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**THYSSENKRUPP ARCHITECTURE PRIZE 2007. CALL FOR IDEAS TO REORGANISE
THE GRANADA RAILWAY INSTALLATIONS AREA**

blancoverdeyrojo

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT

The Granada landscape paints a dialogue of whites, greens and reds. If the railway station permits, the traveller's gaze will fall on the snow peaked caps of the Sierra Nevada and, in the surrounding area, always on the broken white of the Albaicín's geometric lines. The greens at times slide down at a low angle from the lush land and poplar groves, at others they come from rows of olive trees lined up on the dry land, and at others from the residual oak groves or from the romantic setting of the Alhambra forests. Then, ones senses are flooded by the firey reds of sunset and the reflection on the hills and towers - both an intense red - of the Alhambra.

Blanco, verde y rojo
Francisco Ortega Alba



part I. THOSE INVOLVED 01

A TRIP THROUGH THE REGION: LIVING LA VEGA

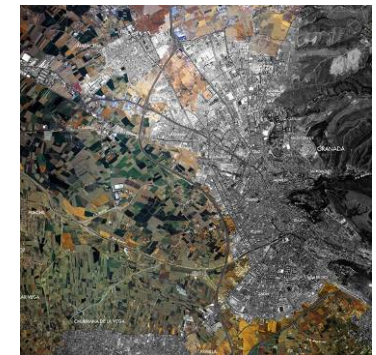
Travelling to Granada by train takes one through the La Vega region. Travelling to Granada by train takes one through the La Vega region. La Vega in Granada is characterised by the blankets of crops dotted about the whole land, producing a seemingly natural landscape with specific elements and textures.

From high up, the landform shows a division of the region into plots, a result of the need to exploit the land, with a structure based on the irrigation system: irrigation ditches that fill the entire region with trickles of water, weaving a carpet of green and ochre that might make us think of a postimpressionist painting. This agricultural fabric is torn up by the transport links (railway, roads and lanes) around which buildings, of a more or less industrial nature, have sprung up, sharing the stage with the buildings that have been there for ever: tobacco drying sheds.

La Vega resembles the sea: horizontal and built up by layers... layers of varying heights following the rhythm of the crop cycles... tobacco, black poplars, corn, and formerly sugar. Many sugar factories are still standing, although they are now in disuse, with their chimneys forming landmarks stretching out high above this horizontal countryside.

The aim of the proposal is to focus on a peripheral, inclusive view rather than an essential and targeted approach. We understand that this is the physical and mental route that will take us to our destination, and which gives us the information we need to interpret a reality that is complex, disjointed and anachronistic.

01 REGION VEGA

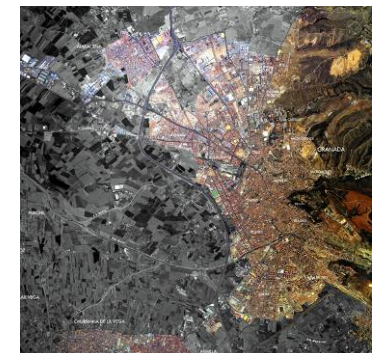


02 CITY

"It is enclosed by hills and mountains that are like defensive walls, guarding its fruit and cornfields from enemies..."

Antigüedad y excelencias de Granada
Francisco Bermúdez de Pedraza

The process of urban development in Granada has followed an expansive model based on semi-circular concentric strips, with successive changes in the direction of its growth. During the first phase of Christian occupation, the city's map extended to the north-west, with the introduction of the Hospital Real and the San Lázaro and La Duquesa quarters. Afterwards, during the Baroque period, the city branched out towards the west and south following the roads leading out of the old city wall gates. Later, under the Napoleon Government, the axis of the River Genil was deepened, with activities on its banks. Finally, during the 19th Century, the focus turned towards interior improvements rather than urban



expansion, while during the 20th Century urban expansion was based on the successive new suburbs, often unplanned, which extended the city out towards the north, south and west.

