

Barcelona's World Heritage Sites

Architecture is the great book of humanity

Victor Hugo
Year 2006

PARK GÜELL (1900-1914)

The Park Güell has been a World Heritage Site since UNESCO added it to its list of cultural assets in 1984. The inscription of a landmark such as this on the World Heritage List is a privilege for the country as well as a responsibility because it needs to be preserved and protected. The Park Güell project, commissioned by Eusebi Güell, originated within the urban and bourgeois phenomenon represented by the Catalan art nouveau movement, *modernisme*, through one of the key figures in contemporary architecture, Antoni Gaudí.

The park was based on the English garden-city concept, and evolved as a luxury development comprising some 60 detached dwellings for families. A group of houses standing above the village of Gràcia, on the so-called *Muntanya Pelada*, or Bald Mountain, designed for Barcelona's moneyed classes. At the time this was a sparsely populated area comprising two houses, Can Muntaner de Dalt and Can Coll i Pujol. The land was stony and extremely uneven, and had no water source. The park project paid painstaking attention to every aesthetic and functional detail, and turned to good account the colours of the natural setting, including solutions to problems such as collecting river water by taking advantage of the sloping terrain. However, the outbreak of the First World War, and the scant interest in the project, turned Güell and Gaudí's design plan into a commercial failure. What should have been a large-scale development was reduced to three plots of land: one for the Trias family, one for the Güell family and another for Gaudí. Initially, the architect hadn't thought about buying one of the houses, but his father was in poor health and the climatic conditions of the area, the setting and aspect were decisive factors which led to Gaudí keeping one of the plots. In 1906 Gaudí and his family moved there.

A unique space

The estate that was originally intended to house a large number of family homes became a vast park instead, with numerous paths and slopes. The initial project for the market, main square and multiple entryways made it possible for the space created by Gaudí to give the impression that the park was, as some have called it, a '*utopian vision of paradise lost*'. The park is criss-crossed with tracks and paths designed for the carriages of the era, with several entrances and two buildings topped by domes and clad in the famous *trencadís* – multicoloured mosaic collage made from broken tiles. A long curving bench, which has been described as the longest abstract painting in the world, encloses the plaza of the Greek Theatre, and was created in association with the architect Jujol. Gaudí was a great urban planner and the creator of unique spaces, and once again left his imprint on the Park Güell, where we can see reflected his ideas of symbiosis between man and nature.

A pergola of parabolic arches, designed by Gaudí, stands in the garden of the house where he lived. There are also a number of elements in the house and garden associated with Gaudí's projects, such as two grilles from the Casa Vicens and

furnishings and fittings from the Casa Milà. In the hall stands a bronze bust of Antoni Gaudí by Joan Matamala. Other important features are the Güell-Jujol-Berenguer room which houses a bronze bust of Eusebi Güell, a portrait in oils of Count Güell, sketches by Jujol and objects donated by Berenguer. The house also contains a library dedicated to Enric Casanellas, a tribute to the man who was the secretary of the Association of the Friends of Gaudí.

In 1922 the park was purchased by the municipal council and opened to the public in 1923. Antoni Gaudí lived there alone for 20 years and, on his death, he left the house in his will to the board of trustees of the Sagrada Família to defray the economic problems which the church had been beset with since building work began. The board then decided to sell the house to an Italian couple, and it was inherited by one of their nephews who offered it years later to the Association of Friends of Gaudí. In 1963, the house opened as a new cultural facility in Barcelona. In 1992, ownership was transferred back to the board of trustees.

THE SAGRADA FAMÍLIA (1914 - ?)

The church of the Sagrada Família – inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2005 – is Spain’s most visited landmark and the world’s only major church currently under construction. Although it is Gaudí’s most important and ambitious work, it was not an original initiative of his, but a commission he received from the church’s board of directors, following the resignation of the person in charge of building work until then, Francisco de Paula Villar. The developer was Josep Maria Bocabella, who had founded the spiritual association the Devotees of Saint Joseph in 1866.

