HISTORICAL INFORMATION
1. INTRODUCCIÓN
1.1 OBJECT OF THE STUDY

The object of this end of degree project is to study and analyze the “Casa Sagnier”, situated on Brusi, nº51-61, through the architectural survey and the investigation of his history. Actually it is used as a civic center of the council of Barcelona. What made us choose this building was its designer, Enric Sagnier. He is not very known nowadays, therefore his works are not valued as they deserve.

We used this project to increment our knowledge on tools graphical expression like for example computer software. (AutoCAD, Sketchup and Photoshop). This way we learned about construction and architecture of a century ago.

1.2 THE BEGGINING OF THE PROJECT

While we were finishing our lasts courses we began to think what our project would be about. We were interested in doing something related to history, artistic heritage because are topics we like and we haven’t studied in our degree. This study gave us the opportunity to analyze a building classified as a work of artistic heritage of our city through the architectural survey and the investigation of its history.

First we began looking these types of projects because, as we said before, we could do things we like and, we could learn more tools of graphic expression. The first building we were interested was situated at “Avinguda Tibidabo”, 69, also classified as an architectural work of artistic heritage of Barcelona. Before this modernist building was renovated for private houses for different owners, it was a bourgeois mansion.

We decided to look for another building because we thought it would be very difficult to get the permission of all the owners to get inside. While we were visiting this building another one, very near, would draw our attention. It was the “Casa Amús”, a modernist building designed by Enric Sagnier, build at the end of the “Avinguda del Tibidabo” were the “Carretera de les aigües” begins.

His greatness and its location draw our attention because at night it’s illuminated for all the people of Barcelona. The complexity made us think we had to look for another building. The owners are “La Caixa de Pensions” which was very difficult to get the permission for a total access in the house. Actually, this house has no use which represents a problem to do the study.

We thought that although we didn’t chose la “Casa Amús” we would like to study a building designed by Enric Sagnier. We discovered that several of the buildings we like were works of Enric Sagnier. We began to read and investigate about him and we discovered that he had allot of productions in Barcelona are not known as his works. He gets eclipsed by Gaudí, Puig i Cadafalch and other architects of the time but Enric Sagnier has nothing to envy to these.

Looking through the architect’s works we saw one that was well-known by us because we have gone to play when we were smaller. The fact that this house was the summer house of the Sagnier family draws our attention. At this moment we decided to choose “La Casa Sagnier” for our final degree project.

We went to explain to our teacher the idea we had and we gave him some pictures. He listened to us with attention and he thought of it. Finally, he accepted our idea.

Now that we had the object of our study accepted we had to get the permission to access the house to do what we had in mind. We thought it wouldn’t be difficult because as a civic center it had it’s doors open to everyone. We explained it to the director of the center and she liked it allot. She explained us that we needed the permission of the council. She gave our letter to he manager of the district of Sarrià-St. Gervasi. After some months, we got the permission of the council.
Good morning,

We are Lluis Roca Cusachs and Helena Roca Moreso, students of Engineering in Edification at EPSEB, UPC. We are finalizing our degree and planning our final degree project. We would like to do a historic study about the building of the “Casa Sagnier”. For us to get the acceptance of the school we must get permission to access all the equipment. We attach a letter of our teacher, Benet Mea, so that you can give it to the council just as we talked by telephone. We only need to access to all building so that we can analyze it. We adapt to your needs.

Thank you,

Lluis Roca-Cusachs i Helena Roca Moreso

Hello,

I received your letter asking for permission to access and study the "Casa Sagnier". Naturally we think it’s a great opportunity. Because the management of this center is public we need the "ok" of the district technical responsible.

I gave your letter to them and I think you will have no problem.

Goodbye,

IRENE OLIVA
1.3 LOCATION OF “CASA SAGNIER”

The building object of this project is located at Brusi street number 51-61, in the district of Sarrià – St Gervasi and in the neighborhood of St. Gervasi – Galvany of Barcelona.

It is a building surrounded by a big garden except the secondary access through the Copernic street number 88. The principal access is located at the principal facade.
3. CASA SAGNIER AT THE XIX CENTURY
3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

3.1.1 THE HISTORY OF THE GEOGRAPHIC ZONE

The “Casa Sagnier” was built at the outskirts of the city of Barcelona at 1900. The old town of St. Gervasi de Cassoles was the chosen place by the architect. This is actually a neighborhood of Barcelona. This building is placed on the “Turó of Monterols”, which follows the “serra of Collserola” between the towns of Sarrià and Gràcia. The exact place was the south-east side of the mountain.

