

**The
South
Coast
of Tenerife**





The Southcoast of Tenerife

Los Cristianos - Las Americas - Costa Adeje

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Subject of our study is the enormous tourist resort at the southcoast of Tenerife. Focussing on the question 'has the increase of tourism the strength to form a city?', we describe the transformation of Los Christianos, Las Americas, Costa Adeje: From a fisher village, over the beginning of a tourist city to the current situation: people living in a cellular resort structure.

Site

Today, the south of Tenerife is “independent” from the northern part of the island. It is growing and developing only because of mass tourism and has its own airport (Reina Sofia) with the highest number of passengers of the islands. Furthermore, there is a touristically very important seaport in Los Cristianos and a highly frequented motorway is the connection between the sunny south and the north of the island. The area of Los Cristianos, Las Americas and Costa Adeje occupies 11.2 square kilometers and counts 22'300 permanent inhabitants and a density of population of 1990 persons/skm, which corresponds to the density of the city of Aarau. But additionally to the permanent population, there comes 1.5 tourist on every local inhabitant





COSTA ADEJE

LAS AMERICAS

LOS CRISTIANOS

Facts

11.2 square kilometers

Total area of Los Cristianos, Las Americas, Costa Adeje

Density exclusive tourists:

1990 inhabitants per skm
(equal to Aarau)

Density inclusive tourists:

6280-8460 inhabitants per skm



359 days of sun

That is the reason, why many tourists come to enjoy their holidays on the Canary Islands.

But there are also some (mostly elderly people from Scandinavia) staying the whole winter in the South.



22 300 local inhabitants

living mainly in Los Christianos



up to 2.6 mio tourists per year

that means 48'000 to 72'400 tourists permanently; more than three times as much tourists than local people!



78'769 beds

37'534 in hotels
41'235 in apartments

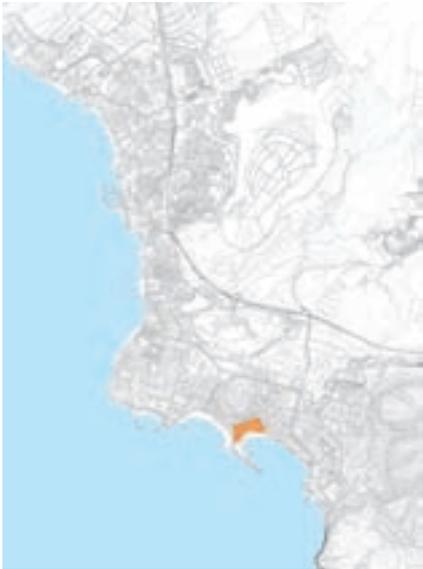


increasing number of second residents

that is the new trend of investing money and spending holydays



Formation



first settlements



1960ies



1970ies



1980ies

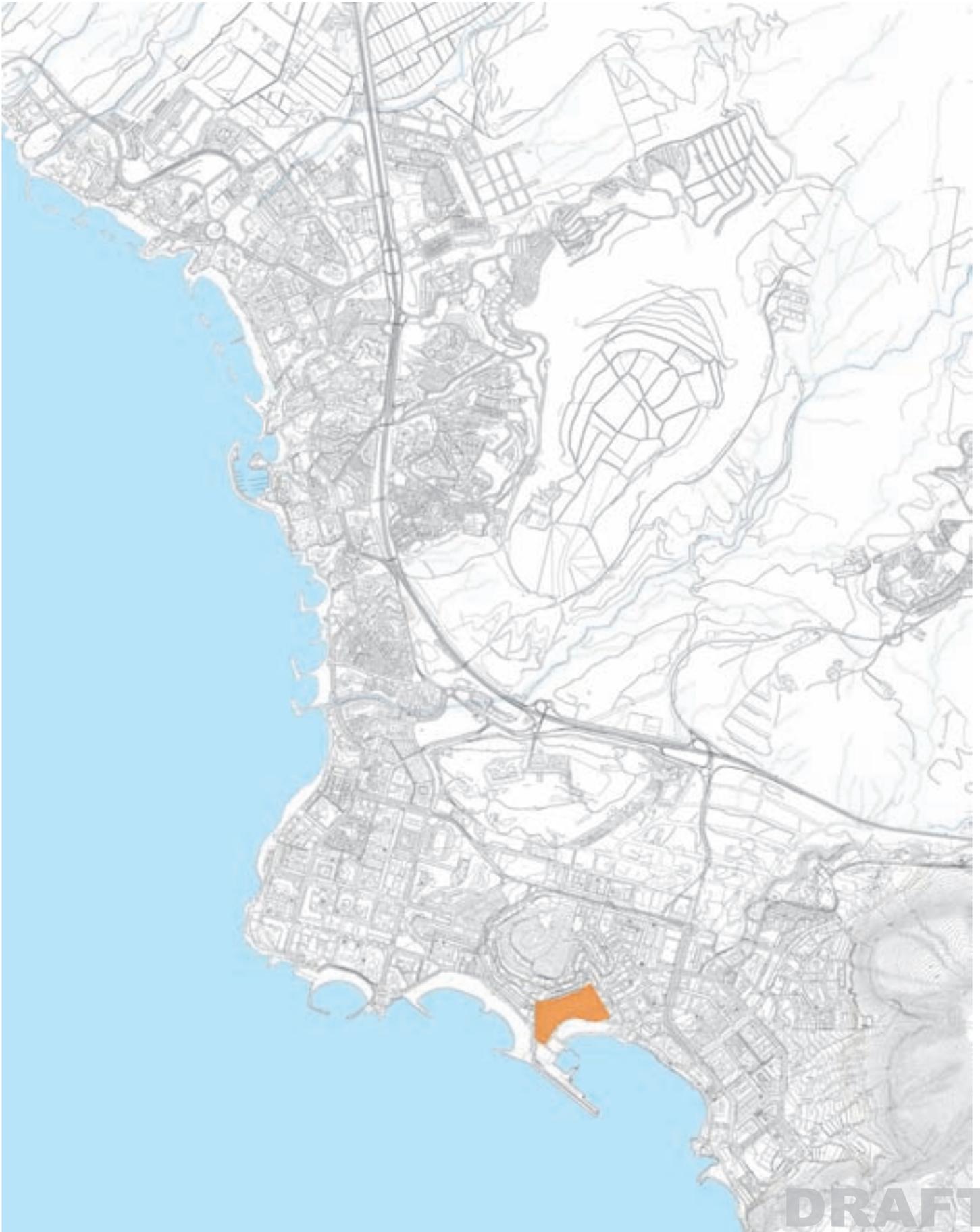


1990ies



current situation

First settlement at a natural harbour



First Settlement



Export of tomatoes and stone as the only connection to the north of Tenerife

Already in 1511, the name of Los Cristianos appears in a document to distribute land and water to the colonists and conquerors of Tenerife. But the land there is dry and the big distance to the capital Santa Cruz makes it not attractive to live there. People living in Los Cristianos were often attacked by pirates, who landed in the natural harbour. Nevertheless, the area has been populated by shepherds and fisher families. They lived in caves dug in the mountain of Chayofita which are still in use today and serve as cellars for the houses built in front of them. Today, these houses build the old center of Los Cristianos. Already 1906 the spanish government built a small pier in Los Cristianos, the one which is called „viejo puerto“ today; it was important for the export of stone-slabs to the rest of the archipelago. Until 1985 they also exported salt, gained at the place where now the resorts of Las Americas stand. Other reasons for the economic development were the salt fishing factory and the beginning of piping water for irrigation (for tomatoes and bananas) from Vilaflor to Los Cristianos in 1914. With this economical development in the first half of the 20th century, a new harbour was needed and realised in 1934, beeing maintained up to now. That allowed a bigger fishing and commercial traffic, what boosted the economy even more. In 1955 the population counted around 1200 inhabitants living very modest and without electricity. The only communication with the other parts of the island was over the lorries taking tomatoes to the north.

