

# COLLAGE HOUSE

Girona  
2006-2009

This housing project for the members of an extended family departed from the recuperation and renovation of a series of run-down buildings that had been built over centuries in the historical centre of the city of Girona.

The large old stone shells had established an optimal relationship in both terms of place and climate. The project seeks to recognize, retain and revitalize the various forms of intelligence deposited in those spaces over time.

## TPOLOGY

Residential - Refurbishment

## AREA

1515m<sup>2</sup>

## PROMOTER

Private

## BUILDER

Capdeferro Constructor, s.a.

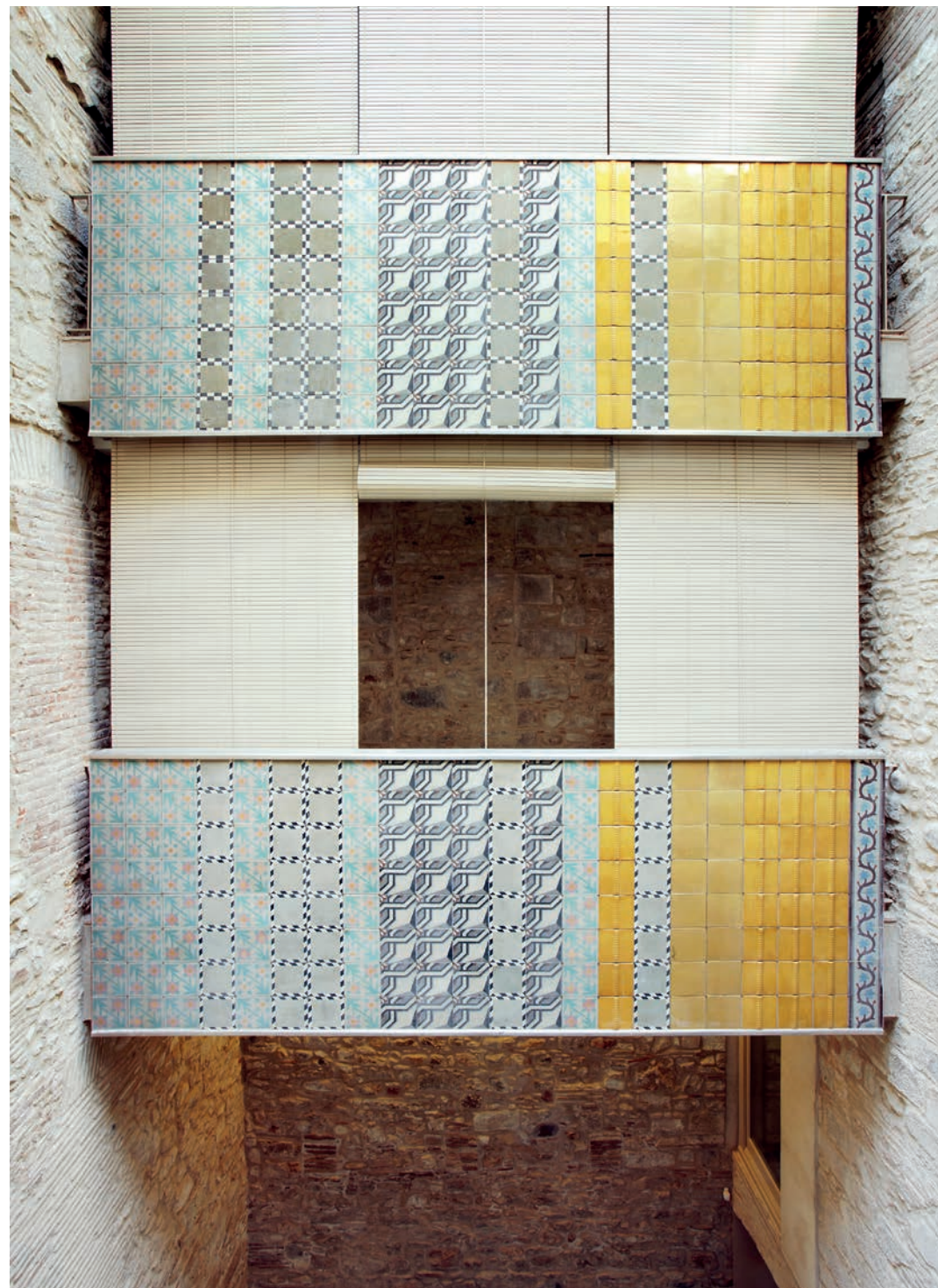
## COLLABORATORS

Blázquez Guanter s.l.p., structural consultants

## PHOTOGRAPHY

José Hevia

Emerging Architect Special Mention of the  
European Prize of Contemporary Architecture -  
Mies van der Rohe Award 2011.  
Architectural Award of the Counties of Girona 2012.





*In Girona, the river and the old Via Augusta structure the palimpsest that contains twenty centuries of life in the old city.*

**F1**  
Collage House site plan. Institut Cartogràfic i Geològic de Catalunya (ICGC), 2016.

**F2**  
View of the Onyar River on its way through the Girona city center. Year: 1905-1911. Credit: Ajuntament de Girona. CRDI (Àngel Toldrà Viazó editor).

**F3**  
High view of the Correu Vell Square and the Força treet in the city of Girona. Year: 1910-1911. Credit: Ajuntament de Girona. CRDI (Àngel Toldrà Viazó editor).

**F4**  
Stairs of the Cathedral's climb in the historical center of the city of Girona. Year: 1906-1918. Credit: Ajuntament de Girona. CRDI (Àngel Toldrà Viazó editor).

Renovation always means establishing a relationship of sorts with the past, with the pasts that are accumulated in the space of the intervention. And also with the future, with that imagined idea of place towards which we would like to tend. But above all it involves a great capacity to work with the present.

To erase or to design: to eliminate, clean, repair, reconstruct, replace, incorporate, add...

Successive discoveries continually require different and complementary responses.