In 1883, Gaudí was appointed director of the project but he didn’t focus his attention on the construction of this great church until 1914, expecting it would only take ten years to build. In order to supervise the building work in person, Gaudí decided to move into the Sagrada Família, a major masterpiece, as Le Corbusier described it in 1920 when he visited the building site. A sanctuary which stands between the streets of Mallorca, Provença, Sardenya and Marina on the right-hand side of Barcelona’s Eixample district.

This cathedral, which has its origins in a church for the poor, is a work dedicated to the glory of God, an artificial mount rising skywards. Inspired by medieval cathedrals with three doorways which lead into each of the naves that intersect with the central aisle, the Sagrada Família rises up in the middle of Barcelona, in the style of a neo-Gothic building, covering an area of 12,800 square metres. Although it is true that, at the present time, eight of the 18 towers that were originally planned have been completed –12 of them dedicated to Jesus’s disciples, four to the evangelists and the two remaining ones to the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ – when Gaudí died in 1926, only the Tower of Saint Barnaby had been built. This means that the architect was only directly responsible for the Nativity Façade, the tower and part of the crypt. According

to Salvador Dalí, the Nativity Façade was a masterpiece of ornamentation built with the help of harmonic resonances. Nevertheless, the project also envisaged two additional façades, the Passion Façade and the Glory Façade, each of them crowned by very tall towers standing 100 metres above the ground. In this project, Gaudí worked on the impact of rays of light in each corner of the church, and explored the musical potential of the oratory – he endeavoured to ensure that the sound of the bells and the organ (which would be activated by an electronic keyboard) would sound in unison, and that the entire city could hear the bells from the towers on the west side of the church. A work shaped like a cathedral with multicoloured mosaics which change and transform from light to enlightenment.

Gaudí: “It won’t be possible to complete the church within the lifetime of a single generation...”

Today, building work is able to continue as a result of donations and inheritances. Following Gaudí’s death, other architects were appointed to work on the project, such as Domènec i Sugranyes, Francesc Quintana, Isidre Puig Boada and Matamala. During the sixties, a group of intellectuals from the decorative arts association FAD spoke out in favour of stopping building work due to the few plans left by Gaudí, arguing that the church was ill-suited to the needs of modern society. As Gaudí quite rightly predicted in written documents discovered after his death, the Sagrada Família was to be an architectural project lasting many generations: *“It won’t be possible to complete the church within the lifetime of a single generation, so let us leave our vigorous imprint, and let the coming generations feel the stimulus to do the rest, so we shouldn’t fetter ourselves with the completion of the building”*. Jordi Bonet is the architect currently in charge of the project and, today, the crypt and the Nativity façade have both been completed. The Passion and Glory façades remain under construction, as do the apse and cloister. Building work has not yet begun on the baptistry, the vestry or chapels. In 2007, it will be 125 years since the first stone of the great church of the Sagrada Família was laid.

LA PEDRERA (1906 -1910)

La Pedrera, or Casa Milà, is one of the most imaginative works Gaudí bequeathed to us. The building is located at number 92, Passeig de Gràcia, one of Barcelona’s main boulevards, and was commissioned from Antoni Gaudí by the Milà family, after he had finished work on the Casa Batlló, which had garnered great acclaim. In 1984, UNESCO inscribed La Pedrera on its World Heritage List. The fact is that Gaudí’s great quality is his timelessness, capable of being the embodiment of a significant period. His work was highly prized by the prosperous classes but never went out of style, bearing a unique and exceptional testimony to an era, and a cultural tradition.

This architect, who created impossible forms, as some have so rightly said, accepted the Milà family's commission, and designed two dwellings with separate entrances but linked by the same frontage. A frontage converted into an interplay between the convex and concave, creating a plastic effect that gives the impression of movement, like the waves of the sea or ripples of the desert. Naval engineering techniques were applied to the construction of the building, and models were used, some of them life size. The blocks of rough-hewn stone used on the façade were cut in situ at the quarry, an unusual procedure at the time. And it is precisely because the Casa Milà is reminiscent of a quarry that it is known locally by the name La Pedrera (quarry in Catalan). In truth, it resembles a sculpture more than the building it actually is. A building with an impressive façade which is transformed into a mass of undulating stone, with no straight lines, and wrought-iron balconies which imitate plant motifs. We also know that Gaudí's original plans envisaged the inclusion of a sculptural grouping of the Virgin and archangels, which was to stand 5 metres in height. However, the sculpture was never made, at the request of the Milà family. The building is in a remarkable condition, and although there are areas which are closed to visitors, the building is bursting with fantasy and imagination, such as the rooftop, for instance. A rooftop which is an abstract sculpture in itself and seems in constant motion. It features connected elements and continuous sinuous, curvilinear and rippling forms. Myriad shapes which alternate between shiny and matt. The chimneys also tie in with the originality of the whole design and are covered with small pieces of glass which change colour with the patina of the smoke. Their shape is reminiscent of a warrior.

