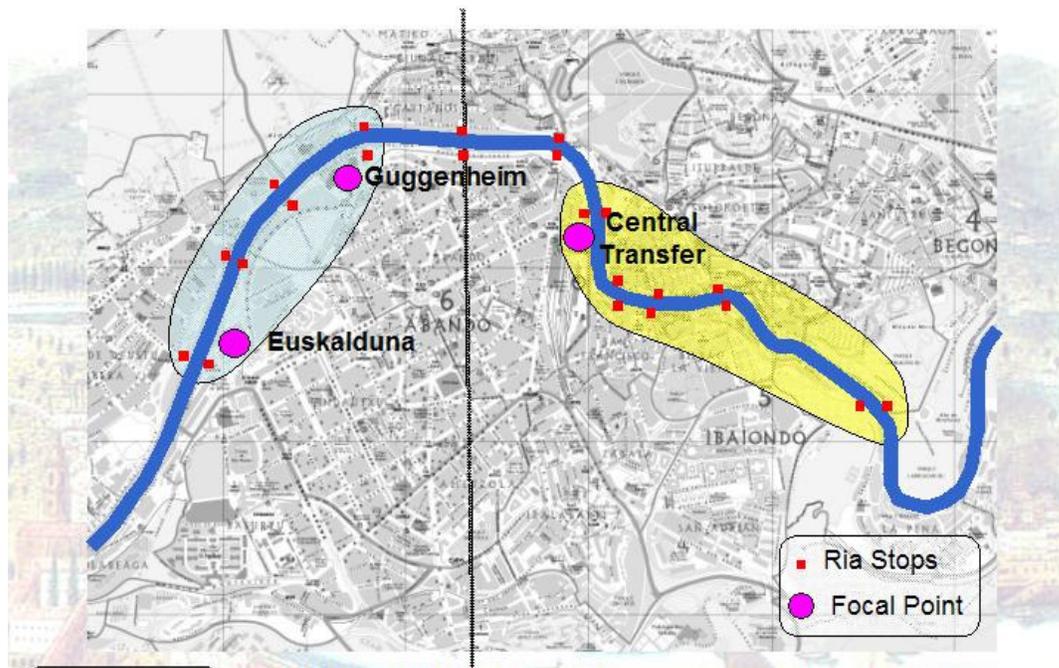
Contents:
General objective
A feature for the front of La Bilbi
Main issues
Area objectives



Li Dong (China)
Deddy Halim (Indonesia)
Arif Yasin Chohan (Pakistan)
Izaskun Asequinolaza (Spain)

General Objective

To be frank, a workshop conducted in one full week - 8 hours/day at Bilbao Arte is not sufficient to develop all possibilities that exist along the Bilbao River in order to make the river a way for Bilbao La Vieja (La Bilbi) revitalization. The methods we used in our work on the given area included sites visits, photography and brainstorming. With blank knowledge of Bilbao beforehand and limited sources and access, it should be understandable that the group has limited information towards the city development of Bilbao. Nevertheless, the limited resources we have are no excuse for not doing our best. In the very best of our analysis of the problems created in the city as a whole and utilizing the river as one of the problem solutions, we found that the general objective of our work is to make **a balance between the different sections of the river and the town center.**



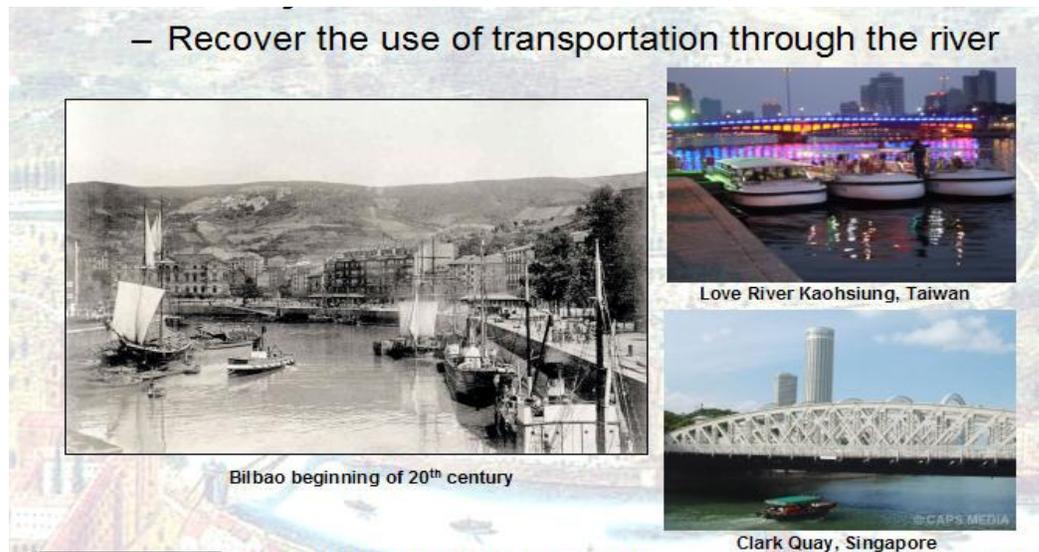
The area of Euskalduna-Guggenheim has been revitalized as a mixed use area. We have two important buildings on each side of the area that create an important tension between both. The space between has been used for commercial, residential and leisure purposes. For years, the area was only a back-yard of the river, nowadays all the uses are facing the river. La Ría (the river) has been the main “actor” in this revitalization scene.

But if we have a look at a complete map of Bilbao and make an axis to divide the city equally into two parts, east and west, obviously we can see that the balance between the east and the west is not yet equal. The west side of the axis is the part of Bilbao with the old city. While all the new architectures have been developed and put in the eastern part, an admirable unphysical work has also already been done through building a function-changed strategy in this old part as it is a very useful part of the city nowadays, with a lot of day and night life. Unfortunately, the area in front of the old city, called La Bilbi (Bilbao La Vieja) – the left behind, indeed is the part that breaks the balance between the eastern and western parts of the river. So there are physical attractions in the east and socio-psychological attractions in the west hindered by deteriorated areas that grow as criminal sources full of immigrants. Therefore something must be thought of to help the revitalization of La Bilbi. How to eliminate this obstacle is the primary question for the group as well as a challenge to turn La Bilbi from a broken point into the strong point.

A Feature for the Front of La Bilbi

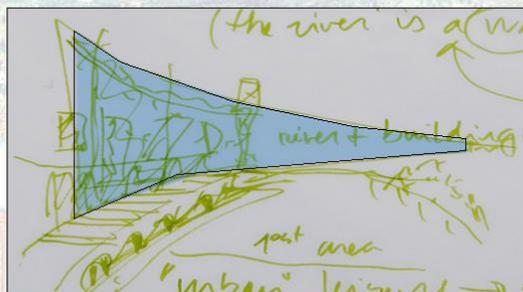
The first step in answering the primary question is to think of a theme for this front of La Ría. Two different ideas appeared in the process as follows:

First, using the river as a way of transport as it has been used in some other cities in the world such as Love River in Kaohsiung and the Clark Quay & Boat Quay in Singapore. In fact, this idea was used in Bilbao during the beginning of the 20th century. In modern context, kinds of jet boats such as Ría Taxi (for private transport) and Ría Bus (for mass transport) can be used to travel along the river. Classical boats such as Gondolas used in Venice can also be utilized in terms of leisure purpose that offer a romantic travel instead of a speedy travel along the river. This idea would give a lot of life forms to the different sections of the river, even to La Bilbi which also would have to look at the river again if this area wants to survive and look at the river for new economical access. The position and peculiarity of the Torre Bailen, a building tower next to the Santander Station, makes it a good point to develop the Central Transfer that will be elaborated below. To provide access to the city, Ría stops (stopping place for Ría vehicles) would be provided along the river.



Second, each of the different parts of the front of La Ría that we have seen is having a different and a specific theme or feature respectively, but La Bilbi has not got one except the abandoned old façade of buildings. Why don't we find one for her? Looking into the existing uses along the river it would not be a crazy idea to propose the front of La Bilbi buildings facing the river as an **exposition art gallery** for the city. Therefore, La Bilbi would be observed from some other parts of the city, especially from the areas across the river instead of observing the city as it has happened until now. In other words, it is better for La Bilbi being observed instead of observing or being an interesting object instead a neglected subject.

