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# The feminist perspective as a counterpoint in the architecture of Anna Bofill (1977–1996)

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The vast and plural production of the woman architect, musician, activist, occasional educator and tireless researcher Anna Bofill Levi (Barcelona, 1944) is characterized by certain features that make its author a unique personality, although one hardly known and recognized in the Spanish and international circles that are the custodians of prestige in architecture. She has achieved most public recognition as a composer, the field in which she has been most productive over time and developed the furthest. Her music is characterized by the number of references, especially contemporary, she includes, the wide diversity of countries where it has been performed, and the range of people to whom she has dedicated her works, all these aspects testifying to her cosmopolitan and libertarian spirit and her commitment to equality. Her incessant writing, with all the reading it entails, has also left us with a large body of written work, extending over a number of fields, including most notably her reflections on the influence of the gender-based perspective on urban planning. A factor also reflected in her architecture, for example, in the implementation of participatory processes in her project designs. She joined the Taller de Arquitectura from the time she began her studies at the School of Architecture in Barcelona in 1964—she graduated in 1972—, and then commenced her independent career in 1981, although her first solo works date from 1977. Her work at the head of her office for almost 20 years is evidence of a tireless capacity for work and an unwavering commitment to people's welfare. This paper analyses Anna Bofill's contributions to feminist thinking through her work as an architect. Also, it addresses the study of a cultured person, a woman with great sensitivity and a strong political and personal commitment who has suffered discrimination and who has made rigor and determination the means to achieve her non-negotiable freedom.

## KEYWORDS

feminism, gender, architecture, activism, equality, pioneering women, Anna Bofill

## 1 Introduction: a creative universe

The prolific and protean production of the woman architect, musician, activist, occasional educator, and tireless researcher Anna Bofill Levi (Barcelona, 1944) is characterized by certain features that mark its author as a unique personality, although hardly known and recognized in the Spanish and international circles that confer prestige (awards, professional magazines, monographs, etc.) in architecture. She has achieved her greatest renown, and dedicated herself most intensely and continuously to her work as a musical composer—in 2009 she was awarded the President Macià Medal for her work by the Catalan Regional Government (Generalitat de Catalunya)—: in fact, her first musical piece, *Esclat*, dates from 1971. Written for chamber orchestra, it was premiered at the

Palau de la Música, at the Barcelona International Music Festival and included in the II San Sebastian Festival of Avant Garde Music in 1974. Her last work, at the time of writing, *Trànsit II*, from 2022, with catalog number 137, mixed electroacoustic, was premiered in the Sala de las Mariposas in the Museum Jorge Rando in Malaga.

She has simultaneously made scenography and incidental music for theater in plays such as *Urfaust* by Goethe (1983) and *Children of a Lesser God* by Mark Medoff (1984). She has also written several pieces and coordinated the music for the stagings of *Cartografies del desig* (1997–1998), presentations in which dramatic recitations, improvised music, videos and performances burst forth, paying homage to “15 women writers and their world” to “delineate a space in which feminine intersubjectivity opens the doors to a new symbolic order toward a new reality” (Marçal, 1998). Her music is characterized by the number of references, especially contemporary, she includes, the wide diversity of countries where it has been performed, the range of people to whom she has dedicated her works, as well as by the authors—mainly women—whose texts are used, all of which speaks volumes about her cosmopolitan and libertarian spirit and her commitment to equality. A mood that permeates her book *Los sonidos del silencio. Aproximación a la historia de la creación musical de las mujeres* (*The Sounds of Silence. An Approach to the History of Women's Musical Creation*), published in 2015 (Bofill Levi, 2015).

Another of Bofill's recurring activities is her writing, and the reading that underpins it. Since 1975, when she received her doctorate in architecture with the thesis *Contribución al estudio de la generación de formas arquitectónicas y urbanas* (*Contribution to the Study of the Generation of Architectural and Urban Forms*) (Bofill Levi, 1975c)—tutored by the mathematician Enrique Trillas Ruiz—, a conceptual support for the works of the Taller de Arquitectura—that same year an extensive article dedicated to the study was published in issue 182 of the journal *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, which she prepared—, to the aforementioned book on the presence of women composers throughout history, she has produced an incessant written output in all fields of her work, with a special focus on the reflections that, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, she made to foster feminist perspectives in the realms of architecture and urban planning. Noteworthy among them are: *Las mujeres y la ciudad: Manual de recomendaciones para una concepción del entorno habitado desde el punto de vista del género* (*Women and the City: A Handbook of Recommendations for a Gendered Approach to the Built Environment*)—in collaboration with sociologist Rosa Maria Dumenjó Martí and historian Isabel Segura Soriano—(Bofill Levi et al., 1998a), *Planejament urbanístic, espais urbans i espais interiors des de la perspectiva de les dones* (*Urban Planning, Urban Spaces and Indoor Spaces from a Women's Perspective*) (Bofill Levi, 2005) and *Guia per al planejament urbanístic i l'ordenació urbanística amb la incorporació de criteris de gènere* (*Guide to Urban Planning and Urban Development with the Incorporation of Gender Criteria*) (Bofill Levi, 2008). These guides are evidence of Anna Bofill's leading feminist activism in the architectural and urban planning fields in the Spanish context.

These aspects are also reflected in her architectural work, for example, in her early implementation of participatory processes in her projects, such as the complex of 100 dwellings for Romani people in Camp de la Bota (1982–1983), and her Escuela Experimental de Enseñanzas Artísticas (Experimental School of

Artistic Learning) in Tàrraga (1983–1988) (Martín Nieva, 2012). Bofill graduated from the Barcelona School of Architecture in 1972—as its 28th woman graduate student—and although she had been a member of the Taller de Arquitectura since she began her studies in 1964, she later left the group in 1981 due to irreconcilable disagreements<sup>1</sup> over their way of understanding the profession, to embark on her own career. However, her first solo works date from 1977. These were small commissions for single-family houses that the Taller de Arquitectura passed on because they were considered minor or irrelevant to its ambitions (see text footnote 1). Bofill Levi worked in the profession until 1996, when she coordinated the European project *Women and the City* from which she published *Libro Blanco* (*White Paper*) (1998)—with the same authors as the *Women and the City* handbook, from which it takes the same title, with the addition of the architect Carmen Martínez Garrote (Bofill Levi et al., 1998b).

Her numerous projects at the head of her office for almost 20 years is evidence of a tireless capacity for work and a commitment to the welfare of the people to whom they are devoted. At the beginning, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, most of her projects were single-family houses. She was particularly active in France, where she also registered as an architect in 1981. From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, her career took off and she undertook major public works exemplified by the Rodalies RENFE Railway Station Plaça Catalunya in Barcelona (1990–1992). From 1992 to 1996 she was coordinator of the Technical Services Department of the Urgell County Council, a particularly rewarding experience for the freedom<sup>2</sup> she had to put into practice her strongest convictions about what the gender-based perspective could bring to architecture and the city.

The aim of this paper is, precisely, to know, make known and highlight the value of these contributions in Anna Bofill's work as a solo architect, which are inseparable from her feminist activism (manifested in lectures, writings, consulting work, teaching and research) and also her music. For this purpose, on the basis of an exhaustive bibliographical review—both of her own writings and writings about her works and idea of architecture—, the mining of both institutional and private archives and visits to document and study her buildings and urban projects, this paper analyses Anna Bofill's work according to a series of parameters that highlight the differentiating factor of her work: the relationship with the physical and cultural geography, the programmatic aspects and the dialectic between the common and the particular, the selection and use of materials, the technological and structural ingenuity and her form creation processes. Of particular interest among these formal issues are compositional patterns, modular layouts, geometric bases and types; concavity vs. convexity and dispersion vs. concentration; inside-outside interaction and interstitial spaces.

Finally, this paper delves into the creative personality of cultured architect and musician, a polyglot and a tireless traveler.<sup>3</sup>

1 Anna Bofill, interview with the authors, Barcelona, March 2023.

2 Anna Bofill, interview with the authors, Barcelona, April 2023.

3 Anna Bofill is fluent in Spanish and Catalan (her mother tongues), Italian (the language in which she was educated), English and French, which has facilitated her exposure to different cultural context and influences throughout her life. She also has some notions of German.

A woman with great sensitivity and a strong political and personal commitment to her non-negotiable freedom. In her architecture, this rigor resides in the composition, which—like the scores of her musical pieces—circumscribes her structures and spaces, their dimensions and articulations. Hence, her feminist perspective causes her to center her projects on the daily life of their inhabitants and thereby on human dignity and its inherent freedoms.

## 2 Materials and methods: studies in conversation with Anna Bofill

In order to achieve the stated objectives, an array of methodologies have been deployed to address the following aspects. Firstly, a complete bibliographical survey of her own writings and works about her architecture. Secondly, the mining—assisted by Anna Bofill herself—of the architect's personal and professional archive, located in her Walden 7 building, where she lives, gave rise to numerous interesting conversations that led to place the projects in context and helped the selection of the most representative ones. Thirdly, the fieldwork, which has led us to understand and experience in person her main architectural works, specifically photographed for the occasion. Finally, in addition to this gathering of materials (written, graphic and photographic) we have formed an analysis from the viewpoint of architectural composition and gender-based perspective, which has allowed us not only to gain an in-depth knowledge of her work, but also to reveal its singularities and contributions to the discipline, as well as its relations with the other areas of Anna Bofill's activity.

Despite Anna Bofill's vast architectural production, her work has so far been the subject matter of just two monographic articles and two book chapters. In 2012, Helena Martín Nieva published “Número y género de dos términos: arquitectura y música en Anna Bofill Levi” (“Number and Gender of Two Terms: Architecture and Music in Anna Bofill Levi”), in the issue 23 of the journal *DC PAPERS*, “Arquitecturas Límite.” This is the architectural theory and criticism journal of the Department of Architectural Theory of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya. In 2015, Cureses wrote the chapter “La estructura-espacio en los proyectos de Anna Bofill: nuevos conceptos del arte sonoro en arquitectura” (“The Structure-Space in Anna Bofill's Projects: New Concepts of Sound Art in Architecture”) in the book *Espacios sonoros y audiovisuales 2013: Creación, representación y diseño (Sound and Audiovisual Spaces 2013: Creation, Representation and Design)*, published by the Centro Superior de Investigación y Promoción de la Música and the Departamento Interfacultativo de Música of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Both titles are evidence of the focus given to their contents, linking music and architecture (Cureses de la Vega, 2015).

