

City of Justice

Project in Detail

Category Civic and community

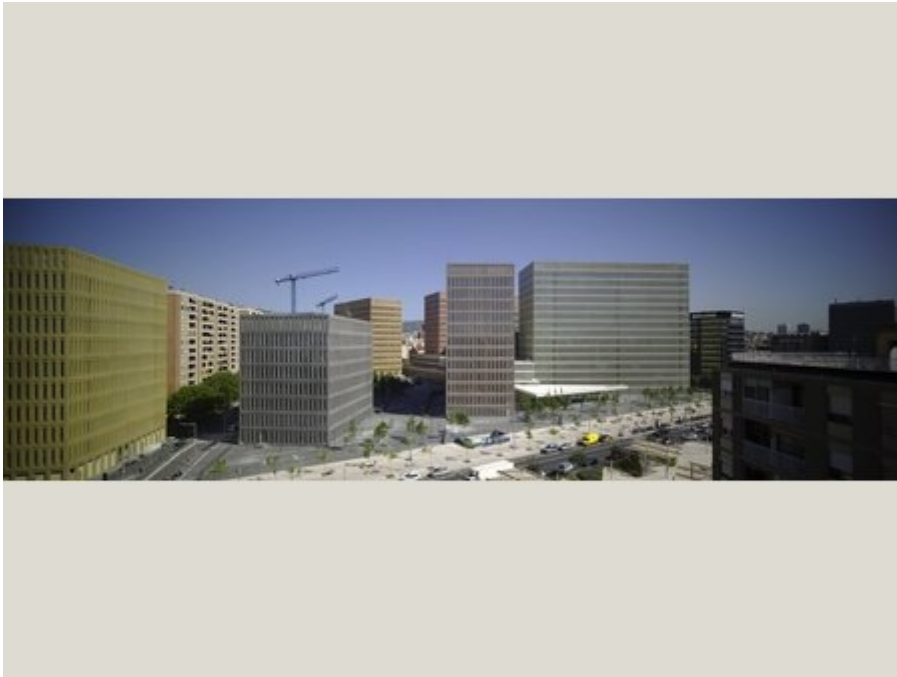
Location Barcelona, Spain

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WAF Entry 2010

Award **World Architecture Festival 2010 - Category Winner**



Barcelona's new law courts complex breaks down the 240,000 square metre programme into nine buildings, four of which are linked by a continuous four-storey high concourse building. The project includes the design of all public, courtroom, and office interiors. The first of the buildings was completed in September 2007.

Previously, the various legal departments of the governments of Barcelona and l'Hospitalet were scattered in 17 buildings across the two cities, with functional frustrations for both users and employees. A new conjoined City of Justice aims to improve efficiency and allow working spaces to adapt and absorb the constant transformation of the judicial body as well as provide reserve space for future growth.

The site is at the border of the two cities of Barcelona and l'Hospitalet on a site which was previously a military barracks. It is located adjacent to both Gran Via, a major access route into the centre of Barcelona from the south, and Carrilet, an artery leading to l'Hospitalet. The position provides optimum accessibility to the city and major metropolitan routes on both public and private transport.

The principal proposition of the project breaks down the massive programme into a series of separate but interrelated blocks on a public plaza, giving a spatial composition that attempts to break the rigid and monolithic image of justice. The project also attempts to provide equilibrium to the relationships between the different working areas, public areas and landscape. A group of four large judicial buildings are situated around the perimeter of a linking concourse building. They generally contain courtrooms at ground floor and a further three floors. All of these floors are accessed directly from the concourse building, which acts as a filter. The concourse building also gathers people at the start and completion of their judicial visit within a central public room, which overlooks the exterior plaza.

Four other independent buildings comprise a judicial services building for l'Hospitalet, a forensic sciences building, and two commercial buildings with retail facilities at ground floor. A further building is planned to contain social housing. All nine buildings are conceived as formally restrained blocks with load bearing coloured concrete 'cage' facades. Each building has a different and contrasting, although muted, colour tone. The concourse building has a more free form plan with deep exposed concrete slabs and woven mesh screens in front of frameless glazing.

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