

The legacy of Barcelona 1992

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Abstract

Barcelona 1992 was a unique and pivotal edition of the Olympic Games. The award of the event provided an impetus for the city to advance its urban redevelopment strategy, which existed before the host city nomination, and continued after the Games had ended. The strategy facilitated major transformation of the public realm, expansion of amenities, regeneration of the economy, and global repositioning of the city to promote its status as an International and democratic Western nation after the Franco regime (1936-1975) [1]. It heralded a new phase of commercialisation and regeneration in Olympic development, setting a benchmark for future Olympic cities and initiating a reinvention of the criterion by which to judge whether or not an Olympic Games had been a success [2]. The resurgence of Barcelona was driven by inspired city leaders, in particular, architect, urban planner, and city Councilor Oriol Bohigas, the ‘mind’ and masterplanner of the Games. In pursuit of an ambitious yet pragmatic urban strategy and quality architectural infrastructure, Bohigas orchestrated new constructions by influential architects such as Alvaro Siza (Meteorology Center), Arata Isozaki (Palau Sant Jordi), David Mackay (Olympic Village), Frank Gehry (Golden Fish Sculpture), Norman Foster (Torre de Collserola), Ricardo Bofill (New Airport Terminal), Santiago Calatrava (Montjuïc Communications Tower), and Vittorio Gregotti (Estadi Olímpic). The Olympic development in Barcelona assembled International acclaim and resulted in the assignment of the prestigious RIBA Gold Medal to the city in 1999, representing a new era for the esteemed award, which had never previously been extended to a city rather than an individual [3]. International architectural practices involved in the resurgence of Barcelona created a trend for future Olympic Games. In 2017, Barcelona celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the XXV Olympiad with a special programme of cultural and sporting events to reflect the importance and commend the lasting legacy of the 1992 Olympic Games. This paper is a review of the context and design solutions that shaped the long-standing legacy of Barcelona 1992. Building upon previous research, the study applies a case-study approach to evaluate the infrastructural impacts of the Games in the city, and their subsequent influence on the development and future of Olympic architecture and engineering.

References

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