– Use the facade of the Bilbi side of the river as an attraction for the other side of the river
 "being observed instead of observing"



Main Issues

To achieve the general objective we have to identify some specific problems in La Bilbi caused by the geographical disadvantages of La Bilbi. Geographically La Bilbi is located in the lower area of the hill divided from the upper area with wall rock. The ground level difference between the lower and the upper area is about 10-15 meters high as shown in the picture below. Moreover there is no sufficient access to connect the upper & lower area.



Another geographical obstacle that makes La Bilbi more isolated is because she is surrounded by the river as shown below. This means that the access to La Bilbi is also very limited in certain places where the bridges existed. Unfortunately there are more bridges that serve pedestrians than bridges that serve vehicles. Among them only two bridges provide access for vehicles: at the old market and at the Torre Bailen.



Obviously the main issues of the La Bilbi are isolation, isolation and isolation so that the solution of this problem is access, access and access in order to make her widely open. In the point of view of urban & architectural psychology an isolated area is the support condition for territoriality. Therefore, the more isolated the more defensive an area will become. This is the reason why La Vieja becomes an ideal place for immigrants and crimes. Criminals are protected and protecting one another in this “save” area. La Bilbi becomes a hideaways heaven for marginal people of the city and this circumstance eventually will create reluctance and resistance to change the attitude towards city development.

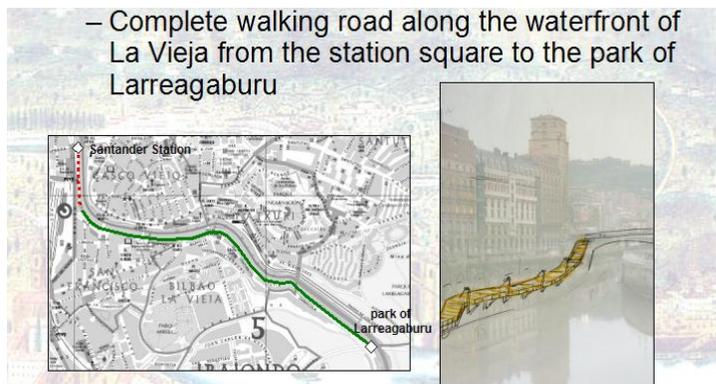
Area Objectives

Given this fact above, the strategy for development planning of the La Bilbi is to open this area as wide as possible and to give as many as possible accesses to her, so that territoriality can be reduced and people inside La Bilbi are encouraged to socialize with people from outside. To realize this there are several area objectives for an integrated development of La Bilbi:

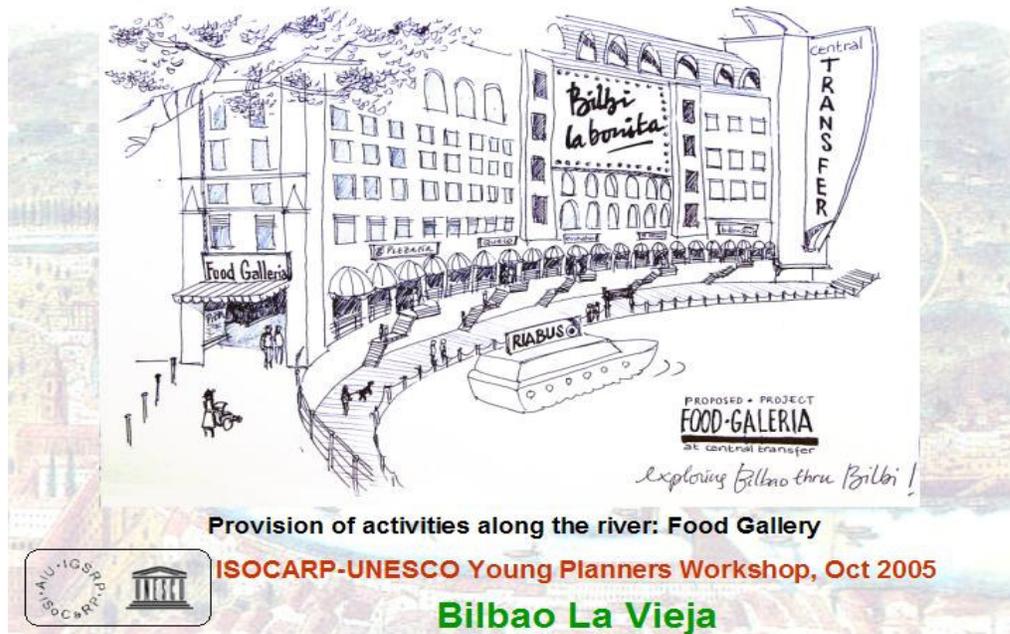
1. Develop a **Central Transfer** point at the main bridge of La Bilbi. The potential location for this point is the Torre Bailen area which is also in front of Santander Train Station. The reason to choose the Torre Bailen is because of the nature of the tower that can be used as a landmark of an area. A tower in the city is also frequently used as an orientation by people and tourists in order to determine a direction and locating themselves in the city. Beside, the height of the tower can be seen from a distance and at the same time it attracts attention to invite people to come. Basically the concept of Central Transfer is a central point for using various transport modes available in the city. At this central point, people can easily choose what kind of public vehicle they want to use and what direction they want to go. There are two major reasons to place this central point in front of La Bilbi area: first, to give a balance between the eastern and western parts mentioned in the general objectives above and second, to force people to go to La Bilbi so that she will gradually become an open area. This is a form of behavior modification that is usually applied in the field of urban & architectural psychology and will make La Bilbi become a starting point to explore the city of Bilbao.



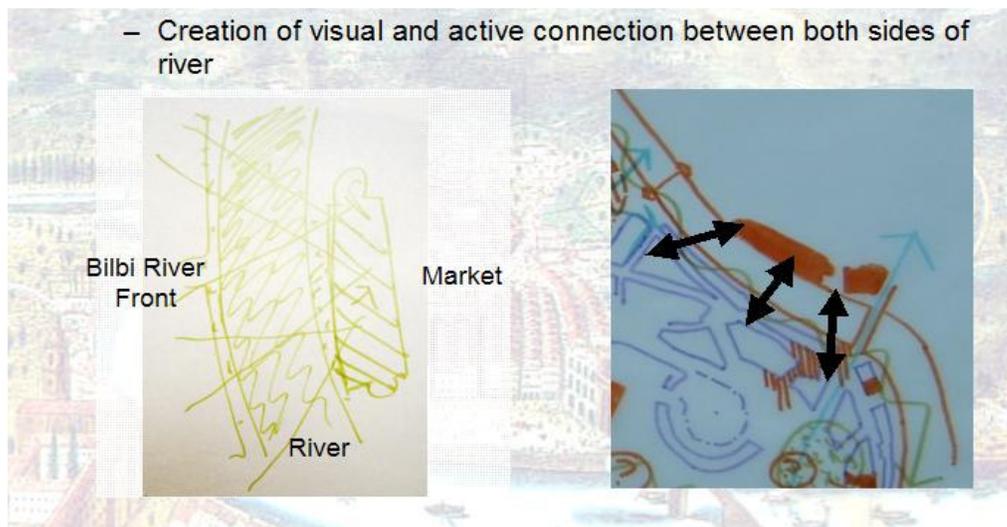
2. Build and complete the walking road along the waterfront of La Vieja from the station square (Central Transfer) to the Park of Larreagaburu. By doing this way we can get a complete and well connected waterfront for La Bilbi to solve connection problems with this part of the riverfront. Today, the walking platform is only provided in front of San Francisco Building with 200 meters length.
 - Complete walking road along the waterfront of La Vieja from the station square to the park of Larreagaburu



- Provisions of activities along the river. This proposal is a form of unphysical strategy of city management & development. We believe that life activities are more vital than physical developments in keeping the city alive. No matter how luxury the building is, without activities inside and outside, the building will have no meaning. Therefore, event organizers and property management must be involved to provide activities in Bilbi waterfront. The appropriate activity for this area are culinary activities by creating a food galleria that provides restaurants.



- Creation of visual and active connection between both sides of the river, (i.e. with the Market in front). La Bilbi has been a place from which one observed but it has never been observed. The relation between both sides of the river has not been completed in both directions. Visual relationship must be attempted.





