

## WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Barcelona (Spain)

No 804

### Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Palau de la Música Catalana and the Hospital de Sant Pau, Barcelona
<i>Location</i>	Catalonia
<i>State Party</i>	Spain
<i>Date</i>	19 July 1997

### Justification by State Party

The two main works of the architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner are without any doubt the Palau de la Música Catalana (1905-8) and the Hospital de Sant Pau (1902, completed by his son in 1927-30).

The Palau de la Música Catalana was outstanding from the moment of its conception because of two factors that were to be of great future importance: a special concept of spaces and a very intelligent use of new technologies developed during the Rationalist revolution. The Palau was the most important source of an architectural concept of great future relevance: the reticulated metallic structure, free floor space, and non-load-bearing outer walls like continuous curtains of glass. The entire building was designed as an intelligent interplay of spaces stemming from the abrupt separation between the exterior and the interior and making maximum use of natural light, the real prime mover in space. The whole was tied together by means of the integration and recovery of decorative arts.

In this way the Palau de la Música Catalana became an exceptional example of the fusion of two basic concepts: tradition and modernity elevated to the level of art. Domènech i Montaner was faithful to the modernist trend with which he identified himself, taking up the words of Byron: "The ideal of architecture is frozen music ... the ideal of beauty always presents itself to my thoughts as living music." Ruskin, an author very close to Domènech i Montaner, expressed similar ideas. The coming together of music and architecture is clearly manifested in the Palau de la Música Catalana. Whilst paying homage to the purely static aspect, it

is only necessary to look at the decorative exuberance of the large concert hall, to be surprised by Pau Gargallo's large sculptures around the proscenium arch and the great stained-glass dome on the ceiling. In addition to Gargallo, several of the most important artists and craftsmen of the time contributed to the Palau de la Música Catalana, such as Lluís Bru, Eusebi Aranau, and Francesc Modollet. All commentators agree about the incomparable beauty of the Palau de la Música Catalana. Through its uniqueness, its authenticity, and its beauty it is an unparalleled testimony, in the Modernist style, to a public concert hall whose symbolic, artistic, and historical value is universal.

From an historiographical point of view, the Hospital de Sant Pau is of immense importance because it is the largest hospital complex in Modernist style (equivalent to *Art Nouveau*). Moreover, this group comes within a secular tradition that owes its origins to the Hospital of Santa Creu, built at the beginning of the 15th century. Historically, the Hospital de Sant Pau, at one and the same time original and daring, demonstrates how Domènech i Montaner had studied the problem of modern hospitals. He planned to erect 48 individual buildings in a 145,470m<sup>2</sup> quadrilateral. The hospital complex was in the form of an enclosure, with the main entrance on the Avinguda de Gaudí, at the end of which was located the main facade of the Sagrada Família, masterpiece of the Modernist architect Antoni Gaudí. The axis of the Hospital de Sant Pau crosses the grid street pattern laid out by Ildefons Cerdà at an angle of 45°. Its floral decoration and abundant use of sculptures by the best artists of the period emphasize in a remarkable way the structure of the buildings. Domènech i Montaner's value as the creator of architectural volumes is also revealed by light. Finally, the personal beliefs of the architect in architecture go well beyond a mere application of the decorative arts. For Domènech i Montaner it was essential to be able to give sick people a feeling of well-being and beauty, which would most certainly contribute to an early convalescence, since according to him beauty has therapeutic value. After nearly a century of existence and uninterrupted public use, the Hospital de Sant Pau has international prestige both from the medical and from the architectural and artistic points of view.

Despite this continuous activity, it retains all its original elements virtually unchanged. Since it was designated an Historical and Artistic Monument, several campaigns of conservation and, on rare occasions, restoration have been carried out. The Hospital de Sant Pau faithfully maintains the original design of Domènech i Montaner. An outstanding example of its type, it is of exceptional interest because of its beauty, its size, and its unique architectural design, and is therefore of undeniable universal value.

[Note The State Party does not make any proposals in the nomination dossier concerning the criteria under which it considers the property should be inscribed on the World Heritage List.]

## Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 Convention, this nomination consists of two *monuments*.