Dalí: "His houses are for erotomaniacs, where you can dream as well as live"

La Pedrera, is a playful and supple work of fantasy, which is clearly Mediterranean in inspiration. It is a building designed with a clear intent, as was characteristic of the architect, in which he sought to build organic worlds which would give a feeling of life. Time and time again, Dalí, when extolling the *modernista* architect's work, defined his houses and buildings as spaces designed to live and dream in, where every detail was imbued with its own personality and painstaking attention was paid to the aesthetics, which were also functional, and were in themselves small works of art. Proof of this is found in the fact that there are no load-bearing walls and the building is supported by strategically placed girders and pillars. This is why the interior layout could be easily altered. The fine work of the ironsmiths and plasterers – in this building in particular – and each artisan, all helped imbue each corner with a magical beauty. Courtyards were also built which provided access to the coach houses in the basement, where today there is a car park. A basement with exposed brick arches.

THE CASA BATLLÓ (1904-1906)

Antoni Gaudí's Casa Batlló is among the nine buildings in Barcelona inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is a work which belongs to the world's

architectural legacy and is also part of Gaudí's extraordinary contribution to Catalan architecture and identity.

The Casa Batlló is the result of the renovation of a building – constructed in 1877 – at number 43, Passeig de Gràcia. Gaudí's imagination and creativity, together with the ideas of the architect Jujol, made the project into an exceptional example of the refurbishment of a dwelling. It incorporated a new concept of ornamentation and decoration which sought to capture more daylight by making it easier for light to pass through the building. The roof is clad in polychrome ceramic tiles, creating a mosaic which gives a feeling of greater luminosity and catches the light at sunset. When it came to embellishing and adorning the building, Gaudí surrounded himself with a team of artisans – sculptors, contractors, interior designers, specialists in wrought-ironwork, plasterers, stained-glass artists –, who worked with him on this project. It is a type of architecture that uses locally sourced materials and incorporates the shapes and colours of the surroundings as ornamentation. A great interest in all the conformations, figures and structures drawn from nature is also seen. Thus, form, colour and texture are worked jointly and, as Gaudí's architecture shows very well, he insists on the unification of all the aesthetic dimensions. Gaudí refurbished the former building, at the behest of Mr Batlló, basing the project on a new layout for the block.

The House of Bones or carnival

The refurbishment was carried out by adding a fifth storey, widening the lobby, building a basement and rebuilding the interior staircase and walls of the apartments – this led to the subsequent rebuilding of the rooms inside, thereby creating a space of curves with no right angles throughout the house. The Casa Batlló is also renowned for its natural ventilation system and the furnishings designed by Gaudí himself – some are still in the building while others belong the holdings of the National Art Museum of Catalonia, the MNAC. Like all artworks, the Casa Batlló has been the subject of a variety of interpretations. The two which are the most widespread say that it is either the symbolic recreation of the legend of Saint George or a metaphor for carnival. The first has been supported by a number of arguments based on the similarity of the mosaic tiles to the skin of a dragon, and some shapes and materials to the bones and skulls of the possible victims of the fight between Saint George and the dragon. This is why the building is also known as the House of Bones. As far as the comparison with a carnival is concerned, some of the materials used reveal Gaudí's intention to evoke confetti, ball masks and even harlequin's hats.

