

## Casa Mila Blog Post

### Background information:

Casa Mila, also known as La Pedrera, is a beautiful modernist residential building located in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain. It was built by Antonio Gaudí between the years 1906 and 1912, commissioned by Pere Mila and his wife as their primary residence with the intention of renting out the rest of the building. It is now, as of 2013, owned by La Fundació Catalunya la Pedrera which organizes cultural events, deals with restorations and upkeep, and hosts outside visits. This building is now a UNESCO World Heritage site, and while no longer a residential building, hosts cultural events and visitors from around the world.

<sup>1</sup>

### Pictures of Casa Mila:



Looking at this image of the front exterior of the building, it is evident that this style of architecture is different from the surrounding buildings. It has a fluid modernist style with the curvature contrasting with the solid limestone of which the building is constructed. The structure appears to curve and form a wave-like appearance resembling nature.

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<sup>1</sup> “Architecture Casa Mila | Gaudí’s Building Barcelona.” *Casa Milà (La Pedrera) | Edificio de Gaudí En Barcelona*, <https://www.lapedrera.com/en/la-pedrera/architecture>.





Taking a closer look at the balconies, what stands out immediately is the wrought ironwork for the balcony railing, which was molded from scrap iron sheets. The designs look like seaweed, which contrasts with the solid material from which the railings are built.



These images of the interior of Casa Mila demonstrate Gaudi's theme of natural form and curving lines. This theme is taken into the inside of the building as well as the outside. The first picture shows the use of lines with impressions on the ceiling, around the columns. Even the columns

themselves do not conform to straight lines or a rigid structure but rather bend and curve. Additionally, we can see the use of color animating a part of a building that usually isn't given much thought, seeming to convey that this structure, while a residential one, is also a work of art.



This second picture depicts an arching walkway. Each arch doesn't conform to the structure of any other arch, and in a way has a nature-like movement to it. While there is this sense of fluidity, the walkway feels heavy because of the solid blocks of limestone used as the material.



This third picture of the interior of Casa Mila, again illustrates Gaudi's use of line as an element of form; more specifically the use of curves. In both the windows and the stone section of the wall there is a curving, wavy line where straight lines would normally be, keeping with the theme and giving the interior a natural feel as opposed to arithmetic one.

