



*The Vall d'Hebron, a huge Olympic project with a large audience in mind.*

## CHANGE OF IMAGE IN THE VALL D'HEBRON

A PARK FOR SPORTS  
AND ENJOYING NATURE

*by GILLEM VICENS*

One of Barcelona's best-equipped sports areas is to be built amid flourishing vegetation, in a park which can be used by cyclists and those on foot. A pavilion, tennis courts, soccer and rugby fields, swimming pools and petanque pitches are to share a site with gardens, irrigation basins and copses right beside the Vall d'Hebron thoroughfare in front of the nursing home, in one of the areas earmarked for holding the Olympic Games.

The plan is now in the preliminary project stage and, after a few finishing touches, work will soon be under way.

The Vall d'Hebron park will cover 26 hectares in an area bounded by the thoroughfare of the same name, which is to be the extension of Jordan Avenue, by the Marti Codolar Seminary and the northern end of the Rovira tunnel. A total of 17,995 m<sup>2</sup> is to be constructed for services and pavilions under the project drawn up by Architect Eduard Bru.

The set of sports facilities consists of a field of artificial lawn, a multi-sports pavilion, a tennis club with 18 courts, two archery fields, a swimming pool with a retractable cover, petanque pitches, meeting places and changing rooms, bars, other services and venues stores, etc.

The area consists at present of open land crisscrossed by dry water courses and paths, with two natural ponds, and has gradually become a wilderness of ruins and rubbish tips, besides harbouring numerous illicit vegetable allotments.

#### OLYMPIC INSTALLATIONS

Of all the installations planned for the Vall d'Hebron park, two form part of the venues for the 1992 Olympic Games, namely the covered pavilion and the archery fields.

For greater accessibility, the covered pavilion is to adjoin the thoroughfare. Together with the sports palace at Granollers, this new pavilion will house Olympic handball events. Their stands will have to be increased by up to 800 seats by the Olympic deadline, with additional tiers. After the Games the pavilion can be converted into a district community centre for such sports as basketball, volleyball and gymnastics.

In a sector adjoining the pavilion, the project features a swimming-pool of 25 x 16.67 m, plus an auxiliary pool measuring 16.67 x 6 m. During the Olympics both pools could be covered so that the surface can be used as a warm-up area. If the pools are eventually deleted from the project, the area could be converted into a permanent warm-up gymnasium or even used for expanding the pavilion.

The two archery fields are to be sited in a large flat area practically in the centre of the park. The one nearest the thoroughfare will be used for the women's Olympic competitions and measure 60 x 70 m, with 12 lanes for the archers, each 5 m in width. This field is to become a flower garden once the Games are over. The men's archery field will measure 100 x 90 m and

#### THE COUNTRYSIDE WITHOUT LEAVING HOME

The Vall d'Hebron project combines sporting facilities with a park of great richness and botanical variety. At the spot where the underground railway depots are to be built, near the present Vall d'Hebron station and alongside the thoroughfare, there will be the most delicate plant species in a flower garden which is to be sown with bushes and fruit trees. In this area an artificial pitch is to be laid for accommodating football matches.

As it recedes from the Vall d'Hebron thoroughfare, the park will become more natural-looking with clusters of hardy tree species such as pine, holm-oak and cedar. Spaces are to be reserved in this interior area for local leisure pursuits like petanque, while others can be turned into parking areas if this sector is used during the 1992 Olympic Games.

This is a most pleasant area for walking or cycling and enjoying countryside which will be bounded by a view of Barcelona and the sea on one side and by the Collserola hills on the other. Strollers will be able to wander among the old dried-up water-courses, paths and irrigation basins which in this area have survived the passage of time.





*Plan of the Vall d'Hebron  
Olympic Venues :*

- 1. Municipal velodrome.  
Cycling competition*
- 2. Vall d'Hebron Palace.  
Handball competition*
- 3. Vall d'Hebron archery field.  
Archery competition*
- 4. Mundet Hostel Youth camp*
- 6. CD Hispano-French*
- 7. CE Taxonera*
- 8. Referees and judges accommodation  
in the Vall d'Hebron.*

have twenty 5 m lanes. After the Games the area is to provide sports fields which can be equipped for soccer, rugby or baseball.

Beside the archery fields there is to be a social tennis club with 18 courts. The allotment land has been chosen to take these and the amount of work needed will be minimal since the area has already been worked to form small-scale terraces. The park will also have a swim-

ming pool with a retractable cover, chiefly to meet the needs of the people in the Taxonera and neighbouring areas, as well as facilities for schools.

### **A TIERED LANDSCAPE**

The park as a whole will be a succession of platforms following the slope of the land in a tiered fashion. The highest platform is to be on a level with the thoroughfare. This is to be the most built-up area and it is there that the field of artificial lawn is to be laid right on top of the underground railway depots which will be constructed before the park itself.

Looking inland from the sea, the depots will appear as a 200 m facade running parallel to the thoroughfare. Above that last platform the landscape will be bounded by the nursing home, various public and private buildings which lie on either side of the thoroughfare, and by the Collserola hills. It is from that area that roads are to lead out to all parts of the park.

The different faults in the terrain sloping towards Barcelona will accommodate the successive platforms which are to make up the park. The vertical facades of all the platforms will have the same dimensions as those of the depots so that, seen from the city, the ensemble will consist of an ascending repetition of the same facade, forming a sort of foothill to the range behind.

The earth in the higher platforms will be contained by concrete walls so that people standing above will see each platform as a balcony giving on to the terraces, trees, gardens and athletic grounds facing Barcelona and the sea.

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