The Casa Batlló (1904-1906) has been restored on a number of occasions but is still in an exceptional condition. It remains one of Gaudí's most important works, due to its symbolism, richness of colour, the variety of materials used – brick, iron, ceramics and wood, to name just a few – as well as his contribution to geometry and new design and building techniques which tie in with some of the characteristics of surrealism, cubism, expressionism and constructivism.

PALAU GÜELL 1886-1889

In 1986, UNESCO inscribed the Palau Güell on its World Heritage List. When it was built, it was one of the most luxurious buildings in Barcelona and was another of the commissions Antoni Gaudí received from his patron Count Eusebi Güell. A palazzo designed with a square ground plan, which the Count planned to use for major celebrations. This town house, which stands at number 3, Carrer Nou de la Rambla, was designed by Gaudí between 1886 and 1889, tying in with another major event hosted by the city: the 1888 Universal Exhibition. However, the decoration and furnishings were not completed until later.

The Palau Güell reveals a highly original design. The aim of the commission was to show, in some way, the social and economic status of the Count. A palazzo which stood in an area that many people at the time considered downmarket, but was adjacent to another of the Güell's houses. Güell asked the young architect to build a palazzo-style mansion which would connect both residences.

The main façade, built with coloured stone from the quarry on the Garraf Coast owned by the Count, has two doorways bearing the initials 'E' and 'G', which stand for Eusebi Güell, and the Catalan coat of arms, a symbol of Catalan identity and the art-nouveau, or *modernista*, period which formed the backdrop to Gaudí's architecture. However, the building has its own, unique style which cannot be solely classified as *modernista* and the rear façade is more sober in style. The entrance, designed for carriages and horses, also shows the meticulous calculations carried out regarding the functional nature of the building, and gives the impression that every aspect had been considered so that when someone entered the building, they could leave their carriage – on their way to the courtyard – and connect directly with the stairs leading into the house. Inside, there is no shortage of good taste and elegance and we find marble columns and a ceiling studded with precious stones which harks back to the Arabic Mudejar style. Privacy and safety are also two premises which conditioned the design of the building, and parabolic arches – constant features in Gaudí's work – do not have a merely structural function, and seem to be there to give protection from the inquisitive stares of passers-by. Slatted screens, designed so that the householders could observe newly arrived visitors, reveal the architect's intention to protect his client from possible thieves and opportunists.

A caliph's house to showcase the economic and social power of a member of the bourgeoisie

This is an ostentatious building with an impressive cupola with small openings which let light in. The gallery with its wooden venetian blinds decorated with ceramics, the abundant marquetry work, the lighting system, the conical ventilators and the famous *trencadís* technique – which Gaudí used here for the first time, when he covered surfaces with small pieces of broken tile, to achieve a mosaic effect –, make us aware that this is a unique building. It has a spacious living room, a private chapel, music

room and parlour and the entire building is imbued with a religious atmosphere. The highly original rooftop and chimneys are well worth a visit, as are the furnishings and a number of art objects. We know that the Count lived here for a time until, in 1910, he moved to the house built for him by Gaudí in the Park Güell. Some years later, during the Spanish Civil War, the house was ransacked by a group of anarchists, who are thought to have been responsible for the theft and possible destruction of a statue which has never been seen again.

The Palau Güell was sold to Barcelona Regional Council to house the Museum of the Performing Arts. The building is in quite good condition, considering that it has been redeveloped a number of times since the 1970s.

CASA VICENS 1883-1888

The Casa Vicens was Gaudí's first project for a private house. It was a commission Antoni Gaudí received from Manuel Vicens i Montaner. A very imaginative project for a family that owned a ceramics factory, as the façade of the building shows. The house stands at number 24, Carrer Carolines in Barcelona, and was a summer residence with a garden and fountain – although there are no traces of the latter.

The plans placed the house on one side of the garden, in order to make the maximum use of the site. The building is cheerfully coloured and highly original due to the large number of tiles used on the outside and inside, and ubiquitous ceramic embellishments. Gaudí's associates thought the building would be unstable – some believed it would collapse –, but nothing could have been further from the truth. The architect worked hard to ensure the building had a totally secure structure that would be able to support its own weight, despite the design difficulties this entailed. The purely decorative minarets, the grilles over the windows – with *modernista* flourishes and references to the windows of medieval castles – as well as the wrought-iron serpents which twist and turn across the façade – a symbol of longevity, nature and eternity – show the architect's desire to create a completely unique space. A fusion of styles where we once again find the Arabic Mudejar style which seems to have had such an influence on all Gaudí's work.