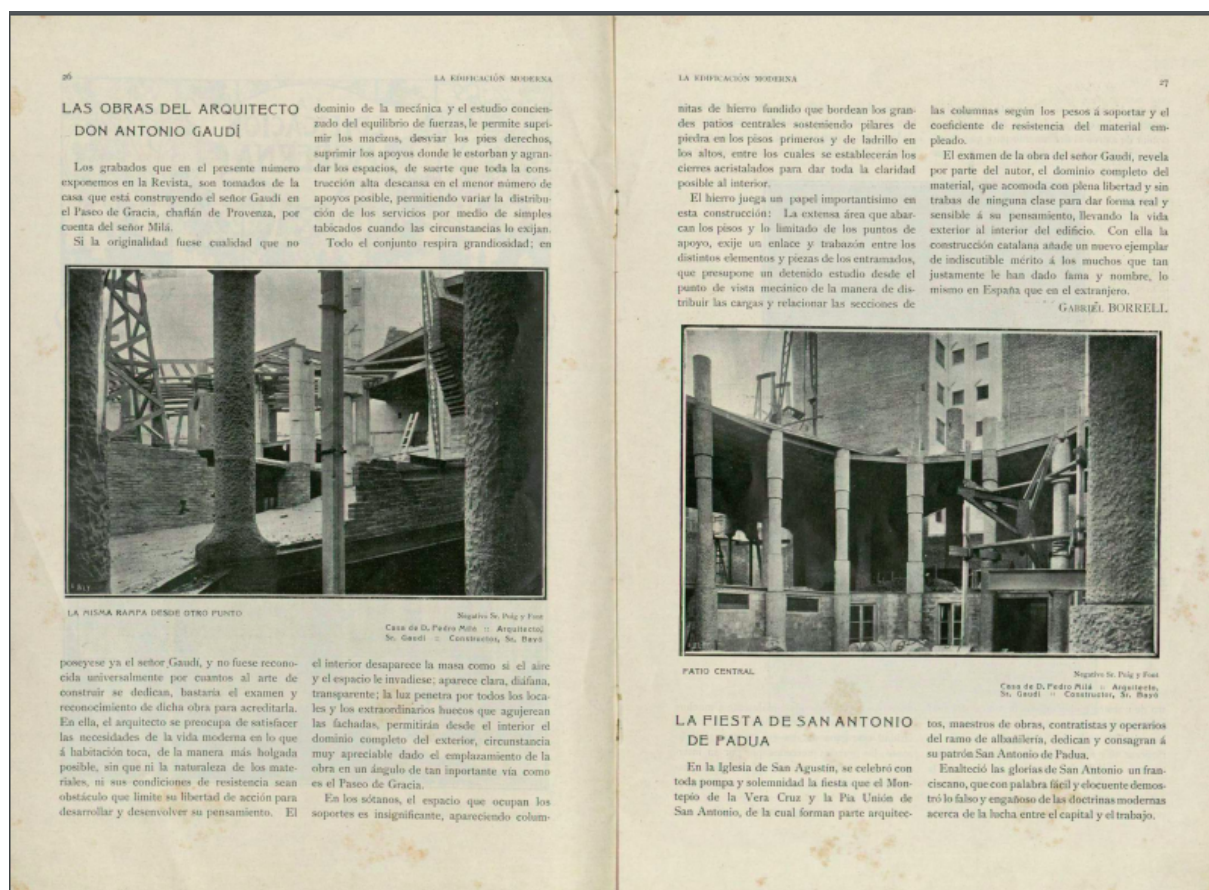


## Academic Readings on Gaudi:

In reading about Casa Mila in a more academic sense, I came across the journal of arts and humanities where I read about Gaudi and his interpretation of Art Nouveau. JingJing Liu, the author, talks about the context of the time period that lead to the emergence of Art Nouveau, and how there were different interpretations throughout all of Europe. He argues that Gaudi uses a natural form as an interpretation of this style of Art Nouveau through the use of curving lines and ocean-like form. He draws from nature to inspire awe and provide an almost religious experience to all who interact with his structures. From my own perception of Casa Mila this is an accurate description of Gaudi's method.<sup>2</sup>

## Article on the Construction of Casa Mila:

While Casa Mila was being built, there was a publication in “La Edificacion



Moderna” about the building process and those involved; the construction was gaining so much public interest as was Gaudi. The Article repeatedly characterized Gaudi’s work as a new modern form and talked about the unconventional construction process focusing on the

<sup>2</sup> Liu, Jingjing. “Anatomy of Gaudi's Curve Architectural Language.” *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, vol. 6, no. 7, 2017, p. 33., doi:10.18533/journal.v6i7.1204.



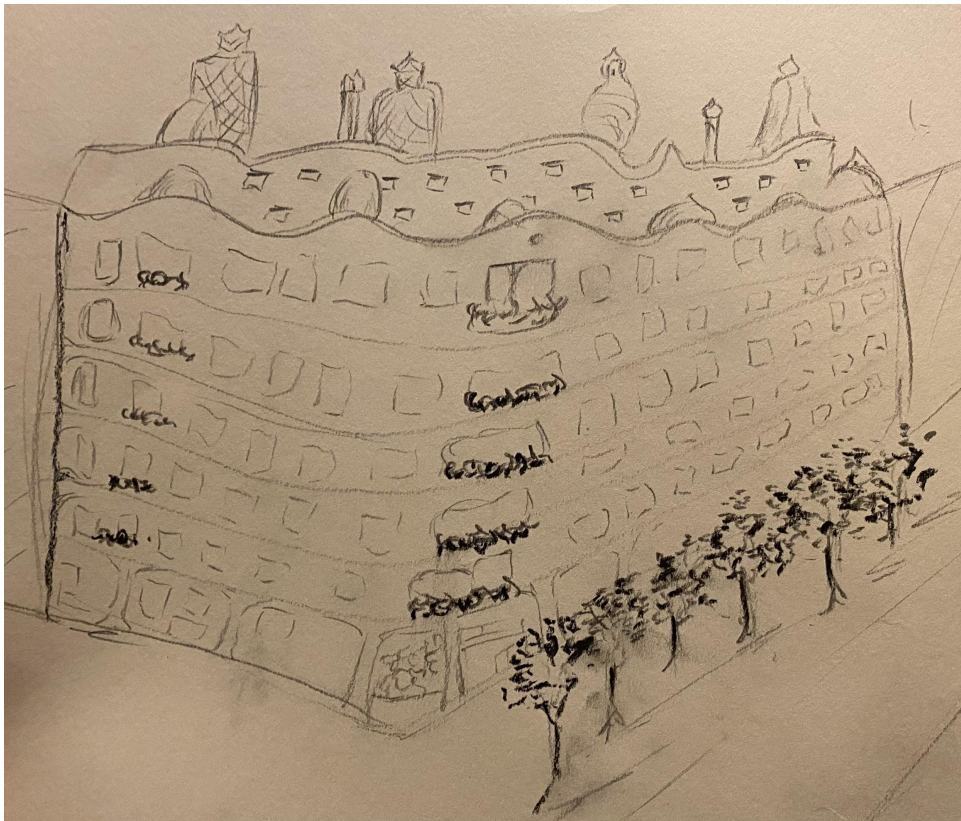
use of non-standardized pillars. Additionally, Gaudi was praised for his unconventional artistic style, experimentation, and breaking from the norms.<sup>3</sup>

