

## **WORKSHOP 2 “Re-imagining Production Spaces: the Royal Artillery Factory of Seville”**

### **IDEAS FOR A RECOVERY PROJECT FOR THE ROYAL ARTILLERY FACTORY OF SEVILLE**

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Seville has close ties with the history of metallurgy in its different forms and especially the art of smelting metal for military purposes, given its exceptional geostrategic importance in different times of Spain's history.

Seville's Bronze Factory, predecessor of the modern-day Artillery Factory, was created around 1565 as a result of a private initiative by the Morel family. It occupied two plots of land in the district of San Bernardo and had just one workshop and two furnaces. In 1634 the factory became the property of the Royal Treasury. It was the beginning of the “Asentistas”, a time of government-regulated contracts, when smelters were bound to the factory through fixed ten-year government concessions or contracts. This was a productive period as a result of trade with the New World and commissions from the Crown. This growth led to continual enlargement, forming a complex within the district's urban fabric. Streets and houses were added to it in a typical expansion process given the layout of the city's urban parcels.

Building started on the modern-day Artillery Factory in the first third of the 18th century. Work was given strong momentum in the reign of Charles III with the outstanding project by Jean Maritz. Its style was in keeping with the model of large royal industries of the time, thanks to the uniform, but also flexible, sense of space. Its initial shape was based on defining a continuous square whose unit of repetition was formed by four pillars joined by an architrave system and covered by a groined vault. Its proportions were those of the large blast furnace. This system created a large space which was easily able to house the different workshops used for the basic smelting process.

Following changes to military strategy from the mid-19th century, and especially the early 20th century, significant renovation of the historical building (currently designated an Asset of Cultural Interest) became necessary. Thanks to the building's ordered structural sequence, the factory could easily be adapted with successive extensions using new building methods and different materials to the original.

In the early 20th century it became obvious that more than partial renovation was required; there was a need for major expansion to house new facilities and machinery workshops along with homes and other services. This took place on land opposite the old factory, next to the former Carbonería building which was also built in the 18th century. The different stages of this major enlargement were carried out between 1906 and 1945 on this significant piece of land, which was adjacent to the Seville-Cádiz railway line. The first stage was geared towards building eclectically styled and interesting single-family housing for managers at the edge of the plot where it met with Avenida de Eduardo Dato and also the construction in 1906 of a major rectangular industrial building of about 3,700 square metres enclosed by a load-bearing perimeter wall, a sawtooth roof and metal structure. This was produced at the San Antonio foundry in Seville (the former Bonaplata Foundry), which manufactured interesting metal structures, such as the Puente de Isabel II bridge and the coaches for the Andalusian railways

in Utrera (with similar properties to those of this building). The second stage began at the end of the 1920s. Work consisted of constructing two industrial buildings which were perpendicular to the Seville-Cádiz railway line and ran alongside Avenida de Eduardo Dato. They were opened in 1930 and a test site clearly under the influence of rationalism. The third stage, launched around 1945, added a small industrial building at the end of the main street and also entailed minor alterations.

Today, industrial spaces from the period of manual arts and crafts or the industrial revolution are undervalued by the Academy of supposed Art, which does not accept them as monuments, and also by the public and private companies from the opulent, decadent end of the post-capitalist period, which see them merely as places for property speculation. Now that the link between raw materials, output and consumers has been lost, industrial spaces have lost narrative strength and physical character. The strategy I am therefore proposing has to be characterised by its ability to safeguard the intrinsic value of the monument, as a *monumentum*, from the Latin "*munere*", which remembers. To do this, I suggest we remember the primitive, cast-iron contraption of Juan Morel and the help of the novel *The Invention of Morel* (Adolfo Bioy Casares, 1940) in which a machine is able to reproduce all the senses simultaneously. Morel describes his invention saying that "*when all the senses are synchronised, the soul emerges*". This is exactly what this factory needs. Let us therefore use the method of memory since we can find the history of Seville itself at the Artillery Factory. All of it is summarised in its high industrial buildings, its spacious yards and streets; as days of glory and times of crisis, structuring and decomposition, construction and demolition, extension and abandonment. The Artillery Factory is a territorial typology. It represents a historical industrial landscape, a landscape of production, from which we can only identify the architecture of the tip of the former diachronic and *historically and environmentally diverse* iceberg. It represents a *time of places*. It also demands analysis fitting its specific essence as heritage so that an attempt can be made to inhabit this fossilised artefact without destroying it.

My proposal is basically to open up a debate in Seville with the participation of citizens and institutions by creating a study group to objectively consider the *re-inhabitation* project so that the historical memory of the Artillery Factory can be preserved by recovering its tangible and intangible heritage, making it a basic intervention support tool. The project can help to transform the Artillery Factory into a space for activity and innovation, characterised by uses compatible with the dissemination of its architectural, technological and scientific content. It can create a programme that facilitates the coherent integration of the new project with an outstanding industrial historical monument, and connect the Artillery Factory with similar initiatives at home and abroad. It is a project that combines the merits of this industrial complex in the provision of dissemination and heritage recovery occurring in Seville. It can convert the Artillery Factory into an identifying brand for heritage policies developed in the regional and city governments and is suitable for a sustainable management and maintenance strategy project.

To paraphrase Pier Luigi Cervellati, the Artillery Factory has been a point of reference in the life of past generations of people from Seville and beyond. Today it needs to represent a meeting place for our current lives and that of future generations. Re-establishing a relationship with a history that, for Seville, means reconnecting the rise of this city (Dominguez Ortiz) with the innovative, sustainable Seville which respects its past and which we all would like for the 21st century.



**B-TEAM  
BROWNFIELD POLICY IMPROVEMENT TASK FORCE**

**BROWNFIELD DAYS IN SEVILLE/SPAIN  
31 May, and 1, 2, 3 June 2011**

**QUESTIONS**

1. What strategies can be developed so that industrial spaces that are modified for other uses do not lose their significance as an intangible heritage of "memory of work" ?
2. How would you implement a recovery of industrial heritage so that it does not end with the usual results of themes parks intended for tourist uses?
3. What proposals relating to the place's historical merits would you propose to the B-TEAM for the selected case in your country?