There are also references to Arabic architecture inside the building, on the ceiling for instance, which features paintings of birds. These are mathematical designs with floral motifs that play with stone and glass. An example is one of the doors in a room which seeks to create the effect of a stained-glass window by superimposing different layers and thicknesses of glass with wood in order to achieve gradations of colour. The use of colour in the building reveals to us that Gaudí could not envisage architecture without tiles. The quadricular distribution of the tiles is also characteristic of this work. The interior columns, garlanded with fruit, also make clear the architect's desire to create a unique living space.

Gaudí, the first environmental architect

A building which perfectly reflects its location, as is illustrated by the fact that Gaudí included yellow flowers in the tiles, after having seen them growing on the site before building work began. This is why, at times, he has been considered the first environmental architect. Throughout his career he was obsessed with using locally sourced materials and remaining true to the environment around his work, seeking out the perfect harmony between them. The painstakingly crafted wood and wrought ironwork, the decorative paintings, and the different applications of plaster, ceramics and red brick, show Antoni Gaudí's ability to incorporate groundbreaking design, building techniques and architectural concepts into this first project, which provided a taster of things to come.

CRYPT OF THE CHURCH AT THE COLÒNIA GÜELL 1898 – 1916

The crypt of the church at the Colònia Güell, in the village of Santa Coloma de Cervelló, near Barcelona, was classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 2005. Gaudí received the commission from Count Güell as part of his model industrial village, a cluster of cottages which housed the workers from the textile mill he owned. Despite the fact that it was to be a major architectural project, the church was the only part of the commission to be built, the so-called church of the crooked columns.

Antoni Gaudí undertook this commission as a testing-ground for the subsequent construction of the Sagrada Família: an *experiment in social engineering*, as he is known to have said on so many occasions. For the first time, the architect used a system of parabolic arches incorporating Catalan vaults and a revolutionary load-bearing system. He made constant use of undulating geometric forms and combined materials such as brick, stone and basalt. Brick was used to support lighter loads, stone – extracted from Count Güell's quarry in Garraf – for heavier loads, and basalt – the most primitive material – for the heaviest elements, such as the central cupola. The columns conceal parabolic forms and were perfectly calculated and meticulously studied to allow maximum visibility of the altar from anywhere in the crypt. It seems incredible how they can remain upright as, visually, they give the impression that the load-bearing system is inadequate.

In order to achieve his aims, and in this case in the building of the crypt, Gaudí only conceived function, form and ornamentation in an integrated way. Thus, the rustic façade is perfectly integrated into its setting, and the porch is decorated with the classic *trencadis* – small pieces of irregular mosaic –, with plant motifs and geometric forms. Inside the crypt, most of the windows are made of stained glass, with cross motifs and protected by very fine metal grilles which required weaving needles from Count Güell's factory. The ventilation shafts are covered with grilles. In other corners, the architect

recreates folds or fabrics in wrought iron, which echo the fact that it is the crypt of the textile mill. Antoni Gaudí designed the furniture inside the crypt, including the pews which were shaped in such a way as to ensure the congregation sat properly, didn't lose concentration or relax too much and stayed awake.

The building techniques which made it possible for Gaudí to build the crypt show that it involved a system that pays painstaking attention to detail, and the architect had to build a model of the entire church made from ropes and bags filled with lead shot moulded directly from nature. Gaudí was thus able to bring mechanical, geometric, building and artistic factors into perfect harmony.

ANTONI GAUDÍ

An autodidact of world renown

Antoni Gaudí was born in Reus, in the province of the Baix Camp¹ on 25th June 1852. From a very early age he showed an interest in drawing and architecture and contributed to several weekly publications, such as the magazine *L'Arlequín*. Years later he took classes from the master Berenguer of Reus.