However, the paper by Gómez-Collado et al. (2017), “Anna Bofill's Use of Mathematics in Her Architecture,” published in 2017 in the monographic issue of the *Nexus Network Journal* dedicated to “Architecture and Mathematics,” focuses on architecture, as does Franchini's (2021) paper, “Resiliency in Geometric Aggregation and Social Connectivity: Anna Bofill Levi and the Taller de Arquitectura,” a chapter in the book *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems*. In addition to these writings, although the focus is on gender, it should be considered the entry “Anna Bofill,

1944” in the blog *Un día Una arquitecta* written by Muxí (2015). Furthermore, of special relevance is the work of Josenia Hervás and Silvia Blanco-Agüeira “Women Architects outside the Spanish Borders: Patriarchal Models at International Congresses (1939–1975),” published in the special issue of the journal *Arts* devoted in 2020 to the theme “Becoming a Gender Equity Democracy: Women and Architecture Practice in Spain and Portugal (1960s–1980s),” as this is the first paper in which the work of Anna Bofill is approached from a gender-based perspective (Hervás and Blanco-Agüeira, 2020). However, other papers have highlighted her role as a pioneer in feminism and architecture (Muxí and Covaleda, 2013; Muxí and Arias Laurino, 2020). Likewise, her figure and career have been studied in academic works (Bosch i Calvo, 2020) and in the field of architectural dissemination (*Animals Arquitectes: Anna Bofill*, 2023).

Her writings on architecture are concentrated in the time she was a member of the Taller de Arquitectura, providing conceptual and methodological support for its architectural designs and urban projects. Thus, in 1972 Anna Bofill published the translation of a lecture she had previously given in Sweden, “Méthodes mathématiques dans l'architecture,” in the 163–164 double issue of the magazine *Arquitectura*, run by the Official Association of Madrid Architects (Bofill Levi, 1972). The text discusses her research on geometric spatial systems and patterns for the development and growth of architecture, both in extension and in height, and therefore on the intimate relationship between architecture and mathematics, the basis of her doctoral thesis and the Walden 7 project. In 1975, with her undoubted participation, yet not always signed—as her handwritten notes, correspondence, reports and other documents in her archive prove—, “Réaliser l'utopie” was published in the journal *Technique et Architecture* concerning the work of the Taller de Arquitectura, as well as the article “Taller de Arquitectura” in the architectural periodicals *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* and *AD* (Broadbent, 1975), whose July issue carried an expressive drawing of Walden 7 on the cover (Bofill Levi, 1975a,b). In 1978 another spread, this time acknowledged as the author, appeared in the January issue of the German magazine *Bauen + Wohnen* (Bofill Levi, 1978, p. 19–23).

In 1976 she was responsible for the report for the proceedings of the International Conference of Women Architects, Ramsar, Iran, prepared for the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development of the then government of the Imperial State of Iran, under the title “Design as a Response to the People's Dreams,” which was published in the book *The Crisis of Identity in Architecture* (Bofill Levi, 1977). In 1983, she wrote about her works in Perpignan “La Pergola” and “Les Portes de la Mer” in *Architecture Méditerranéenne*, an article published in Marseille (Bofill Levi, 1983). From this moment on, her architectural thinking is based on its relationship with music, as in the contributions collected in the magazine *Música d'ara*: “Reflexions sobre música i arquitectura, en memòria de Iannis Xenakis i de Antoni Gaudí” (“Reflections on Music and Architecture, in Memory of Iannis Xenakis and Antoni Gaudí”) (Bofill Levi, 2002) and “Iannis Xenakis, art i ciència” (“Iannis Xenakis, Art and Science”) (Bofill Levi, 2003).

Anna Bofill's professional archive is housed in a flat in Walden 7, the building where she also lives, and several versions of her curriculum vitae are also available, including reproductions of plans and photographs, which makes it easy to search, extract and select

TABLE 1 Classification of the works documented in Anna Bofill's professional archive.

Anna Bofill's mode of practice	Dates	No. approx. of projects drafted	No. of works constructed
Taller de Arquitectura	1964–1981	21	11 (52%)
Solo	1977–1996	54	28 (52%)
Urgell County Council	1992–1996	30	30 (100%)
Total		105	69 (66%)

works in a considerable number of files. In order to approach this work, her projects have been classified as follows: firstly, those produced as a member of the Taller de Arquitectura; secondly, the buildings and architectural designs signed by her alone, distinguishing in both cases between those not completed and those built; and thirdly, the works from her period as coordinator of the Technical Services Department of the Urgell County (Table 1).

The purpose of this research is to study a selection of 21 works within the group of solo projects, a sufficiently representative sample (75% of those built and 39% of those planned) and in partnership (new works, interior design, ephemera) whose detailed analysis aims to provide an answer to the research question set out (Table 2). These are addressed in the following section.

### 3 Results: architectures between the rhetoric of the image and political practice

The Taller de Arquitectura was a multi-disciplinary group founded in 1964 by Ricardo Bofill which, in 1975, brought together the architects Anna Bofill, Emilio Bofill, Ramón Collado, Francisco Guardia, Peter Hodgkinson, Javier Listosella, José Malagarriga, Manuel Núñez Yanowsky and Julio Romea, writer Salvador Clotas, poet and philosopher José Agustín Goytisolo and actress and photographer Serena Vergano. Its working methodology was based on the dialectic between spatial images and the analysis of social data, for which the group developed a system for organizing spaces and groupings of dwellings. It combined formal imagination and mathematical logic, with variations that were the result of the specific conditions of each project.

Anna Bofill was an active part of the Taller de Arquitectura, not only providing the conceptual framework from which its working methodologies were developed, but also as the material author of the aforementioned writings in which the ideas of the Taller were disseminated, and moreover as co-author of the works that cemented the office's international fame: for example, in Spain, the Gaudí quarter in Reus (1964–1970), the Castell in Sitges (1966–1968), Xanadú (1969–1970) and the Muralla Roja in Calpe (1970–1973), and Walden 7 in Sant Just Desvern (1970–1975); in Andorra, the [Church of] Our Lady Meritxell (1974); and, in France, the Parc de la Marca Hispanica in Le Perthus (1974–1976), Les Arcades

du Lac in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (1975–1980), Le Théâtre in Marne-la Vallée (1978–1982), and Antigone in Montpellier (1979–1983).

## 3.1 The beginning of Anna Bofill's solo career: private residential use

### 3.1.1 Single-family dwellings

Anna Bofill began to personally become involved with the drafting and project management of single-family housing projects that she designed herself during the period from 1974 to 1981, as a transition toward personal and professional emancipation (Figure 1). The Taller would adopt a new identity to include the name of her brother—it is currently called Ricardo Bofill Taller de Arquitectura, RBTA—gradually eliminating any vestige of Anna's and other figure's contributions to the collective's achievements.

The Martí House (1974–1977) is located to the south of the town center of Torroella de Montgrí, a village at the foot of Montgrí and to the north of the river Ter, in the comarca of Baix Empordà, Girona. The building consists of 3 floors plus a roof terrace. It is a plot with a narrow frontage—<5 m—facing west, and much greater depth—25 m. On the ground floor, on the right is the commercial premises—today a garage—and on the left is the staircase leading to the upper floors and the roof. The ground floor flat has two bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen, living-dining room and exit to the backyard. A small patio is inserted in the middle of the plot to illuminate and ventilate all the rooms. The first floor flat consists of three bedrooms, bathroom, toilet, kitchen, living-dining room and terrace at the back. The second floor has two bedrooms, bathroom, toilet, kitchen, living-dining room and two terraces, one at the front and one at the back.

The project involved the demolition of the partition walls, floor slabs, staircase, façade and roof of a two-story building between dividing walls in order to rebuild them to create better general hygienic, functional and habitable conditions, adding an extra story to the complex. The part forming the façade arches is clad with *rasilla*, or slender bricks, and the surface planes of the openings are plastered and painted in a color that matches the *rasilla*. The roof is partly—at the back—a roof terrace for hanging clothes, with a common laundry room under the roof, and the rest is covered with Arabic tiles. The window frames on the ground floor are of wood whereas on the other floors are made of dark metal.

As the architect writes in the project report, “the location of the building in question has been considered in order to adapt it to its immediate surroundings and to the environment imposed by the other buildings, with the aim of preserving the character of the avenue. For this reason, the façade is composed of three arches that bring together vertically all the openings, thus offering a compositional unity and a classic Arabic tile roof” (Bofill Levi, 1974, p. 1). With regard to the project, the work used the arches for the finishing touches and merged the two on the right of the ground floor into a single opening. Apart from these alterations, the effort to resolve the contrast between the domestic and urban scales is striking, which is achieved, precisely, thanks to the exercise

TABLE 2 Selection of solo works (21) documented in Anna Bofill's professional archive.