The built fabric and the streets of that period was situated in current center of Los Cristianos, where now the shops and residential area is.

However, the real transformation of Los Cristianos from a small fishing village to a busy tourist resort began in 1956, when the first disabled Swedish pensioner arrived, looking for a sunny and peaceful place to ease his pains.



Modest accommodation



Natural beach of Los Cristianos

Today filled with rows of deck chairs



Houses gathered around the natural harbour

First existence based on fishing and trading

Transformation of the former natural harbour

Natural harbour



Export of agriculture goods increased

In 1934, the natural harbour was replaced by a new port near the center of Los Cristianos



Busy port of today

An important starting point for day trips



Cultivation of agriculture goods at the place where today tourists live in holiday resorts



Traces of the past

Former caves used as cellars

Some decades ago, some inhabitants of Los Cristianos still lived in caves.

The contemporary old town of Los Cristianos was added in front of them. Today the caves function as cellars of the houses.



Old houses have been extended

One of the few reminders of the old fisher village houses (painted in blue) has been extended over the years.



Handicapped retirees from Sweden discover the south of Tenerife



Swedish Pioneers



Swedish pioneers accelerate progress in Los Cristianos

While the north of the island became very popular among European tourists, only a few visited the south, but no one stayed there for a longer time. The south consisted of a rather homogeneous population, until 1956 a retired Swede arrived. He intended to spend the rest of his life in a dry and warm climate, curing his arthritics.

Being taken of the climate, he invited some friends (all in wheelchairs) to join him. Soon they rented a house, hired a cook and a maid. The very hospitable locals tried to fulfill all of the wishes of their guests.

The following years more and more Swedish invalids came, often with their families and visited by some friends. First, the guests stayed in the houses of local inhabitants, later a boarding house was opened and finally some apartments were built. For that, a local bought a generator and sold electricity; a cinema and a restaurant followed, the community became socially more complex.

From the 1960ies on, tourists from other European countries as well visited the southcoast of Tenerife, which caused a new wave of development: locals, employed as workers on the plantations turned to the growing building industry and services. The infrastructure was accomplished with a hospital and a bus-service to the north.

The fast development caused problems: society was divided into locals, Swedish and non Swedish Europeans. Furthermore, there was a lot of rubbish, electricity cables through the village, and there were hardly rules on urban development.



Olle Ryding, a Swedish pioneer

Vestiges of Swedish establishment



Article of the local newspaper “El Día” in 1964: How the first Swedish pioneer made Los Cristianos popular

“The motive why in Los Cristianos there is today a huge Swedish community and why the influx of visitors, especially Northern Europeans, is bigger and bigger is in the work of propaganda done by the person who could be called the pioneer of the tourist future in Los Cristianos: the Swedish citizen don Benito Rilander, known familiarly as don Benito among the residents in Los Cristianos. Mr. Rilander, who died in this village a few months ago, came by chance to Los Cristianos around eight years ago. With this wonderful weather he found that the rheumatic disease that he thought is incurable was relieved. He was a writer and a TV commentator, and he spread the news in his country, through the newspapers and television, about the excellence of this picturesque village of Tenerife. Not only Scandinavians are already going to Los Cristianos. They come from all over Europe, and how very strange, even from North America.”

Scandinavian architecture

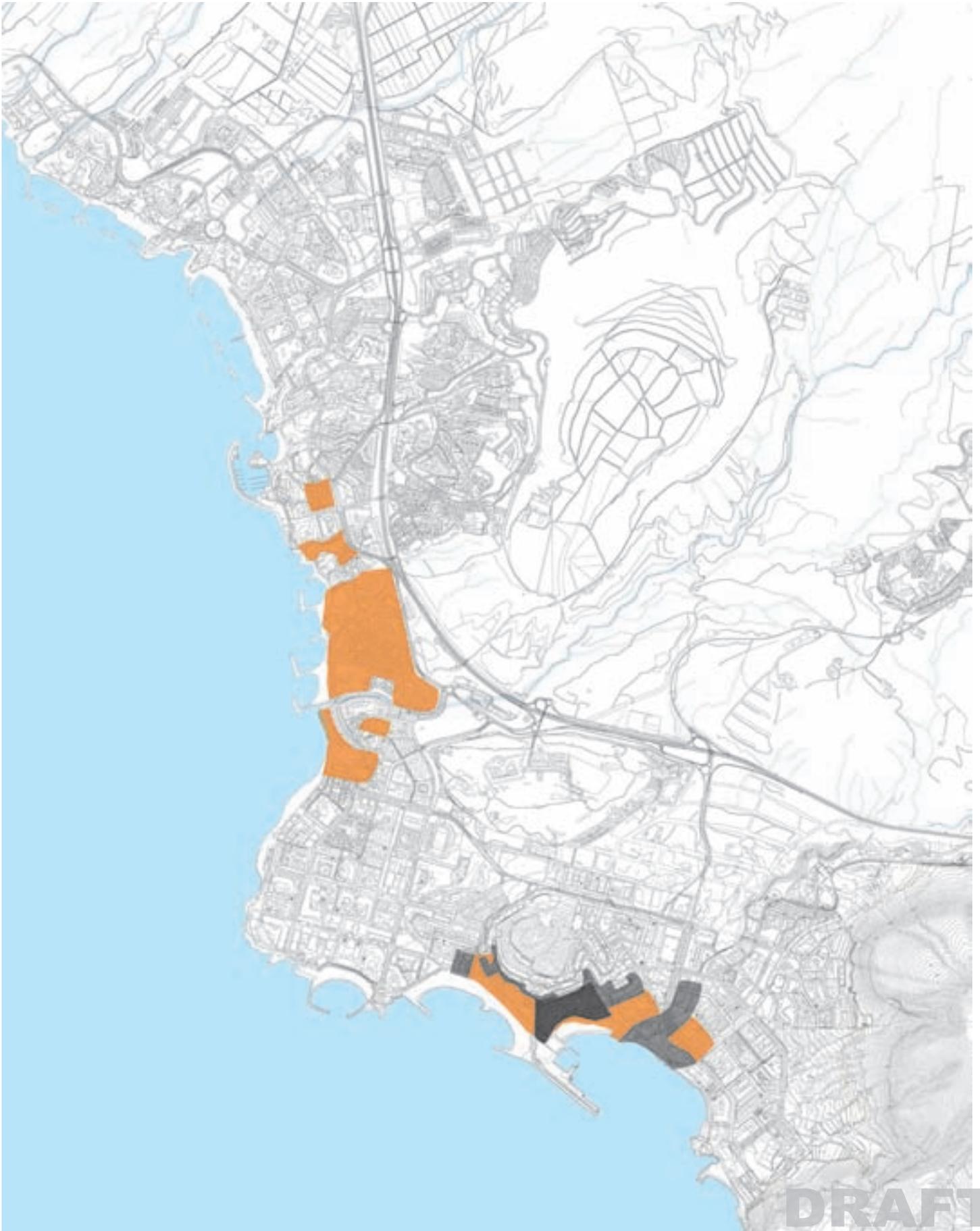
Until today a unique style in the south.