The zone was very different as we know it nowadays. We can find different paths with big slopes which cross small streams and hills very difficult to go through. Few people lived there because of the problems explained above. Most of them were peasants.

Like all the towns nearby Barcelona, they depended on the Consell de Cent. At the X century there existed 10 parishes in the territory of Barcelona. Three of these were located inside the walls of the city and seven outside. Sant Gervasi was one at the outside.

The word Sant Gervasi is first heard in the year 992. There’s the possibility that a small rural church existed before. The population didn’t increase between the centuries X and XVIII. They thought that only seven houses were habited. At 1833 the population increased in 372 inhabitants.

EL “TURÓ DE MONTEROLS”

As we explained before, Sant Gervasi was built at the hill named Monterols. The Sagnier’s estate was located at the south-east side. Facts tell that “iberic” settlement was placed here.

Archeological remains were found meanwhile the works done in at the Copernic street to join it with the Muntaner Street (located at 200m of the house) were done. At the XI century several documents that name the hill of Monterols were found. Afterwards the town will get the name of Sant Gervasi.

THE URBANIZATION OF THE ZONE

The imposition of the Decret de Nova Planta, at 1716, made that the zone of the old church became an independent town at 1727 although the conditions to live in it were very hard. The houses were surrounded by forest and fields. The people who lived there were peasants who sold their products in Barcelona.

At the XIX century there was a legislative change named the “desamortización de Mendizabal” at 1837. At that moment the lands of the zone were owned by bourgeoisie families as, Craywinkle or Dalmasses.
These new owners wanted to urbanize the lands and get some profit. They offered the wealthy families a place to live or to have a summer house because Barcelona increased a lot in population. Once these wealthy people occupied the town better communications were done and living conditions were better. Sant Gervasi’s council began at 1848 to make the streets bigger and at 1951 promised to straighten de raining water.

At 1860, the council divided the zone in three districts, also divided in two neighborhood: the first, la Bonanova with the neighborhoods of Craywinckel and Puig; the second, el Lladí divided by Galvany and La Forja; and the third, el Putxet; has the neighborhoods of Beltran and Farró.

At the other hand, the good situation of the economy in Barcelona made that wealthy people buy and change houses with beautiful gardens but always looking for a zone communicated with Barcelona. At 1900 Enric Sagñier built a house for the summer in this town. This is the “Casa Sagñier”

3.1.2 HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

We will do a chronology to explain this part of the project; afterwards we will explain each stage.

- From 1894 to 1936: Sagñier’s family summer house. The father of the architect requests his son to get down the old house and built a new one.
- From 1936 to 1955: There’s no information about this stage. We have to consider that at this time the Spanish Civil war is having place.
- Form 1955 to 1981: It was the “Col·legi Major Femení “Virgen Immaculada”
- From 1981 to 1985.: The house was closed.
- From 1985 to 1996: It was “La seu del Centre d’Estudis Històrics Internacionals (CEHI),”
- From 1996 to 2007: The house was closed again because the CEHI wanted to build new equipments and the neighborhood didn’t want that. The neighbors did everything they could to preserve the garden. Finally the council decided to open the gardens for everyone at 2002.
- From 2007 to nowadays: The council decided to open the civic center “Casa Sagñier” .

Now we are going to explain the different uses that the house has had through it’s life. This information is from the book “Casa Sagñier, de casa senyorial de segle XIX a equipament public published by the council of Barcelona.”
- Sagnier’s family summer house

The “Casa Sagnier” was the summer house of the wealthy family, Sagnier. The house has changed from the original. At 1894 the father of Enric Sagnier, Lluis Sagnier, asked his son to change something of the house. At 1900, Lluis Sagnier asks his son to get down the existing house and build a new one. The new one is the building we see at Brusi’s street, number 51-61.

The architect designed 12 bedrooms, a private church and playroom for the children. The documents of those years explain that there was a natural fountain and in the garden there was a tennis court. This document also mentions a small train that goes around it. It was the place where the family got together.

The entrance was before through the Sant Elies street but when the new house was built the entrance changed to the corner of Alfons XII with Matas street. Nowadays the location and streets are different. The Matas street became the Copernic Street. The Alfons XII street is today de Brusi street with some changes. When this happened the garden got reduced 30m of depth. Later on the new building annexed were done. The house is placed on the same place as original but the area around has changed.

- “La seu del Centre d’Estudis Històrics Internacionals”:

At 1980, the director wrote a study to transform de school into a investigators residence. At 5 of February of 1981, the “Junta de Govern” explained that this house would now be for the “Centre d’Estudis Historics Internacionals de la Universitat de Barcelona” (CEHI) and to Arqueology Institute.

