

Mediterranean Sea Club – Ibiza; Competition

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The Project

The Island of Ibiza is located in the Mediterranean Sea, and is surrounded by other islands also owned by Spain. Ibiza has come to be known for its legendary nightlife, seemingly endless parties in famous dance clubs, and as the world-centre for Electronic Dance music.¹ As a result of this reputation, Ibiza is known to attract rowdy tourists only interested in the island's hedonistic offerings.



Figure 1 - Portinatx on the northern coast of Ibiza was the site of the Mediterranean Sea Club

The Mediterranean Sea Club Ibiza competition called for students of architecture to design an intervention along the northern coast of the island of Ibiza that deviated from the standard tourist accommodations that the island has seen built in the past. The competition served to help showcase the other things Ibiza has to offer, such as the rustic communities of local residents, natural and inspiring beauty, and also the interesting and complex Mediterranean environments that are home to organisms such as animals, all the way down in scale to bacteria. The idea was to design a building that would attract a more

¹ "Mediterranean Sea Club Ibiza, Presentation," Arquideas, Accessed August 9, 2015, <http://www.arquideas.net/competition/mediterranean-sea-club>

² "Mediterranean Sea; About the Area," World Wildlife Fund, Accessed August 9, 2015,



Figure 2 - Site Plan of the Sea Club shows its placement on the northern coast of Ibiza

sophisticated tourist who would want to experience more of what the island has to offer than simply revelry and mindless indulgence.

This intervention chose to focus on the rare Mediterranean ecosystems found in this area, what humans can learn from them, and also what they can do to help preserve them. The marine life of the Mediterranean Sea is heavily threatened by habitat degradation mostly due to human activities such as ship traffic, water pollution, and coastal anthropization,² all directly caused at least in part by the tourism industry. The Sea Club designed for this competition aimed to provide a place for study of these ecosystems, but also a wake-up call to those who do not realize the

extent of the deterioration of these areas. Scientists, researchers, and students can come to the Sea Club to carry out studies and research on the fragility and biodiversity

of the Mediterranean Sea, while their families and other interested tourists can become educated about these issues while still relaxing and partaking in more traditional tourist activities such as swimming, sightseeing, dining, and relaxing. The Mediterranean Sea Club also serves as a local hub for residents of the island to become educated about their home and the preservative tactics being developed within the building's research facility by the guests of the club.

² "Mediterranean Sea; About the Area," World Wildlife Fund, Accessed August 9, 2015, http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/ecoregions/mediterranean_sea.cfm

Building Type and Program

The project outline provided by the competition organizers did not include program requirements to increase the freedom given to the entrants. A program was developed based on the concept of a multi-use building that served as a research facility and resort. In terms of typology, multi-use buildings are nothing new, and sub-types included in this project (such as library, laboratory, restaurant, etc.) have been combined countless ways in the past. It was not the intention to create a new type of building, but rather an interesting study of how these sub-types can co-exist to create a building that either functions correctly or fails. I wanted to see if the macro-design of the building's separate uses and included types would combine to become a dynamic and cohesive space or simply areas that functioned on their own and didn't contribute to the "machine for living"³ that was the Sea Club.

The building had to function smoothly as both a place of study and a place of leisure, two concepts that do not always co-exist easily. Rather than try to create one multi-purpose space, a two-pronged approach to design was adopted; leisure spaces and learning spaces were interspersed within the volume of the building but were ultimately kept separate, and there is not a lot of run-over where one particular area can serve a dual purpose.

³ Le Corbusier, *Towards a new Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1986)



Figure 3 - Section Showing the different typologies that make up the building. From top floor: Guest Rooms (x3), Library, Aquarium, Restaurant, Lobby and Bar, Research Labs, with pool to the right and staircase in middle of building on each floor

Main Program Areas

Leisure

Pool
 Restaurant
 Bar

Leisure/Research

Aquarium

Research

Library
 Study Deck
 Laboratory/ Classrooms
 Lecture Hall

Each specific space was to function well, and if all spaces served their purposes in an effective manner, then the building could be considered to work as a whole. In addition to the program areas seen above, it was necessary that the Sea Club included support program areas such as a lobby, public washrooms, hotel rooms for guests, and circulation space.