Still a popular rehabilitation center



Mass tourism begins on two spots



Mass Tourism Begins



Rising high to accommodate a lot of people, mark territory and have a good view

The following decades are characterized by the increasing number of tourists visiting the south of Tenerife. The places there were confronted with almost the same problems as all touristic areas in the world –the big masses of guests. Therefore, the development of accommodation typologies and other characteristics of the time can be considered as (arche-)tipic.

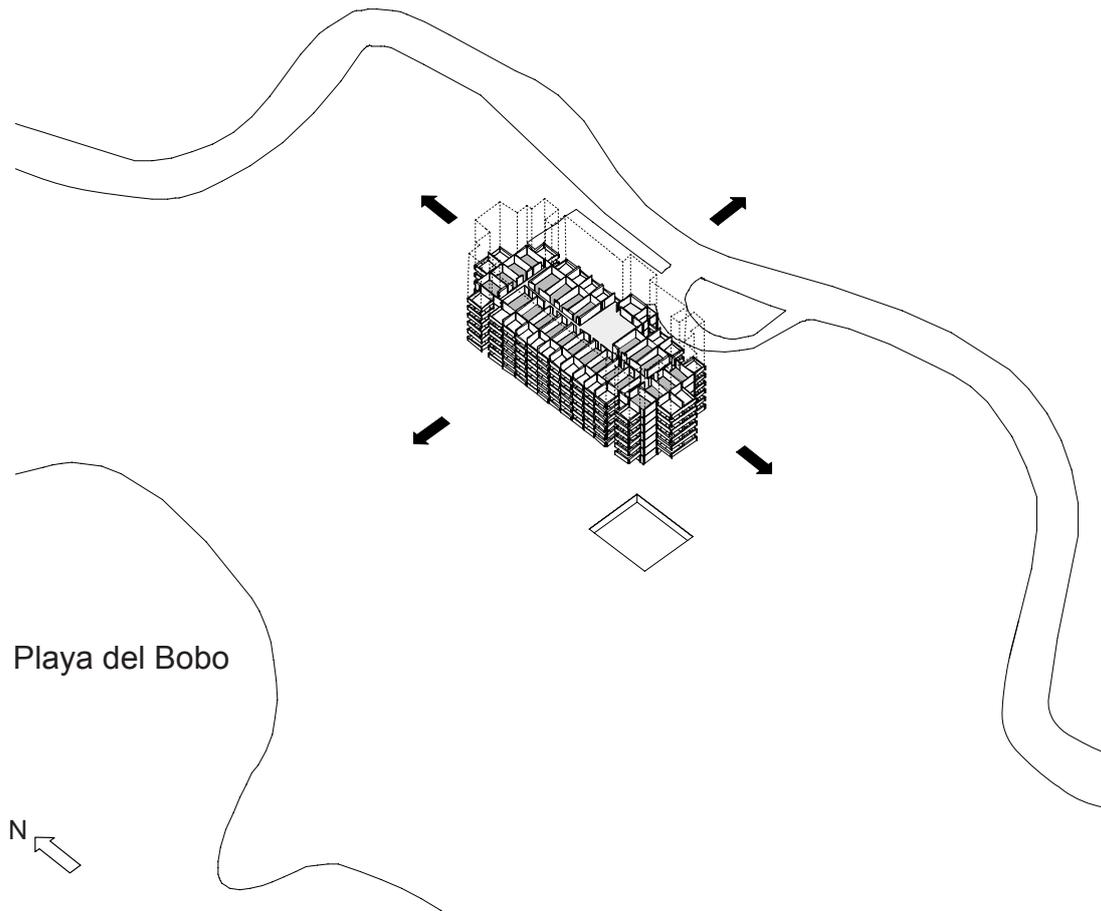


The important ocean view from a highrise building



Residential buildings adapted the highrise typology

Mass Tourism Begins



Hotel complexes of early mass tourism

Hotel Gran Tinerfe

With the fast increase in tourism, the first important architectural changes came: the rising of the 11 to 15 stories high buildings. With their outstanding height they act as landmarks, and are erected to absorb a big number of tourists, visiting the islands in the early 1970ies.

The building typologies of blocksheaves and towers are high, compact and have two or even four similar facades with balconies. The access to the rooms is through an inner corridor.

The hotels and apartment towers are situated on the basis of profitting the best of the view on the sea, neglecting their relation to any neighbourhood. The ambit consists only of an accessroad, wich is a simple junction between the main road and the entrance of the hotel.



Mass Tourism Begins **The complexes were isolated from urban environment**

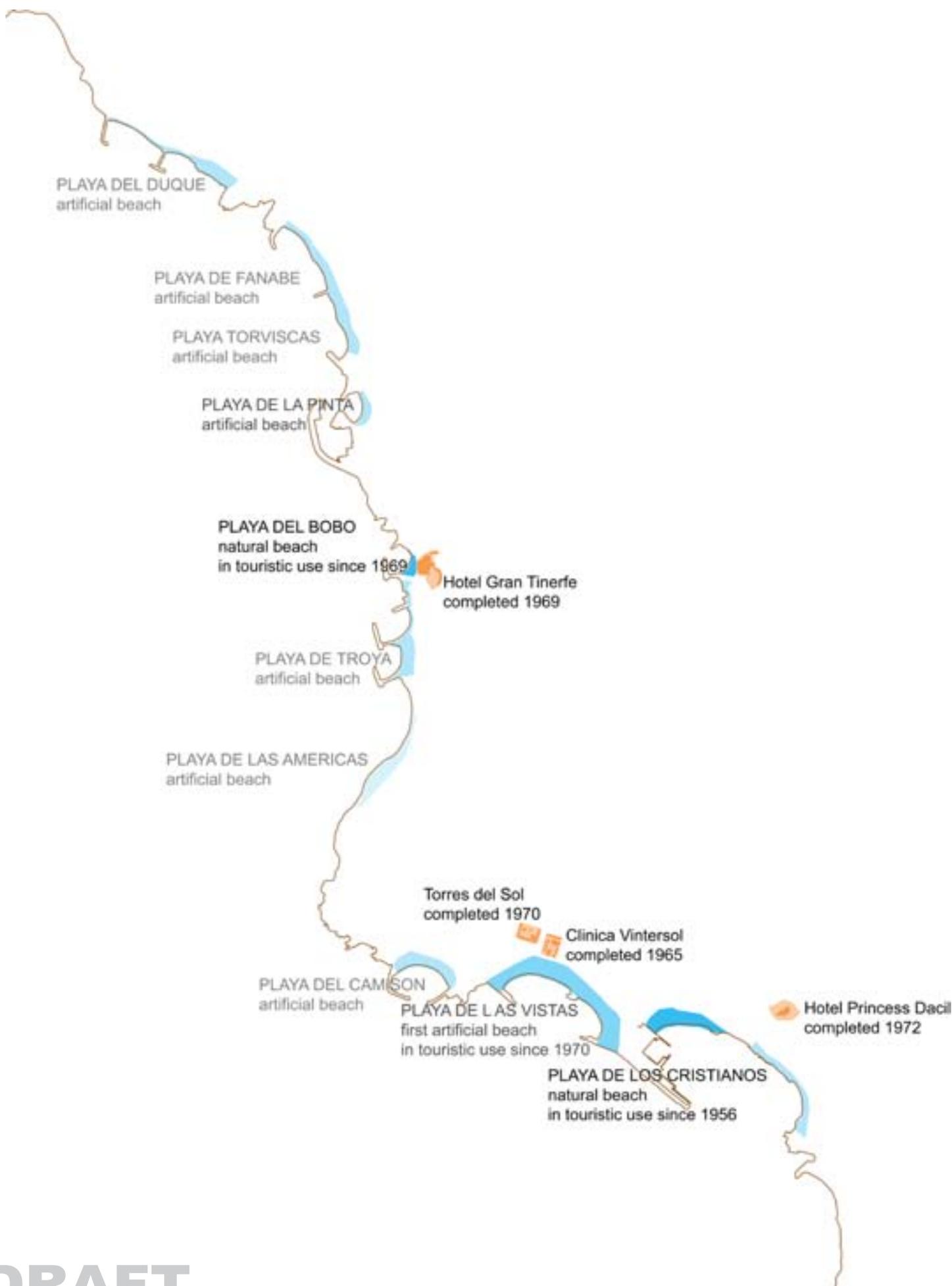
The South of Tenerife was not a very densely built area. Social life played in the center of Los Cristianos or at the beach. For that reason, most of the valorisation of public space was done in that period.



