

Urban Planning Case Study: Barcelona's

Urban Planning Case Study: Barcelona's Eixample District

1. Introduction

- **Eixample:** a planned 19th-century district of Barcelona, Spain, designed to expand the city beyond its medieval walls.
- It is a landmark example of rational grid-based urban planning.

2. The Cerdà Plan

- Engineer **Ildefons Cerdà** devised the plan in 1859 to improve health, mobility and equity.
- The design used a uniform grid of square blocks with chamfered (octagonal) corners.
- Cerdà coined the term "urbanisation" and pioneered scientific city planning.

3. Key Features

- Wide, straight streets aid circulation, light and ventilation.
- Chamfered corners improve visibility and ease traffic flow.
- Original intent included green courtyards and limited block heights.

4. Outcomes

- Created a legible, walkable and well-connected urban fabric.
- The grid supports efficient public transport and services.
- Density rose above Cerdà's intentions as courtyards were built over.

5. Lessons

- Demonstrates how planning can shape health, mobility and city form.
- Recent "superblock" schemes reclaim street space for pedestrians.
- Shows tensions between original plans and real-world development pressure.