Design Precedents



Figure 5 - PIXAR Office in Emeryville, California features spaces that encourage interactions between people that work there



Figure 4 - PIXAR Office's large atrium has small alcoves such as this cafeteria area so people can sit down and conduct an impromptu meeting after bumping into colleagues

For inspiration, the program and layout of offices of some of the most innovative and famously fun companies in the world were studied, such as Google, Facebook, and Yahoo. In a research facility such as the Sea Club, it was important that the design of the building foster collaboration; more minds thinking towards solving a problem is more effective than singular thinking when tackling such a large question as how to save the environment. The theory is that open spaces that are fun, where people want to be, facilitate idea exchange;⁴ the combination of leisure spaces and study spaces appeared more and more appropriate.

The overarching design principles of the PIXAR offices factored most heavily into the design of the Mediterranean Sea Club. Located in Emeryville, California, and designed by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Architects, the building was designed to promote encounters and unplanned collaborations.⁵ Steve Jobs, overseeing much of the design of the headquarters, believed that “if a building doesn’t encourage collaboration, you’ll lose a lot of the innovation and the magic that is sparked by serendipity.”⁶ He goes on to explain that the team designed the building to



Figure 6 - PIXAR Office's open spaces and ample shared seating areas facilitate spontaneous group work

⁴ Karsten Moran, “Looking for a Lesson in Google’s Perks,” New York Times, March 15, 2013.

⁵ “PIXAR Headquarters and the Legacy of Steve Jobs,” OfficeSnapshots.com, Accessed August 9, 2015, <http://officesnapshots.com/2012/07/16/pixar-headquarters-and-the-legacy-of-steve-jobs/>

⁶ “PIXAR Headquarters and the Legacy of Steve Jobs,” OfficeSnapshots.com, Accessed August 9, 2015, <http://officesnapshots.com/2012/07/16/pixar-headquarters-and-the-legacy-of-steve-jobs/>

make people get out of their offices and mingle with people they might not otherwise see.⁷ Research and education is something that is accelerated by working with others, so the Sea Club's research spaces were designed as open and communal to encourage interaction with others. The lab space on the subterranean level is the centerpiece of the research program areas, featuring stimulating views of marine life through a large underwater windowpane and an open and flexible shared area to urge interaction with other like-minded scholars. A lecture hall for hosting symposiums and educational film viewings is also included on this level to facilitate a group-learning environment. On one of the upper floors, an interactive aquarium exhibit is included so that exchanges between the experienced and the fresh tourists can happen seamlessly. Not only do these spaces provide intellectual stimulation between scientists, but also an opportunity for children accompanying families to learn and engage with the work that goes on at the Sea Club.



Figure 7 - Laboratory Render

⁷ "PIXAR Headquarters and the Legacy of Steve Jobs," OfficeSnapshots.com, Accessed August 9, 2015, <http://officesnapshots.com/2012/07/16/pixar-headquarters-and-the-legacy-of-steve-jobs/>

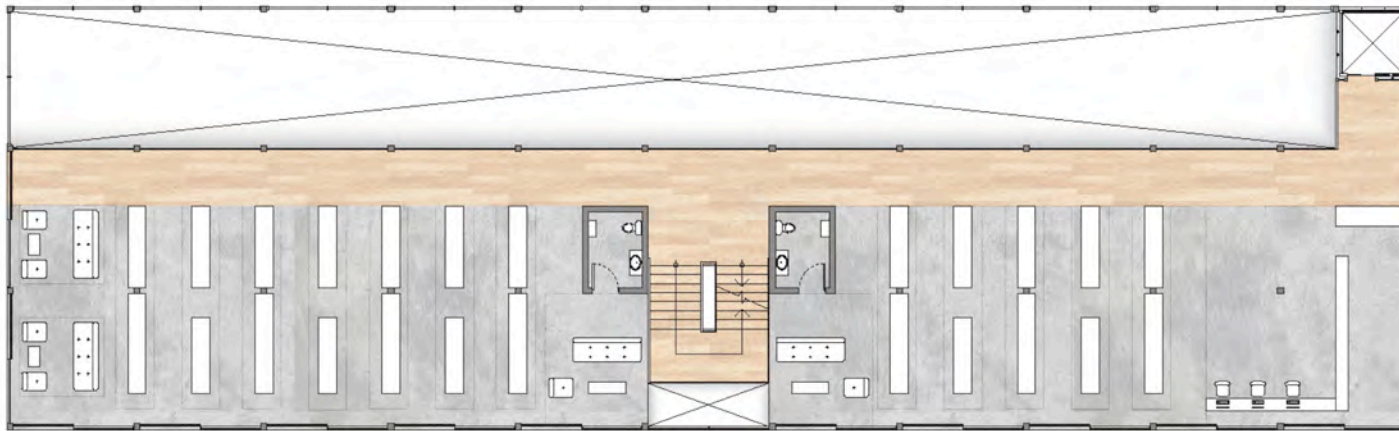


Figure 8 - Library level of the Sea Club. The single-loaded corridor can clearly be seen from this image