## History and Description

### History

The inspiration of the *Palau de la Música Catalana* was the concept of the “Orfeó Català” that emerged during the Barcelona Universal Exhibition of 1888. This choir for the performance of Catalan music formed part of the overall political movement that developed in these years, with a resurgence of Catalan nationalism. It was conceived on the model of contemporary groups in Britain, France, Germany, and elsewhere in Europe.

After its foundation in 1891, the choir used various premises in Barcelona. In October 1904 it acquired a site in Calle de Sant Pere Més Alto and commissioned Domènech i Montaner, then at the peak of his career, as architect of its new building. Construction began in 1905 and was completed three years later, when the building was awarded a prize as the best building of the year by the Municipality of Barcelona.

Domènech i Montaner had already begun work at that time on the *Hospital de Sant Pau*. It was the successor of a 15th century foundation at the other end of the city, the Hospital de Santa Creu, which was inadequate to deal with the enormous growth of the population of Barcelona at the end of the 19th century. In 1892 a Paris banker of Catalan origin, Pau Gil, left a large sum of money in his will for the construction of a hospital in his native city, to be named in honour of his patron saint. The land for this was purchased in 1898 and Domènech i Montaner received the commission to design it.

Work began in 1901 and by 1911 eight blocks of the complex had been built and were in use. The work of Domènech i Montaner was once again honoured in 1913 by the award for the best building of the previous year (in fact, the third that he had received, as a consequence of which the architect was awarded a Gold Medal by the city). In 1913 the architect brought his son, Pere Domènech i Roura, into the project, and they worked together on the church and further hospital blocks until Lluís Domènech i Montaner's death in 1923 at the age of 73. Pere Domènech i Roura was responsible for completion of the project, which continued until 1930.

### Description

The *Palau de la Música Catalana* is one of the most emblematic buildings of *Art Nouveau* (Modernism), exceptional both for its qualities and its setting in the historic centre of Barcelona.

Structurally it consists of a steel skeleton (of which it is a very early example) closed by a curtain wall that is largely of glass. The use of a steel framework makes it possible for the internal floor plan to be free

and with a series of large open spaces, in particular the great concert hall.

The exuberant decoration, by artists such as the sculptors Miquel Blay, Eusebi Arnau, and Pau Gargallo, mosaicists Lluís Bru and Mario Maragliano, painter Miquel Massot, and stained-glass artist Jeroni Granell, with its allusions to the musical traditions of Europe, is utilized in such a way as not to overwhelm the structural and spatial qualities, either of the facades or of the interiors. The relationships between architect and artists can be seen to have been intimate and constructive. Especially harmonious is the concert hall, with its great inverted dome of painted glass, where the lavish decoration contributes to the spatial continuity and integrity.

The *Hospital de Sant Pau* similarly succeeds in combining the functional with the decorative. It is built on a site at the opposite end of the Avinguda de Gaudí to the Sagrada Família, one of the icons of Barcelona. This diagonal thoroughfare, also the work of Domènech i Montaner, cuts dramatically across the rectangular street pattern of Ildefonso Cerdà's *Eixample* at an angle of 45°, and this orientation is followed within the 13.5ha of the Hospital complex.

The hospital blocks are arranged along the diagonal axis of the site, providing regular spaces for gardens, since Domènech i Montaner believed firmly in the therapeutic value of greenery in speeding up the recovery of patients. The three-storeyed blocks are connected by a network of underground service galleries, which total c 2km in length. The complex is entered through the spacious monumental hall of the administration building, with its views of the broad panorama of the main hospital beyond.

An atmosphere conducive to the well-being of patients is created by the extensive use of glazed tiles in bright colours, stained-glass windows, sculpture, and paintings, the work of artists such as sculptors Pau Gargallo and Francesc Modollet and mosaicists Francesc Labarta and Mario Maragliano, with whom Domènech i Montaner and his son worked closely. Like the *Palau de la Música Catalana*, the *Hospital de Sant Pau* is an outstanding example of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, of which it is unquestionably the largest and most ambitious manifestation.

Built into the original design and layout was a flexibility in potential use of the various components. The effectiveness of this is amply demonstrated by the way in which the Hospital has been able to keep abreast of developments in medical and surgical practice and technology without losing any part of its overall appearance or impact.

## Management and Protection

### Legal status

The *Palau de la Música Catalana* was designated an Historical-Artistic Monument in 1971 and the *Hospital de Sant Pau* in 1978. Any interventions must be authorized by the Ministry of Culture.