Dates	Work	Situation
1974–1977	Martí House: building with 3 flats and commercial premises	Passeig de Catalunya, 40, 17257 Torroella de Montgrí, Girona
1975–1979	Mohr House: detached house with garden and swimming pool	Carrer des Riu Pla, 100, 07701 Maó, Illes Balears
1978	Giró House	Avda. de Salvador Dalí, 2, 17488 Cadaqués, Girona
1979	Andreu House	Carrer d'en Guillem de Bruguera, 11, 17488 Cadaqués, Girona
1979	Interior decoration project of a flat in Walden 7	Ctra. Reial, 106, 08960 Sant Just Desvern, Barcelona
1979–81 1981–82	La Pergola: 80 holiday apartments (built: 40)	21 and 23 Boulevard Desnoyer, 66750 Saint-Cyprien, France
1981–1982	Les Portes de la Mer: 150 holiday flats. First phase: 66.	25 Boulevard Desnoyer, 66750 Saint-Cyprien, France
1983	Tulloch House	Partida Manzanera 1N, 03710 Calpe, Alicante
1983	Set design <i>Urfaust</i>	Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 585, 08007 Barcelona (Paranimf or Main Hall of Barcelona University)
1983–1984 1987–1988	Higher School of Art and Design Ondara	Plaça del Centenari, s/n, 25300 Tàrraga, Lleida
1983–1989	Institut d'Estudis Secundaris Ernest Lluch (Ernest Lluch Secondary School)	Carrer de la Diputació, 11–15, 08015 Barcelona
1984–1985 1987–1988	Social housing apartment building	Plaça de Sant Agustí Vell, 17, 08003 Barcelona
1984–1995	River walk on the Llobregat River	08696 La Pobla de Lillet, Barcelona
1985–1986 1987 1989–1991	Sports Club for the Asturian Center: first phase	Carrer de Ràfols, 17–21, 08034 Barcelona
1987	Façades of L'Aigüera Park	Avda. de L'Aigüera, 03501 Benidorm, Alicante
1987	Refurbishment of Mr. Grebler's 6th floor and attic flat	Avda. Diagonal, 520, 08006 Barcelona
1989	Stand for the firm Taugres	Cevisama International Fair. Avda. de les Fires, 46035 Valencia
1989–1993	Cal Notari: Territorial Education Services in Baix Llobregat	Carrer de Laureà Miró, 328, 08980 Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Barcelona
1990–1991	A Riouxa Park. Implementation and Project Management	22, Baixada á Rotea, 10, 36216 Vigo, Pontevedra
1990–1992	Plaça de Catalunya Rodalies Renfe Station	Passeig de Gràcia, 1, 08007 Barcelona
1992–1996	Plaça de Catalunya de Preixana	Plaça Catalunya, 25263 Preixana, Lleida

The works shaded in gray (9) have been visited and photographed.

in architectural composition that is deployed despite the modesty of the piece.

The Mohr House (Vilardell Santacana, 1992) is located on a privilege rural enclave on the northern shore of the port of Mahón, capital of Menorca, a residential area of detached single-family dwellings, whose access roads adapt to the topography, overlooking the sea. The plot has a steep slope (30%) and is shaped like a quarter circle facing south. Road access is via the semi-basement floor, which acts as a base for the buildings above it, which have only one story. It consists of two square volumes, measuring  $7 \times 7$  m, joined by an intermediate volume measuring  $3.5 \times 5.5$  m, the whole of which is oriented in a north-east-south-west direction. The squares house the bedrooms, bathrooms and living-dining areas, articulated according to the different levels on which the rooms rest, adapting to the terrain. The central piece houses the kitchen, in front of which a  $3 \times 6$  m swimming pool is planned edged by a pergola facing south-east.

The semi-basement floor has undressed masonry walls and the dry-stone walls enclosing the plot are built into the slope. Stone

is also used in the garden terracing. The upper floor volumes are painted white and Catalan-style roofing was used to harmonize with the landscape. The pergola stands out, built in reinforced concrete, painted white, and made up of arcades of semi-circular arches joined by wooden cross members. The arches rest on abacuses and the abacuses rest on slender columns that support the globe light fittings and rest on faceted pedestals. The window frames are all wood, as is the floor around the swimming pool, and the windows are protected by white shutters.

This project, with its carefully balanced composition, sets out the architect's manifesto on how Anna Bofill understands the discipline's relations between tradition and innovation. With respect to the environment, not only the physical place and its landscape, but also the cultural context, Bofill shows a high regard for the volumetry and materiality of her work, interpreting with sensitivity and intelligence both the signs of identity of the site and its vernacular construction, adapting to the landscape and making it an object of contemplation and enjoyment through the architecture that frames it. Inside, however, the absence of



partitions in the bedrooms is a bid to rethink family relationships, where the common and the social are above the particular and the individual. As architects and scholars [Navarro Martínez and Blanco Lage \(2017, p. 151\)](#) state: “Preventing isolation is perhaps a way of educating oneself.”

The Giró House (1978) is located inside the eastern sector of the old town of Cadaqués, in the region of Alt Empordà, Girona. Located at the end of the bay of the same name, facing the sea and isolated from the interior, from Es Baluard the city opens out on both sides, forming two large curves over the bay. These sectors, together with the old town, are included in the historical whole. The house is oriented in a north-east-south-west direction and the single-story garage is attached to the north-east boundary of the plot in order to free up a garden around the building, which is thus perceived as free-standing. On the ground and first floors, the house has an L-shape attached to the car park and with an open angle to the south. On the second floor, the volume maintains the alignment overlooking the façade, but the sides of the L are cut back to free up the terraces. It also has a small basement or cellar.

The house’s materials observe the norms of villa construction of the area, namely: whitewashed walls, sloping roofs of Arabic

tiles, dark green carpentry, protected by white shutters, slate floors and stone walls to enclose the plot. The blind prismatic volumes that emerge from the façades and which correspond inside to the wardrobes, uniquely identify the house, in addition to the tiered walls protecting the terraces.

The house has a completely blind façade facing the street, with only the shaded recessed entrance opening onto it, the profile of which, due to the slope of the roofs and the aforementioned stepped protection of the terrace, corresponds to a party wall. However, it opens onto the garden through the large windows at the overhanging ends of the sides of the L, which also create the terraces on the top floor. That is, the house is closed to the exterior in the convex part of the L and opens to the plot in the concave part in order to seek privacy and protection for its inhabitants.

The Andreu House (1979) is located in the historic center of the town of Cadaqués, 100 m west of the church of Santa Maria. The house, between party walls and on a small plot, has two floors: the ground floor is a renovation of an existing house, and the upper floor is an extension. The plot also backs onto Carrer Llampec (Llampec Street), onto which opens a terrace on the first floor.

The dwelling's materials relate to its two parts, the pre-existing ground floor is left in stone masonry and the upper floor is finished in white rendering, underlining its status as an addition by its separation from the ground floor by the discontinuity of the façade. On the ground floor, only the small blue wooden door of the entrance to the hallway opens and, on the first floor, there are two tiny openings with shutters. The roof is made of Arabic tiles and drains through a gutter and a green glazed ceramic downpipe.

Of particular interest is the house interior, as its finishes denote the Mediterranean character of the spaces—white walls, ceramic floors, wooden finishes—and where the central staircase stands out. The furniture actively assists in defining the spaces, being made of brickwork that is then fitted with rattan in the cupboards, futons and cushions to make it suitable for use and, above all, the comfort of the body.

The Tulloch House (1983) is located in La Manzanera housing development, in Calpe, Alicante, specifically, in the area by the entrance to the urbanization, where there are other single-family dwellings surrounded by vegetation and semi-hidden behind enclosing walls bordering the area's winding roads. A few meters away is La Manzanera cove, known not only for its natural surroundings, but also for the Taller de Arquitectura's residential projects: the Xanadú building and La Muralla Roja apartment block, which have become icons. The detached space, surrounded by paths, offers a sea-view, in a sought-after area.

The detached family house is organized on two floors, with almost the entire project works concentrated on the lower level. The ground floor is characterized by the double-height entrance and the central position of the spiral staircase. It features two porches designed to expand the internal spaces that give prominence to an open spacious living-dining room. The plan creates an access path to cross to the kitchen and bathroom area. On the upper floor, there is a second bedroom with bathroom and access to a terrace, as well as a north-facing study.

The design uses a metal structure and is finished on the outside with an earth-colored render that has had certain treatments. Inside, the white color of the walls is complemented by the stoneware tiles and marble floors. The plan's most noteworthy material elements are the wall and the ceramic tiled gable roof. The house opens up to the favored south and east orientations by means of large openings, with smaller windows to the west and creating a large, glazed opening over the two-story entrance.

The dwelling is located in a strategic enclave and, in spite of its modest use of materials, offers a solution that makes optimal use of the plot's views and orientations and the expansion space of its ground floor through the porches that ensure shaded living areas. A remarkable dwelling with a Mediterranean air that is sheltered from prying eyes by the perimeter wall and the lush vegetation and which, behind a simple programme, reveals a fluid floor plan open to the living possibilities of its inhabitants.

### 3.1.2 Collective housing

Just after Anna Bofill left the Taller de Arquitectura and qualified as an architect in France, she undertook her first residential projects in the Hexagon, specifically in Saint-Cyprien, a small French town and commune, located in the department of the

Pyrénées-Orientales, in the Occitan region and the historic County of Roussillon (Figure 2). The town is 20 km southeast of Perpignan. The Boulevard Desnoyer is an important artery that runs through the town from the north-east, turning the access road parallel to the sea into a main road. It runs along the east side of the main town and reaches the port. The holiday flats La Pergola are located almost at its midpoint, facing the sea, in a north-south linear block layout with a width of 15 m and three floors.

The doorways and vertical communication wells are arranged in the block in an east-west direction, with pedestrian entrances to the east and road access to the west. The building has three bays: the two wide outer bays and the narrow central bay. On the ground floor, to the east, there are 4 flats with a garden; to the west, are the parking spaces. On the first and second floors, the layout is symmetrical with respect to both the axis of the staircase and its perpendicular, in which the entrances to the 8 flats per floor are organized around a central gallery that overlooks the landscaped courtyard on the ground floor. All the flats have a terrace, some overlooking the sea and others overlooking the Canigou.

The project is based on a strict modulation whose unit is a square of  $\sim 1$  m on each side: thus, the wide bays occupy six modules and the narrow one 4, with two being the overhang of the terraces. The structure is made of reinforced concrete posts and beams, the window frames are metallic, and the rendered façades are painted in two shades of pale pink. The flat, accessible roof allows those living on the second floor to access a solarium via a metal spiral staircase installed on the terraces.