The Old Town compensated the lack of urban environment: shopping, bars and amusement



Mass Tourism Begins **First hotel towers were located next to the natural beaches**



Transformation of the coast: artificial beaches instead of rocks

The volcanic island has only a few natural beaches, where the first hotels were constructed. To upgrade and extend the touristic infrastructure, rocks were detonated and replaced through artificial beaches.



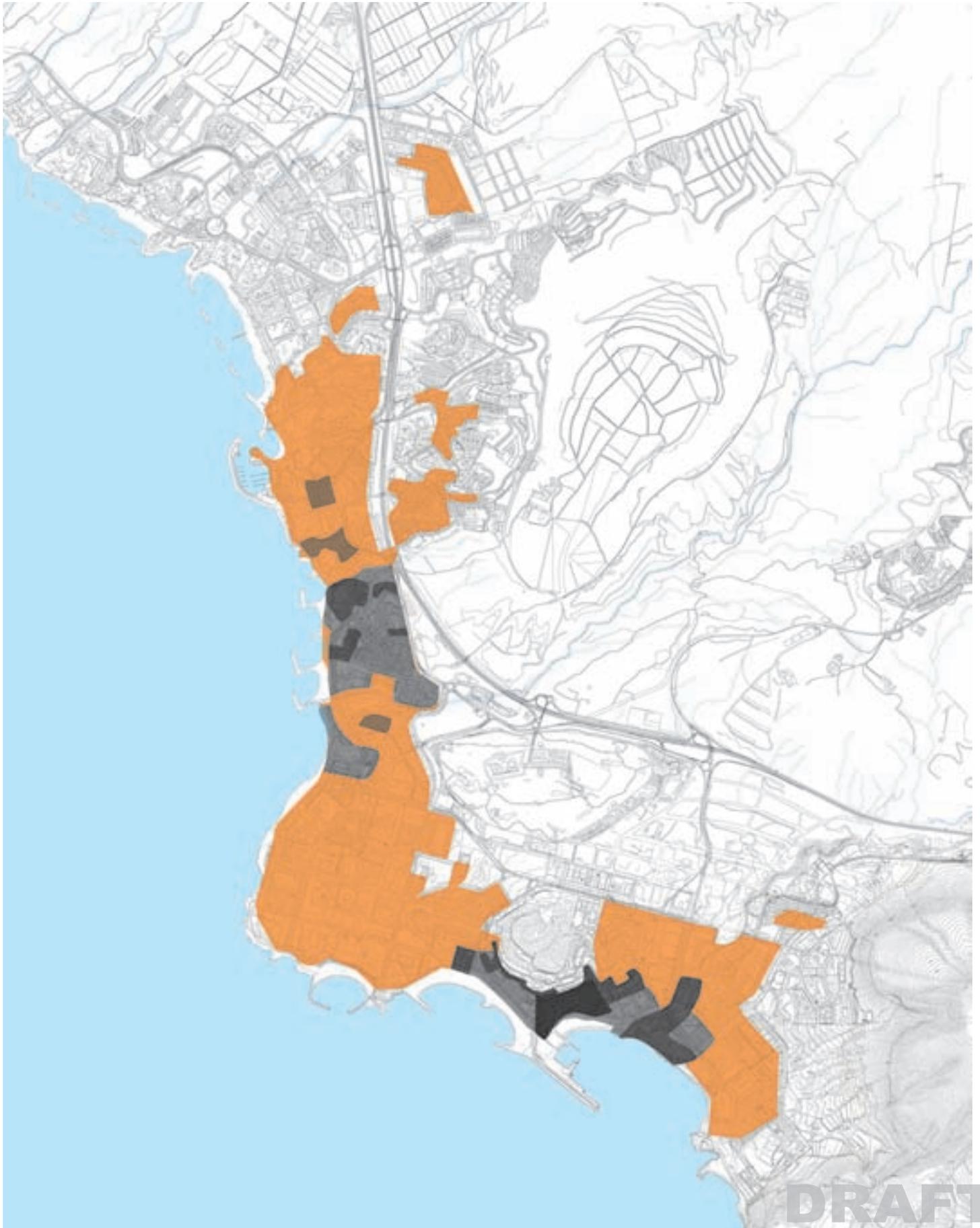
Mass Tourism Begins **Streets as connections from the hotels to public spaces**





■ reaching out to the hotels
■ first streets

Vast territorial expansion filling up landscape with cellular structures



Territorial Expansion



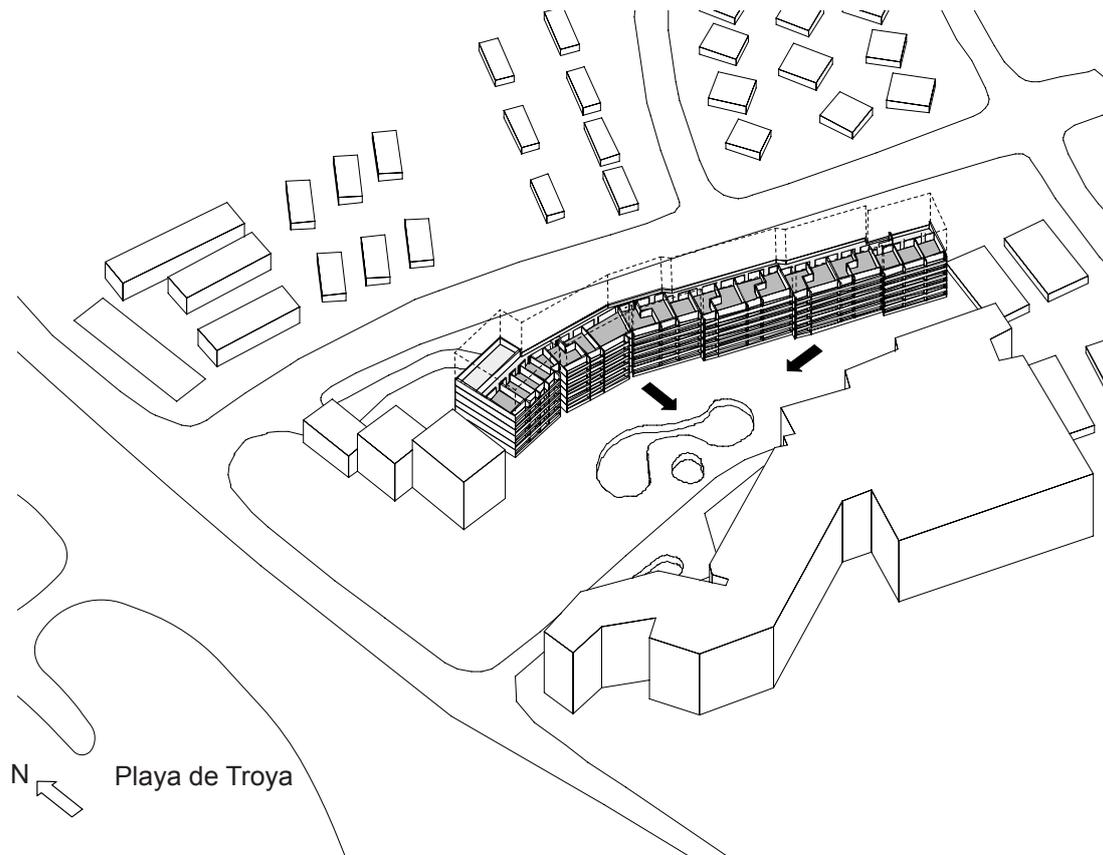
Major occupation of land and widespread infrastructures

The ongoing boom in tourism was even accelerated by the commissioning of the airport Tenerife South in 1978, and the finishing of the highway in 1983. That consequenced an enormous building wave in the 80ies, spreading out from Los Cristianos and the only natural beach in Costa Adeje, called Playa del Bobo.

