

Colonia Casa de Campo, built in the 1970s, envisioned shared spaces between open block buildings. Over time, these areas became asphalted parking or green zones fenced off by hedges. The neighborhood is isolated by heavy car traffic, disconnecting it from nearby areas and Casa de Campo park, resulting in a limited public social life. The proposal aims to enhance daily life quality by revealing a network of pedestrian alleys connecting existing and nearby social spaces. These alleyways promote the transformation of inner-block areas into green meeting spaces, protected from drought by collected rainwater. "Alleyways" invites the community to enjoy a walkable, shaded, and social environment—walk to school, stroll to the park, chat, relax under fruit trees or share tapas at a kiosk.

ANALYSES

Colonia Casa de Campo was designed in the 1970s with the modernist idea of an open block structure. The spaces between the buildings were intended to serve as social meeting places for residents. Many of the original residents who moved in after construction still live in the neighborhood. These residents have witnessed the shift toward a car-dominated use of urban space.

The area is enclosed by a triangle of highways and internally dominated by parked cars. Even people from outside Madrid use the area to park their cars and take the metro. There is a lack of regulation and vision to address this issue.

Pedestrian mobility is limited due to narrow sidewalks and minimum pedestrian crossings. It is difficult for residents to simply step outside the door and walk to a park or the supermarket. This situation can lead to social isolation, as people feel confined within the 'triangle of pollution.'

The community of Casa de Campo is willing to take action. They started and recently renovated a bike park with ramps along the Carretera de Boadilla del Monte, right on the edge of the neighborhood next to the Casa de Campo park. At the same time, the core problem is that despite the open block structures, there is hardly any quality space available for other community initiatives internal of the neighborhood.

Daily Life Under Pressure

The thesis is that, in general, there is a lack of spaces to walk, meet, and sit in inner-block spaces and public areas. Consequently, it is difficult for any meaningful social life to develop in the neighborhood, putting pressure on daily life.

Currently, inner-block spaces are mostly inaccessible for activities. Some are fully used as car parking lots, while other areas are bordered by hedges. Neighborhood representatives have elaborated that a feeling of insecurity and disinterest in the surrounding by residents. Benches have been removed from the courtyards, and even a community of blocks has attempted to fence off all open block spaces from the public. During hot summers, with drought issues causing much of the greenery to turn yellow, these spaces appear uninviting.

The public spaces in Colonia Casa de Campo face similar problems. The area is poorly connected internally as well as externally for pedestrian traffic. Walking to the metro station in Colonia Jardín via the main street, Calle Fuentesauco, is difficult. The sidewalk is too narrow for comfortable walking, forcing residents to walk on the street next to a line of parked cars. Walking to the Aluche neighborhood and station presents a similar challenge, via a narrow pedestrian tunnel required to cross the highway.

Most activity takes place around the Calle de Galicia. A few times a year, the street is closed for markets or events. Other businesses in the area, especially those located in smaller units, have little space in front to invite

Madrid (ES) ALLEYWAYS

the public to sit and stay. Meanwhile, open spaces like the square at the Colonia Jardín Metro Station lack the activity from businesses that could provide liveliness and, therefore, social security.

INNER BLOCK SPACES



Dominance of parked cars



Inaccessible green space



Drought and lack maintenance of green



Poor threshold spaces

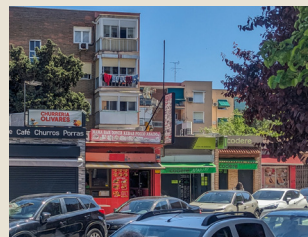
PUBLIC SPACE



Narrow sidewalks
Calle Fuentesauco



Road as barrier between park and neighborhood



Lack of appropriation space for businesses in units



Inanimate context of entrance square Colonia Jardín metro

STRATEGY

‘Revealing’ Urban Continuity: Alleyways as Integrative Factor of Existing Social Spaces

The strategy is based on two perspectives: first, enhancing interaction and functionality within urban spaces and connecting them to existing social areas and buildings, making open spaces an integral part of daily life. Second, reconnecting the area with the park and surrounding neighborhood. A crucial aspect of this strategy is thinking beyond the borders of the neighborhood to reveal the potential of interconnected communities and spaces.

The aim is to create urban continuity from north to south through a network of alleyways that meander around buildings and cut through inner courtyard spaces, opening up the neighborhood. Existing trees and blind façades are used to create a shaded walking experience and meeting places. For example, these alleyways will connect Casa de Campo Park to the senior center in Colonia Casa de Campo and the library in Aluche. A rainwater collection system is introduced to enhance the green qualities of the inner-block spaces (salons), to encourage people to use these spaces for activities.

East-west continuity is established by reconfiguring public spaces to define plazas with a high density of activities—“hotspots” and “heart”—along a car-free route from the Colonia Jardín metro station to the park, which intersects with the alleyways.

Toolbox: More Publicity and More Privacy

The toolbox presents a flexible set of measures that can be implemented to both publicize spaces along the alleyways and increase community spaces within the block, while also enhancing privacy in and around the apartment building.

The alleyways are envisioned as a connecting element, linking a meeting bench in front of the apartment door to the cafés and shops in the heart of the neighborhood, extending all the way to a platform overlooking the Arroyo

Meaques stream. This design transforms inner-block spaces into more public areas, which may conflict with the privacy of residents.