The architect states in the project report (Bofill Levi, 1980) that, given the width and height restrictions of the block, her efforts have focused on the spatiality and functionality of the apartments and on the composition of the façades, which she sought to harmonize with the landscape, to be the expression of an architectural language linked to the place's regional history and to contain features of its vernacular architecture. In effect, the distribution plan makes the most of the possibilities in such a tight space thanks to the basic order and the composition of the façades understood as a giant loggia in which the ground floor acts as a base, each terrace is framed by paired openings each topped by a semi-circular arch regularly separated by pilasters that punctuate their beginning and end.

The holiday apartment building Les Portes de la Mer (1981–1982) are located to the north and next to La Pergola (1979–1982), in a layout of two blocks, of which the longer northern block is set back from the official alignment and has four floors, while the southern block is set forward to its neighbors with the same height—three floors. The doorways and vertical communication wells are arranged between the two blocks in an east-west direction, with pedestrian entrances to the east and road access to the west. There are three bays: the two equal outer bays and the slightly wider central bay, designed as an interior street with a garden in the center. On the ground floor, on both sides of this street, there are 18 apartments, as well as on the first and second floors (with terraces) and the third floor (set back). The flats, which have a square floor plan, have a single kitchen-dining-living room facing the outside street and facing the internal street, through which one enters the apartments, is a bathroom and bedroom.

By floor, of the 18 flats, 14 are type A, as described above. The other 4, type B, located on the north side of both blocks, expand



into the inner street a little, which allows them to be slightly larger. The structure is made of reinforced concrete beams and pillars, the window frames are metallic, and the rendered façades are painted in two shades of ochre color. The roofs are pitched, with ceramic tiles and a single gable that drains toward the exterior streets. The flooring in the communal areas is also ceramic.

The façades present a variation on the themes found in the adjoining blocks, likewise, composed like a giant loggia in which the ground floor acts as a base. This pattern is reinforced by the expressive gesture of the stepped modillions that support the overhang of the terraces, which are also framed by paired openings crowned with a round arch, and the separation between them, this time solid, forms a rhythm of pilasters that is finished with the powerful parapet protecting the terrace on the top floor, which acts as the attic of the composition. This is an exercise of post-modernist architecture that reinterprets the classicist language in a domestic

and Mediterranean key and is as concerned with the construction of the image of the city (Lynch, 1960) as it is with the community.

Another significant project is a building of 12 social housing units and five commercial premises located in Plaça de Sant Agustí Vell (Sant Agustí Vell Square), in the north-east of Barcelona's Gothic Quarter. It has its entrance on Carrer dels Carders (Caders Street), which flanks it to the west. The project involves the complete reconstruction of the previously existing building, which is five stories high. On the ground floor, we find the imposing doorway located approximately in the center of the façade, where the presence of the sculptural staircase stands out. The five commercial premises are organized around it, two adjacent and three overlooking Carrer d'en Tantarantana (Tantarantana Street). The floor plan houses three dwellings per level: type 1, passing between the two converging streets, type 2, facing Tantarantana Street and type 3, facing Carders Street. The latter two share the



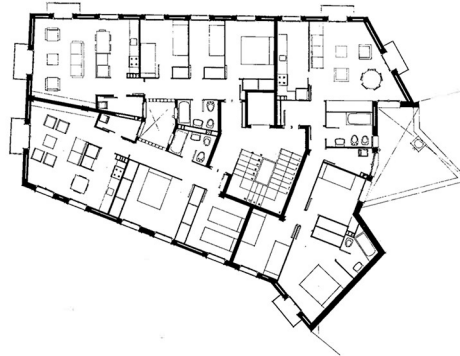


FIGURE 3

Plaça Agustí Vell Building (1984–1988), Barcelona (Spain): image of façade and standard floor plan. Source: Anna Bofill papers and Paola Acevedo (photography).

façade of the square. All have three bedrooms, bathroom, toilet, kitchen, drying room and living-dining room (Figure 3).

In the project report, Anna Bofill writes that the most interesting thing is to preserve the stone wall of the ground floor on the façade facing the square, with the fountain in memory of “*la nostra Marieta de l’ull viu*,”<sup>4</sup> and also “the spirit, character and style of the building, bringing it back into line with the current requirements of the programme, function, habitability and economy” (Bofill Levi, 1985, p. 5). With regard to the façades, Anna Bofill proposes to conserve the differences between the floor-to-ceiling heights of each floor, those of the openings and the balconies overlooking the square, as well as the treatment of the exterior finishes: doorjambs and lintels imitating stone, horizontal pointing on the plastering of the façades, iron railings, doorway and cornice with stone coping. The foundation had to be driven by piling and micropiling through the water table.

The project seeks to—and succeeds in—maintain the main signs of identity of the neighborhood’s architecture, or rather, of its atmosphere. The ground floor is laid out as a base on a stone plinth whose nature is underlined by the segmental arched openings with stone window surrounds. The elevations are made up of a regular set of balconies which, in Tantarantana Street, are cantilevered at the ends while the rest is flat. The façade to the plaza is characterized by the fountain on the ground floor and the subtle variation of the balconies on each floor. In Carders Street, the balconies are flat, except for the one closest to the party wall. The slabs are emphasized on the façade by impostes, in which the jambs of the openings are merged, as well as the edges of the front facing the square and the cornice behind which a parapet protrudes.

<sup>4</sup> *La Marieta de l’ull viu* is the main character of a popular Catalan song, the sardana *Baixant de la Font del Gat*, who was a local of the neighborhood and went daily to this fountain with its three spouts to collect water.

## 3.2 Take-off: public uses

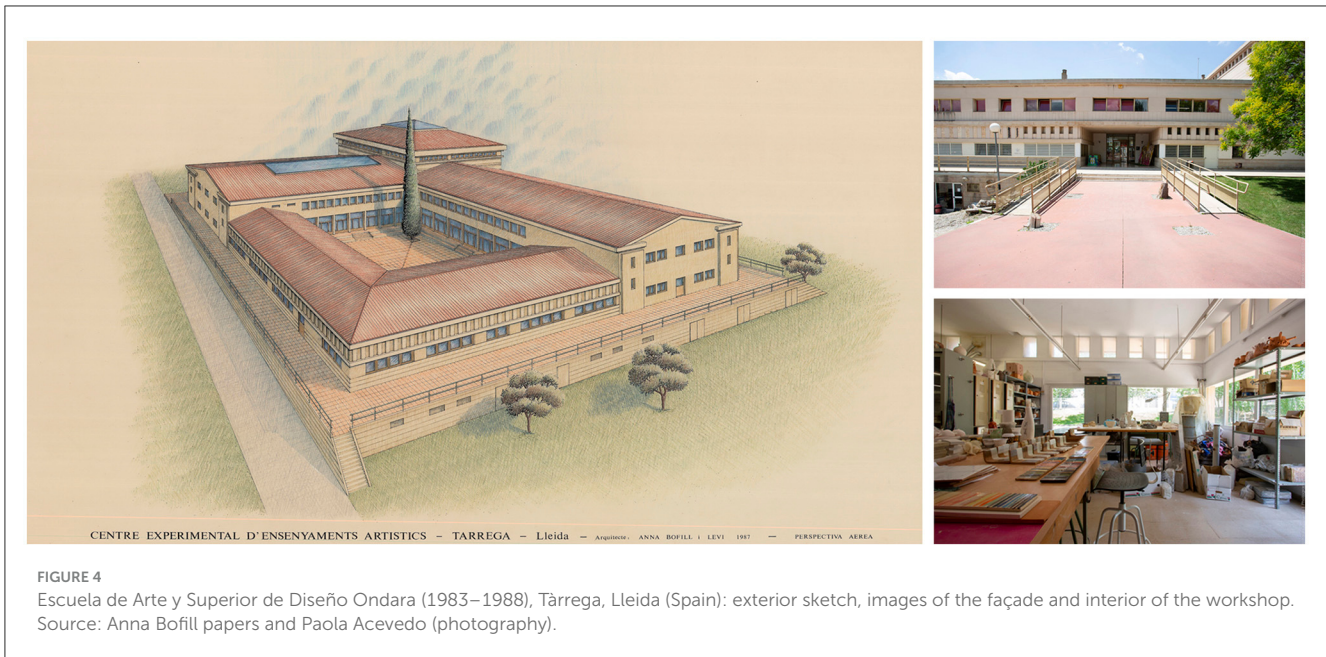
### 3.2.1 Educational facilities

Two years into her solo career, Anna Bofill was commissioned by the *Escuela de Arte y Superior de Diseño Ondara* (Higher School of Art and Design) (1983–1984 and 1987–1988), which is located to the southwest of Tàrrrega, Lleida. This is an area for public use, with the castle promontory to the north-east of the city.

The ground plan of the building describes a square whose sides face the four cardinal points. A cloister connects into it, which is angled in a south-westerly direction, so that the north and east bays enclosing it are wider than the south and west bays. The slope of the land to the south-east enables a basement for facilities to be planned for the corner, currently used entirely for storage and other ancillary facilities. The entire building rests on a square platform which juts beyond it, creating a continuous terrace around it (Figure 4).

Entry to the main floor is from the east façade, via a staircase centered on the cloister and therefore not on its axis. The vertical communication wells are located in the west and south façades, which connect with the respective corridors. The workshops are housed in the wider bays, with the narrower bays reserved for offices and classrooms. Only the north and east sides have another floor with a tower on the corner, as the space was intended for a mural painting and now the library has been installed there with the construction of a metal floor and staircase.

The building’s structure is made of reinforced concrete and the metal frames have been painted in a cream color to match the rendering and the stone cladding on the façades. The tiled roofs are gabled, and the tower has a four-pitched roof. Skylights are installed in this section as well as in the North Bay. The exterior façades display a compositional play with the openings based on the use of material: both the plinth and the edges of the slabs are clad in stone, emphasizing the horizontal nature of the building, whereas the tower, which because of its function and its relation to



the town, where it acts as a landmark, provides the counterpoint. The main floor has a double system of openings: on the ground floor, they extend across the entire span and are replicated on the first floor. On the upper level, in order to fill the classrooms with light, a continuous line of narrow vertical windows is used. Finally, the top of the tower is lined all around by small square openings.