### **An interesting fact:**

While reading from the official website of Casa Mila, one interesting fact that I came across is that the reason Casa Mila is known as La Pedrera, a nickname translated to The Stone Quarry, is because of the natural like form and heavy limestone facade. This nickname was coined by the general public and now is what the structure is commonly called.<sup>4</sup>

### **My Own Drawing of Casa Mila:**

This drawing that I made shows an outside view of Casa Mila, emphasizing the curving lines, and sculpture-like chimneys, as the central identifying features. Additionally, in the drawing I emphasise the balconies as an important artistic feature.



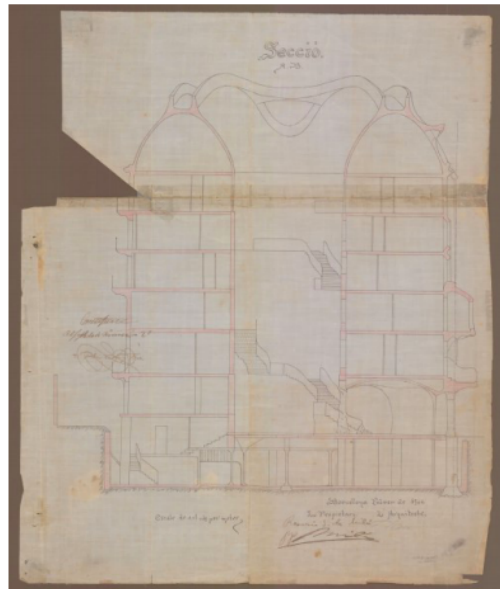
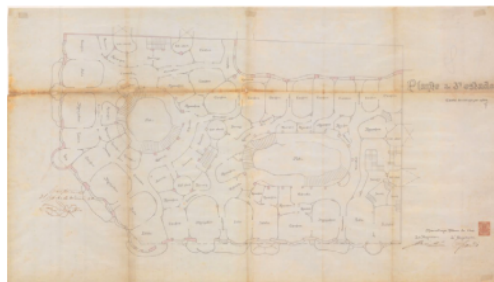
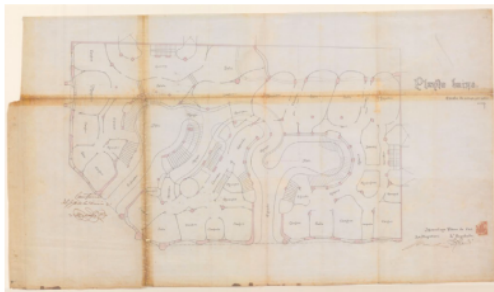
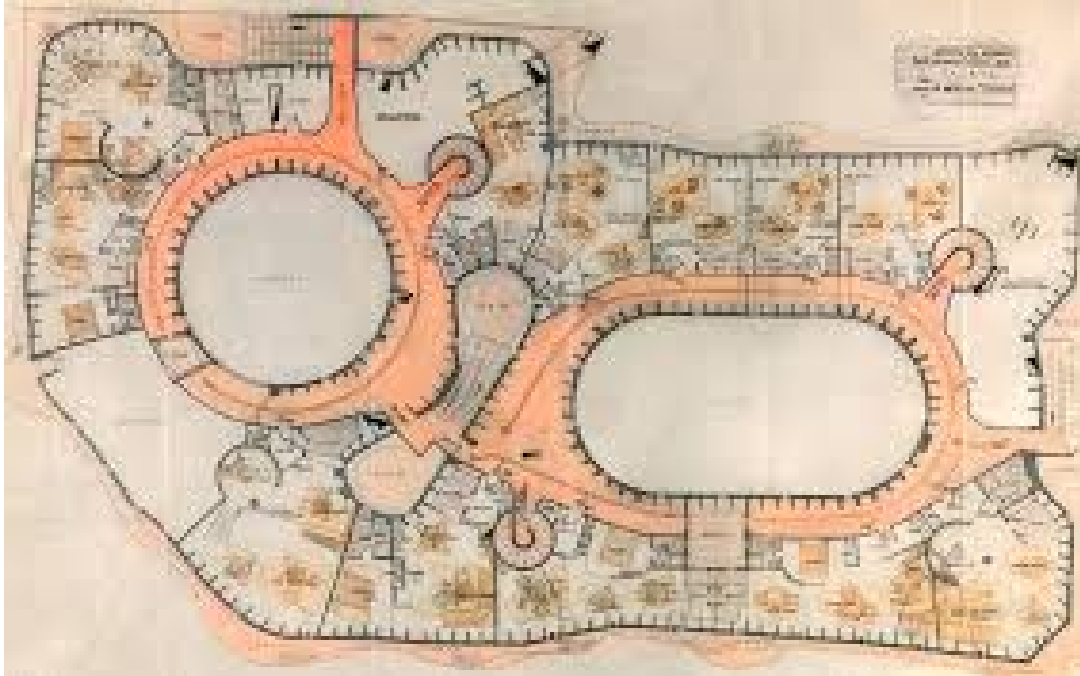
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<sup>3</sup> “The Construction of Casa Milà | La Pedrera’s Untold Stories 1906-1986.” *La Pedrera al Llarg Del Temps | La Pedrera Inèdita 1906-1986*, [https://pedrerainedita.lapedrera.com/en/aportacions/construction-casa-mila?\\_ga=2.19451960.1855996486.1613147746-863023206.1611937599](https://pedrerainedita.lapedrera.com/en/aportacions/construction-casa-mila?_ga=2.19451960.1855996486.1613147746-863023206.1611937599).