Provision of activities along the river: Art Gallery

5. Produce new urban spaces related to bridges so that the inside of La Bilbi is connected to the riverfront. This measure could increase a better social condition inside of La Bilbi. A possible point to be opened would be Gate to Miribilla that connects the river front to the new development of Mirabilla, by breaking through San Francisco street – the major street in La Bilbi. For this purpose, we do not have to demolish any buildings since some buildings at the proposed gate location have been demolished already.



Hanging garden of San Francisco



ISOCARP-UNESCO Young Planners Workshop, Oct 2005

Bilbao La Vieja

6. Another strategy that can be applied is the opposite way of the previous strategy. While the Gates of Miribilla serve visual access from the river side to La Bilbi, the Hanging Garden of San Francisco provides visual access from La Bilbi to the riverside. The Hanging Garden is the square/plaza in San Francisco street which because of the level difference between the street and the river is uniquely located in the rooftop of the school building facing the river. This square is a perfect place for public space of San Francisco

people to have a view of the other side of the river such as the old city. This square could be characterized by some middle foliage vegetation that could be seen from the river.



As integrated scenario of the riverfront revitalization strategy, the six proposals explained above clearly create a sequence of different Urban Spaces along the river. By using the Ria Taxi or the Ria Bus from the starting point of Central Transfer, we can enjoy the unique Tower Balién and Food Galleria as the first scene followed by the Hanging Garden of San Francisco as the second scene, then the Gate of Miribilla as the third scene directing to the Art Gallery on the right side and the Old Market on the left side as the fourth scene where the La Bilbi area ended. But of course the river journey can be continued to the Guggenheim and Euskalduna in the east part of Bilbao.

With regard to the City Marketing strategy, it is a potential consideration to move the Terminus at San Mames that connects the Bilbao airport with the city into La Bilbi area near Central Transfer, so that people and tourists can explore the whole Bilbao without interruption or lack of accessibility. It must be also considered to provide other modes of transportation at the airport to deliver people to the Central Transfer such as subway, train, etc., so that people can choose freely what kind of transport they prefer to use for their comfort.

Other specific proposals to work on are related to safety concerns that simply are called “brighter-wider-better”. The provision of sufficient lights (especially at night), a wider riverfront platform and clean up accesses from bridges to walking roads, and better ergonomic forms for different levels of connection must be considered.

3.

The Railway Area as an Engine for urban Change



*Ana Mateus (Portugal/Germany)
Barbara Carbone (Spain)
Jessica Webster (Canada)
Sanhita Bandyopadhyay (India)*



The Abando Train Station seen from El Arenal

The methods we used to develop our work on the given area included sites visits, photography and brainstorming. We were also fortunate to have a group member with local knowledge about Bilbao and the train station area.

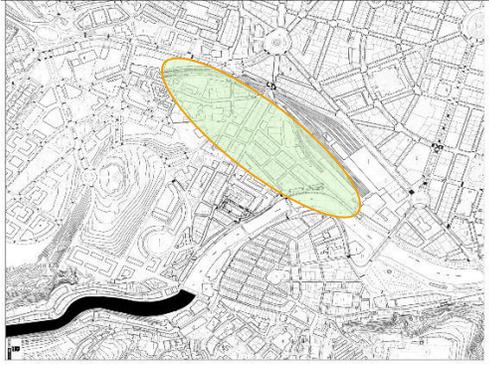
In the old images of the city, the Abando train station appears as the first element in the development of the Ensanche neighborhood. Its presence today still has an undeniable strong impact both on the city structure, image and functionality.



Development of the Ensanche



El Abando beginning of 1900



Study Area



San Francisco Street view to the Abando

We have also seen that there are areas with a lot of potential. The rail yards continue to serve the function for which they were originally intended by bringing people and goods into and out of the “heart” of the city of Bilbao. From those observations and discussions made over the few days we worked together, our group came up with two general guiding ideas for the transformation of this area:

First main point: the railway station should remain in the center of Bilbao

This is justified by the fact that it is already a great transportation hub that promotes sustainable mobility in Bilbao. The rail station area in its present state already serves an essential transportation and mixed function. From our investigation we have identified certain elements that can be refurbished, rebuilt and adapted to better serve the surrounding neighbourhoods, the people of Bilbao as a whole and visitors to the city.



1. The rail station should remain in the centre

2. The existing area can be revitalized to connect different realities in the area

Illustration of points 1 and 2

Second main point: the existing area can be revitalized to connect different realities in Bilbao

The basis which follows the rest of this presentation is founded precisely on this second point.

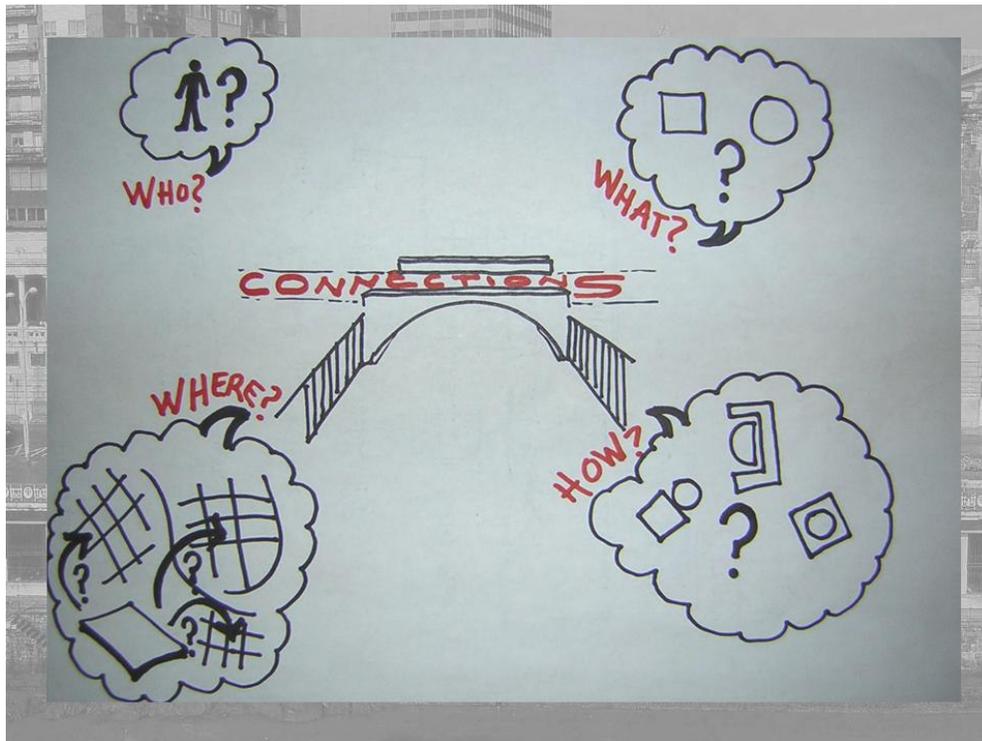
Although Bilbao has been widely recognized to date for its urban revitalization, spending a few days here, particularly in Bilbao la Vieja, one can see that room exists for improvement. At a physical level, differences can be seen in the urban infrastructure and the quality of public spaces in different parts of the city. From a socio-economic perspective, disparities can be seen in wealth, education and opportunities available to the local population.

To address these differences in the urban fabric, we view **the railway station area as an engine for urban change.**

And similar to the area's primary use as a transportation hub, connections is the theme that can drive that engine. A revitalized rail station area can reinforce *existing* effective connections as well as establish *new connections* with surrounding areas.

To develop the initial concept of connections into a more concrete list of intentions, we felt the need to answer 4 important questions which would show us how to proceed. Those questions are:

Who, what, how and where do we want to connect?



Connections to establish

The 'who' question can be answered quite simply by saying that residents of and visitors to Bilbao should benefit from improved connectivity in the rail station area.