To establish a balance between publicity and privacy, threshold spaces are introduced. These spaces help create a sense of openness in front of the buildings, with features like roses and benches. On the rear side of the buildings, greater privacy is ensured with more natural, wilder vegetation. Residents are encouraged to green their façades with climbing plants, flower boxes and pots.

The “salons” (inner-block spaces) consist of three key elements: the vegetable garden, the meeting garden, and the public garden. The first two are enclosed by hedges and are designed for private block community activities. The public garden, situated next to the alleyways, is intended to foster interaction among different residents within the neighborhood. These public gardens are ideal for neighborhood initiatives and activities. The curved structure of the hedges ensures that the apartments maintain sufficient privacy from these spaces.

Along the alleyways, the primary meeting places are strategically located on the blind facades of buildings—referred to as “meeting corners.” These areas are often more shaded and not centrally located within the inner-block spaces, which reduces noise disturbances in the salons. The addition of pergolas further enhances shading and helps block sound.

In response to climate change, which brings more periods of intense drought and heavy rainfall, a rainwater collection system is introduced. Rainwater is collected from rooftops into tanks, while street rainwater is channeled into ponds through drainage canals. The water in these ponds is filtered by helophyte plants and stored in a cistern. During dry periods, the stored water is pumped to a pipe running beneath the alleyways, which then irrigates the salons. In cases of extreme rainfall, excess water is drained into the Arroyo Meaques stream.

PARTICIPATION AND PROCESS

Casa Impulso as Driver of Action: Resourcing the Inventiveness of the Community

The Casa Impulso is a co-creation center aimed at supporting the bottom-up development of the area. Its role is to encourage local residents to improve their surrounding spaces by providing plans, tools, and guidance. Casa Impulso brings together engineering consultants, the municipality, architects and design students to collaborate on community projects.

The center also offers spaces for workshops, meal prep kitchens, coworking areas, a language café and pottery classes to foster a strong sense of community within the neighborhood.

There is potential for three Casa Impulso locations in the area, each with a different focus, such as landscape design, climate neutrality or neighborhood activities.

Casa Impulso supports people who want to improve their buildings or open spaces but don't know where to start. For example, children who want to create a football field—where can they do it, and how can they make goals? Casa Impulso helps them with ideas and practical solutions.

The initiative is backed by the municipality and operates from repurposed, unused buildings and structures. For instance, Casa Impulso I is located in a transformed parking garage, which will become available when Calle Fuentesauco is partially made car-free as part of the first phase of the gradual transformation of the area.

Gradual Transformation Process

The transformation of public spaces begins in the municipally owned areas in the northeast of the neighborhood. Over time, the scope expands southward towards the Aluche neighborhood, and eventually to the west side of Colonia Casa de Campo. Initially, the focus is on public and municipally owned spaces, but as the process progresses, private spaces will be incorporated, and the scale of public projects will grow.

The municipality plays a crucial role in this process. On the one hand, it takes the initiative in transforming publicly owned spaces. On the other hand, it adopts a facilitating role in the transformation of private inner-block spaces, working closely with the community. The Casa Impulso acts as the incubator for collaboration between public and private efforts.

Short Term: Open to Park – Intervention in Municipally Owned Spaces

The first step is to create alleyways that connect the neighborhood to the park. At the same time, new parking regulations will be introduced to reduce non-residential parking. The courtyards along central Calle Fuentesauco will be transformed into vibrant green salons as this part of the street becomes car-free. Parking will still be available in inner-block spaces, which are connected to the main traffic roads around the municipal areas, as well as in the park's parking lots.

Mid Term: Open to Aluche Neighborhood – Intervention in Municipal and Privately Owned Spaces

The alleyways will be extended to connect to Aluche. Residents in non-municipal spaces will be encouraged to transform their inner courtyards into green salons with support from Casa Impulso. The new parking strategy will focus on creating multi-story parking hubs and parking strips along the main traffic routes. This will open up the possibility for all inner-block spaces to become green areas. The parking hubs will be connected to the alleyways, creating a seamless transition from home to hub. These hubs will also include package delivery points and car repair shops. Meanwhile, Calle Fuentesauco will be fully car-free in preparation for the next phase.

Long Term: Open to All Sides – Intervention in Municipal and Privately Owned Spaces

The alleyway system will extend to the west side of Colonia Casa de Campo and across the main road into neighboring areas. More residents will be supported by Casa Impulso I, II, and III in transforming their inner-block spaces into green and healthy salons. Car parking will be further consolidated in parking hubs on the neighborhood's edge and in parking strips along the main traffic roads.

REPLICABILITY

A key aspect of the implementation is the involvement of the neighborhood. The spatial outcome itself is not the most transferable element; rather, it's the participation process that holds potential for replication. The Casa Impulso concept can be expanded through research conducted by students, who gather and analyze data to distill valuable lessons from the community's engagement. These insights can then be shared with other urban professionals, inspiring similar strategies in different neighborhoods.

The alleyway system is planned to extend beyond the neighborhood, potentially reaching surrounding areas and inspiring similar salon developments. This could create a network of connected green spaces, spreading the impact to neighboring areas and promoting a broader transformation.

The flexible toolbox of measures can also be applied to other high-density, open-block areas facing similar challenges. It's designed to enhance public spaces and increase the privacy of apartments, making it adaptable to a variety of urban contexts.