Most of the new built area was constructed on wasteland, but sometimes former agricultural structures had to make room for touristic buildings.



Territorial Expansion



Access balcony type as a higher developed holiday resort

Hotel Palm Beach Club

We call the typology of the buildings constructed in that period „access balcony typology“. The hotels and apartment blocks are characterized by their way of access, which is taken out of the building and placed at the facade. One reason for doing so, is to save place inside the building. But at the same time, this building type responded to the new trend, which reacted against the typical mass tourism holiday. The guest feels more as an individual, because he has his own entrance to the apartment.

The buildings were also less high, segmented and arranged slightly curved or building an „L“ in plan. Like that, an inner courtyard is formed, which becomes an important component of the hotel resort. The resort architecture is becoming more and more introverted, and evokes more individuality and less mass clearance. Also the facade showing to the inner side, the court, is the main facade, whereas the access-facade at the outside looks rather rejecting.



Territorial Expansion



Access balcony type
Apartments El Dorado



Territorial Expansion



Holyday in a carpet

Island Village

An other form of individualisation is the construction of row houses and villas. The neighbourhood of Costa Adeje is becoming a ghetto of rich people, building their second residences. Like this, huge territories get occupied by people using more and more space. But the action-radio of their lifes is getting more and more concentrated in their own small and controllable world, leaving the outdoor space out of mind and care.