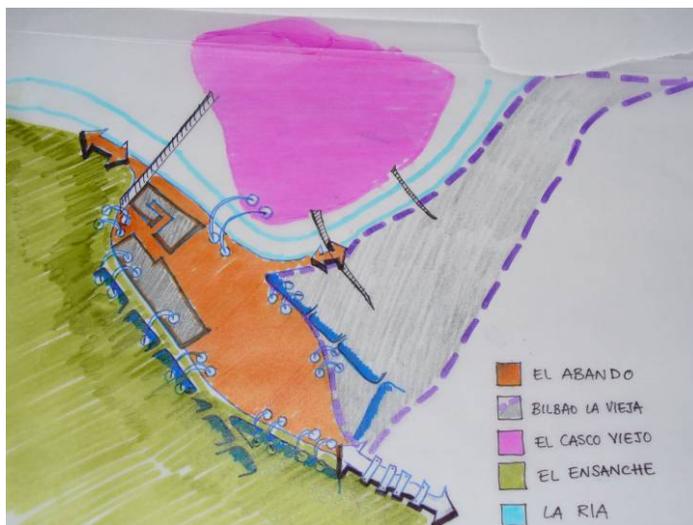
The *what*, *how* and *where* questions require however more in-depth analysis....



Analysis of the urban morphology



Analysis of the existing linear structures

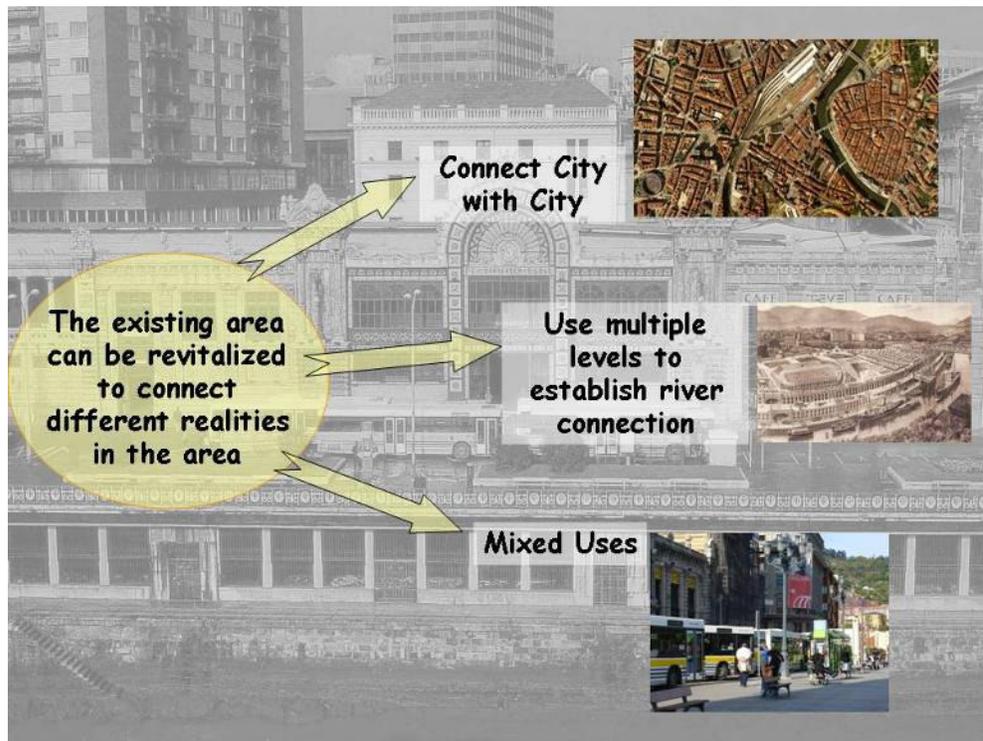


Analysis of the different socio-economical-visual realities

By analysing the existing urban shape of the Ensanche, Bilbao la Vieja and Casco Viejo (the 4 different realities surrounding El Abando), we realized that all of them are similarly compact morphologically speaking. So the main differences are cultural and economical. This fact stresses the importance of creating on the train station area an urban structure that brings them together, breaking the boundaries.

The information taken from our different analyses leads to the conclusion that a successful revitalisation of the area can only be accomplished by:

- **connecting city with city**
- taking advantage of the existing **multiple level situation**, to re-establish connections with the river
- reinforcing the present situation of **mixed uses** which is already an important aspect observed on the area, giving impulse to future regeneration schemes.



Revitalisation of El Abando area

How do we connect city with city?

The important factors to consider at this point are:

Physical connections – which are linking roads, blocks and green spaces around the train station.

Visual connections can be made across the rail yards, the river linking the different urban realities in those areas.

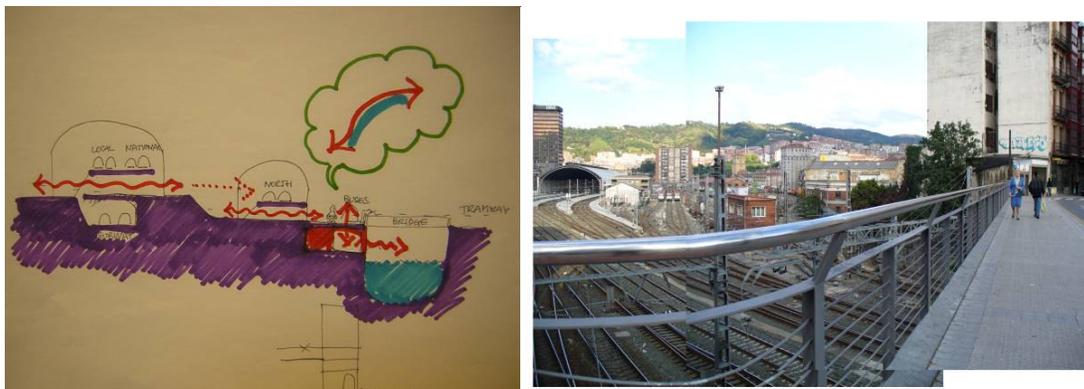
Streets, bridges visual axis to Bilbao la Vieja (...) allow physical and visual contact both horizontally (with the river, the old town) as well as vertically (with what is going on underground)



Physical and visual axis of connection

The scheme of views allows to have simultaneous visual contact with the interesting urban fronts and with the partial vertical openings that allow to percept the railroad under the ground.

The different levels are reinforced by the location of multifunctional activities, as explained ahead.



Different topographical levels allow a rich visual connection both horizontally as well as vertically to the “underground”.

Economic connections can include employment creation, both within a revitalized train station area and in spin off economic benefits to the surrounding neighbourhoods resulting from an improved pedestrian flow.

Urban continuity can also be achieved by creating new places that will host traditional urban activities. For example, empty spaces in the railway area can be transformed into public open spaces that connect principal squares and the area's many uses.

Joining the parts of the city with more city means bringing into the study area the same morphological characteristics as found in the existing surroundings. That means well kept and quality designed public areas, made for the people who live there, where they feel free to develop their activities; designed thinking of the wishes of those actors of public life, and on what they expect to find on the public arena.

The area today occupied by railroad tracks (see image below) would be used to extend surrounding street blocks that host the urban activities like commerce, equipments, housing (...) which contribute to attract people and to a safer and pleasant environment in the public space giving it identity, a place where different entities meet, mix and evolve.



Creating urban continuity

Using multiple levels to establish a connection with the riverfront

The old facade of the station is a part of the identity of this side of the river and connects the observer with the transportation history of the city.

As this building has an entire lower level, continuous to the riverside arcades, it can be an important element for any revitalization projects on the river itself. One issue that should be carefully addressed is the security of the area.

Taking advantage of the already mentioned different level situation, we can achieve two objectives:

1. give continuity to the already existing shore walk in the areas of Abando Walk and Bilbao la Vieja, in which the section of the unused Portugalete station represents an interruption in the pedestrian flow;
2. connection of uses and views between the Ensanche, the river and Casco Viejo.

This way we intent to re-establish the close relationship the city once had with its river.



The different levels of topography and uses uniting the different realities and bringing the Abando area to interact with the river front and Bilbao la Vieja

Open spaces of public areas of green and non-green preserve the existing urban fronts of value. Green areas are to give more value to the urban environment.

The 4 squares (Zabalburu_Sagrado Corazón de María_Circular_Arenal) are a very important part of this scheme of public spaces. They are linked by axes for pedestrians and public transports along which are the functional activities. The same squares are connected with residual spaces in the surrounding grids, and with an open space proposed for the railway, from which the urban fronts can be observed and taken advantage of to value them.

