



The Vallcarca cement factory on the Mediterranean coast (above) and a rendering of perspective of the district with mixed uses.

Mias Architects and OUA / Vallcarca NEXT / Barcelona

New life for an old cement factory

The Vallcarca cement factory was opened just outside Sitges, approximately 40 km south of Barcelona, in 1903. Nestled on the Mediterranean coast at the foot of the Garraf limestone massif, it was accessible by road, sea, and rail. Vallcarca went on to become one of the most dynamic cement factories in Spain, with more than 2,000 workers and their families living in the surrounding area. In total, at its peak, the area had a population of 5,500 people.

More than a century later, the end of cement production and the progressive abandonment of the factory opened the door to its transformation. The ideas ranged from the demolition and naturalisation of the site, incorporating the entirety of the space into the Garraf Natural Park, to its regeneration for a new use. This proposal was the one presented by the owners of the cement plant and which has the support, to differing extents, of the public administrations.

The 'Vallcarca Next' masterplan is now being drafted. It aims to completely reinvent the old factory and provide it with new uses and activities. The masterplan's authors are

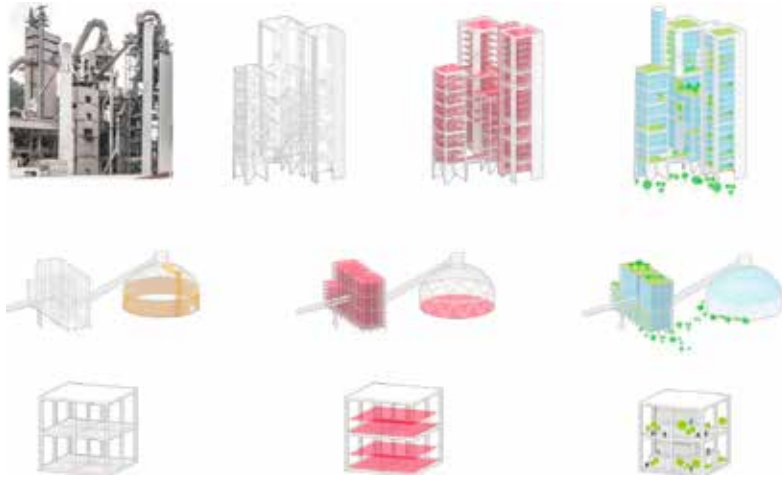
Barcelona-based studios Mias Architects and OUA, under the direction of the architects Josep Miàs and Jordi Artigas. Based on regeneration projects from across Europe, the urban plan envisages the transformation of a total of 49 ha, 21 ha of which would host new functions specific to an innovation and knowledge campus, especially focussing on technology and audio-visual production. Commercial, recreational, and residential uses are also planned, including a high proportion of affordable housing, with the aim of turning Vallcarca Next into a new district with mixed uses that is well connected to Barcelona and its airport by train and road. However, residential uses are the most controversial; regulations in Catalonia are very strict, and the government has gone so far as to approve plans that slow down or even reverse construction on the coast.

The architectural rehabilitation of the different buildings is one of the most prominent plans, respecting the buildings and their volume with a view to preserving the historical memory of the site and considering its industrial past as heritage. The train station and the port,

LOCATION Sitges (Barcelona, Spain)
PROJECT Vallcarca Next innovation
DESIGNERS Mias Architects/OUA (Josep Miàs and Jordi Artigas)
COMMISSIONED BY Cementos Portland Valderrivas S.A. Group
SURFACE 49 ha
DESIGN PERIOD 2022
REALISATION 2030

which would be converted from industrial to recreational use as a new marina, would also be recovered.

The remainder of the former complex, spanning 28 ha, would be included within the limits of the natural park, thus affecting the restoration of the landscape. The inclusion of vegetation throughout the project is worth mentioning, as are multiple green spaces that reinforce the site's aesthetic and ecological qualities. The incorporation of landscape criteria has been formalised in the construction of a riverside park following the stream that



The architectural strategy: maintaining the structure and provide them with new functions.

Impression of Vallcarca Next at daylight.



crosses the space. The master-plan comprehensively reflects the principles of sustainability and the commitment to giving pedestrians priority use of the public space.

Vallcarca Next contains a variety of spatial, social, and conceptual attributes that make it a unique mixed-use regeneration project, including in terms of its location, history, and characteristics. A one-of-a-kind undertaking.

Narcis Sastre



The clinker silo will be recovered as a flexible space for shows and events related to the audiovisual culture characteristic of Sitges.

Vallcarca Next at night.