In 1869, Antoni Gaudí and his family moved to Barcelona where he enrolled at the School of Architecture. To pay for his studies, he collaborated with Josep Fontserè on his Ciutadella Park and Born Market projects. He obtained his degree in architecture in 1878. That same year, he met Eusebi Güell – who had been made a count as a result of his faith and generosity as a patron of the arts and for ennobling Barcelona's heritage – who would be his patron and would provide him with the commissions for many of his projects. Later, other members of the bourgeoisie followed his example, making Gaudí's civil architecture greater and more highly regarded. Gaudí had strong religious beliefs and his relationship with specific members of the church led him to design projects of religious architecture. Antoni Gaudí died on 7th June 1926, as the result of an accident in which he was struck by a tram. He was buried in the crypt of the Sagrada Família, the architect's supreme masterpiece. However, the design of the church was not his idea and, although Gaudí devoted the last years of his life to the project, he didn't live to see building work completed. A building which, in his words, would see many generations before it reached completion.

After associating Gaudí with the spheres of symbology, magic and the occult, he was considered a precursor of modernity, of the geometry that had yet to come. He was an autodidact who took advantage of the resources of mechanical science and industry by offering novel and innovative technical solutions. At the same time, in the endeavour

¹ It isn't clear whether he was born in Reus or Riudoms - a village next to Reus, although Gaudí had close links with Reus as he went to school in the town and later worked there.

to avoid falling into the contradictions he thought inherent to the modern style, and always with recourse to nature as an element for artistic renewal with the idea of blending all the plastic arts, he contributed to embellishing the urban landscape with colour and plasticity, from his discipline, with a combination of ceramics, glass, wrought iron and sgraffito work. His works have been described as baroque in style, original and tremendously utilitarian.

Gaudí's work is one of Barcelona's main icons. The architect set out to find forms that would reflect the age he lived in and he achieved this aim by associating himself with the European trends of the time, eschewing the type of work he had done until then and making a commitment to identification through the relationship between the work and designer. A philosophy associated with modern architecture which is expressed through very different art forms which feature new materials and new ways of working with them. As a result of his mastery of the techniques he himself invented, Antoni Gaudí became one of the greatest exponents of Catalan architecture and a master builder. An architect who changed the concept of architecture by approaching logically the technical problems which could not be resolved by simple aesthetics. The fact is that Gaudí's architecture is a type which, as Le Corbusier said at the time when speaking about geometry as a solution to the problems of architecture, remains upright due to meticulous geometric calculations.

It is no easy task to classify the different artistic phases of Gaudí's career, as many of the periods when his works were being built overlap, and some were in the planning stages while others were being built. Nevertheless, we can talk about Gaudí's **early years when he was an assistant to other architects** and his work consisted of very specific designs, such as furniture, decorative elements and mechanical details. The next period of Gaudí's work bore the **influence of Arabic design** because the architect – as he was wont to say – admired their skills in applying mechanics to their buildings. His projects also included a **revision of the Gothic**, a new phase for this style which does not seem to have reached its full potential during the actual Gothic period but was able to develop fully during Gaudí's time. After Gaudí had perfected the Gothic, his subsequent creations fell within a period known as **expressionist naturalism** which is the essence of the *modernista* period, which he began by working with structure and finally perfected with the plastic. The final phase of the architect's career is known as the period of **organic synthesis**, in other words, the period when function created the organic and the plastic and the structure became a whole, like nature.

PALAU DE LA MÚSICA CATALANA 1905-1908

The Palau de la Música Catalana, the work of the *modernista* architect **Lluís Domènech i Montaner**, is one of the world's leading concert halls. In 1971, the intrinsic value of the building was officially acknowledged when it was classified as a monument of artistic and historic interest, and in 1997, it was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. This means that this first-class music venue, which is a project of

the Orfeó Català,² has been recognised for its aesthetic and architectural value as well as its status as a historic landmark.

The Palau de la Música, is an artistic wonder which was originally only devoted to music. Nowadays, it is taking the initiative to concern itself with culture, social events, leisure and business. With the aim of opening up to the world, being cosmopolitan and pioneering, the Palau has always sought to adapt to the demands of a society which is evolving and ever intent on preserving Catalan cultural values. The Palau comprises a major concert hall, and a new magical venue in the shape of a glass box with a central light well. The sculpture on the façade by Miquel Blay clearly shows its desire to preserve Catalan traditional song. The motif of the four stripes of the Catalan flag, which is to be found throughout the building, and had to be hidden by curtains during the Spanish Civil War, is a good example of this desire to preserve Catalan culture.

