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ACE President Daniel FÜGENSCHUH

Preparedness by Design

The Role of Architecture

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Architects' Council of Europe

The Architects' Council of Europe is composed of 53 Member Organisations which are the national regulatory and professional representative bodies in the EU Member States, the accession countries, Switzerland and Norway.

Through its members, the Architects' Council of Europe represents the interests of 580,000 architects from 36 countries in Europe.

INTRODUCTION

- **Vulnerability Multipliers vs. Shock Absorbers:** Poorly planned infrastructure amplifies disasters. Designed resilience absorbs these shocks
- **Preparedness by Design:** Placing human well-being and risk mitigation at the start of the planning cycle, rather than relying purely on post-event emergency management;
- **Legislative Mandate:** Calling for risk reduction to be enshrined into spatial planning codes, policy legislation, and public investment criteria ;
- **Role of Architects:** Positioning architects not merely as designers, but as vital technical advisors and strategic leaders across the full crisis timeline (prevention, response, and recovery);

THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE IN PREPAREDNESS

1. Resilient Infrastructure: Designing for Environmental Reality

We can no longer design our buildings and cities for historical climate averages; we must design for future extremes.

We must integrate nature-based solutions, such as sponge-city urban design, green roofs, and localised water retention—to prevent catastrophic urban flooding and reduce heat island effects.



**WATERPLEIN BENTHEMPLEIN,
Rotterdam, by De Urbanisten**

photo Ossip van Duivenbode

THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE IN PREPAREDNESS

2. Adaptive Design: Building for Spatial Continuity

During a crisis, continuity of life depends on spatial flexibility:

- **Reversible spaces:** Buildings must be designed with modular structural layouts and adaptable systems so they can shift function seamlessly
- **Circular resilience:** By prioritising modularity and demountable components, we safeguard material supply chains and allow rapid structural repair following natural disasters.

Pakhuset Braunstein, Køge, Denmark by ADEPT



Image credits: Rasmus Hjortshøj, Morten Aagaard Krogh

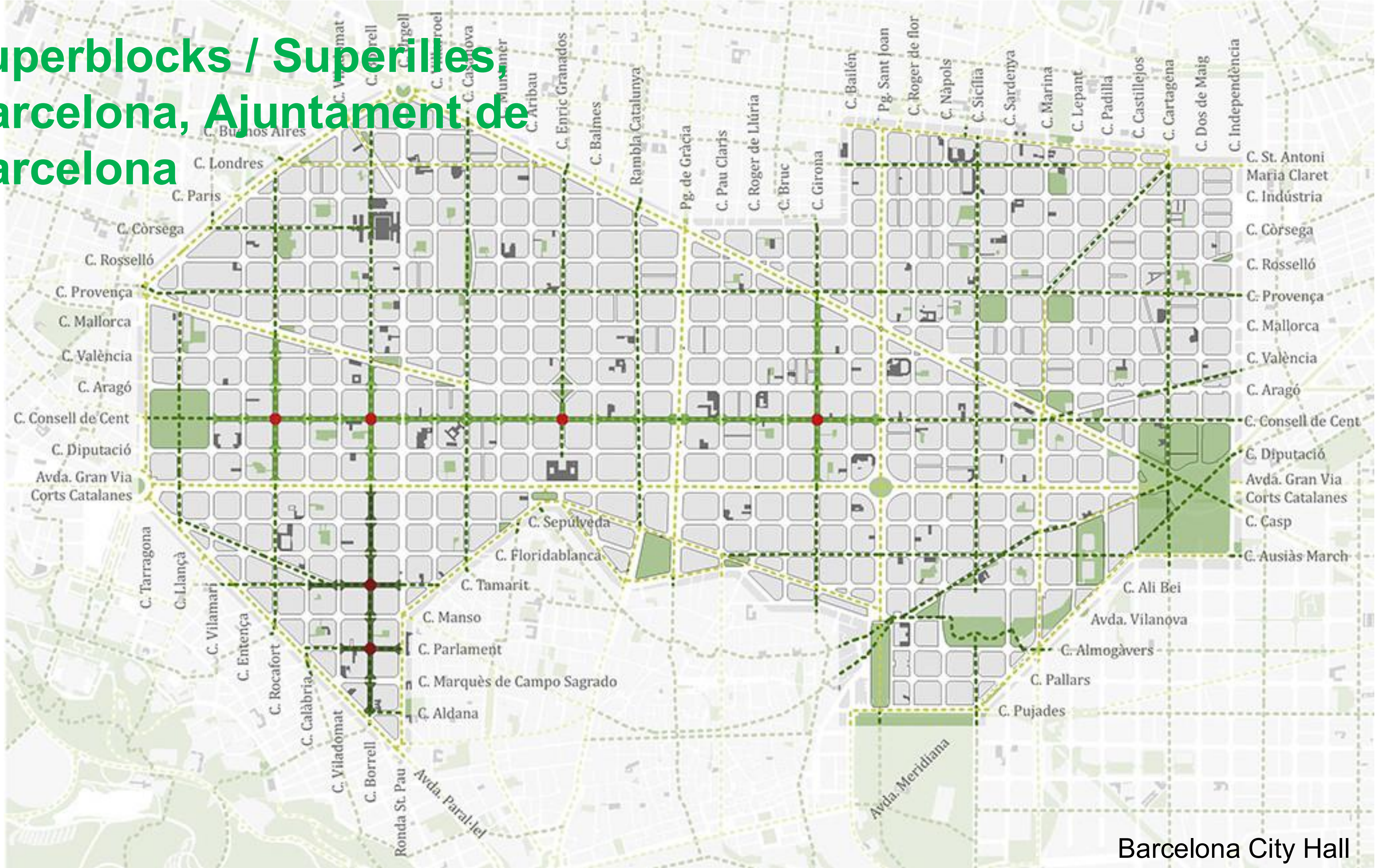
THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE IN PREPAREDNESS

3. Human-Centered Solutions: Social Cohesion & Public Health

Technical resilience is meaningless if it neglects human experience:

- **Health by design:** Spatial quality establishes a baseline of physical health that builds community immunity long before a health crisis strikes;
- **Social infrastructure:** High-quality public spaces foster trust and social cohesion. In times of crisis, connected neighborhoods recover significantly faster than fragmented ones.

Superblocks / Superilles, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona



Barcelona City Hall



A CULTURE OF PREVENTION & RISK-INFORMED SPATIAL PLANNING

True resilience begins long before a disaster strikes.

We urge public authorities to embed a *Culture of Prevention* into long-term development planning:

- Strategic audits & vulnerability diagnoses
- Discouraging urbanisation in high-risk zones
- Pre-disaster land & shelter management:

CONCLUSION

No single profession can build societal resilience alone.

What binds us all together is our professional independence and duty to the public interest.

Unbound by short-term market speculation, the liberal professions are uniquely positioned to guide Europe through long-term risk.

Thank you for your attention!

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