MODERN CITY: RECENT TOWN PLANNING

The city of Granada was defined with the Draft Urban Development Plan in 1943, establishing the scale of its development and growth based on satellite cities located in the municipalities of La Vega.

This draft plan was a preview of the Alignments Plan in 1951. This graphic representation of the urban reforms by Mayor Gallego y Burín helped to physically determine the city's development until 1973. The Granada reform was described as an urban development problem, since an articulated global development plan for the city was never achieved.

From the 1950s onwards, two unplanned settlements sprang up in the La Vega region, doing away with transition elements (farmhouses, vegetable plots) and colonising free areas: the El Zaidín and La Chana quarters. Over time these came to be two important focuses for urban growth. They also brought about a change that had important consequences on the orientation of the city map, by setting up powerful lines of penetration into the La Vega countryside, breaking the balance between the city and the territory once and for all. The important loss of the agricultural sector contributed to the organisation of production and the outsourcing of the regional capital.

After the 1951 Alignments Plan had been in force for more than 20 years, the urban planning process was revised, with the approval of the Regional Urban Development Plan of Granada in 1973. Although this adapted Granada's urban planning regulations to the provisions of the 1956 Land Act, in practice it meant that urban development was conditional upon economic development, establishing the speculative value of the land market.

Moreover, the concept of finished city that the General Municipal Urban Development Plan of Granada in 1985 conferred to it, with the restrictions imposed by the physical barrier of the Ring Road which caused a division between the countryside and the city, prevented any sort of relations with the La Vega region. This Plan was limited to developing the territory of the municipal district without the possibility of setting it under a Regional Plan, thus giving way to the chaotic growth of the bordering or nearest municipalities.

In light of the above, it is clear that with the exception of a few cases this city's production has been limited to an uncontrolled emerging of commercial architecture. However, when the city was given the School of Architecture, it seemed that the expectations that arose during the 1980s could be consolidated, following the period of democratic standardisation, with architectural production and town planning being considered to be more than just building.

EATING WITHOUT DIGESTING

The Ronda route project dates back to the late 19th Century, but the idea was taken up again and carried out from the 1930s onwards. The new road was designed to act as a limit for urban expansion and played a role in territorial structuring by being used as a link road between the Malaga and Motril routes. Having said that, the Alignments Plan consolidated it as an axis on which the future Although designed as the city's barrier to defend its La Vega region, the fact was that it had the opposite effect since it created expectations for growth towards it. A new belt, Calle Arabial, was created, and later, following a large citizen debate, a dual carriageway Ring Road, different to the one that the PGOU-85 proposed, i.e. a boulevard bordering La Vega, was built.

In addition, the introduction of road links in this agricultural landscape led to a new relationship, and sometimes the merging, of the city of Granada with the neighbouring towns - Armilla, Maracena, Atarfe Albolote, Huétor - which have reduced this natural setting due to the scattered and uncontrolled expansion of its municipal districts.

At present, the dual carriageway Ring Road has become the city walls surrounding the old medieval city, enclosing behind it a city that lived in contact with its region, and drawing an excessively definite limit for growth that before was fuzzy and ambiguous, and that brought the city closer to La Vega.

This enclosing process pocketed part of the city's nearest La Vega territory in its coffers, producing La Vega communities stripped of their essential values, without use or purpose, and a new topology emerged: Urban La Vega. Granada has not been able to swallow this for the most part, and we are still faced with a poorly digested product, and a question: we can we domesticate our territory? A meaningless periphery, without its own apparent values, without special places, that observes and is observed by the historical city, overflowing with memories and meaning.

Beyond the architecture is the landscape. and also the irresistible pull of the void, where events occur from our point of view, but also from the perspective of social, public and group events. Today, the easy distinction between cities and the countryside, between territory that is artificial due to having been built on and natural in reference to the environment that precedes and goes with us, is no longer.