The director of the CEHI, Emil Giralt i Raventós, presented a report at 1883 related to the conservation of the building explaining the use that they wanted to give to the house. CEHI was in the Casa Sagnier until moving to the “Pavelló de la República” 1996.

At this moment the neighborhood movement, under the sentence “Save de Brusi Gardens”, asked for its use of it for people who live in Barcelona. This petition arrives to the council. The council began to talk with the university and later on, the 29 of march of 2007, the civic center Casa Sagnier was inaugurated.

- Civic center Casa Sagnier:

The civic center didn’t need allot of changes because the basic structure of the building was good conserved. A new lift was placed in the space were originally was the courtyard which permitted de access of people with difficulties to move. So, at the ground lift, the principal room has been converted to the main entrance. The original dining room know is a room to o different things. Enric Sagnier’s office is nowadays director’s office.

- “Col·legi Major Femení “Verge Immaculada”

Sagnier’s family used this house until 1936, year when the Spanish Civil war began. There’s no information about the use of it in these years. It is until 1955 that documents explain that a female residence was opened. This happened because the Sagnier’s family sold de house and the gardens.
The rooms of the first and second lift are now used as classes. The room were nowadays are the computer was the Sagnier's room.
4.1 SAGNIER’S FAMILY

Sagnier’s family comes from France, exactly the region of the Auvergne, at the center of France. At the XVIII century, Louis Sagnier Dalichous, went to Spain to marry Maria Rosa Vidal Roger. We don’t know the reason they came to Barcelona.

Lluis Sagnier i Nadal, the father of the architect is a known person in Barcelona at that time. He was born at 1930 and studied laws and music. He was the president of the “Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad de Barcelona” and a conservative. We don’t know when the Sagnier family bought this house. The brother Manel, wanted to build a house of three lifts with the entrance in Sant Elies Street. This project was never built.

Lluis Sagnier married Clementinca Villavechina i Busquets (between years 1851 and 1852) and had eight sons. One of them was Enric Sagnier i Villavechia born at 1858. It was a wealthy family in a good social position what made them have a selected education. Two brothers of Sagnier, Leopold and Eugeni, worked as engineers. Joaquim, another brother, became the mayor of Barcelona later on. The Villavechia family was the owner of another house to this one. Actually, they were the owners of a big part of the zone.

5.1 CHRONOLOGY

1958: Enric Sagnier is born at Barcelona fruit
1882: He obtains degree in architecture at the Architectural School of Barcelona.
1884: He helps Francisco de P. Víllar y Lozano at the works of the church of “Sant Josep a la basílica de Montserrat”.
1884: He began to work for the Salesians, at the neighborhood of Sarrià.
1886: He designs “El porxos de Fontserè”, around the “Mercat del Born”.
1886: He gets the work of designing and director de project d the “Palau de la Justicia” with Josep Doménech i Estapà.
1886-1928: Does the work at the church Santa Engracia de Montcada.
1887: The works at the “Palau de la Justicia” begin.
1888: Designs the houses for Antoni Roger Vidal (c/Ausias Marchs, 33-35; c/Girona, 20). And the buildings of Enric Rogent located at c/Girona, 22 I 24. He also designs the house for Rodrig Juncadella (rambla Catalunya, 33)
1889: The works at the Santuari de Santa Maria Auxiliadora began.
1890: He designs the “les cases Ponts” (Passeig de Gràcia, 2 i 4)
1892: The works at the Casa de Joseph Fabra, Construction of the house of Tomas Roger Larrossa (c/Ausias March 37-39) finish.
1893: The construction of casa de Gustau Peyra (c/Mallorca, 235) begins.
1895: He designs “Casa de Isidra Pedro” (c/Bruc 66-68, c/ Girona, 321)
1897: The “col·legi Jesús María”, designed by Sagnier, finishes.
1908: The “Palau de la Justicia” was officially inaugurated.
1911-1916: His son Josep M. Sagnier Vidal obtains the degree in architecture.
1916 – 1917: The “seu central Caixa de Pensions a la Via Layetana” was built.
1917: He obtained the “Medalla d’or de l’Ajuntament de Barcelona” because he won three contests.
1917-1918: He becomes the architect of the “Diòcesi de Barcelona”
1918: He does the “remunta de la Casa Juncadella”

1923: The pope Pius XI gave him the title of “Marqués de Sagnier.”

1924-1927: He is a councilor of Primo de Rivera.

1930: He inaugurates the “Patronat de Ribas projectat”

1931: Enric Sagnier dies in Barcelona the 1of September.