With regards to mixed uses the area is already a transportation hub that provides access to different modes including local, regional and international trains as well as buses, trams, taxis and pedestrian walkways. Public art can play a role in making any new or revitalized public spaces exciting and inspiring. Other uses that can be incorporated in the revitalization of the area include shops and services such as information points, cafes, bookshops, artistic activities such as studios, television design, fashion, arts and crafts. Trades can also be accommodated in schools or workshops. Commercial projects could include rebuilding the warehouses in the rail yards. Any or all of these functions can be used as interventions to connect the rail station with the river and surrounding neighbourhoods, bringing vitality and creativity to the railway area, and fostering a strong urban identity for the future benefit of Bilbao.

Connectivity and the possibility to interact in the urban environment in a challenging, amusing and vibrant way are the key premises to allow the birth and development of creativity and innovation.

When we “make city” we make it for the people who live in it, for those who visit it and for their future generations, having in mind that noone should be excluded. Everybody, with all their differences should find a place and feel they belong to the city in which their life takes place.

That is the main goal of a planner.

4.

From Corazon De Maria Square onwards



Contents:
Introduction
About the site
Issues and concerns
Analysis
Proposals
Management plan
Conclusion



Miguel Alonso Flamarque (Spain)
Arunava Sarkar (India)
Guneet Kaur (Australia/India)
Ambreen Iqbal (Pakistan)

Introduction

The Bilbao La Vieja area is a physically and socially segregated part of the city. The mandate of the **Corazon De Maria Square onwards group** was to help establish this integration by utilizing the square as an urban element catalyzing integration.

The Bilbao La Vieja situation is comparable to the Al Raval Area in Barcelona where city integration was achieved by establishing a physical interface of the problematic Raval area with the rest of the city in the form of a cultural centre and a public plaza. The Corazon De Maria Square in this context offers an opportunity of establishing a magnet which will act as a catalyst in the overall integration attempts by the other groups.



The Bilbao La Vieja area

About the site

The Corazon De Maria square is like a proverbial node in the Bilbao La Vieja area. It is located on the San Francisco Street approximately in the centre of the area. Being the only large open space also commands a functional and recreational centrality. The square being positioned between the river and the Mirabillia Park also offers the possibility of linking the major open spaces.



Site location

Issues and concerns

The Corazon De Maria Square shares the same issues with the rest of the area like isolation, low income, drugs, prostitution, homelessness etc. The main issue of isolation is thus not confined to just physical isolation:

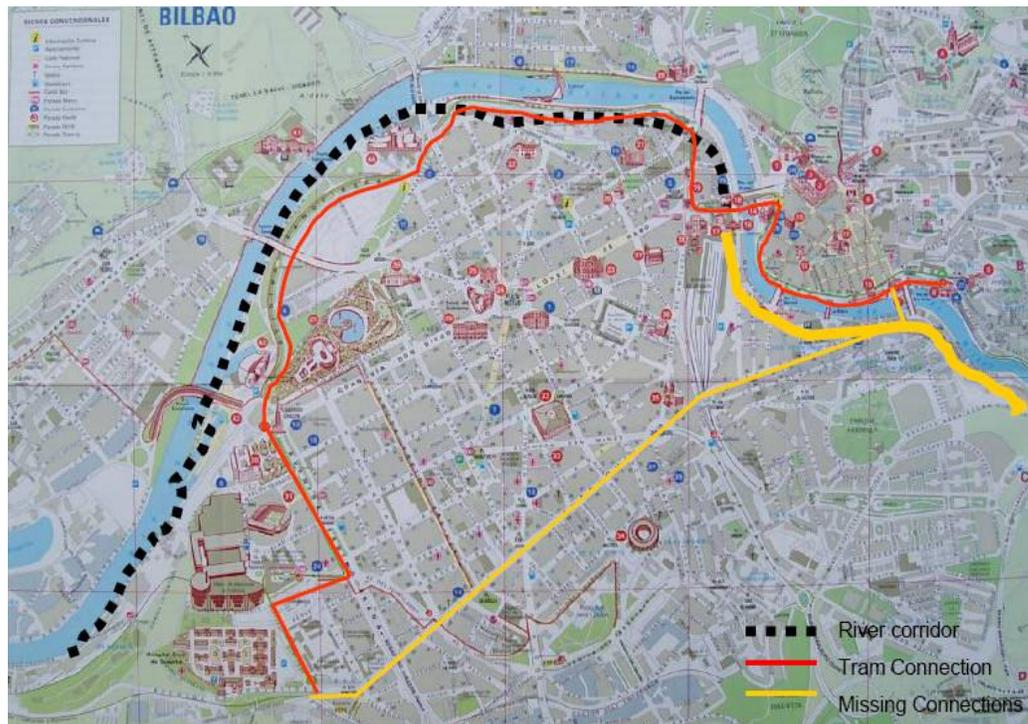
- **Human Isolation:** Lack of interaction and co-ordination. No functional or economic interdependency. The square itself does not feature in the activity cycle of the greater city.
- **Physical Isolation:** Missing connections and activities. The tram network does not connect this part with the rest of the city. Site topography on the edge of the Mirabillia Park is not negotiable and the area is thus not well connected to the western part of the city.
- **Social and economic Isolation:** Closed community with lack of economic interaction due to limited employment opportunities.
- **Infrastructure Isolation:** Lack of adequate transport facilities along with inadequate public health services and lack of cleanliness and waste disposal facilities makes this an undesirable destination.
- **Open Spaces and Views** that this area can offer have been limited in potential as the quarter turns its back to the river. The open spaces network is much fragmented.

The Corazon De Maria square on a whole misses out on an opportunity of anchoring another of Bilbao's urban catalysts like the Guggenheim Museum.

Analysis

Integrated development:

The proposal should establish a functional relationship with the rest of the city through an integrated development of the square. The development should bring in new opportunities in the area so that it becomes a desirable destination for the rest of the city.



Missing link in the transportation network

Transport network:

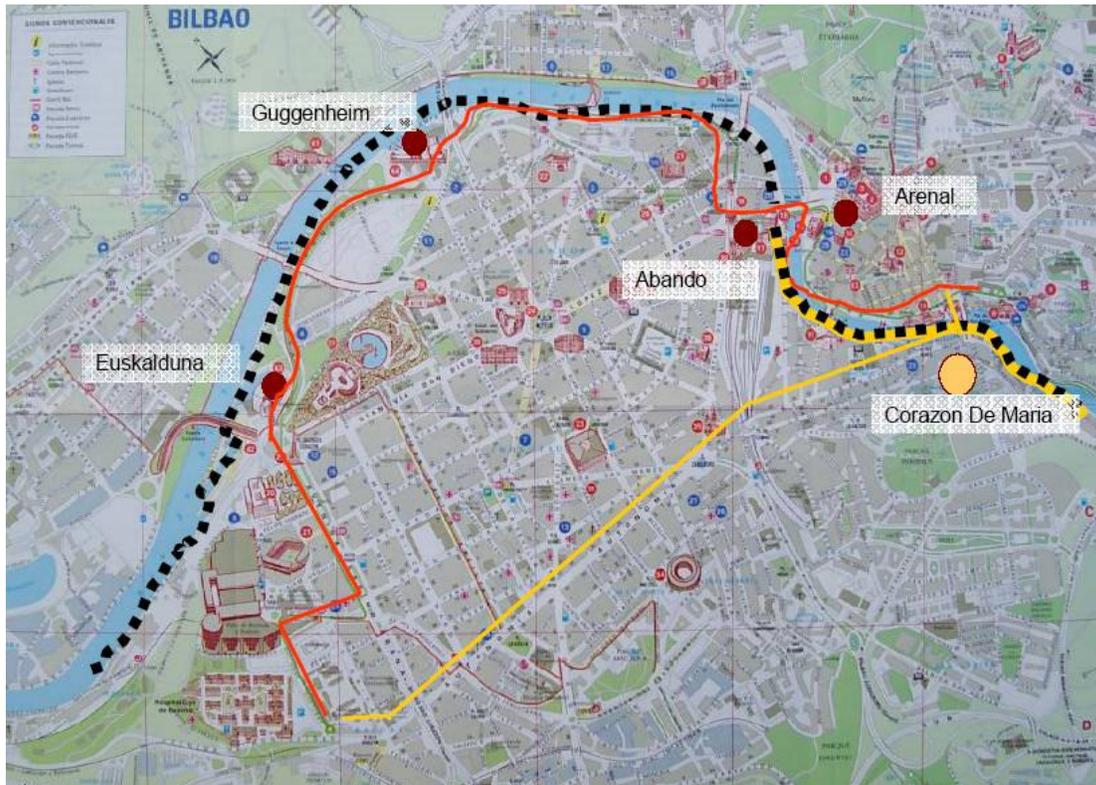
The area lacks a public transportation system. Providing the same also ensures that an induced development takes place near the transport node

Urban catalyst:

Completing the circuit of urban catalysts by intervening in the Corazon De Maria square. A series of public projects in the area would help in the integration and development. The school block can be relocated to free up land for new activities.