The two properties are also subject to the Provincial Law No 9/93 on the Catalan Cultural Heritage.

#### *Management*

The Palau de la Música Catalana is owned by a private association, "Orfeo Catalana." It is managed by a consortium (*Consortio del Palau de la Música Catalana*) set up after the 1982 restoration, with members nominated by the municipal administration and the City Council of Barcelona, the Generalitat (provincial government) of Catalunya, and Orfeo Catalana. This body has had a special heritage section responsible for conservation and restoration work for the last fifteen years.

The Hospital de Sant Pau belongs to the private Fondation de la Sta Creu i de Sant Pau and is managed by its administrative body, known as MIA (*Molt Il.lustre Administració*), composed of representatives nominated by the municipal administration of Barcelona, the Generalitat de Catalunya, and the Archbishopric of Barcelona.

There is strong protection afforded to the cultural heritage in the master plan for Barcelona. A buffer zone is proposed for the Palau de la Música Catalana which would prevent the erection of any inappropriate or unsympathetic structures in the immediate environs of the property, whilst the entire area of the historic centre (Ciutat Vella) is regulated by strict ordinances.

There is a plan to demolish the adjoining Church of San Francesc de Paula, which has no artistic merit. This will have the effect of leaving the Palau as an isolated building, as envisaged by Domènech i Montaner.

It is difficult to ascertain whether any buffer zone is indicated in respect of the Hospital de Sant Pau. One of the maps provided shows certain buildings designated as *Monument* and there is a dotted line described as *Delimitació Monument*, which may be intended as a buffer zone, but it closely follows the lines of the outer buildings and does not fulfil the function of a buffer zone, as defined in the *Operational Guidelines*.

In July 1996 the Catalan Heritage Commission approved a Special Plan, prepared by the City Administration, for the future development of the complex, which has become inadequate to meet current medical requirements. It makes some radical proposals: the construction of an underground car park on the north side of the site, rehabilitation of the original historic buildings of Domènech i Montaner, construction of a new building in the north-eastern corner of the site, following demolition of existing structures, and adaptive re-use of the historic buildings (notably for an international school for restoration of *Art Nouveau* monuments).

The building of the Puigvert Foundation, on the west side of the complex, is a contemporary building of little architectural merit, which clashes in style and scale with the historical element of the complex. However, it is to be retained for the foreseeable future because of its medical importance

#### **Conservation and Authenticity**

##### *Conservation history*

At the Palau de la Música Catalana a major campaign of restoration and conservation was carried out in 1988 under the supervision of the architect Oscar Tusquets.

The Hospital de Sant Pau has been subject to continuous maintenance since its completion. The La Mercè block was restored by Antoni González in 1979-80 and the clock tower was restored in 1985-89 by the Architectural Heritage Service of the Department of Culture of the Generalitat de Catalunya.

##### *Authenticity*

The authenticity of both properties is high. Great care has been exercised to replace damaged elements such as external tiles with exact copies of the originals. In the Palau de la Música Catalana ingenious methods have been used when installing modern technical equipment such as air conditioning, acoustic insulation, etc and reinforcing structural elements.

#### **Evaluation**

##### *Action by ICOMOS*

An ICOMOS expert mission visited the two properties in January 1997. ICOMOS also consulted a distinguished Norwegian expert on *Art Nouveau* architecture.

##### *Qualities*

The claims made for these two buildings in the nomination dossier are not exaggerated. They are two of the finest (and earliest) examples of the Modernist style in architecture and of exceptional importance, both as manifestations of human creative genius and works of art.

##### *Comparative analysis*

*Art Nouveau* has been the subject of an International Joint Study organized by UNESCO. In the report of its final plenary meeting, held in Turin (Italy) in October 1994, the international expert group included these two buildings in a short list of nine that it commended as being worthy of consideration for inclusion on the World Heritage List (along with the works of Antoni Gaudí in Barcelona that were by then already inscribed on the World Heritage List).

#### **Recommendation**

That these two properties be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria i, ii, and iv*:

The Palau de la Música Catalana and the Hospital de Sant Pau in Barcelona are masterpieces of the imaginative and exuberant *Art Nouveau* that flowered in early 20th century Barcelona, the work of one of the acknowledged

leaders of this influential architectural movement.

ICOMOS, September 1997