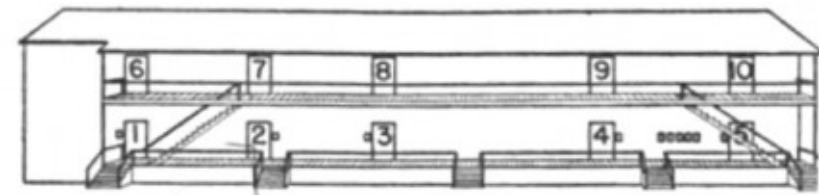
One unique design element behind not only Pixar offices but also Google and others is the capacity for the building to enable having fun. It has been proven to

increase productivity for those who work there.⁸ The Mediterranean Sea Club also includes leisure areas, which serve the same purpose: to increase output of those doing research, while also serving to entertain tourists who may not necessarily be visiting the Sea Club to study.

The circulation paths of the Sea Club also help to encourage chance meetings between guests. Each floor of the building contains a single-loaded circulation path. People walking from one end of the library to the other for example must pass other people also trying to navigate the bookshelves. Guests on the way to the pool or the study deck must walk by those sitting at

⁸ Karsten Moran, "Looking for a Lesson in Google's Perks," New York Times, March 15, 2013.

the bar. It may seem like an arbitrary observation, that people walking by others will be forced to interact and therefore network, however the effectiveness of this principle was illustrated by a project called Westgate West. This was a residence at MIT where psychologists lead by Leon Festinger observed that proximity to others assisted the development of friendships. They observed that those in apartments 1 and 5 (See Figure 7) were more likely to list people living in the upper units as friends, because those on the upper floor needed to walk by apartments 1 and 5 each day to use the staircases. Passive encounters brought about by forced interaction fostered friendships.⁹ This phenomenon, the proximity effect (coined by Festinger), was also employed by Steve Jobs and Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Architects in the design of the PIXAR offices.¹⁰ The Mediterranean Sea Club also mimics this phenomenon in its vertical circulation tactics; one large centrally located staircase spanning from the top floor to the bottom serves as the main ascending/descending path (See Figure 3), with a secondary elevator being located out of the way of general traffic.



Schematic Diagram of a Westgate West Building
Figure 9 - A Westgate West Apartment building illustration

Conclusion

⁹ Leon Festinger, Stanley Schachter, and Kurt Back, *Social Pressures in Informal Groups: a Study of Human Factors in Housing*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1950).

¹⁰ Adam Alter, "How to Build a Collaborative Office Space Like PIXAR and Google," 99u.com, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://99u.com/articles/16408/how-to-build-a-collaborative-office-space-like-pixar-and-google>



Figure 10 - Bar and pool render of main floor

The Mediterranean Sea Club was designed as a building to enable those that are interested to come and immerse themselves in information about the Mediterranean Sea's unique ecology, while providing a space that is also relaxing. The main design strategy was to create a resort that encourages collaboration so that the spread of knowledge can be seamless and effortless. More buildings like this one could hopefully spread awareness of and enthusiasm to correct the deterioration of the Mediterranean Sea and its marine life.

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Figure 1 – Provided by Arquideas

Figure 2 – Produced by Hannah Mete

Figure 3 – Produced by Hannah Mete

Figure 4 – aofmarketing. "Ten Cool Things About Working in the PIXAR Office." Photograph. 2015. Arnoldsofficefurniture.com.
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Figure 5 – Sharon Risedorph. "PIXAR Headquarters and the Legacy of Steve Jobs." Photograph. 2012. OfficeSnapshots.com.
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Figure 6 – Eileen Mary O'Connel. "Some Of the World's Coolest Offices." Photograph. 2015. Guff.com. <http://guff.com/some-of-the-worlds-coolest-offices/inventionland-design-factory>

Figure 7 – Produced by Hannah Mete

Figure 8 – Produced By Hannah Mete

Figure 9 - Festinger, Schachter, and Back. *Social Pressures in Informal Groups: a Study of Human Factors in Housing*. Illustration. 1950.

Figure 10 – Produced by Hannah Mete