Rosa Barba

part II. – OPPORTUNITY

03 URBAN VEGA

URBAN VEGA: NEW ARTIFICIAL CROPS

The way through which we can give meaning to our countryside does not involve worrying about how to construct buildings, it involves thinking about how we can apply the techniques of narrative, interconnections and icons to create structures that allows us to rebuild ourselves in relation to the world.

Aaron Betsky

Manager for the MoMA architecture department

The project sets a conceptual theory for the growth of the city of Granada based on an assessment of the region as a present medium, the urban social area and the consideration of alternatives to speculative land management, in a specific region. A place that, stripped of its initial values, has lost its ability to evolve, unable to respond to the surrounding area, waiting to be transformed by man, planned like just another piece of the city, all to probably (let us give it the benefit of doubt) forget its identity once and for all.

This theory is born out of an effort to turn the reality of a landscape – the outskirts of Granada that are both far-sighted, reaching La Vega where the Sierra Nevada becomes the foreground of recognition, and near-sighted- into that “enclosed territory” that shapes the edge of the Granada periphery. Here we can find the city's waste land, deactivated urban land just waiting to be used or expanded. A new urban Vega from which the landscape has penetrated the city's streets, areas that should be understood from a more global perspective.

This is the focus of the project. It is a more flexible focus, that simply aims to provide another possibility, another point of view, another way of “adoring” the support of our city that allows us to enter the unexpected, randomness, factors that during the course of this contemporaneous society become clearly necessary, compared to other more stagnant attitudes that have been tried out and tested and that have all been used up.

An alternative method to standardising production is proposed. You are invited to imagine and invent areas for collective statements, distinguishing processes, to use today’s La Vega as a huge metropolitan park providing it with new uses, new crops: artificial crops, for a new artificial Vega. These areas can be configured and redefined based on the transitory activities in them. These areas, free from the dictates of built forms become meeting places for the expression of new meanings...without fixed opening hours, they set their own rhythms, their own crop cycles...they appear, reappear or disappear among the rhythms of daily life. It does not so much consist of determining a method as the implementation of strategies that channel habitation and urban experience processes, mediation and transit processes from the territorial scale to the urban scale, from the private scale to the public scale.

Thus, the above analysis in steps, firstly looking at the natural aspect and then at the urban aspect like two magnets far apart, to coherently interpret the essence of the place and create situations that overlap that which exists, that allow emerging uses and functions to be consolidated, understanding that they are two sides of the same coin. Landscape as the basis for new urban behaviour.

PROGRAMMATIC CARPET FOR VARIABLE USES.

INSTRUCTIONS TO REPOPULATE THE URBAN VEGA WITH 40 USES AND 1 METAPHOR.

The proposal aims to set a new playing board, a superficial project that is not about the absence of land, rather it deals with its definition and the setting up of a series of techniques, a new land discipline...classification, domestication of land, the recovery of potentially wild intensities of La Vega. A new Vega that is introduced as an artificial element in search of a new state of balance between the city and its region: a new artificial Vega, a new productive landscape.

Therefore, it is proposed to paralyse pre-existing cycles and axes, patterns of use of urban activities, turning the land into a programmatic carpet of variable uses, that provides places for storage, for socialising, whose recombination of available uses makes new urban events possible. The new architectural areas will be sensitive to the new social, environmental and urban conditions, encouraging this ability to live, to use, to enjoy the outside space...in this world that comes to us through a screen. Open spaces will be the focal point, emerging areas for the new forms of urban development...thematic approaches in the setting up of new public areas that reuse or reinvent agriculture.

The strategy will apply to Vega areas that can be used, for uses in which the city is lacking, establishing a plot division by crops, paying more attention to areas where new crops had to live alongside the existing route. Most crops could be subject to change, evolving over time in accordance with the new environment needs and city situations. In this way we can achieve a true organism, a new live landscape, whose variability or changeable nature would be determined by the cycles that govern each specific crop, there being fixed, semi-fixed and variable crops.