The lobby, flanked by two ornate lampposts which are characteristic of turn-of-the-century Barcelona, a number of busts depicting famous composers and a column with floral motifs, are good examples of the importance of decoration and the complementary arts in the *modernista* aesthetic. Details such as skylights, multicoloured stained glass, constant combinations of exposed brick and ceramic ornamentations, are also some of the elements displayed by the Palau de la Música and the skill of those artist and artisans who worked with the architect Domènech i Montaner. A building which reflects the national Catalan character and also reveals great architectural talent, with fabulous decorations inspired by Hispano-Arabic architecture and curvilinear patterns. Domènech i Montaner already applied here some groundbreaking architectural solutions such as the iron structure, and multicoloured mosaics and stained-glass windows.

New spaces which increase the functionality of the Palau de la Música

Also worth mentioning are a number of spaces which were originally intended for the exclusive use of the choral ensemble, the Orfeó Català and are now open to the general public, such as the foyer and the Luis Millet room – named after the founder of the Orfeó. Since it opened, the Palau remained unchanged until, in 1983, the architect Òscar Tusquets undertook the first extension and refurbishment project of the Palau. Later, in 2004, new refurbishments were carried out and some of the facilities extended. A recent addition is the Petit Palau, a concert hall of extraordinary dimensions and acoustics which hosts chamber music concerts and congresses, and also has its own recording studio and modern technical, acoustic and audiovisual equipment. There is a venue known as ‘Espais del S.XXI’ (Spaces of the 21st Century), which hosts meetings, presentations, press conferences and small-scale social events, and a rehearsal room, a restaurant and an open-air plaza where celebrations are held.

² A Catalan cultural institution for the last 100 years.

HOSPITAL DE LA SANTA CREU I DE SANT PAU 1901-1930

In 1997, UNESCO inscribed the Hospital de Sant Pau i de la Santa Creu on its World Heritage List. The building, which was way ahead of its time, was designed by the architect **Lluís Domènech i Montaner**, one of the leading figures of Catalonia's home-grown art-nouveau movement *modernisme*.

The origins of the Hospital de la Santa Creu date back to the fifteenth century. In 1401, the Catalan governing council decided that it was necessary to bring together the city's six existing hospitals on one site. Hundreds of years later, at the end of the 19th century, advances in medicine meant changes and more modern facilities were necessary. A site was found for the new hospital and in 1902, building work began, under the supervision of Domènech i Montaner. He had previous experience working on another hospital project, the Institut Pere Mata in Reus (Tarragona) and applied his knowledge and the new techniques he had acquired to the new project. Building work lasted 18 years, and was brought to a halt halfway through, due to lack of funding. In 1930, the name Sant Pau (Saint Paul) was added to the Hospital de la Santa Creu, in honour of the building's patron, the banker Pau Gil.

The hospital complex covers a surface area of 300 square metres. The project originally envisaged 48 pavilions, but the number was reduced to 27 separate pavilions which were used for the different medical specialities. They were all connected together by an underground gallery which facilitated access between the buildings. The hospital comprises a series of technical facilities and also has a library and chapel. It is renowned for its paintings and mosaics as well as its elaborate wrought ironwork. A hospital building which takes into account every possibility for better medical attention.

Catalan government Gold Medal

In the year 2001 – the year of its 600th anniversary – this exceptional architectural ensemble received the Catalan government's Gold Medal. The Hospital de Sant Pau i de la Santa Creu is imbued with a carefully executed ornamental language, characteristic of the *modernista* period, in which nature is understood and instrumentalised as a healthy, pure element for the spirit, and brought closer through the use of stained glass. The Hospital de Sant Pau reveals a specific *modernista* aesthetic, close to French *art nouveau*. The figures, sculptures, gargoyles, friezes and reliefs are by the sculptor Pau Gargalló.