<sup>4</sup> “Architecture Casa Mila | Gaudi’s Building Barcelona.” *Casa Milà (La Pedrera) | Edificio de Gaudí En Barcelona*, <https://www.lapedrera.com/en/la-pedrera/architecture>.

## Floor Plans of Casa Mila:

The last set of plans are drawn by Gaudi himself while planning the building. What stands out is the lack of line, and the two large open spaces in the center of the building. This serves to create space and allow light to be an important aspect of the design.



Gaudi, Antoni. Casa Milà: ground floor, 1906. CG-00024.  
Gaudi, Antoni. Casa Milà: 3rd floor, 1906. CG-00025.  
Gaudi, Antoni. Casa Milà: section, 1906. CG-00026.

Original drawings by Gaudí,  
his assistants and others  
(1874-1954)

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<sup>5</sup> “Architecture Casa Mila | Gaudi’s Building Barcelona.” *Casa Milà (La Pedrera) | Edificio de Gaudí En Barcelona*,



### **Street View and Surrounding Context:**

Casa Mila is situated in the middle of the city of Barcelona, fitting in with the array of residential and commercial buildings within the city grid. It is the same height as the surrounding buildings which helps it blend into the city rather seamlessly. This being said, the building does stand out from the street because of its wavy, non-linear design and artistic appearance. There are restaurants and a myriad of other shops on the bottom floors of the surrounding buildings with residential apartments on the upper floors.

### **An Interesting Video**

The design of Casa Mila not only proved to be a work of art, but additionally conveyed a message. That message was one of non-conformity and breaking from the traditionalist norms that predominated during that time period. Gaudi received pushback from the community and the government because of how far the designs for Casa Mila strayed from the architectural and societal norms of the time. Ridged, formal structures with a form based more heavily in math, symmetry and religion was the norm and with Casa Mila, Gaudi took liberty to be unconventional in every aspect of his design.<sup>6</sup>

### **Interview a Visitor**

I talked to Pablo, a friend of mine who was in a study abroad program with me and who lived for several years in Madrid. His impression of Casa Mila was very positive. He explained how the building really stood out from the exterior and how it was more like a sculpture or a piece of art than a function-stressed building (Although it was very functional as well). He was in Barcelona for a week and wanted to see the building because his father was in design and recommended it. What stood out most to him was the rooftop chimneys looking more like abstract sculptures than anything else.