The relationships between old and new spaces are gradually brought about, often in real time, as are those between the workers who one day put up the walls and those who now remake them. The endless superimposition of time, desire, skills, materials, strategies, of individuals.

Two large voids, two essentially unoccupied areas, qualify and structure the house: the courtyard of the gothic staircase and the backyard on the ancient city wall. They act as the true centres of gravity of the building. Their different nature (different depths, dimensions, orientations, proportions, openness...) set up two complementary microcosms and microclimates. The intervention in these two empty spaces articulates the whole project: clarifying their role as organizing centres of the functional structure of the building; restoring their character of natural lungs for the built mass; gathering inside of them and in

their surrounding areas all the open spaces (private and collective) that every dwelling needs; and bringing back to light their rough, irregular, handmade, enigmatically complex and preciously imperfect condition, recovering them as inert stone landscapes. The new added layer intends nothing more than joining, as naturally as possible, the rich and varied agglomeration of rooms and corners shaped on site by men and their stories.

Regarding materials we were able to work with an extremely valuable heritage: the house itself provided us with grilles, mosaics and stones to be reused in the construction. The master builder supplied us with old woods and tiles. Simple mortar facings and stuccoworks completed the choice, following a certain idea of continuity with the constructional language of the old neighbourhood. There was a wish to show, in a completely natural way, the overlapping of the old and new layers, thus responding to the state of preservation of each element and to the future use of each space.

Last, but not least, this project meant for us a growing confidence in a necessarily open design system (in this instance, collage) capable of harmoniously integrating the stories of each bit of the process into a single whole.