Open space network:

Improving cross river connections to ensure a new face and entry to the area from the riverside. Integrating the Mirabillia Park with the river by an open space network passing through the square would activate this area by bringing in commercial activity from the more prosperous commercial and retail district across the river.



Series of urban catalysts

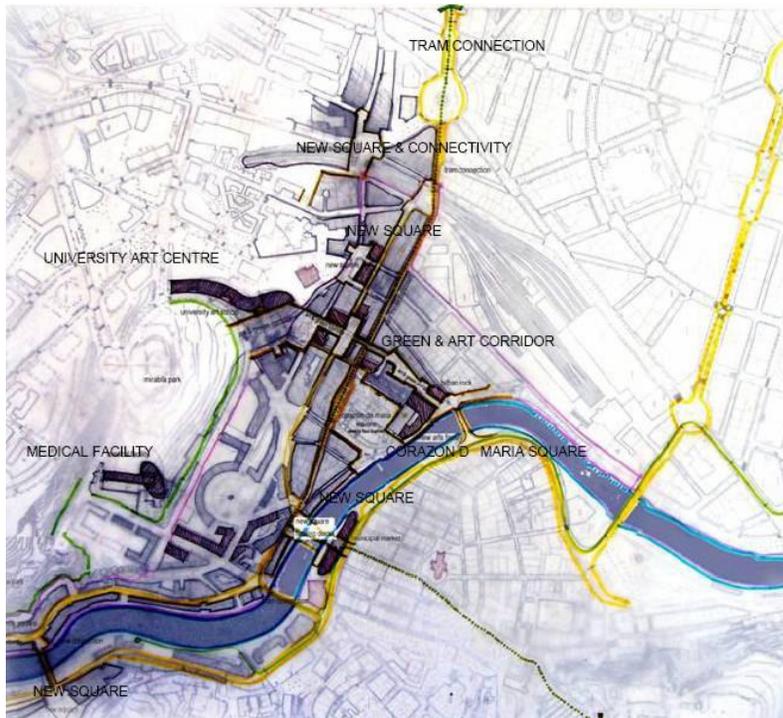
Proposals

Elements:

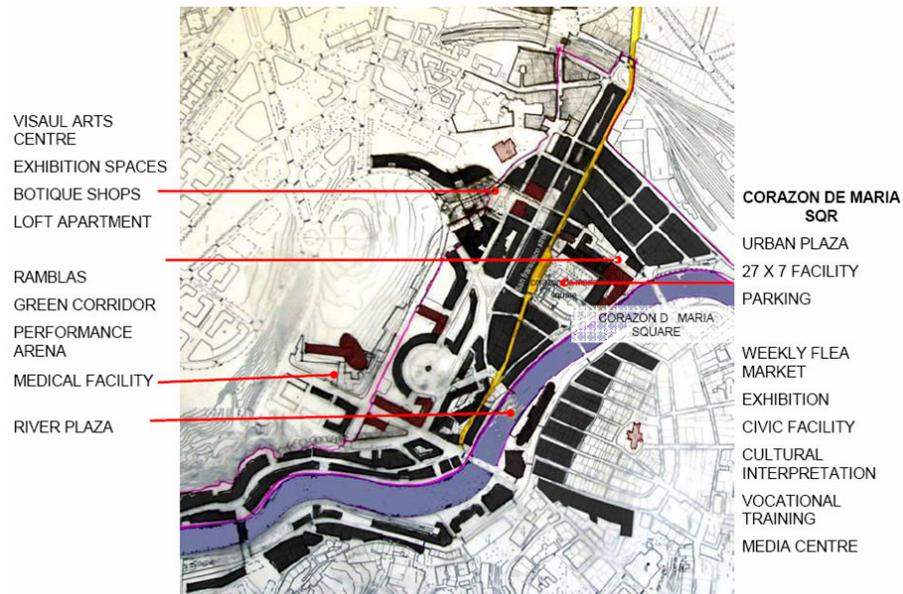
- Art university
- Medical university
- Media centre
- Boutique shops
- Green art corridor
- Tram network
- River plaza

Activity:

- Vocational training
- Civic facility
- Studio spaces
- Gallery spaces
- Performance spaces
- Retail spaces
- Weekly flea market



Proposals on site



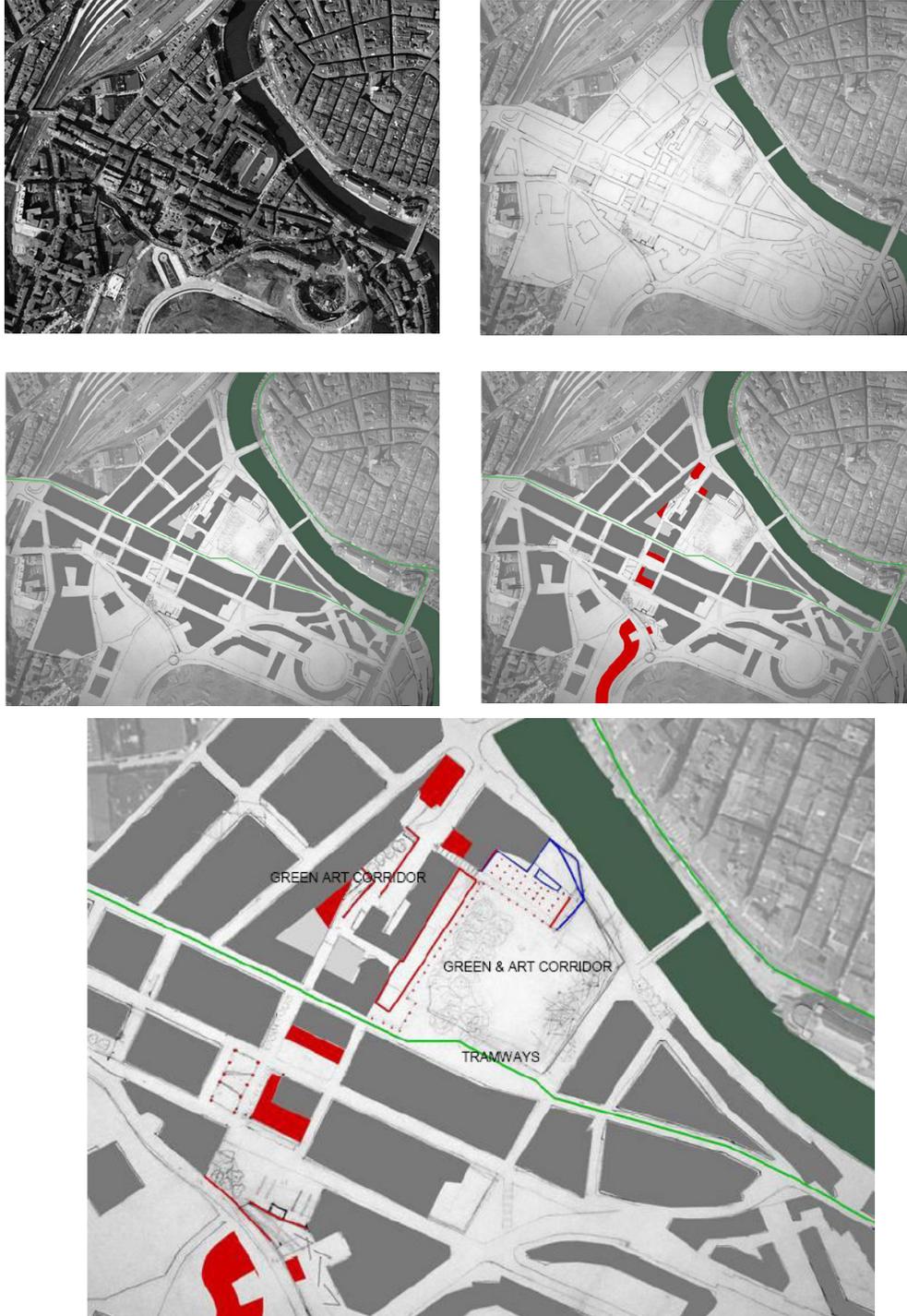
Activities proposed

The proposal is to develop the CMD square into a major activity hub by introducing creative and support activities. The school will be relocated and the space available will be landscaped into a river plaza overlooking the river. The proposal is to develop a series of floating decks on the river which will extend to the municipal market thereby activating the riverfront. The art museum in the basement of the school will be retained and the activities will be consolidated by support activities on the adjacent lots. Some new construction around the square will add an incubation centre, galleries, media centers etc.