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<sup>6</sup> WorldSiteGuides. *Casa Milà, Barcelona [HD]*. YouTube, 17 Jan. 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q18lNtqxrDc>.

## More Images with Commentary on Style <sup>7 8</sup>



This picture of the wrought iron door keeps with the nonlinear theme, and also plays with the element of light. When the sun shines through the door the shadows move and change with the time.



What stands out in this image is the use of color mixed with the light form. The thin pillars give the building a sense of lightness in this section, and the ripping colors of beige, light blue and other combinations of color on the ceiling, evoke a feeling of nature and lightness.

<sup>7</sup> “Architecture Casa Milà | Gaudi’s Building Barcelona.” *Casa Milà (La Pedrera) | Edificio de Gaudí En Barcelona*, <https://larryspeck.com/photography/casa-mila/>.

<sup>8</sup> “Casa Milà - Antoni Gaudí - Great Buildings Architecture.” *GreatBuildings*, [http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Casa\\_Mila.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Casa_Mila.html).





The chimneys which are on the top of the building (image on the left) seem to be more like sculptures than their functional counterparts. They seem to be abstract people-like forms or natural forms. Like the rest of the building they are non-linear and have a soft feel to them. What stands out in this image to me is the color. The beige is very welcoming and adds to the human-like appearance.

The interior view of this room in Casa Milà is simple and doesn't stand out from the ordinary. It is very accommodating and modern while also has a classical feel from the lighting and furniture. A detail that stands out to me is the rippling in the ceiling.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Architecture Casa Milà | Gaudi's Building Barcelona." *Casa Milà (La Pedrera) | Edificio de Gaudí En Barcelona*, <https://larryspeck.com/photography/casa-mila/>.



This image is from the inside of the building, depicting one of the open areas. This central space is open allowing light to flood in. What stands out in this image is the staircase with a covering that looks like a canopy. The shape of the covering is irregular and has lines that look like veins in a plant. Additionally, there are plants growing along, and draping over the staircase furthering this image. Again we see Gaudí's use of nature as an inspiration for form and his use of curvature as a basis for structure.

### Antonio Gaudí Quotes

While I had a difficult time finding any interviews with Gaudí, I was able to uncover some quotes that give insight into the building of Casa Mila. He stated that “Nothing is art if it does not come from nature” and “Nothing is invented, for it's written in nature first”. These two quotes show that Gaudí has a high regard for nature and this can be clearly seen in the design of Casa Mila from the curving natural forms, to the colorful mural.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> “Antoni Gaudí Quotes.” *Antoni Gaudí Architecture and Design Overview*, <http://www.antoni-gaudi.com/quotes/>.



## SOURCES/ CITATION

1. Liu, Jingjing. "Anatomy of Gaudi's Curve Architectural Language." *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, vol. 6, no. 7, 2017, p. 33., doi:10.18533/journal.v6i7.1204.
2. "Architecture Casa Mila | Gaudi's Building Barcelona." *Casa Milà (La Pedrera) | Edificio de Gaudí En Barcelona*, <https://www.lapedrera.com/en/la-pedrera/architecture>. Accessed 12 Feb. 2021.
3. WorldSiteGuides. *Casa Milà, Barcelona [HD]* . YouTube, 17 Jan. 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q18lNtqxrDc>.
4. "Architecture Casa Mila | Gaudi's Building Barcelona." *Casa Milà (La Pedrera) | Edificio de Gaudí En Barcelona*, <https://www.lapedrera.com/en/la-pedrera/architecture>. Accessed 12 Feb. 2021.
5. "Architecture Casa Mila | Gaudi's Building Barcelona." *Casa Milà (La Pedrera) | Edificio de Gaudí En Barcelona*, <https://larryspeck.com/photography/casa-mila/>.
6. "Casa Mila - Antoni Gaudi - Great Buildings Architecture." *GreatBuildings*, [http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Casa\\_Mila.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Casa_Mila.html).
7. "Antoni Gaudi Quotes." *Antoni Gaudi Architecture and Design Overview*, <http://www.antoni-gaudi.com/quotes/>.