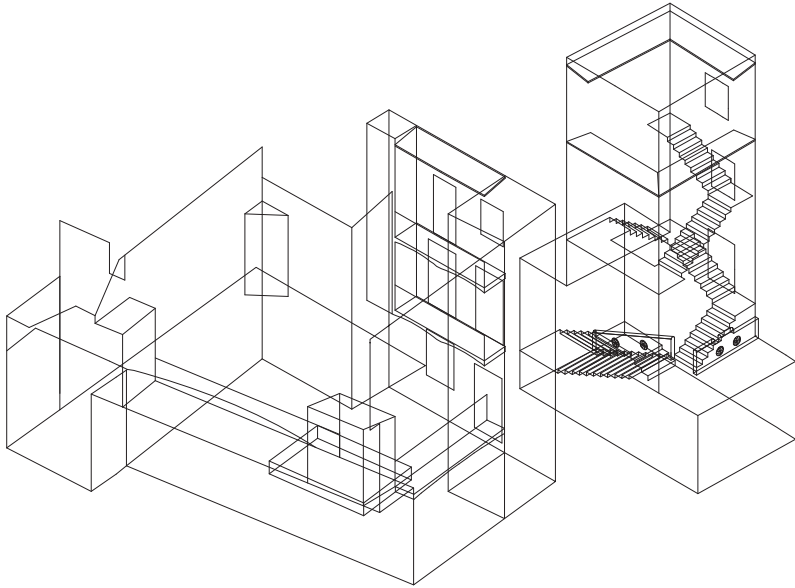
Under the irreplaceable command of Josep Capdeferro, master builder, who lead throughout the work with inimitable energy and sensitivity.



**F1**  
Estat de la casa abans de la rehabilitació: calcificacions i addicions al pati posterior.

**F2**  
Materials valuosos trobats a l'interior de la casa aptes per a ser reutilitzats.

**F3**  
Casa Masó a Girona. Fotografia de Jordi Puig.



#### F1

State of the courtyards before the intervention: several added elements disfigure its dimensions and morphology.

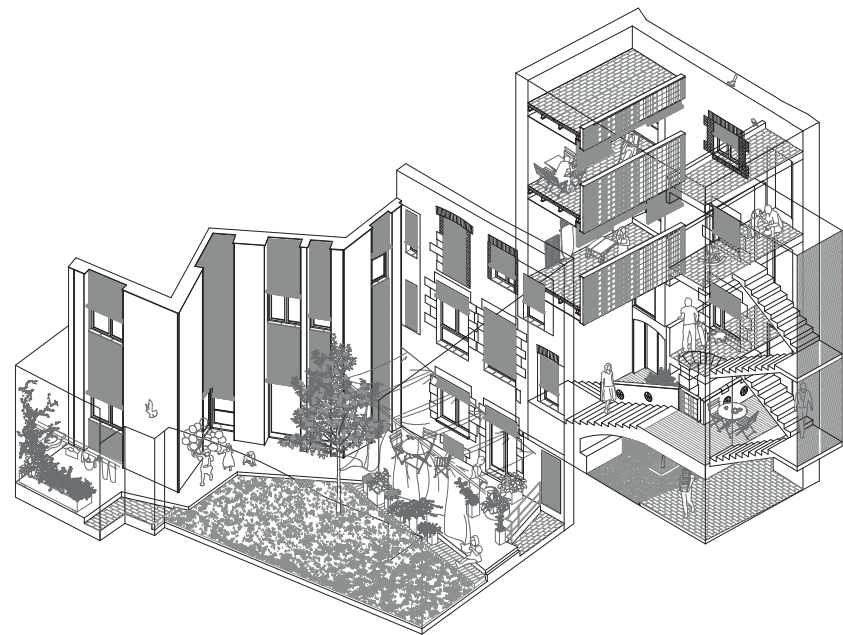
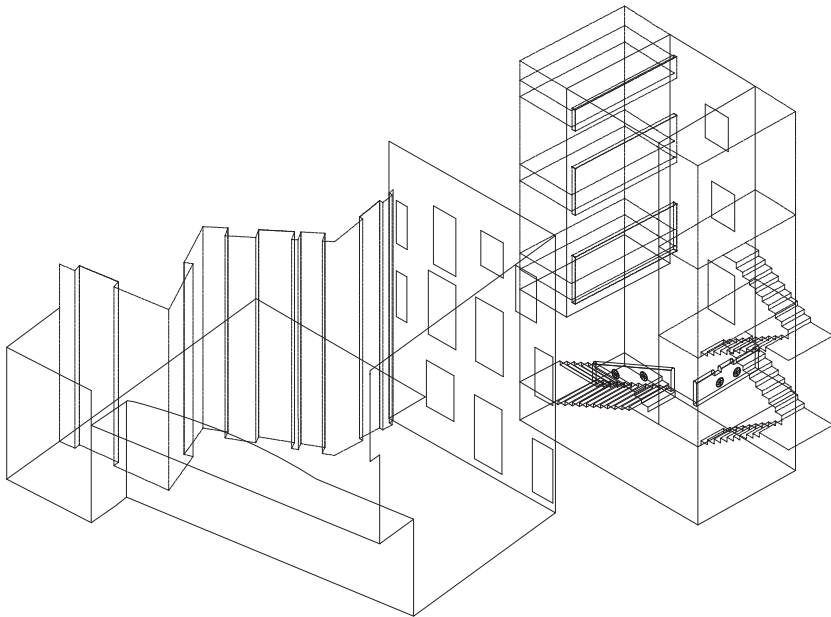
#### F2