The design deploys three strategies: firstly, a precise exercise in architectural composition based on the geometry that provides the modular ground plan and, alongside, the impeccable structure, once again affirming Paul Valéry's well-known axiom that the greatest freedom comes from the greatest rigor. Secondly, the detailed attention to the programme, which was organized in a constant dialogue with the users, making the building very functional as proved by the way it has weathered the passage of time. In this regard, the handling of light and material is essential. And thirdly, the symbolic and representative nature of an architecture that owes as much to the city, which it embodies, as to a comprehensive education in which the different disciplines and specialities harbor interrelationships, consummated in the cloister and its cypress tree.

In its turn, the Institut d'Estudis Secundaris Ernest Lluch (Secondary School) (1983–1989) is located on the corner of the Carrers Diputació and Vilamarí (Diputació and Vilamarí Streets), in Barcelona's Nova Esquerra de l'Eixample neighborhood (Figure 5). On the front facing Vilamarí Street, the building opens onto the Joan Miró Park and, behind it, the pre-existing Escola Joan Miró (Nursery and Primary School) imposes aesthetic restrictions. The building is oriented in a northwest-southeast direction, converting the characteristic chamfer of the Eixample—Cerdàs's celebrated Barcelona Plan—blocks into series of retracting volume through which access is provided freeing up a much-needed space for the entrances and exits of the center.

The access, in fact, collects the flows of the two converging streets by organizing entrances parallel to them and adjacent to the vertical communication wells. The diagonal entrance hall opens

onto a porch leading to the courtyard. On the ground floor, the long section facing the park is laid out with a central corridor that organizes offices and seminar rooms on either side and is finished off with two sets of lifts and staircases. In the part facing Carrer Diputació (Diputació Street), a cafeteria and another staircase are afforded. The first floor replicates this clear scheme by installing the toilet block at the junction between the two wings and overlooking the courtyard. The building has, in addition to two basements for communal spaces, five stories on the dividing wall on Vilamarí Street, four on the rest of the façade on this artery and three on the elevation on Diputació Street and in the volumes that make up the main entrance, thus producing a dynamic staggering between them.

The project presents a modulated reinforced concrete structure with three basic bays in the long section: two wide outer bay and a narrow central bay. Its image is characterized by the use of face brick on all its façades, which are also laid with vertical running bonds—rowlock bond system—, accommodating a series of narrow floor-to-ceiling openings, with red metallic framing. On the ground floor, the windows are cut out to create a solid base and preserve the intimacy of the spaces they illuminate and ventilate. This musical-style seriation varies in the walls that cover the vertical communication wells, bringing the small openings to the top and opening the large ones at half the height of the adjoining ones, making an eloquent break in rhythm at the staircase landings.

In addition to brick's proven resistance to the intensive use of a secondary school and its secular tradition as a material capable of expressing the power and strength—literal and metaphorical—of the union of the small and modest to build the great, even the grandiose—as Roman builders did—, it is evident in this melodic exercise that this is a tribute to one of the most important architects of Spanish modernism, Coderch, co-signatory to the plans for the school and secondary school complex. This recognition transcends the use of brick and the actual composition of the image of the project to achieve a profound concomitance between Coderch and Bofill: an attitude that is reflected and expressed in



FIGURE 5  
Institut d'Estudis Secundaris Ernest Lluch (1983–1989), Barcelona (Spain): image of façade and upper floor plan. Source: Anna Bofill papers and Paola Acevedo (photography).

Coderch's text "It's not geniuses what we need now" (Coderch, 1961).

### 3.2.2 Recreational and administrative buildings

Concerning these types of buildings, the sport and recreational Centro Asturiano de Barcelona (Asturian Center in Barcelona) (1985–1991) is of significant interest. It is located in Sarrià, to the west of an essentially residential area in the center of which the Sagrado Corazón school stands prominently. The block that makes up the Sports Center building—changing rooms with bar—is arranged perpendicularly to Carrer de Ràfols (Ràfols Street)

and separates the two open-air multi-sports courts while at the same time resolving the existing difference in level between them (Figure 6). This first phase was part of an ambitious project that included a social club, a caretaker's house, more sports courts, an Asturian bowling alley and swimming pools.

The building's entrance is in the center of the south side. It is conceived as a compact volume separated from its envelope by its long sides, generating longitudinal corridors. The entrance faces a staircase leading to the unbuilt upper court, as were the roofed stands, which separated the women's changing rooms to the east from the men's changing rooms to the west. At the west end is the bar.



FIGURE 6 Club Deportivo for the Centro Asturiano (1985–1991), Barcelona (Spain): image of façade and elevation, and ground floor plans. Source: Anna Bofill papers and Paola Acevedo (photography).

The building, measuring  $44.00 \times 11.65$  m, has a reinforced concrete structure with double bays, and its façades are made of face brick with floor-to-ceiling openings with blue metal frames. The roof is flat and usable, and access to it is via an external staircase attached to the west façade. The installations are visible in the interior, where the walls and floors are gray, creating a feeling of cleanliness and luminosity.

The main façade, or access to the lower court, is symmetrical with respect to the central entrance opening, which is square and flanked by two other equal openings on either side. A group of four rather narrow openings follow that punctuate the transition to the final series of windows: another four extremely narrow openings separated from larger windows that complete the façade. It is a classical and rhythmically interesting composition that has been spoilt by subsequent successive interventions on the building. At present, therefore, the original project has been significantly altered, and there are plans to extend it by a further story, which is currently under construction.

Another crucial structure in Anna Bofill's solo career is The Territorial Education Services of Cal Notari (1989–1993). The building is located to the southwest and on the edge of the residential area, before giving way to an industrial and service area, of Sant Feliu de Llobregat, capital of the Catalan region of Baix Llobregat, 15 km west of the center of Barcelona. Bofill conceived this project upon consideration of two design strategies: on the one hand, the refurbishment of the Cal Notari building and, on the other, the construction of a new building to extend the previous construction in order to accommodate the client's requirements (Figure 7). The programme is organized on 4 floors: the semi-basement is accessed from the back, taking advantage of the unevenness of the terrain, and essentially houses archives, a conference room and a rest and exhibition area. The ground floor accommodates the main entrance to the east through the new building and, in addition to a generous foyer, provides offices and meeting rooms for the head of department. The first floor houses the centers and staff areas, and the second floor houses the intervention area.

Cal Notari was a single-family residence, in the Catalan style typical of the area, with a load-bearing wall structure from the end of the 18th century, to which a portico was added at the beginning of the 19th century overlooking the back garden. The proposal for the building basically involves a comprehensive restoration—old pictures show it in a state of abandonment—which recovers and enhances the value of the damaged elements: floors, façades and roof. The new building has a reinforced concrete structure in pillars and main beams and one-way slabs with concrete coffered ceilings. The façades are treated with concrete and large glass panels with black metal frames. The roof is flat, walkable, and the vertical communications axis is covered by a gable roof, transparent over the staircase and concrete over the lift.

The new building is related to the old one in two aspects: in plan, it is set back from the façade alignment in a respectful gesture that also allows for the creation of a small front garden, a protective space with respect to the busy road and a necessary rest area for a public work. It is also stepped back from the dividing wall with the old school, recessed by a 1-m-wide strip that functionally operates as a maintenance space for installations and cleaning rooms. In the organization of the floor plan, a central axis perpendicular to the street contains the staircase on the main façade and the lift, freeing up two sections on either side. In the elevations, the height of the original construction is maintained, given emphasis by the balustrade at the top, and reinterprets in a post-modern and monumental style the classical idiom that Cal Notari vaunted in domestic mode.

### 3.3 Ventures of a greater scale: public space and infrastructures

Coetaneous with the abovementioned projects, the riverside walkway on the Llobregat river (1984–1995) in La Pobla de Lillet—a municipality in the province of Barcelona, 130 km north of the capital—consists of rearranging the public space on the right bank of the river, from the new bridge to the exit to the town. The

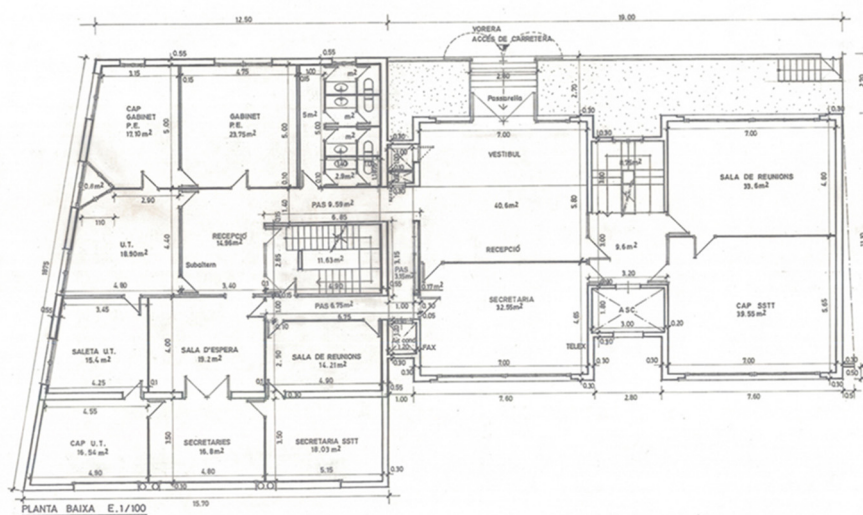


FIGURE 7  
 Cal Notari (1989–1993), Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Barcelona (Spain): images of façade and ground floor plans. Source: Anna Bofill papers and Paola Acevedo (photography).

proposal is to renovate and extend the pedestrian area adjacent to the B-402 road by creating a series of spaces such as a square by the river, a riverside promenade and stairs (Figure 8).

