

SUSTAINABLE TOURISTIC DEVELOPMENT IN CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Francesc Navés

Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Barcelona Architecture School,
Barcelona, Spain
e-mail: francesc.naves@upc.edu

Graciela Arosemena

Panama, Panama
e-mail: garosemena.arq@cableonda.net

Abstract

To rebuild cultural landscape, with sustainable principles, it is fundamental to revalue the cultural and historic heritage but also natural heritage, improving site interpretation, as a manner to recover its touristic potential. Through the case study Peguera project it can be explained how it. Peguera has a great landscape and ecological value, fundamentally because it is in the middle two natural protected spaces, so the area of the project has a natural corridor function, and at the same time it has a historical and cultural value, mainly configured by the antique Peguera town remains, and the abandoned buildings form old mining activity.

The planning of Peguera, has oriented the touristic development proposed, and this planning came up from the territory's own characteristics, mentioned behind, and traditional activities, considering the sustainable criteria. Consequently the tourism development has been oriented to ecological tourism, specifically rural tourism.

Keywords: sustainable tourism cultural landscape

Introduction

To rebuild cultural landscape, with sustainable principles, it is fundamental to revalue the cultural and historic heritage, improving site interpretation, as a manner to recover its touristic potential. But also, most of those historical sites are related to natural spaces, so their legacy must be thought not only by a historical view, but also as the natural and landscape heritage, as the setting of history, and the physical evidence of the relationship between one human activity and environment. The importance of natural environment lies in the fact that it identifies and gives character to the historical site as a unique one. The landscape recover is an opportunity to demonstrate how was the possible relationship between the monumental site and its natural environment, and how it has been modified by man, and consequently, how man has built a new landscape.

For those reasons we argue that in cultural landscapes the archeological monuments, or ruins from antique cities or towns, cannot be disassociated from the natural scenery that round it.

In the other hand, improving cultural landscapes through touristic development, besides of being an important way to develop those areas, it also involves the protection of historical and natural legacy. In cases where the historical sites are linked to natural spaces, the biggest goal is to improve and maintain the historical monuments, but also it is fundamental that the touristic activity do not disturb the natural systems where they are located, by conserving and promoting all natural values (fauna y flora) and respecting historical remains.



Figure No. 1: general view of Peguera, the case study area.

Case study description: touristic development of Peguera

Peguera is a great territory with rural characteristics, predominant is an area of grassland, with physical evidence of old cultivated terraces. This grassland has some dispersed areas of groups of trees, mainly pine trees and deciduous trees.

The project is about 75 ha at the Peguera Valley (Berguedà). Peguera has a great landscape and ecological value, fundamentally because it is in the middle to natural protected spaces, so the area of the project has a natural corridor function, and at the same time it has a historical and cultural value, mainly configured by the antique Peguera town remains, the abandoned buildings form old mining activity, and the medieval castle ruins. The valley activities began with agriculture and then in the beginning of the xx century the area was transformed by the mining activity.

The town was associated to the antique mining activity that was developed in the area in middle xx century in Berguedà region (Catalonia). One time ended this mining activity, the town was abandoned. The touristic project consisted on planning the territory by consider the grate historical, cultural and natural values, preserving and improving the site.

By now, this territory is deserted and the remains of historical and cultural heritage is now in danger of losing a part of the historical memory.

What to do?

In historical and natural heritage always there is the doubt of what is better to the conservation of the site; we can develop an intervention to improve and give an use to the site, or do nothing. Peguera was not the exception, but the fact is that if the Peguera antique village is abandoned and we do not do nothing, this historical heritage and the memory of the site would disappear. So the alternative of develop an intervention was more able to the protection of the evidence of old human activity, but it was also a challenge, how to do the intervention between tow natural spaces and reducing the environmental an ecological impart to those spaces.

Strategy: Sustainable rural-tourism development

The kind of touristic development proposed came up from the territory's own characteristics, mentioned behind, and traditional activities, as: sheep grazing, hiking, mushroom hunting, and picnic. Consequently the tourism development has been oriented to ecological tourism, specifically rural tourism.

The fundamental objectives of the project are to preserve the environmental and ecological conditions of the valley, and to prevent losing the cultural.