There is also a proposal for an extension of the art department of the university on the edge of the Mirabella Park with a proposal to link it up to the Bilbao Arte on the riverfront by a green art corridor. This is an open space network linking all the residual open spaces with

the Mirabella park, the riverfront, and the CDM square. It will be like the Ramblas dotted with exhibition spaces, studio spaces and performance arenas. This can be a major attractor for the area which will make stream in people from the adjacent commercial district across the river.

The part of the square is proposed to be a transport terminal for the new tram connection with full underground parking to decongest the area. A series of public facilities like medical facilities, social activity spaces, and shelters for the homeless, drug rehabilitation centers should be proposed in the new construction around the square.

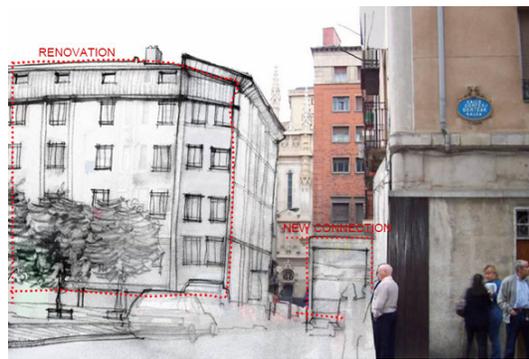


New developments: the proposal in context

Transformations



Corazon De Maria Square: Relocating the school and converting the square into a river plaza with activity centers around.



Green Art Corridor: Renovating existing building facades, studio spaces, exhibition spaces, boutique spaces and performance spaces. The commercial district on the other bank of the river can then extend into this open space network.



Green Art Corridor: The performance spaces would augment the Bilbao Arte as performance spaces for the community.

Management plan

Most of the property is believed to be private. Sufficient rehabilitation is to be provided to induce development.

The school proposal is already under consideration by the authorities and compensation packages are believed to be already in place.

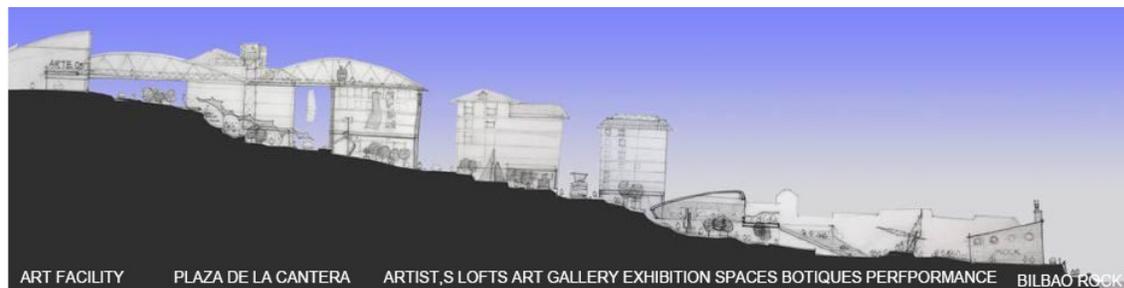
The green art corridor requires minimum intervention into the built fabric. The demolitions can be compensated by Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to other blocks in the same area. Wherever there is a requirement to free up private ownership at the groundfloor level for public access, a similar area will be allowed to be built on higher floors in the same property.

To activate the green art corridor some building facades have to be redone where a suitable structural system can be devised.

In order to raise funds for the project it might be essential to sell FAR in the development and later on put a levy on the parking facility.

Conclusion

It is believed that the development induced by tramways, the art university and the new river square will help to bring in people into the area, make it safer, provide new economic activities and help in an overall uplift of the social condition of the area. The model adopted in Al Raval and in the Pompidou center has been successful in delivering social justice to their respective areas. Similar logic has already been successful in Bilbao> Thus these interventions will hopefully assist in the social improvement of the area.



Green Art Corridor: Activity network for the new art university to the river plaza.



Corazon De Maria Square: New transport terminal, underground parking and weekly flea market.

5.

The Cantera Square and its Surroundings



Contents
Introduction
Problems of the area
Our proposals
Concluding remarks



Evrin Ozkan (Turkey)
Tolga Islam (Turkey)
Maria Villalobos (Venezuela)
Alvaro Cerezo (Spain)

Introduction

The definition of the area

Our study area, the La Cantera Square region, is located at the outer edge of the river. There is a large park on the north; the San Francisco Street, one of the main axis that provides connection with the rest of the city, on the south, and old and dilapidated housing stock on the west and east side of the area.

The park located on a vast land on the upper level is the most important environmental amenity in the area. It is also important to mention that the area above the Park is one of the remaining development areas of Bilbao.

Starting point

We have started our study by identifying the problems of the area and continued by using appropriate urban design tools to solve these problems and create a better and more pleasant environment for the local residents of the neighborhood and the residents and visitors of the city.

Problems of the Area

In our study area, we have identified problems related with accessibility, security, image and quality of life and classified them into two broad groups: problems related with accessibility and those related with image.

In terms of accessibility, the La Cantera Square has two types of problems: accessibility with the Park (above) and accessibility with the river (below). The first problem is created by a physical barrier: the gap created by the 10 meters of wall between the La Cantera Square (at the bottom) and the Park (at the top) cuts the relation between the two levels. The square, currently, has no direct connections to the Park (the stairs, which look old and unsound, are closed for public use).



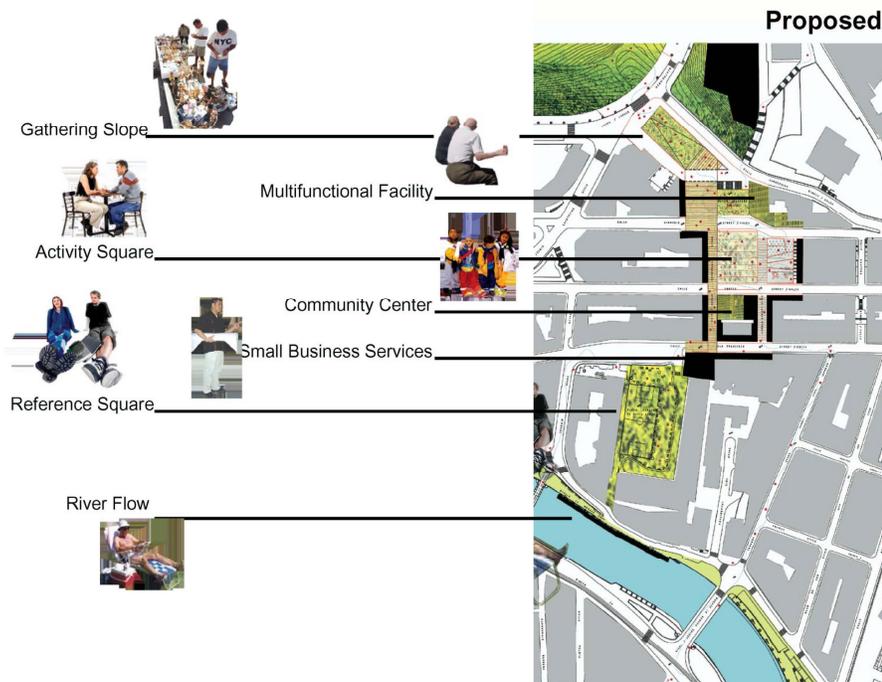
This gap of 10 meters between the Square and the Park does not only create physical separation. The gap also draws a sharp border between two different socio-economic groups: the rich above the park and the poor at the bottom. The middle and upper-middle classes live in the high-rise buildings located on the slopes of the park (the upper level) whereas lower classes, together with drug dealers and prostitutes, are living in the dilapidated housing stock at the lower level.