The square is paved with 30 × 15 cm pieces of artificial stone, while in the promenade the pieces are 30 × 30 cm and overhang the riverbed protected by a railing of three round tubes 5 cm in diameter, which is punctuated with lampposts. It is worth highlighting the care that went into the treatment of a unique natural and built environment whose transformation invites people to enjoy the river.

Another intervention of significant scale in a public space is Parc de L'Aigüera (L'Aigüera Park) (1987), which is the main green space in the city of Benidorm, Alicante (Jaén i Urban, 1999). The urban park was designed by the Taller de Arquitectura, of neoclassical inspiration, with a longitudinal layout and an extension between the town hall and the bullring. It has walking and living areas, planting and two amphitheatres for events. Anna Bofill responsible for creating a coherent urban image to read Avinguda de L'Aigüera (L'Aigüera Avenue) as a setting or backdrop to the park on the residential blocks.

The design completes the intervention in the park through the treatment of the façades of the buildings that frame the open space. The project aims to reduce the irregularity and the lack of visual order in terms of the heights and alignments of the six to eight-story residential buildings by redesigning the façades. The design shares the neoclassical compositional language used in the park, featuring porticoes and round arches in the commercial arcades on the ground floor. The upper floors display various solutions with imposing classical features, balustrades, pilasters and cornices in the various blocks of flats.

The intervention is based on the creation of a new façade on some of the buildings on L'Aigüera Avenue (Figure 9 left). This new urban front resorts to a scaffolding-like solution where the precast concrete parts are anchored to the existing structure by means of galvanized steel ties, as if they were a new casing over the façades, like a new skin.

The main theme of the design is to find a solution to the image of the city (Lynch, 1960). A challenge in a city as diverse as Benidorm, with its idiosyncratic and recognizable urban landscape. The proposal must solve the puzzle of the variety building types and heights, for which Anna Bofill employs a language, of (neo)classical idiom, to bestow a certain order to the avenue with a varied plan of straight sections and curves, main and secondary façades, balconies and windows of different dimensions. A new, unfinished and transformative scenography is created, since the original proposal affected the entire avenue and gave the park a symbolic meaning with the unrealised plan of gates as monumental landmarks with a cultural programme and a viewpoint overlooking the city from another perspective.

Another green infrastructure and public space transformation is Parque da Riouxa (A Riouxa Park) (1989–1990) located in the neighborhood of Teis, northeast of the historic center of Vigo, in Galicia. The site is rectangular and oriented in a northwest-southeast direction, rising toward the southeast. The design lays down a double pergola aligned parallel to the road, in order to protect the park from its visual and acoustic impact. At the north-eastern end of the park, a perpendicular path leads to a large open-air circular amphitheater, which dialogues with the curve

of the Baixada á Rotea, which surrounds the park to the north and east, and offers a viewpoint overlooking the sea, a veritable belvedere. To the right of the promenade is a children's play area and, in the southwest corner, a tennis court (Figure 9 right).

This park has a multitude of tree species, many brought from other parts of the world, such as the horse chestnut, which coexist with native species such as oak, birch and pine. These two architectural features stand out: in the upper part, the polished-finished reinforced concrete pergola, while in the lower part, the amphitheater combines and offers a play between the geometry and staggered form of the reinforced concrete, and the grass. The columns of the pergola and its abacuses rest on beams turned on edge, tied together with cross members between, and finished with modillions.

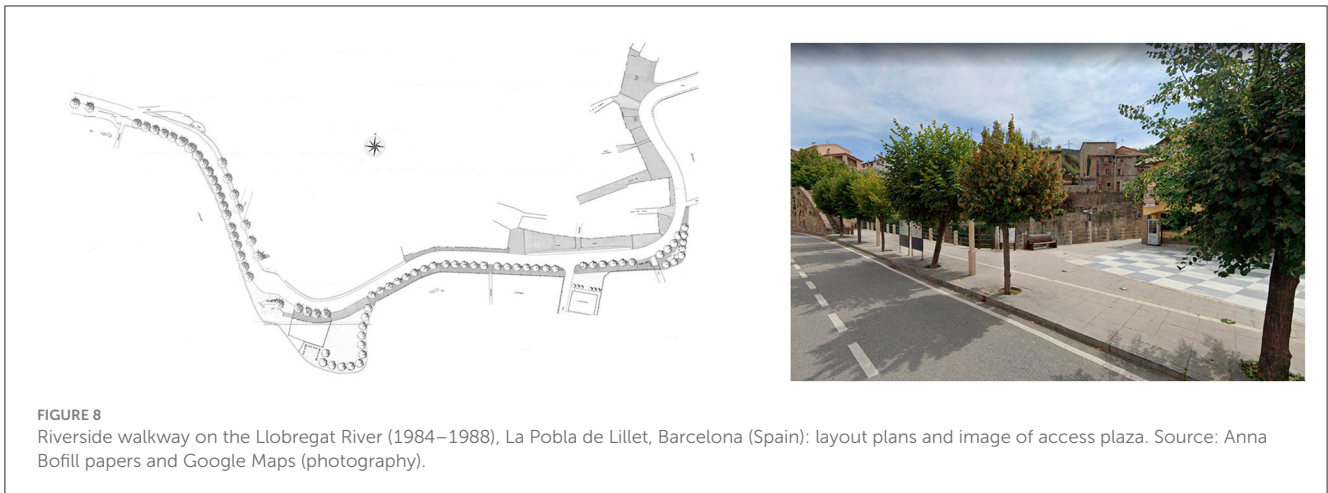
According to the architect (see text footnote 2), right upon completion, A Riouxa Park was appreciated by the neighborhood, as it offers many possible uses and pleasures to enjoy: from a stroll through its pergola and paths, to practicing sports and other physical activities, children's games, to the meeting point, to encounter and contemplate the sea views offered by the amphitheater. The landscaping project draws inspiration from Roman gardens and varies the theme of the open-air amphitheater so characteristic of the Taller de Arquitectura. In this case, archival records reveal that the group produced the preliminary design, but Anna Bofill executed and managed the project, a fact not usually remarked on when this park is mentioned.

In 1988 Anna Bofill began to collaborate with Catalan Railway Company, making proposals for the design of stations at Coma de l'Embut, La Floresta and Montjuïc, which were never built, and for Plaça de Catalunya, which was built. This Renfe local train station (Rodalies) is accessed from the western corner of this renown square of Barcelona.<sup>5</sup> This representative, central and connective public space forms a transitional point between the historic center of the city and Cerdà's Eixample (Extension Plan). The purpose of the project was to redevelop the station, which had fallen into disuse because it was small and chaotic. It envisaged the renovation of the platforms on level –2, including softening the curving layout, which are extended to 240 m in length and 8 m wide, and the refurbishment and extension of the concourse on level –1, including the Renfe and Metro station, a space 30 m wide and 200 m long (Figure 10).

The tracks run under the north of the square. On level –1, there is a large lengthwise hall accessed from the western corner of Plaça de Catalunya. At the center of the space is an oblong glass hexagon with stairs leading down to level –2 and, at its center, four escalators and two lifts, all for local trains—called *Cercanías* (in Spanish) or *Rodalies* (in Catalan). Access to the Metro is via the ends of the hall.

The station's materials contribute to its clarity, legibility and user-friendliness, fundamental objectives of the project. The enveloping walls of the general space have been treated with a rhythmical composition forming arcades and porticoes, as if it were a street. The materials on the walls are of earth-colored natural stone, Norwegian quartzite with regular white marble lines linking

<sup>5</sup> Anna Bofill, interview with the authors, Barcelona, March 2023 and telephone conversation, June 2023.



the pillars, dressed in a cladding in which the horizontal joins are highlighted, on the floor, and gray metal plates or panels on the ceiling. Particular attention has been paid to the lighting, which has been corrected to preserve the real colors, avoid glare and create shades of *chiaroscuro* in order to create a relaxing atmosphere in which the commercial premises stand out, with a more intense and warmer light. Steel is prominently used in the finishes, both in the escalators and in the cladding of the walls separating the tracks, in which large, recessed arches open up.

The station design uses a modular approach, and the drawing shows the division of the paving. This forms the basis for the structure, with free-standing pillars at the ends of the great urban hall which is, in the background, the station concourse. The center of the hall is used for the layout of the glazed enclosure which marks, protects and controls the accesses to the suburban train platforms. The one closest to the entrance has the prominent

marker of a large clock suspended above the specially designed staircase. The wall next to the square contains commercial premises and the outlets of other underground galleries. The commitment to order and clarity is supported both by these design strategies and by the material choices, all of which form an intelligent and intelligible space where people, despite the scale and footfall, are oriented and feel safe and comfortable. As Anna Bofill explained in her project report: “a large transport hall used by users of both networks, and by pedestrians in general, who can enjoy the services in the lobby as well as the space itself, as a meeting place, or a place to wait [...] A space endowed with such order and coherence that it could instill pleasure and tranquility in the traveler and the passer-by in general” (Bofill Levi, 1993).