Removal of calcifications to rediscover the skeleton of the house. New volumetric interventions to redefine and revitalize the existing courtyards.

#### F3

Recovered materials and traditional techniques to give the space a domestic character. The activities expand naturally towards the courtyards, centers of gravity of the intimate and collective life of the house.

0 5 10m



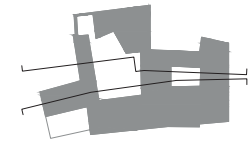
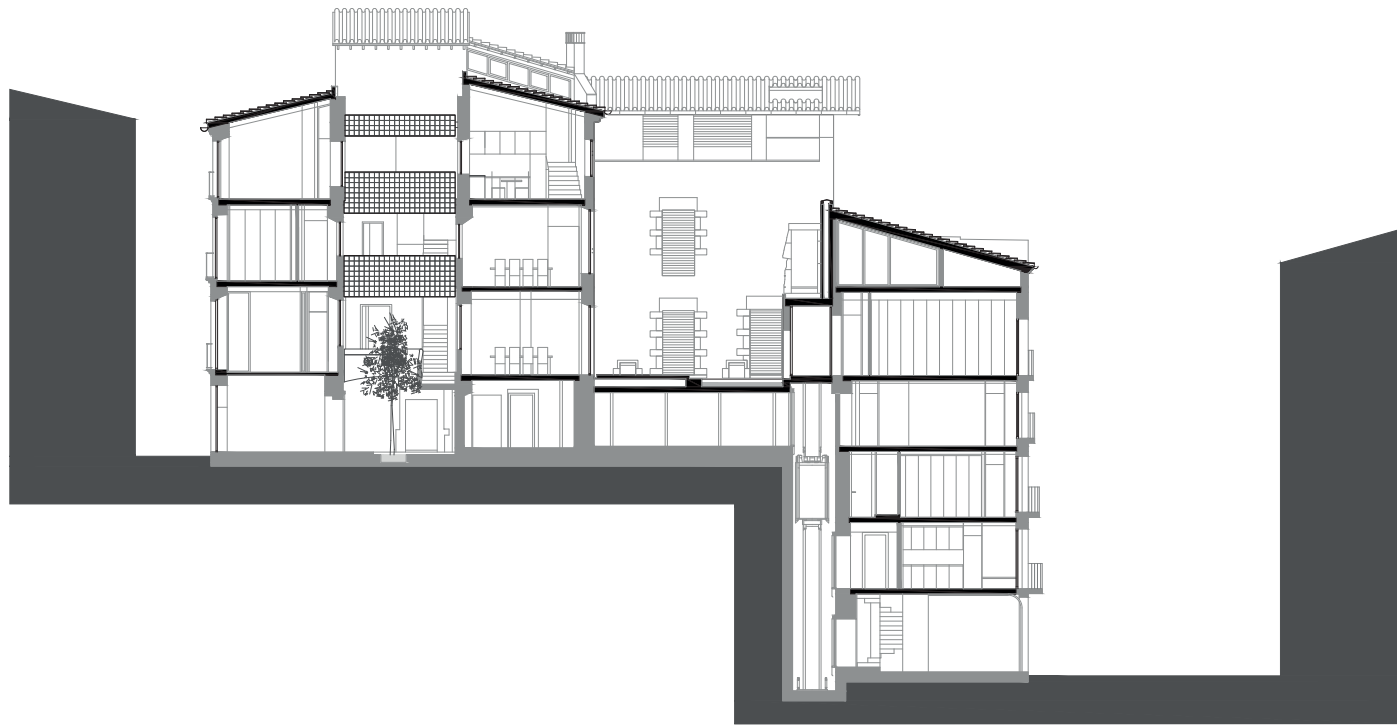