5.2 BIOGRAPHY

Enric Ferran Josep Lluís Sagnier i Villavecchina, was born the 21 of march of 1858 at Barcelona and died the 1 of September of 1931 at the same city. He died in the bed of his summer house. It is one of the architects with more works in all the zone of Barcelona (more than 300 buildings). He belonged to a wealthy family which made him have a good education. He studied music, drawing and architecture. Meanwhile he was studying his degree he worked with different architects. The most important was Francisco de Paula del Villar y Lozano. He did the works of Monestir de Montserrat with him. This architect is known as a director of the Barcelona technical school and for being the impulser of the construction of the “Sagrada Familia”, before Antoni Gaudi began to work on it.

Along his career he would work with Josep Domenich i Estapà, Bonaventura Bassegoda i Aigó, August Font i Carreras i Francesc Folguera. Later, his son will decide to follow the steps of his father and he will finish the degree in architecture. His son finished the “El Templo Expiatorio del Sagrado Corazon”, design of Enric Sagnier, located at the top of the Tibidabo.

At 1887 he married Dolores Vidal-Ribas i Torrents with whom he had five sons.

He became member of the “l’Acadèmia de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi” at 1911 and obtained the “medalla d’or de l’Ajuntament de Barcelona” because he won three times the annual city contest. He won it with the projects of “Casa Emili Juncadella” (1901), The buildings for the “Junta Provincial de Protecció a la Infància i Repressió de la Mendicitat” (1916) i with the “sede central de la Caixa de Pensions de Barcelona” (1917). He also won with the house Casa Ignasi Coll, 1918, and with Casa Lluís Rocamora, 1919.

Sagnier also worked in politics. The most important was the link with the church. In the lasts years of his life the pope Pius XI gave him the title of “Marqués de Sagnier”. Later on, the 10 of July of 1928, became part of “Sa Santedat”

Finally he became part of the “Junta Diocesana” and the “Conferències de Sant Vicenç de Paül”

We must say that nowadays the architect is not well-known in Barcelona although the city is full of his works. This is because the link with the church which made him follow a conservative life. At his lasts years his architectonic style didn’t included the modern styles.
5.3 ENRIC SAGNIER’S WORKS

Enric Sagnier is an architect unknown nowadays although he had more than 300 works in Barcelona. Nowadays 59 of those are classified as artistic heritage. His first work was “reforma de la capella de Sant Josep en la Basílica de Montserrat” (1884), whom he made under the orders of Francisco de Paula del Villar y Lozano. His first important work was the church of “Santa Engràcia de Montacada”, 1886, which was destroyed in the Spanish Civil War.

At the years 1890 he basically designed houses for the wealthy families in Barcelona.

At the same time he did the “Frontón Barcelonès” (1893) which was the first place to play with a ball in Barcelona and the “Palau de Justícia de Barcelona” (1888-1911), designed with Josep Domènch i Estapà.

The “Palau de Justícia” was, after the University of Barcelona, one of the firsts public buildings in Barcelona seen as a monument. This building was composed by two rectangular bodies and a central one. There’s allot of ornamentation and sculptures. The design of this building included the new techniques of building with iron.

One of the lasts important works is the “Patronat de Ribes” built between 1920 and 1930. It’s decoration has a populist baroque style. It is actually a school (l’IES Vall d’Hebron).

At the beginnings of the century he began doing important works for the church. The Salesian made him do the “Santuari de Santa Maria Auxiliadora” (1889-1901), composed by a heart of people and a church with three rooms separated by two rows of 6 pillars. He also designed other churches in other neighborhoods of Barcelona. The most important one is the “Temple Expiatori del Sagrat Cor”, in the mountain of Tibidabo. This began on 1902 and finished in 1961 by his son. The style of this work is romantic. The most important works outside if Barcelona are The school in Pearth (Australia), and a church built in Cuba between 1915 and 1920.

With the change of century Sagnier became to get closer to modernism. Various of his works are classified as modernist works. At this time he also did funerary works Another important work is the “Casa Amús” known as “El Pinar”, 1902-1904, located at the Tibidabo.

At his last years of life, Enric Sagnier, had less productions. The most important ones at this stage was the “Real Club Marítim de Barcelona” built between 1911 and 1913. This building got down at 1957. The other building we must talk about is “La seu central de la Caixa de Pensions” at the Via Layetana of Barcelona, numbers 56-58. It was built between 1914 and 1917. It is important because he used the new technique with concrete.

One of the last important works is the “Temple Expiatori del Sagrat Cor”, in the mountain of Tibidabo. This began on 1902 and finished in 1961 by his son. The style of this work is romantic. The most important works outside if Barcelona are The school in Pearth (Australia), and a church built in Cuba between 1915 and 1920.

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