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Agrotourism | 15. Circus | 28. Street market |
| 2. Amphitheatre | 16. Storytime | 29. Mini golf |
| 3. Anti-stress Have a siesta | 17. Experimental crops | 30. Night skating |
| 4. Landing taking off in a hot-air balloon | 18. Showcase for mating | 31. Riding school |
| 5. Classroom for playing with animals | 19. Cybernetics | 32. Picnic_weekend |
| 6. Classroom for mathematical games | 20. Recreation for pets and domestic animals | 33. Therapeutic plants |
| 7. Home cinema | 21. Book fair swapping | 34. Native plants and flowers |
| 8. Sunbathing | 22. Open-air gyme | 35. Jumble sales |
| 9. Travelling bazaar | 23. Public vegetable gardens | 36. Recycling |
| 10. Open-air library | 24. Cultural exchange and mixing of immigrant groups | 37. Puppet shows |
| 11. <i>Botellón</i> | 25. Texture garden for children | 38. Yoga and taichi |
| 12. Petanque fields | 26. Shadow games black poplar labyrinth | 39. Monitored campsite |
| 13. Solar power | 27. Testing premises | 40. Wet areas |

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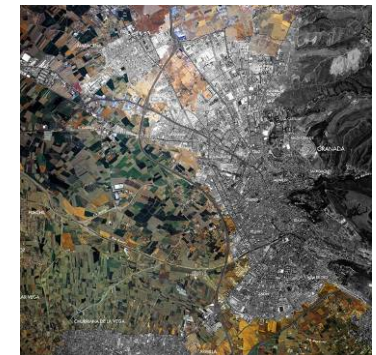
This would result in an urban route with activity centres defined quantitatively and qualitatively, in which the users would be directly involved through knowledge of their situation and rhythms. They are observers who interact with a new artificial Vega, going, like Jean Dubuffet did, from the physical to the mental landscape.

In the middle ground between countryside and city there is hope for a new synthesis of urban life and urban form. Traditional planning methods are no longer enough. By reconsidering the city from the point of view of the countryside, these projects study untested programs and new types of urban areas.

Steven Holl

Part III. THE RENFE VOID

04 RENFE VOID



RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE: CURRENT SITUATION

At present, the RENFE facilities in Granada include the Avda. de Andaluces Station and the Depot-garage on Avda. de Andalucía. These facilities create huge possibilities, by consisting of large areas of land set in a consolidated urban area, with a high expectant value.

CREATING A VOID

The railway was introduced in the city in 1874 in the north-west, separated from the city centre by the campo del Triunfo, reintroduced as a public walkway in 1856.

The Alignments Plan in 1951 planned to build a park in the area that would decongest future expansion between the residential areas and the railway station. However, in the mid 1960s, the City Council granted the University this land to bring together the teaching facilities. The Fuente Nueva Campus was set up without an urban development plan to regulate and organise the various initiatives, which were limited to the patchy layout of each of the teaching buildings.

Currently, the RENFE land is like a pocket of the city, an island that cannot be accessed from its borders, limited to the north by a residential area, the Los Pajaritos quarter. Just like the La Chana quarter, this started off being occupied by a relatively homogenous population, with limited economic possibilities, but that has gradually become diversified but without the necessary urban classification and transformation. For years, this quarter has been inhabited by Granada university students who each day are faced with a physical barrier on their daily route (towards the Fuente Nueva campus, just opposite), granted visually, however, from their windows.



part IV. URBAN STRATEGIES

“The void is omnipotent, because it can contain everything”.

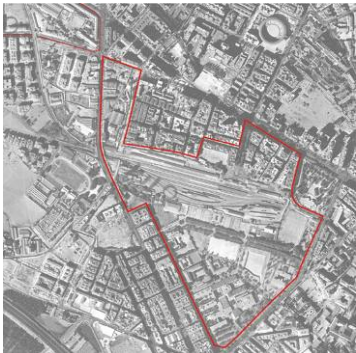
Okakura kakuzo.