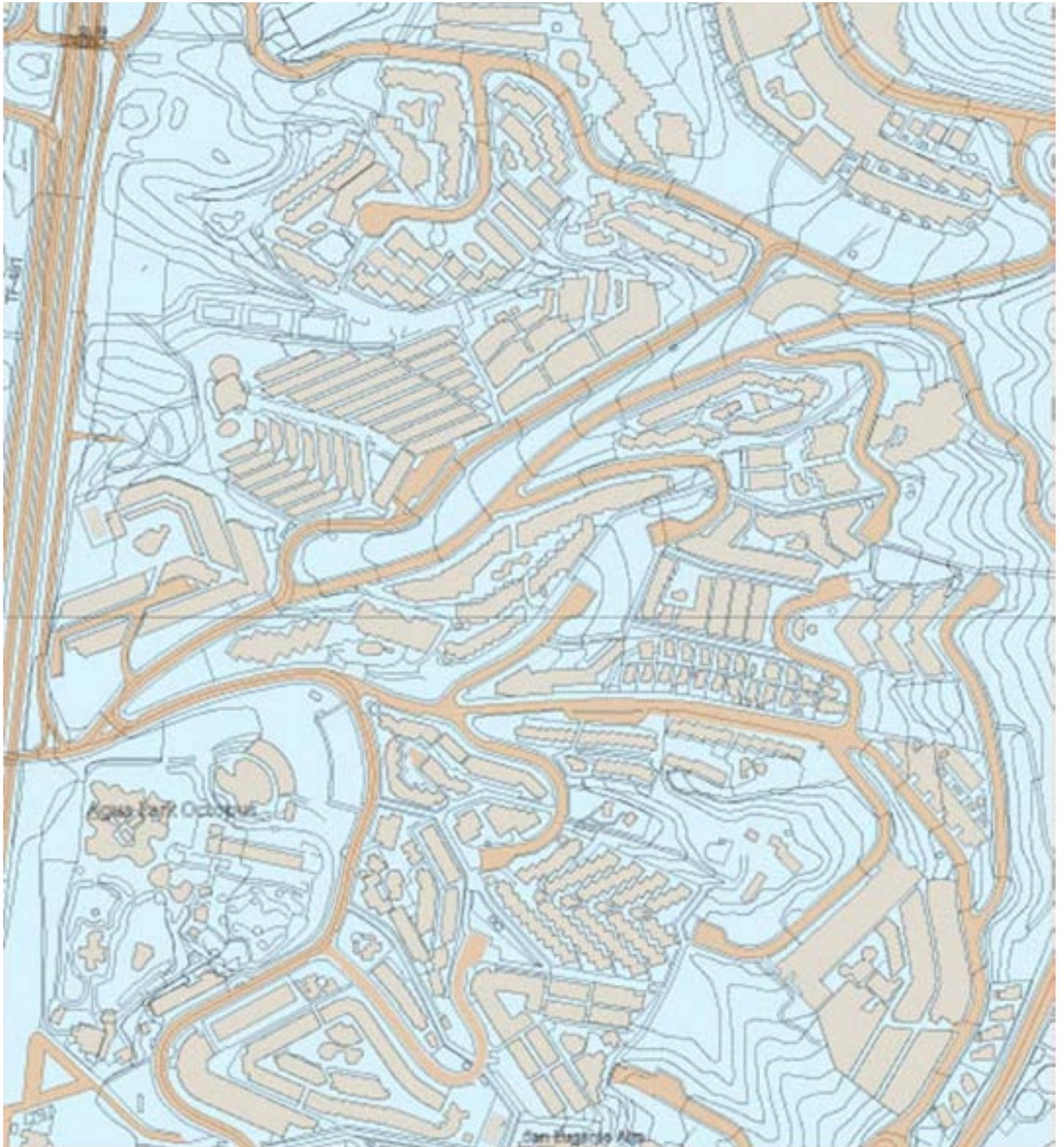




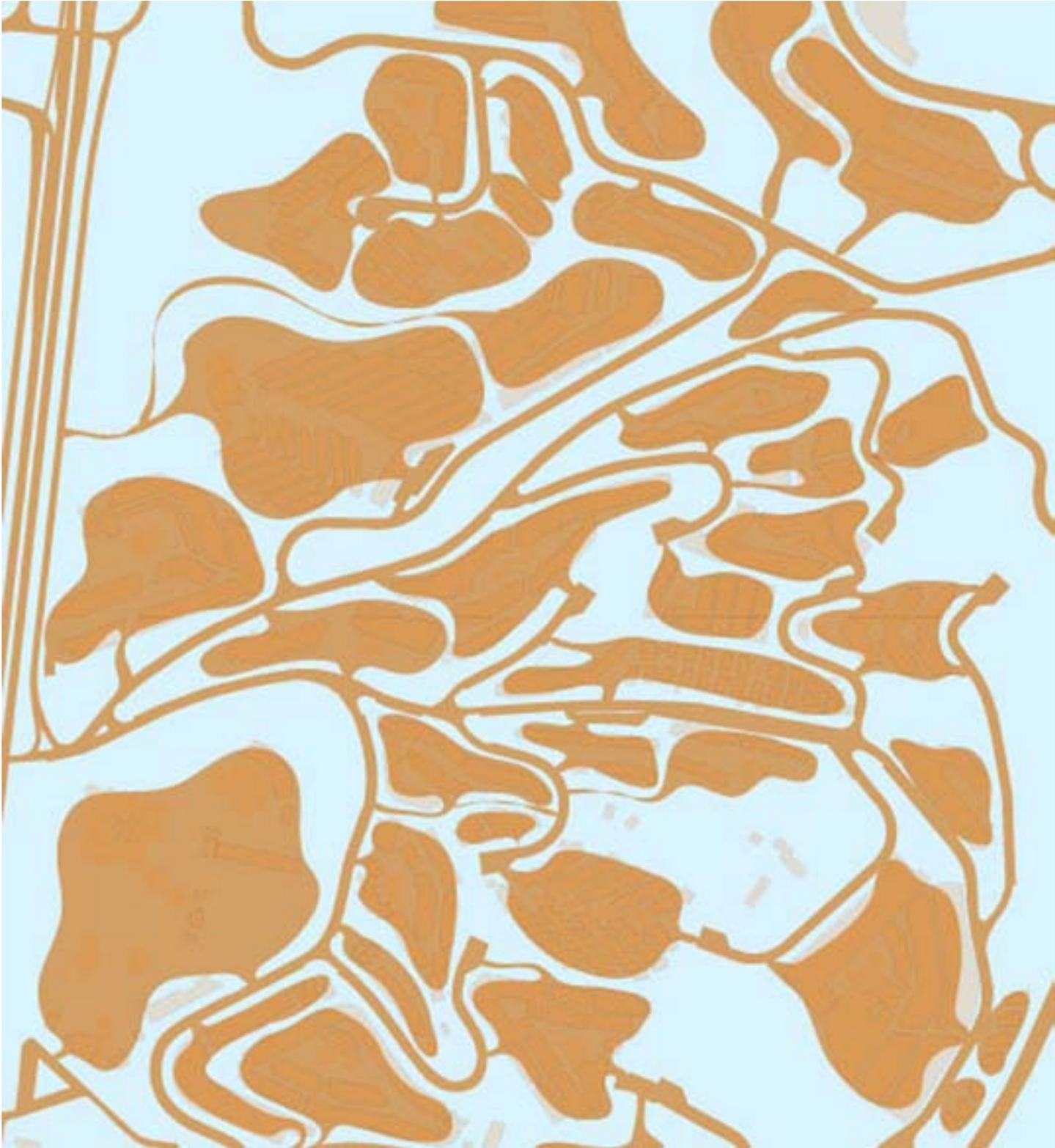
Outside

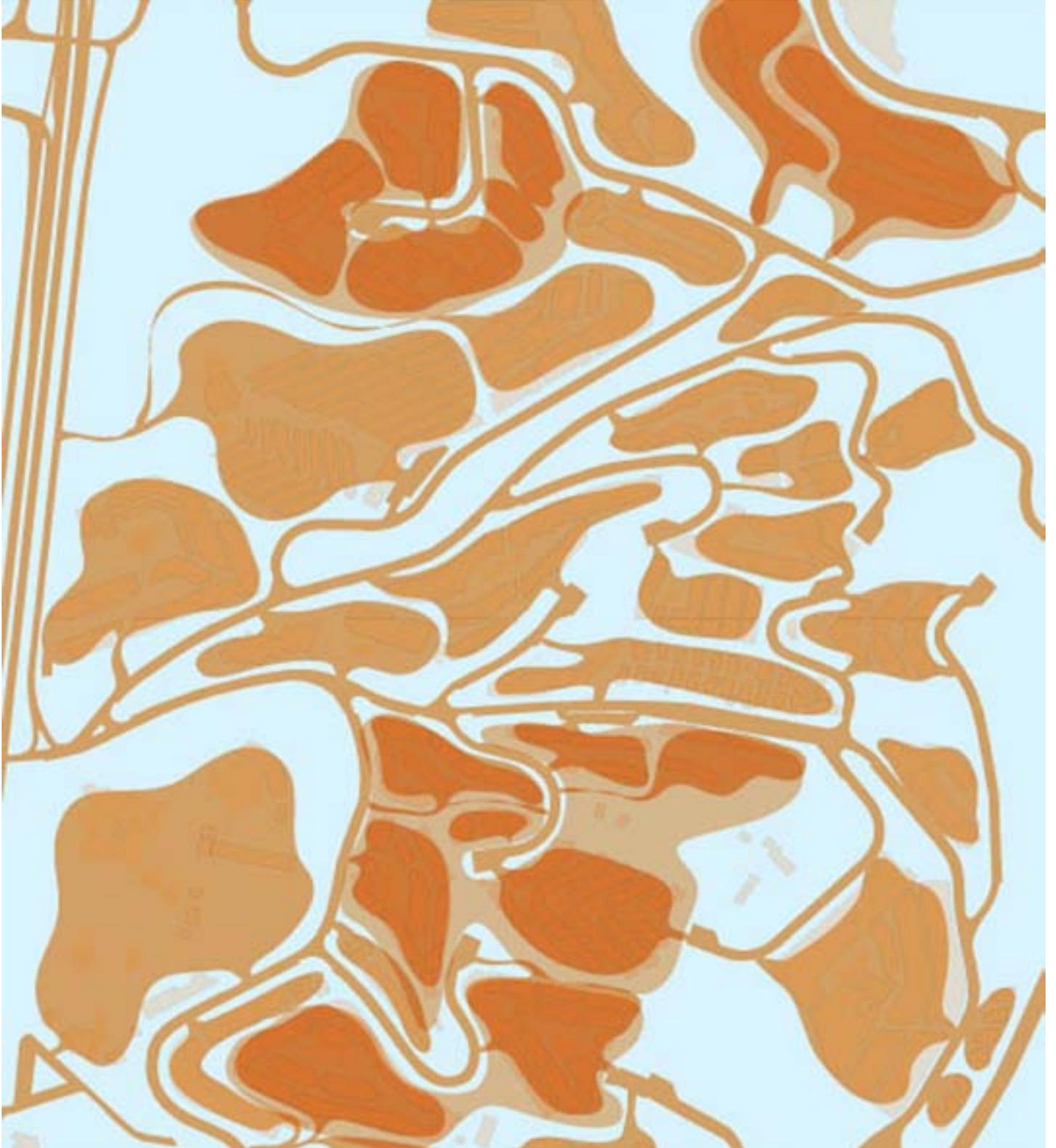


Territorial Expansion



Cellular structures





Cellular structures

Because the resorts had always less relation to the neighbourhood and became more and more introverted (sometimes also physically manifested by gates), the place is falling apart. We decided to call the region of Los Cristianos, Las Americas, Costa Adeje not a tourist city anymore, but an area, existing of cellular structures and undefined interspaces.

The cells can be a hotel resort, rowhouses, even a shop, and more (different functions). Therefore, it is obvious that the cells can have various forms with different degrees of diffusion/enclosures.

The interspaces between the cells have few value (they might be a street, wasteland, an unused shop). Life plays inside the clearly defined cells, making public space needless.

There are different ways to simulate urbanity in this unanimated system of cells and interspaces: parks, where nobody goes; avenues, with too many palms; shops, offering all the same products; the new cultural center "magma" at the other side of the motorway, hired by companies for some time to hold closed meetings, etc. -but life does not come!

The region of LC, LA, CA is not following any masterplan, economy is the driving force also in urban design. The interesting thing is the generation of characteristical zones, with different developments: locals or elderly people in Los Cristianos (with its decay) staying next to Las Americas, where the built fabric is under permanent restructuration, and the area of Costa Adeje, becoming a zone of 2nd residential. This patchwork gives the region a very complex character.