The touristic project considered sustainable criteria and strategy:

- Natural environment protection, by territorial zoning by intensity and impact of activities.
- Traditional activities protection, by including them on the territory design
- Climate change prevention, by promoting natural energies
- Integration of the water cycle, reducing and water recycling systems application
- Landscape preserving, conserving the original architectural forms and
- Territory carrying capacity respect, by limiting the touristic services capability.
- Reducing the use of material and build space, by recycling and rehabilitation the antique town for touristic accommodation and different services, keeping its original footprint.
- Preserving ecological connections, by restrictive vehicular transport.

Territorial and Landscape Planning through sustainable concerns

The territorial planning of Peguera, was developed taking care of environmental possible impacts. And since the beginning of the planning the environmental criteria was included. In fact, before the plan, first of all it was made an environmental and physical analysis of the site (weather, flora and fauna, hydrology, geology), to consider with a global idea of the site and to determine how to develop de territory with minim impact.



Fig. no. 2: Vegetation distribution analysis and section. (Navés et al, 2009)

Then the environmental study was an engine to take decision. But also it was made a landscape study, identifying the characteristics and types of landscapes, and the territory elements that give it identity.

So these environmental and landscape analysis were used as the bases to develop the plan by taking the territory opportunities, with the objective of develop a rural tourism project. The planning had as objective to integrate the sustainable urban development criteria with the territorial planning.

Sustainable planning

The Peguera Plan introduced some sustainable strategies that we describe next:

Sustainable urban model

- It was decided to not expand the actual constructed area, and re-use the constructed footprint for the development.
- Re-built the existent town houses, and other antique constructions, rehabilitation or re-using the original materials from the old existent constructions, to build new ones.
- The new use, a rural tourism project, must continue with natural conservation and ecological permeability. Also these economical activity maintain the local natural resources.

Mobility

- It is not allowed the use of private motorized transport, to reduce the acoustic impact in the area; instead, it is allowed bikes, and pedestrian mobility.
- It is developed a track network for the pedestrian communication between all the buildings and the cultural and natural interest zones of the project. Those tracks are planned to be permeable to drain all the water to the subsoil.

Water use

- The plan binds the sewage water treatment, and also the re-use of treated water for the green areas irrigation.
- The plan promotes the rain water use, for different applications.

Energy

- It is recommended the use of renewable energy and a bioclimatic design of the buildings.

Landscape strategies

The landscape project, following the plan criteria, looks for the natural conservation promoting all the fauna and flora values, and at the same time restore the site history and stimulate local economy.

These principles are reflected on the zonicification map of the project. It is planned 3 principal zones, one is the protection zone, which is an ‘untouchable’ area next to the forests and the protected natural spaces, or areas of special natural interest. This zone also guarantees the ecological permeability and continuity of the natural systems. The second, is the transition zone, which is an area where is permitted some activity of low impact and is settled in the grassland. Are sport areas, agricultural activity, and surrounding the buildings areas. And the third zone and last one is the garden and orchards area, which is the area close to the buildings and the village, is an area that mitigates directly the buildings activities and is for free access .