HORIZONTAL LANDSCAPE: NEW TECHNOLOGICAL DRYING SHED

We are faced with an area with opportunity, an internal periphery in which we should redress the institutional balance of the immediate consolidated fabrics, by setting up new focal points as the key means to support strategies to balance and transform the outlying area. This results in:

- the need to articulate, by area, these activities to form axes and focal points for urban development based on the existing urban fabric which so far have been non-existent on the land.
- need to provide the new central areas with an architectural structuring that represents the new urban functions.

As a starting point, the project eliminates the border that separates it from its surrounding area, so that the limits of the activity match those of the available space. It is understood that to accept the landscape in its true dimension this cannot be limited to exclusive dialogue between the building and its immediate surroundings. The proposal thus makes the



most of the land's ability to harbour and boost several intertwined values, turning the land into an active area. It is a built plane from which architecture emerges as a fluctuating figure...a drying shed on a horizontal landscape.

This ability is determined by the surrounding area. A diverse environment on each side that has evolved with its own characteristics and determining factors, different to those of the rest, perhaps because it could not imagine shaking hands.

- The Los Pajaritos quarter, student habitation, so close and yet so far from the University. Maze of streets that filter the traffic from the Avda. de la Constitución: it goes nowhere.
- The Parque de Fuente Nueva and the rugby field, two green areas, not linked, enclosed by fences and opening times, isolated. Another obstacle on the route.
- The university sports area, hanging off the Paseillos Universitarios axis, endless, without an exit, hurtling towards Calle Gonzalo Gallas (also endless). Unaware of what goes on around it due to its thick white wall.
- Camino de Ronda, separate route, that relocates everything on its borders at the necessary height. No possibility of crossing it. Impassable wall, except for trains.

In light of this series of situations, the project is faced with the clear challenge of re-conciliating positions, stopping activities from flowing and creating other new ones, setting up areas that allow this new balance, like a whirlwind that picks up until it reaches a calm spot.

In this context, the general proposal considers the following:

- **NEW BORDERING ROAD: Vega-Fuente Nueva in 5 min.**

This new vehicular traffic road travels along the current railway layout, collecting the traffic flow from the La Chana and Los Pajaritos quarters. This road forks into two where it passes under Camino de Ronda, once of them going underground and serving as an access to the new axis marked by the station at height + 664.



- **SLOPING GARDENS: from the Fuente Nueva park to the roads.**

These gardens are in the current rugby field – moved next the Estadio de la Juventud – as the start of the project, extending the current Fuente Nueva park to the Paseillos Universitario, linking with Calle Severo Ochoa and taking the green area to the road level.



- **BOTANIC AND MINERAL GARDENS: the Paseillos Universitarios is extended.**

The project's most experimental area is at this point, just before the Camino de Ronda overpass above the roads and halfway between the Granada University Faculty of Science and La Vega. This is the nearby Vega region, considered to be the new artificial, experimental and manageable Vega...an urban agricultural park for the students of Biology Geology, Environmental Sciences...who at the end of the Paseillos Universitarios can find an outdoor study room, an experimental park, with colours, fragrances and humidity, which being above the roads becomes a mineral garden, or a dry garden. And, next to them, below height +669m, classrooms and laboratories to collect and study data.



- **BELT-MIRADOR AROUND CAMINO DE RONDA.**

At this point, a new building links the students with their city and university, in the current squatter area, which includes the University as an essential part of the city's structure. This is an area that must be crossed to access the project from Camino de Rondam which ends the axis marked by the Gonzalo Gallas buildings.