Territorial Expansion Activities during daytime



Simulating urbanity with an increasing number of shops offering the same products



beach toys



cameras



souvenirs

t-shirts



cameras

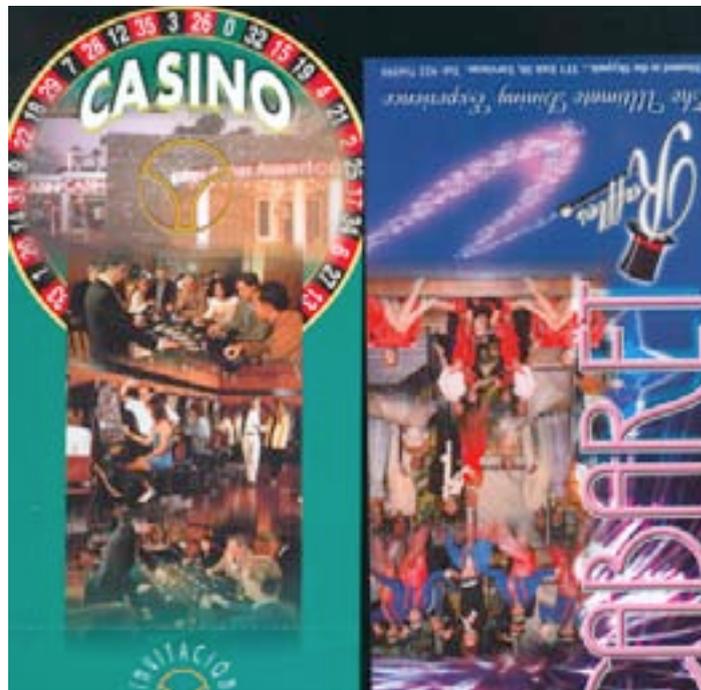


souvenirs



cameras

Territorial Expansion



Leisure pleasure

exclusive golf park



aqualand



Territorial Expansion

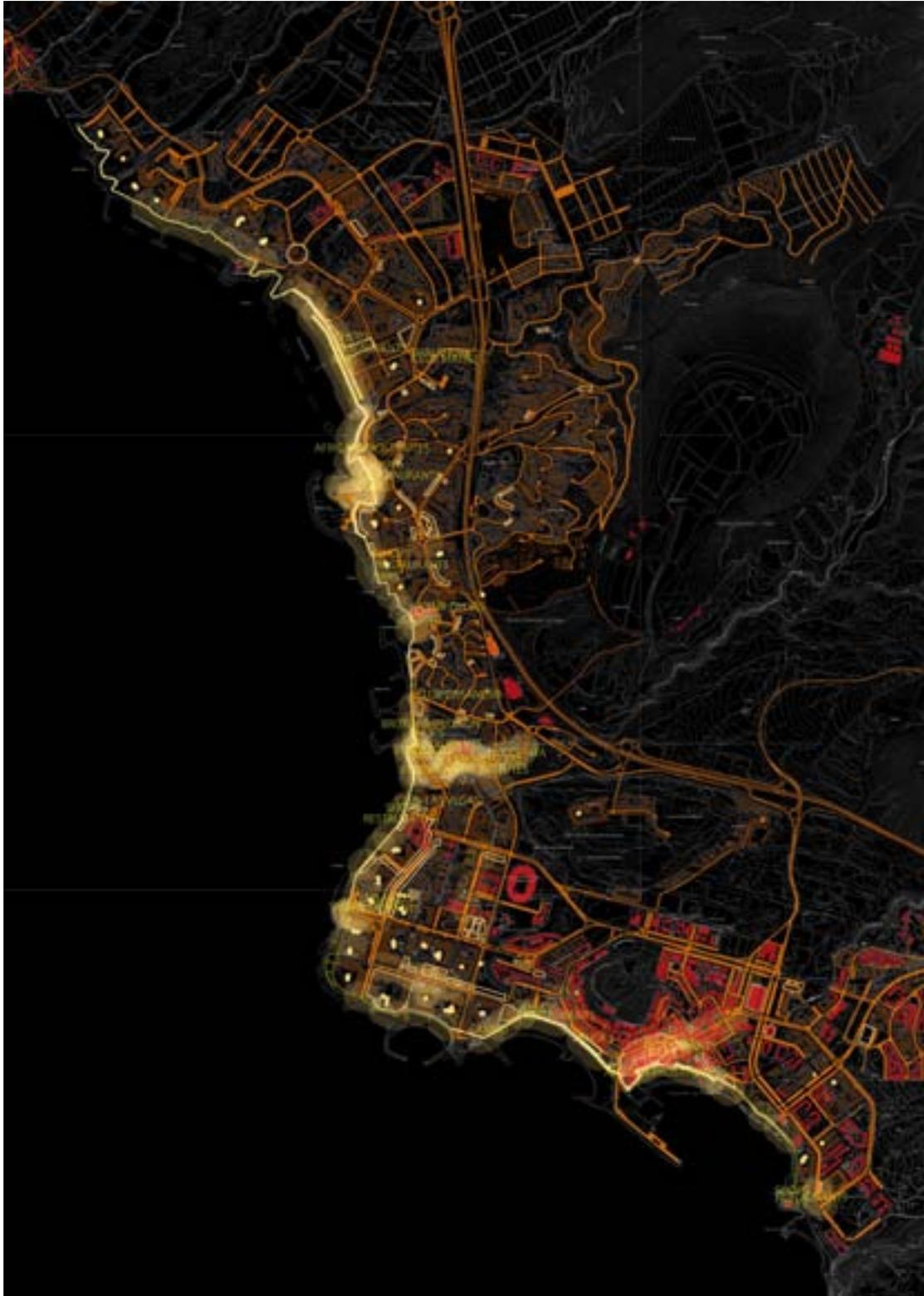


-  future streets
-  new territorial expansion
-  beginning of mass tourism
-  first settlements