PROJECTE, zones de protecció

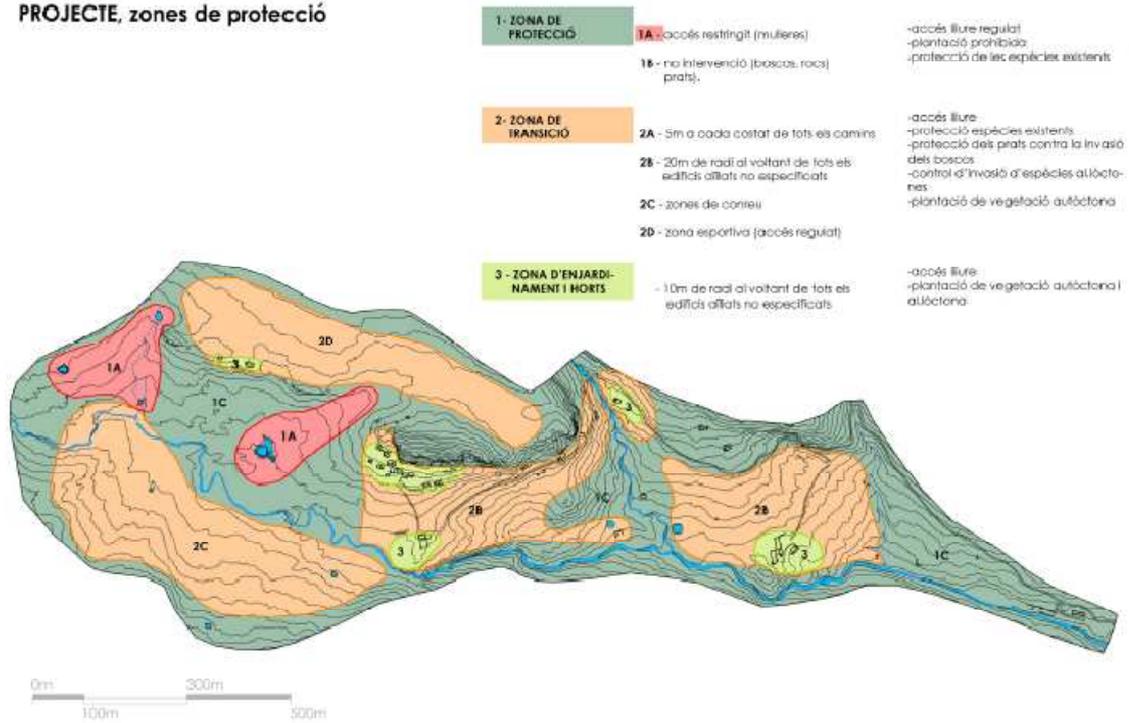


Fig. no. 3: Zone map, indicating 3 principle zones. This zones were considered by the environmental impact level. (Navés. et al, 2009)

PROJECTE, zones de recuperació

LOCALITZACIÓ DE LES DIFERENTS ÀREES

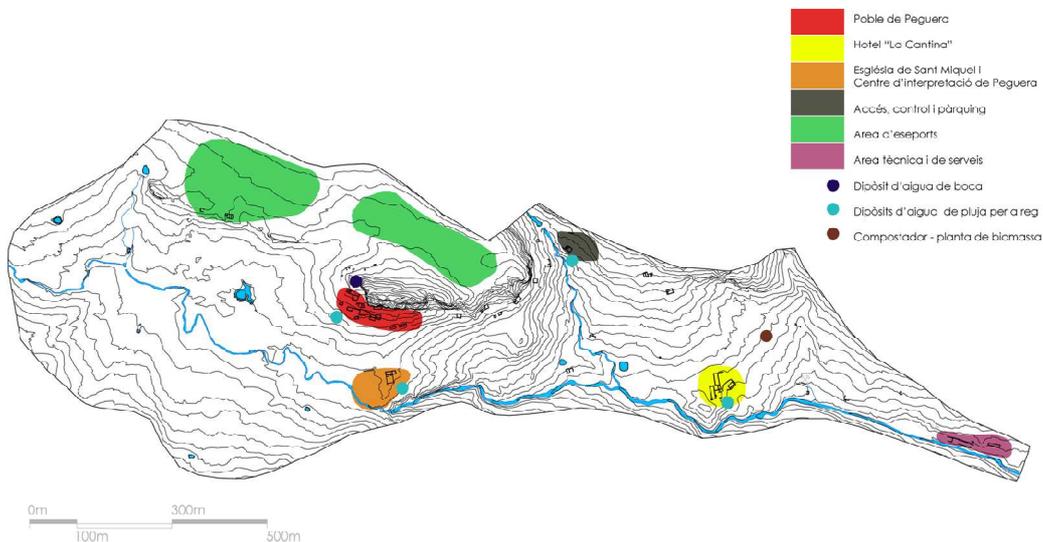


Fig. no. 4. Activities area location map. Indicating the areas of direct intervention, like the old town, the buildings, and the parking area, fundamentally. Also it is indicated the location of the rain water storage points. (Navés et al, 2009)

The antique Peguera village and the other buildings will be restored with uses in harmony with the necessities of the zone. The town will be developed as a complex houses for rural accommodation, other isolated buildings, as the antique mining workers dormitory, are going to be rebuilt for a little rural hotel, also there will be a visitor's center for the local information diffusion, including natural, cultural and industrial antique activity.

The landscape project takes on count that al those new activities are compatible with the actual valley's uses, as ranching, tracking, and other local traditional activities.