Accessibility of the Square to and from the River is also problematic. Among the five study areas, La Cantera Square region is the one that is most far away from the river. Thus, the

link between the Square and the river, an important environmental amenity, is weak, both visually (despite the high altitude there are no viewpoints of the River or the land mark buildings like the Guggenheim or Euskalduna) and physically (there are no direct routes to the river).

The poor or “bad” image of the area (a social rather than a physical barrier) also contributes to the problems of accessibility between the Square and the River. There is a general public opinion that the area is a “dangerous” and unsafe location (during our site visit, we were strictly warned by our local guides not to grow the distance from the group as it might be very dangerous). The presence of criminal and illegal social groups such as drug dealers and prostitutes are the main underlying reasons of this bad image. Other factors such as lack of open spaces (at the level of Square), lack of social and cultural activities that would attract neighboring residents and visitors, the old and dilapidated housing stock, and lower socio-economic profile of the residents are also factors that contributes to this “bad” image.

Our Proposal



After defining the problem areas, we have proposed the following solutions in order to mitigate the current conditions.

The ramp or the “gathering slope”:

- Our main concern was to solve the problems of accessibility. Our first and foremost proposal has been the creation of a ramp, which we defined as the “gathering slope” that connects the La Cantera Square with the Park both physically and **visually**.
- By creating activities at both levels, we tried to make a flow of people to both directions (from the square to the park and vice versa). The “gathering slope” will then be a meeting point between the two levels...
- The slope may also play a role to connect the rich up, with the poor down, helping to mitigate the problems caused by the years of segregation.
- The feeling that it is part of the topography

- Very wide
- Openness
- Increase the feeling of security by the users
- Apart from the “gathering slope”, we put additional connecting elements like elevators and stairs.

The connection to the San Francisco Street (and so to the River)

Our second accessibility problem to overcome was to provide an easier connection between the La Cantera Square and the river, the center of activity. Regarding the absence of any direct routes and distance to the river, we aimed to establish the connection to the river over a “reference square”, the San Francisco Square. In order to accomplish this, we have **pedestrianized** the Cantalojas Street, the axis that goes down to San Francisco Street and reaches San Francisco Square. New activity units, including those open for 24 hours (7/24 activities), are located on the two sides of the pedestrianized axis in order to increase its attractiveness and guarantee security.

New Spaces for Activities

The area definitely lacks social and cultural activities that can help to attract the attention of neighboring communities and visitors. The absence of these activities is both an outcome of and a reason for the bad image the neighborhood has. In order to overcome this problem, we have offered the following uses for the area: artist studios, playgrounds for kids, sports activities, study rooms, cafes, bars, restaurants, community center, dorms and hostels. These uses will enhance the image of the neighborhood, increase the quality of life, bring liveliness and help to mitigate the security-based problems in the region. Moreover, the flow of people will definitely create an increase in the economic activity, which will in turn create new employment opportunities for the local people.

Open Spaces

We have identified the density of building stock and lack of adequate open spaces at the level of La Cantera Square as a problem.

The connection of the La Cantera Square with the upper level by the “gathering slope” will open the Park to the use of the people living around the square.

We have also created open spaces for different kinds of activities (recreation, sports, etc.) in the area.

Concluding Remarks

Our main concern was to create a better environment for the local residents, the inhabitants of the city and the visitors, by connecting the La Cantera Square region with the River. We have identified a bunch of interwoven problems in terms of accessibility, image, security, quality of life etc. and tried to use the appropriate urban design tools to overcome them.

This integration of La Vieja neighborhood with the city will complete the missing part of a wider urban regeneration process taking place city-wide, which started and is symbolized by the Guggenheim Museum. There is a probability that this integration will give a better chance to the inhabitants of the La Vieja region to benefit from the positive aspects of these wider regeneration processes.

There is, however, another possible scenario, in which these regeneration processes lead to the **gentrification** of the La Vieja district as a whole. In this very probable scenario, the current low-income residents of the La Vieja are displaced by the arrival of more affluent newcomers and the whole area turns into an upper class district. It is, therefore, one of the shortcomings of our group (and other groups perhaps), that we took no real measures to prevent or mitigate these (very) possible negative effects. What will happen to those living in La Vieja after its transformation remains an important question to be answered.

ANNEXES

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Presentation of MOST - Management of Social Transformations

MOST is a UNESCO programme that promotes international, comparative and policy-relevant research on contemporary social transformations and issues of global importance. Created in 1994, it aims to:

- further understanding of social transformations;
- establish sustainable links between social science researchers and decision-makers;
- strengthen scientific, professional and institutional capacities, particularly in developing countries;
- encourage the design of research-anchored policy.

The MOST programme is directed by an Intergovernmental Council and an independent Scientific Steering Committee, and works closely with MOST National Liaison Committees. It is coordinated by the MOST Secretariat at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

MOST projects and activities focus on issues such as multicultural and multi-ethnic societies, urban development, globalisation and governance.

Additionally, MOST contributes to the United Nations system-wide priorities, such as poverty eradication, governance and indigenous peoples.

The work of MOST

Increasing and sharing knowledge

MOST produces and exchanges knowledge on major contemporary social transformations, via international research networks, expert groups, meetings, conferences, workshops, publications, discussion forums and the MOST Clearing House (Internet).

From research to policy

The programme measures the impact of research on policy, conducts policy-relevant case studies, provides expertise in development initiatives, and shares information on how to design research-anchored policy.

Capacity-building and training

The MOST programme provides training material including pedagogical tools and CD-ROMs; holds training workshops and summer schools in partnership with national institutions and other United Nations agencies; strengthens the institutional and scientific capacity in developing countries through UNESCO/MOST Chairs; and runs a PhD award competition for young researchers from developing countries and countries in transition.

For up-to-date information on meetings, upcoming events, current projects and activities, publications and on-line studies, visit the MOST Clearing House: <http://www.unesco.org/most>

Presentation of ISoCaRP

ISoCaRP is a global association of experienced professional planners. It was founded in 1965 in a bid to bring together recognised and highly qualified planners in an international network. The ISoCaRP network consists of both individual and institutional members of more than 70 countries (It has members from countries all over the world).

ISoCaRP is a non-governmental organisation recognised by the UN, UNCHS and the Council of Europe and has a formal consultative status with UNESCO.

The objectives of ISoCaRP include the improvement of planning practice through the creation of a global and active network of planners. ISoCaRP encourages the exchange between planners, promotes the profession in all aspects, stimulates research, improves education and training, increases information and awareness on major planning issues.

City- and Regional Planners act in spatial processes and are consultants to key decision-makers. Their task is to propose or support spatial interventions and plans on behalf of the society in general or specific actors. Planners combine knowledge, science, design and strategy and are used to work in joint ventures and multi-disciplinary teams.

The association's main event is the annual congress, which focuses on an international planning theme. The congress takes place in a different country every year, preferably on a different continent. ISoCaRP also organizes smaller scale seminars and publishes reports and other professional documents. It is represented at major international planning events.

Admission of members

Please see ISoCaRP website: www.isocarp.org/

ISoCaRP Congresses since 1995

2006 - Istanbul/Turkey	Cities between Integration and Disintegration -Opportunities and Challenges
2005 - Bilbao/Spain	Spaces for the creative Economy
2004 - Geneva/Switzerland	Management of Urban Regions - Experiences and new Intervention Policies
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2002 - Athens/Greece	The Pulsar Effect coping with peaks, troughs and repeats in the demand cycle
2001 - Utrecht/Netherlands	'Honey, I shrunk the Space' - Planning in the Information Age
2000 - Cancún/Mexico	People's Empowerment in Planning – Citizens as <i>actors</i> in managing their habitat
1999 - Gelsenkirchen/Germany	The Future of industrial Regions - Regional Strategies and local Action towards Sustainability
1998 - Azores/Portugal	Land and Water: Integrated planning for a sustainable future
1997 - Ogaki/Japan	Risk Assessment and Management: Planning for an uncertain future
1996 - Jerusalem/Israel	Migration and the global Economy: Planning responses to disintegrating patterns and frontiers
1995 - Sydney/Australia	Planning and Mediation in Urban Planning