A smaller project is Plaça Catalunya de Preixana (1992–1996), which is located to the south of the city center of this small municipality in Lleida belonging to the region of L’Urgell. It is just

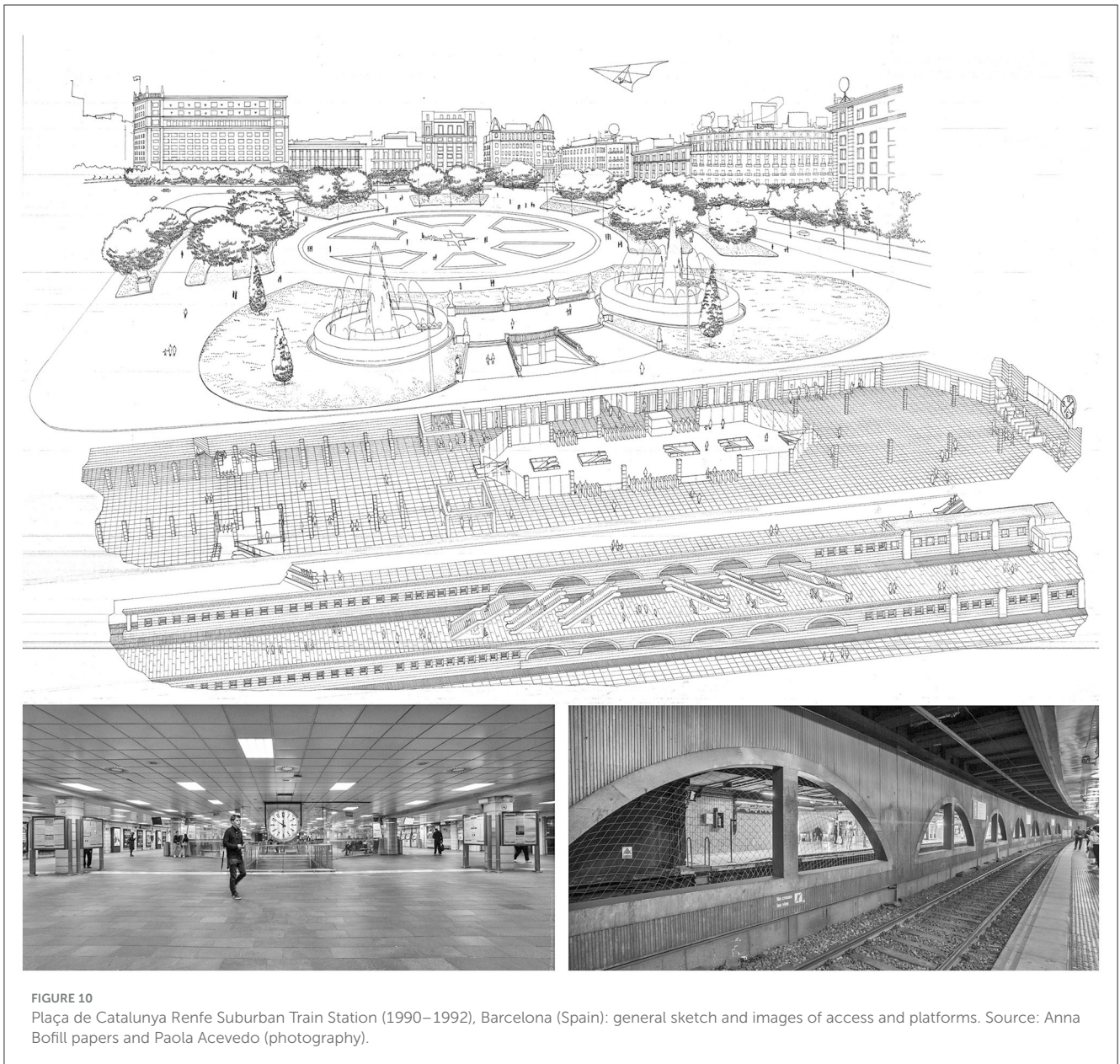


FIGURE 10

Plaça de Catalunya Renfe Suburban Train Station (1990–1992), Barcelona (Spain): general sketch and images of access and platforms. Source: Anna Bofill papers and Paola Acevedo (photography).

over 40 km east of the province's capital. The town hall lies to the west of the square. The Senior Citizens' Center was also designed by Anna Bofill, as was the Medical Clinic. These works correspond to the period between 1992 and 1996 during which the architect was Coordinator of Technical Services of Urgell County. From this position, Anna Bofill undertook and managed numerous civil works projects, as well as urban and rural infrastructure projects, especially the paving of streets, paths, roads, lighting, sewage systems and other urban service networks, in all the municipalities of the region.

The design of Preixana's Plaça de Catalunya proposes two clearly differentiated areas: the larger, to the west, is formalized as a paved quarter circle crossed diagonally by an axis given another treatment. In the center of the axis is a circular fountain surrounded, in the half next to the circular arch, by a semi-circular pergola. At the right angle there is a flower bed with plants, as well

as at the ends of the aforementioned axis. The other area, to the east, is triangular in shape and is used for children's play.

The children's play area has a rammed earth floor and small, inexpensive plants, while the plaza is paved with red-painted concrete and running through its graveled axis. Anna Bofill centers her work on recycling: the stones of the benches, the pillars are filled cement pipes, and the main beams of the structure are hollow to house planting (Figure 9 middle).

This work is representative of the architect's way of understanding and designing public space. Bofill approaches the programme from a gender-based perspective, reserving and protecting a specific children's play area with a particular treatment for its recreational use. Moreover, the plaza reveals a remarkable compositional exercise that dialogues with the existing urban fabric, which it serves and dignifies, while at the same time she uses materials with a great sensitivity for economy, manifested





FIGURE 11

From left to right. Interior design of Anna Bofill's own apartment in Walden 7 (1979), Sant Just Desvern, Barcelona (Spain). Renovation of a flat on the 6th floor and attic of the former Hotel Diagonal Tuset (1987), Barcelona (Spain): sketch of staircase. Source: Anna Bofill papers.

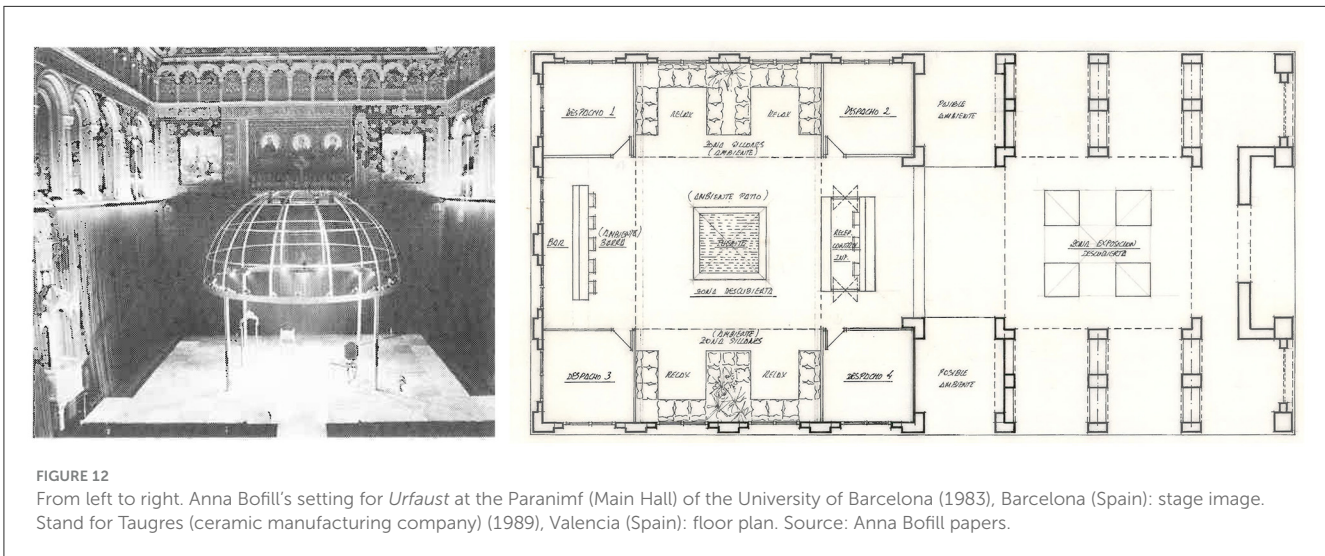


FIGURE 12

From left to right. Anna Bofill's setting for *Urfaust* at the Paranifm (Main Hall) of the University of Barcelona (1983), Barcelona (Spain): stage image. Stand for Taugres (ceramic manufacturing company) (1989), Valencia (Spain): floor plan. Source: Anna Bofill papers.

in the recycling of very affordable elements that thus enjoy a new life.

### 3.4 Game of scales: interior design and ephemeral architectures

In addition to these works, Anna Bofill undertook interesting interior design projects, such as the decoration of her apartment in Walden 7 (1979) (Figure 11 left). The living area, is at a lower level to the entrance and configured in an L-shape, closed off at the back by a light and minimal metal staircase with wooden treads that screens the master bedroom open to this space. The bedroom is both separated and joined to the kitchen by a large cupboard with two side sections between which the dining table is laid. The bathroom space is compartmentalized, separating the toilet in a cubicle from the washing area and vanity unit. On the upper

level, there are two further bedrooms with their bathrooms and the office-music laboratory with the library. A comfortable, bright and intimate domestic environment is created where, despite the small scale, life unfolds with order and joy.

In 1987 Bofill renovated a duplex—an apartment and its attic—on the 6th floor of the former Hotel Diagonal Tuset (Figure 11 right), which consisted of building a pair of metal stairs connecting both levels—one from the bathroom, with an overhanging wooden staircase suspended by a system of cables anchored to the ceiling which also serve as protection—and a fireplace to join/separate two rooms. It was conceived as a sculpture: two large, separate pillars at the foot of which the hearth is placed. The flue is concealed in a cubic volume suspended above it and above which are panels. The level of detail in the drawings speak volumes about the attention and care that went into the interior design work.

This is similarly exemplified in Anna Bofill's ephemeral architecture, such as the scenography for her *Urfaust*, created in

1983 at the Paranimf (Main Hall) of the University of Barcelona. It consisted of a hemispherical metallic dome 8 m in diameter and height, supported by 4 cylindrical pillars forming a square of  $5.48 \times 5.48$  m. The dome, designed to be dismountable and easily transportable for performance tours, is constructed of four parallels and 12 meridians of metal tubes (Figure 12 left).

Another installation was the stand that Anna Bofill designed in 1989 for the company Taugres on the occasion of the Cevisama International Fair in Valencia. It was a small pavilion built of ceramic materials and natural stone. Its composition was based on the geometry of the square: thus, the general floor plan was made up of two attached units, one for the private area and the other for the public area. In turn, each of the large squares were divided into smaller  $4 \times 4$ s, of which the four central ones were left uncovered to form courtyards arranged with an impluvium. In the private area, the corner squares were occupied by offices, while the space between them was used for rest and relaxation areas. The public area, which was not enclosed, functioned as a large welcoming atrium and the displays were arranged on either side of the entrance, which was signified by a round arch topped by a pediment with small replicas on either side (Figure 12 right).