- **SPORTS FACILITIES: the entry into the void.**

- **TRAIN SHUNTING YARDS: a station that overlooks the Alhambra.**



Like the drying shed...the leather lets air and light pass through...and they say that if you listen hard enough you can almost hear it breathe. Like the drying shed...at night, when everyone disappears, it lets its pores breathe...allows its insides to be seen, allows the moon to be paid back for the favour that the sun did for it during the day...and it shines, and twinkles, and struts around the city like a drag queen bathed in glitter.

partV. NEW AVE TRAIN STATION IN GRANADA

The Station has been considered as an event in a place. A place where there is a congregation of another series of activities, movements, people, travellers... other travellers... all travellers and trips. It is due to this chance meetings that it is difficult to identify its start and end, its own uses, and those that surround it, understanding that the arrival of an underground train does not need to be an isolated and anonymous event, rather it can be included as another event of those that enrich our city. And in this case, the case that concerns us, what happens when a traveller "emerges" into Granada, since it is the city that enriches the event. In few cities we can find a sequence upon arrival such as in this one... La Vega, Sierra Nevada, Alhambra.

The information that guides this project...the frequency of trains and passengers, the different transit speeds, the frequencies of passage and stops...make up one section, which gives rise to different spatial areas and arrhythmic light frequencies, that can travel at different speeds: from the train itself, from the carriages that pass through incidentally, moving slowly inside or fleetingly with a glance. This is what allows the city to embrace the traveller, all travellers, from here...and from there.

The Station program is formed by different levels, identified here by the height at which they are linked.

partVI. THE PROGRAM

Height +659:

Platforms and exit to sloping gardens. At this level the trains arrive and depart. The station has 9 tracks, of which 8 are for passengers and one is linked to the R.E.N.F.E. cargo storage area, used for a sleeper train, or if not, for breakdowns. The traveller can choose between different points to emerge onto the ground level from the platforms. The first, at the head of the station, leads to the sloping gardens. From here, he can also access levels 1 (height +664) and 2 (height +665.65, from which we access the sleeper train) of the car park. The second exit will take the traveller to the city with a splendid view of the Alhambra hill, due to the cross section of the project, emerging onto a square, a meeting place, a public area partly open and partly covered.

Height +664:

Plaza Mirador of La Alhambra level

This is the level at which the project is linked to the nearby university facilities. Here we find the descent to the platforms from the Plaza Mirador, the bus interchange, and a series of services that adapt the program to the traveller's needs (express coffee shop, VIP lounge, luggage check-in, courier service, left luggage, and a shopping area). The level can also be reached by vehicular traffic through the street inside the station, which accesses all of the facilities of the various public areas and car park.

Height +669:

Station access level

This is the level at which the project is linked to the Los Pajaritos quarter. The level of the current access from Avenida de Andaluces. From this route, anyone walking to the station will see there is no façade strictly speaking, since this is lowered down onto the floor when one looks out over the patio that exposes the platforms, the Plaza Mirador, the travellers arriving or departing, the students crossing the sloping gardens... This will be where we can buy our tickets and go down the escalators or go to the R.E.N.F.E. offices.

Height +673:

Access level to audiovisual rooms and La Vega mirador restaurant.

This is the level where the program starts to diversify, understanding that the building has a privileged location in the north area of our city, equipped with few facilities where interesting and popular activities can be carried out. Therefore, and due to the proximity to the university, a series of audiovisual rooms are designed, which float above the tracks, thus providing views in two directions, towards the Alhambra and La Vega, filtered through the metal fabric (technological drying shed) that forms the building enclosure in this Vega – Alhambra direction. This will also be the access level to the hotel on the east wing, looking over the sloping gardens and linked to the shopping area. The retail program has been divided into small cells that will duplicate, triplicate, and so on so forth depending on the public that wants to hire and use it. This variability is shown in the project by identifying each cell with a different colour depending on the size. The aim is for the façade in this area to be expressive and variable, with a given identity depending on the use it contains, as if the different textures of the shops spoke for themselves.

Height +677:

Departure level from audiovisual rooms and shopping area

Height +681:

Shopping area/offices level



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