**F1**  
Outdoor rooms around the courtyards.

**F2**  
The courtyards as centers of gravity of the space and stone landscapes of the whole house.

*The project focuses on the recovery of courtyards as the backbone microclimates and microcosms of the house.*





**F1**  
Section 1.

**F2**  
Section 2.

0 5 10m





**F1**

Passive energy control elements from traditional architecture allow an easy graduation of the relationship between the home and the environment.

**F2**

Materiality: lime plaster, natural pigments and rope blinds.

**F3**

A traditional vocabulary of materials and techniques drives the new interventions with the gothic house and the neighborhood.

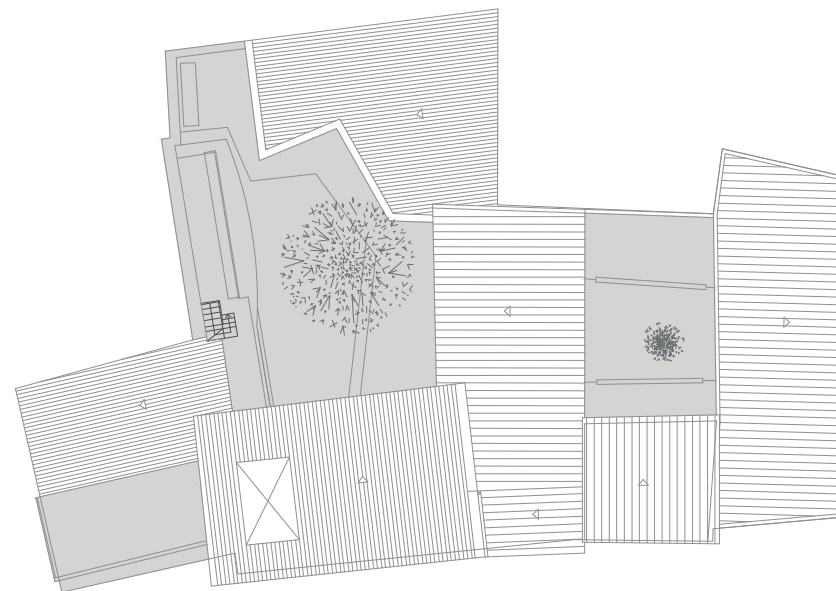
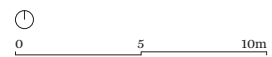




**F1**  
Ground floor plan at Força Street.

**F2**  
First floor plan at Força Street.

**F3**  
Roof plan.



**F1**  
Mosaics and ceramics, interior landscapes.

**F2**  
Coexistence of time and materials.

**F3**  
Traces, scars and overlaps.