## 4 Discussion: toward a caring architecture

Even before she left the Taller de Arquitectura, Anna Bofill's architecture had already diverged from the Taller's and moved on a different path. Thus, her first single-family houses invoke the modern masters, without frippery opting for the reasonable, appropriate and measured. Only when the commission comes directly from her relationship with the Taller does Anna Bofill accept its formal instructions, in a respectful attitude that characterizes her work: this is true of the Martí House, the holiday apartments in Saint Cyprien, the façade of the L'Aigüera Park in Benidorm or the A Rioux Park in Vigo.

The place where Anna Bofill's tempered modernism—as influenced by the work of Alexander (1964)—is more evident, in the face of the late modernism (Jencks, 1977) or even postmodernism of the Taller, is Calpe (Alicante). Next to Xanadu (1969–1970) and the Muralla Roja (1970–1973), the Tulloch House (1983), with its modesty and dignity, its openness to the landscape and its safeguarding of privacy, its rational logic and its user-friendliness, illustrates the distance between two increasingly irreconcilable ways of understanding architecture, its theory and its praxis.

When considering Anna Bofill's career as a whole, it is clear that it was precisely in 1981 when her activism and commitment to feminism intensified, as testified by her essay “Dona i Habitatge” (“Women and Housing”) published in the sixth issue of *Quaderns d'Alliberament* dedicated to “Dona i Llibertat. Aportacions al debat feminista avui” (“Women and Liberty. Contributions to the Feminist Debate Today”) (Bofill Levi, 1981). The gender-based perspective was already at the very heart of what can be called the *pathway to opposition* and resistance of Anna Bofill's work to the patriarchal system of architecture and urban planning.

This conceptual and political frame operates in her architectural approach in at least three spheres. Firstly, people:

she aims to go unnoticed and focuses on the others, concrete and specific individuals, with names and surnames, her clients, whose wellbeing her architecture caters for above all other considerations. Only from a deep empathy with those who will inhabit its spaces can the layout of these spaces, their dimensions, articulations and rhythms be fully understood. Before feminist and gender theory in architecture identified the need to place people at the center of its concerns as its main leitmotif, it had been a silent but essential practice in Anna Bofill's work. An example of this caring vocation can be found not only in her model layouts—her plans are exemplary in this respect (e.g., the Sports Club for the Asturian Center in Barcelona)—but also in the pioneering implementation of participatory processes in her designs, as in the project for the Tàrraga School.

The second area where the feminist perspective is mobilized and expanded is context: material and immaterial, physical and cultural. Anna Bofill's approach to site entails a respectful dialogue with context that began, as mentioned above, with the works that maintain a close or distant link in space and time with the Taller de Arquitectura. This is more evident when an engagement with the city is required, with its urban landscape of architectural images and emotional memories and with its types and structures, as exemplified in the dwellings of the Gothic Quarter in Barcelona or in Cal Notari in Sant Feliu de Llobregat. Yet equally valid is the Ernest Lluch Secondary School's paradigm of respect for a previously established consensus, and even if these agreed approaches didn't convince Anna Bofill, she adopts and tempers the social and cohabitation dimension of her building, which the nature of the park before it redeems from its austerity.

Thirdly, in Anna Bofill's work, technology is a means and not an end. It is a tool at the service of the project that plays its role, justly, precisely, without claiming prominence and without undermining its own importance. This idea shines through, for example, in the constructive and material solutions used to tackle the structural and functional complexity of the Plaça de Catalunya Suburban Railway Station in Barcelona, whose project report explains precisely how the legibility and clarity of the space is achieved even during the rush hours, when it is quite tumultuous (Bofill Levi, 1993).

It is also possible, and pertinent to read Anna Bofill's works from the perspective of the themes in which current urban planning, and even the recent notion of the *caring city*, has made the implementation of the gender-based perspective in her projects a concrete reality. Thus, we can read, for example, the distribution of the Sports Club for the Asturian Center as a better guarantor of the perception of security of its users, since it is precisely areas such as the changing rooms—the main use of the building—that produce the greatest sense of vulnerability in women (Werkele and Whitzman, 1995) (see text footnote 1). To mitigate or eliminate the perception of fear, these rooms have direct and open access from the corridor, which opens onto the public space through large openings.

In Cal Notari, accessibility is a guiding principle of the project: the new building is set back from the official alignment not only as a sign of respect toward the original, but also to generate the necessary public space and sufficient room for a ramp to allow people to reach its entrance level without difficulty. And Renfe's Suburban Station is a model, *avant-la-lettre*, of introducing the gender-based perspective in public transport and urban mobility:

accessible, safe, diaphanous, transparent, airy and with a very careful design that pays special attention to spatial quality and details as conducive to the wellbeing of passengers.

The housing designed by Anna Bofill predates most of the recommendations that later regulations on the subject currently include—see the ground-breaking case of the Basque Country—, namely: a varied range of typologies to accommodate different forms of coexistence; accessibility and perception of safety in the common spaces—the entrance of the building in the Gothic Quarter or the common areas of the flats in Saint Cyprien are, in this regard, exemplary—; an interior layout that makes the kitchen part of the living-dining room, to which it opens, expanding its surface area and facilitating sharing or, at least, accompanying domestic work; and a number and size of bedrooms that takes into consideration both the people cared for and their care givers.

At the Ernest Lluch Secondary School, in addition to the perception of safety and accessibility, the criteria for the design to facilitate orientation in space, thereby assisting people's autonomy, have been contemplated. Finally, as mentioned above, the Tàrrrega School was designed in close collaboration with its future beneficiaries.

To recapitulate, Anna Bofill's architectural work, always true to itself, but only after years of independent effort and inspiration, can be divided into three phases, for the purposes of a practical methodology. The first phase was from 1974 to 1981, a time when she practiced alone but was still a member of the Taller de Arquitectura. The second phase, from 1981 to 1989, was a period of emancipation, in which she tolerated, but did not assume, the tenets of the Taller. And the third phase, from 1989 to 1996, is the period in which her personality imposes itself in its own right, with no other restrictions than those imposed by the author herself.

The first phase begins with the Martí House, faithful to the firm where she works: the Taller. In the Mohr House the pergolas respond to the landscape, the constant in her architecture of the appreciation of the environment. In the Giró House, she portrays herself as a woman architect who considers each particular circumstance, without renouncing her modern but measured style. And, in the case of the Andreu House, she attests to the attention she pays to uncompromisingly modern interiors.

In the transition between the first and second phases and in France, Bofill, still indebted to the Taller, constructed housing projects in which she was still played a subordinate role with dignity. But with Tulloch House, the two career lines are parted. The School of Art and Design marks the moment of Anna Bofill taking ownership of her own way of conceiving and creating architecture: her desire to create healthy spaces which, in the contemporary Ernest Lluch Secondary School, will be understood as convivial and social.

The dwellings in the Plaça de Sant Agustí Vell, on a chamfered corner, with three façades, an appropriate layout and a suitable form, is a model of town planning and good workmanship. Throughout the decade from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, she developed the Promenade on the banks of the Llobregat River in La Pobla de Lillet, an example of how architecture contributes to making the landscape habitable and user-friendly. The building of the Asturian Center combines a sober exterior, impeccable brickwork, with playful interiors, dotted with progressive details.

This double game gives her architecture rigor and affability in equal parts. In Benidorm, however, Anna Bofill allows herself certain ironies in keeping with the frivolity that the place allows, which she would not attempt elsewhere.

Cal Notari opens the third and last phase in the work of the architect, where she skilfully and elegantly combines concessions to post-modern eclecticism with the most classical modernism in the sincerity of her interiors. Once again, attentive to her surroundings, she leaves her calling card in the attention to privacy. And in A Riouxa Park, with its irregular perimeter and ample space, the ground plan shows an unwavering desire for order.

In the 3-year period 1990–1992, Anna Bofill found an opportunity to deliver her most popular, albeit underground work, a high caliber example of urban design, the Suburban Station. An exemplary work without stylistic deviations, the space, at once concealed and civic, is a consummately successful marriage of form and function. While the Preixana Square, shows Bofill's playful side, in keeping with its function, suitably representing the final years of her career at the head of the County of Urgell, reminding us of the author's rigorous yet conciliatory nature. Flexibility and rigor, sensitivity to the environment and interiority, craftsmanship and habitability are just some of the features that characterize her architecture.

To conclude, it can be argued that when studying the entire architectural production of Anna Bofill, perhaps it is more appropriate to speak of architectures, in the plural, than of architecture, as they are so various and different. Regardless of their particular features, as a whole, their imprint is relevant, because at times they result from the relationship, with all its intricacies, established with the developers. Anna Bofill's works are exact and opportune. They cannot be explained without a specific context and requirement and, thus, it is difficult to understand them when their *raison d'être* has vanished. It is serious architecture, free of any pretense or will to raising a strident voice, and, consequently, her buildings are all but objects of media interest or public seduction. It is a creation of its time and place and is set to last without this condition becoming an imposition.

Anna Bofill's architecture appears, at first sight, sober and correct, modest and respectable. It demands, from the scholar and the visitor, both an attentive gaze to discover its complexities, and a familiarization by successive approximations, just like the tuning of a piano. It is not an easy architecture, but it is friendly, offers multiple layers of reading and even didactic intentions. But, above all, it makes people feel comfortable at whatever level one wishes to approach it. This is so because her architecture makes concessions, based always on empathy, with the environment, with its surroundings and, above all, with those who will inhabit it, thus giving it meaning.

## Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

## Author contributions

M-EG-M: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft. AG-D: Methodology, Visualization, Writing – review & editing. AD-G: Formal analysis, Supervision, Writing – review & editing. JP-M: Writing – review & editing, Investigation.

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