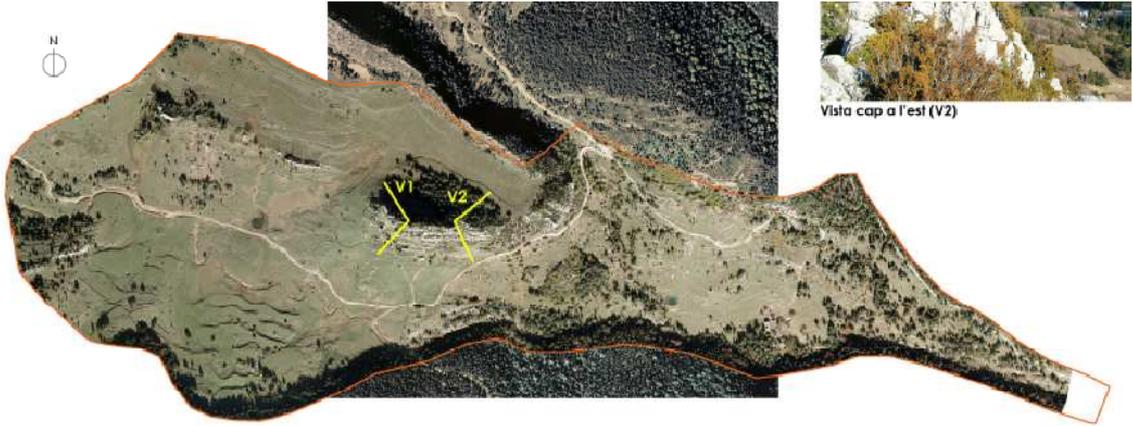


Fig. no. 5: aerial orthophoto map of the study area. In red line, is the project boundary.(Architect X, Brufau)



Fig. No. 6: Peguera rebuilding illustration. (Navés et al, 2009)



Fig. No. 7. The rural hotel proposal illustration. (Architect X, Brufaur)

The project, at the same time that integrates the different spaces with a path network into hierarchy, there will be a car parking in the project's entrance, with the objective that nobody get into the project by private cars, instead of them it is proposed the use of common electric transportation.

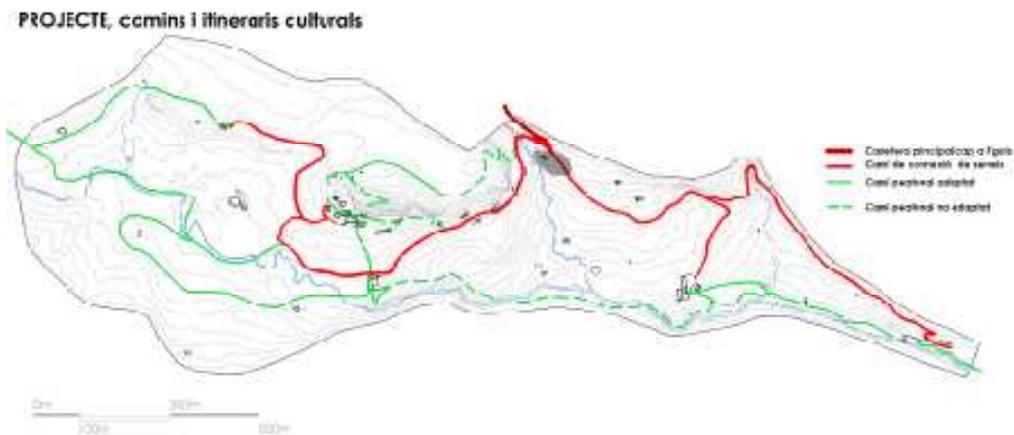


Fig.No.8. Patches and itineraries network map. The thickness red is the principal road for the arriving to the project by car to the parking. The other red line is the patch for internal communication. The green line is for pedestrian patch adapted for easy walk. The dotted green line is for the pedestrian rustic patch. (Navés et al, 2009)

Also it is designed a cultural itinerary, for all the visitants of the natural zone, the abandoned mining remains and agricultural evidences.



Fig. No. 9. Cultural itineraries through the town, and also shows the antique mining remains.(Navés et al, 2009)



Fig. No. 19. Natural itineraries. This itinerary shows natural spaces like the river, forest, and natural water ponds, and the big rock mountain of Peguera.(Navés et al, 2009)

References

- Navés, F; et. al.. (2005) "Arquitectura del Paisaje Natural". Omega. Barcelona, Spain.
- Navés, F.;et al. (2004) "Arquitectura del Paisaje Rural", Omega. Barcelona, Spain.

Naves, F., Arosemena, G.; Herrera, X.; Canut, A.. (2010). “Informe de sostenibilitat ambiental (ISA) de Peguera”. Barcelona, Spain

Naves, F., Herrera, X.; Canut, A.; Arosemena, G. (2009). “Projecte de Recuperació Paisatgística de Peguera”. Barcelona, Spain.