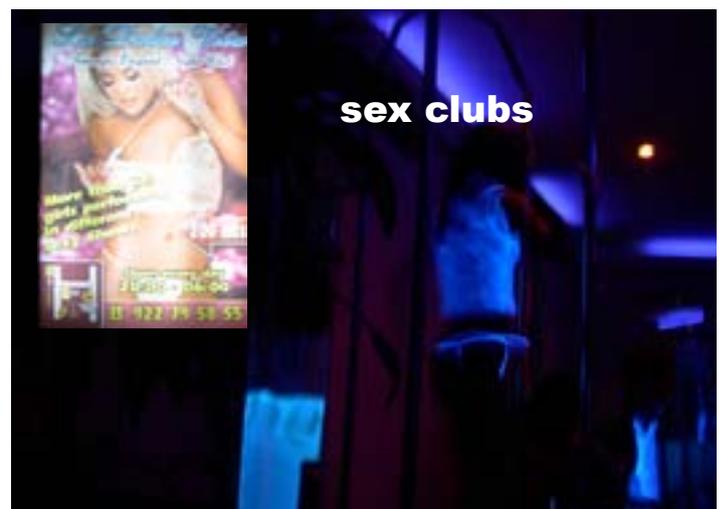
Spread of the infrastructure



Territorial Expansion



Activity at night

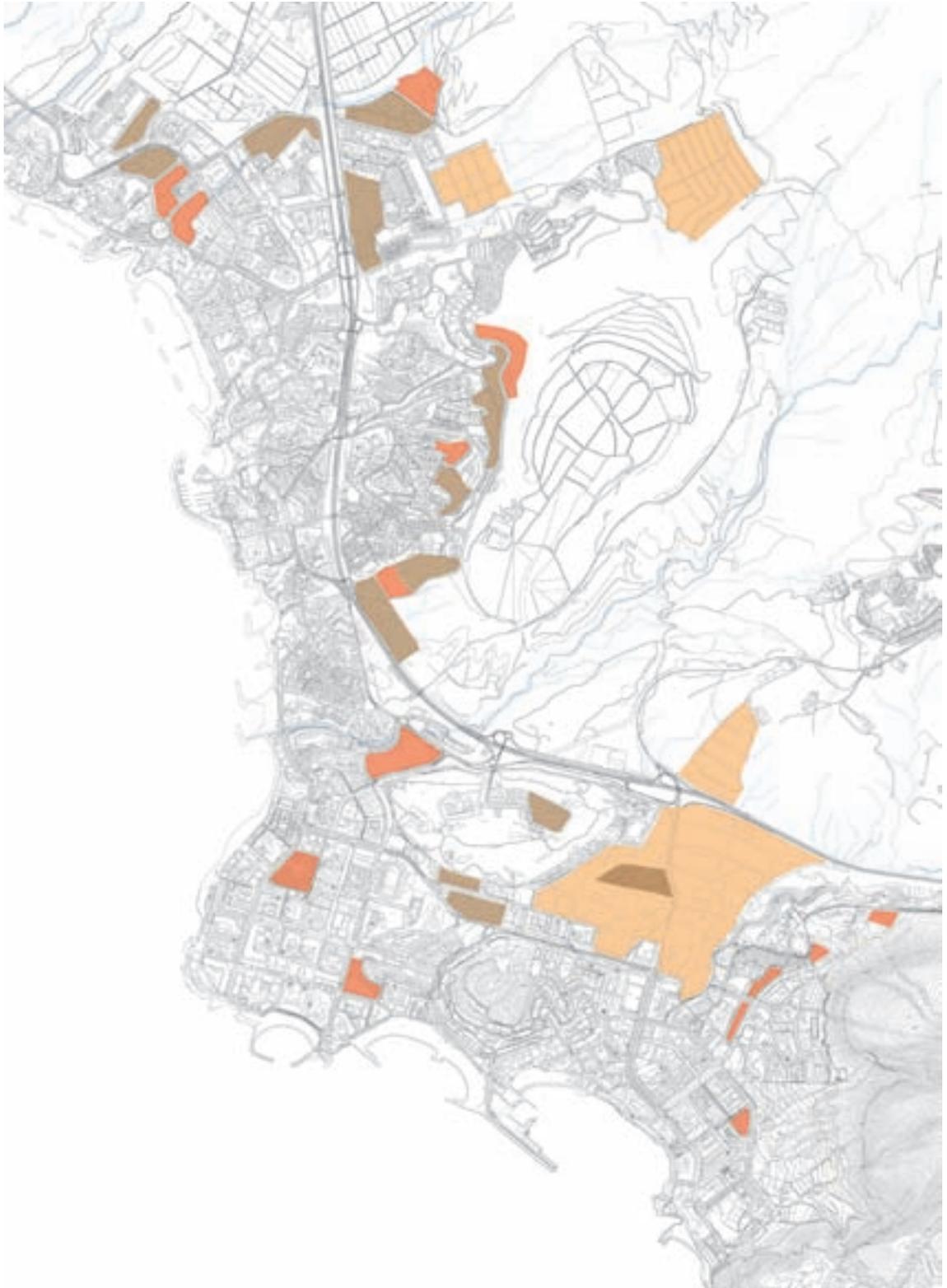


Territorial Expansion





Territorial Expansion

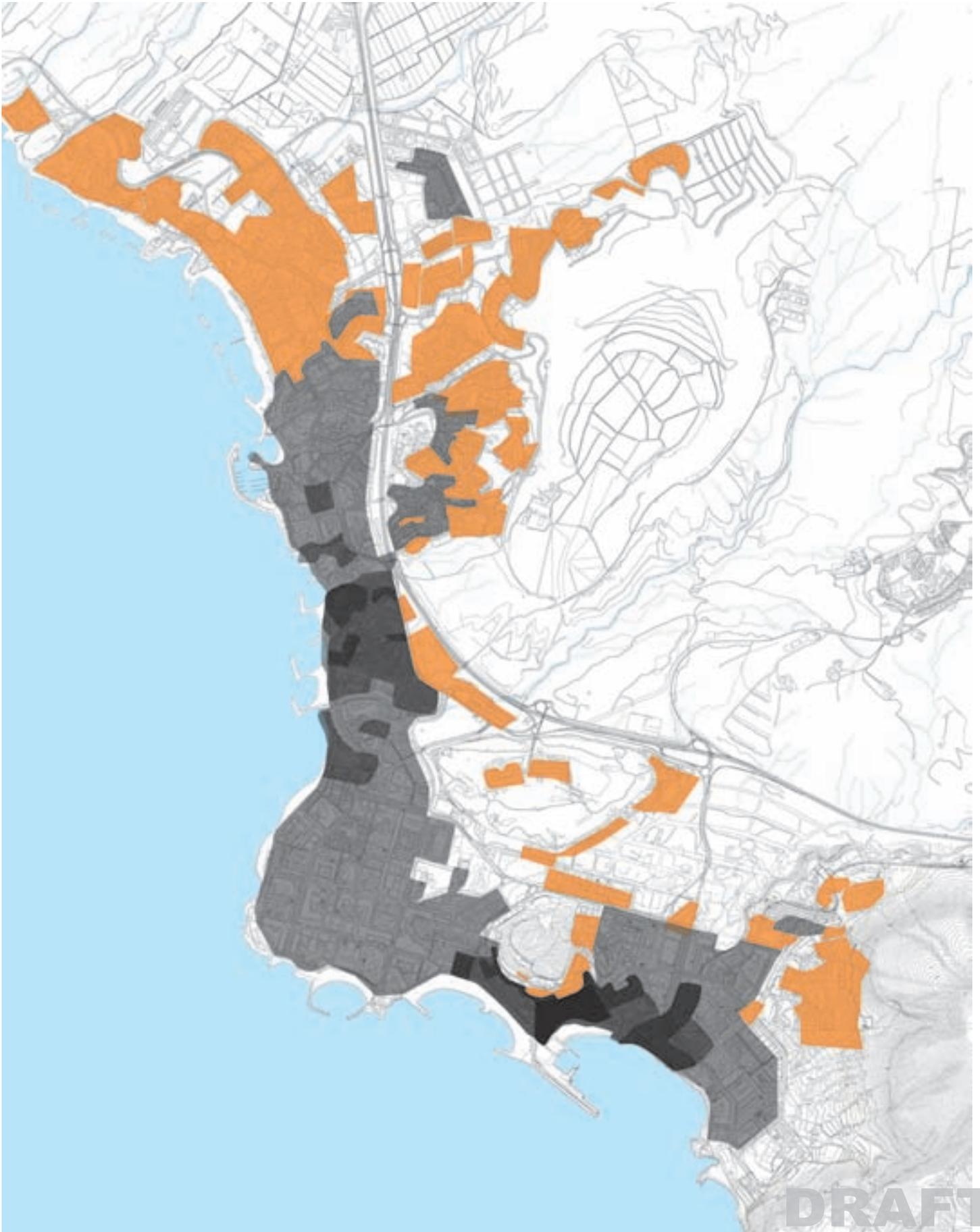


- construction site
- wasteland
- prepared infrastructures

Construction and waste land



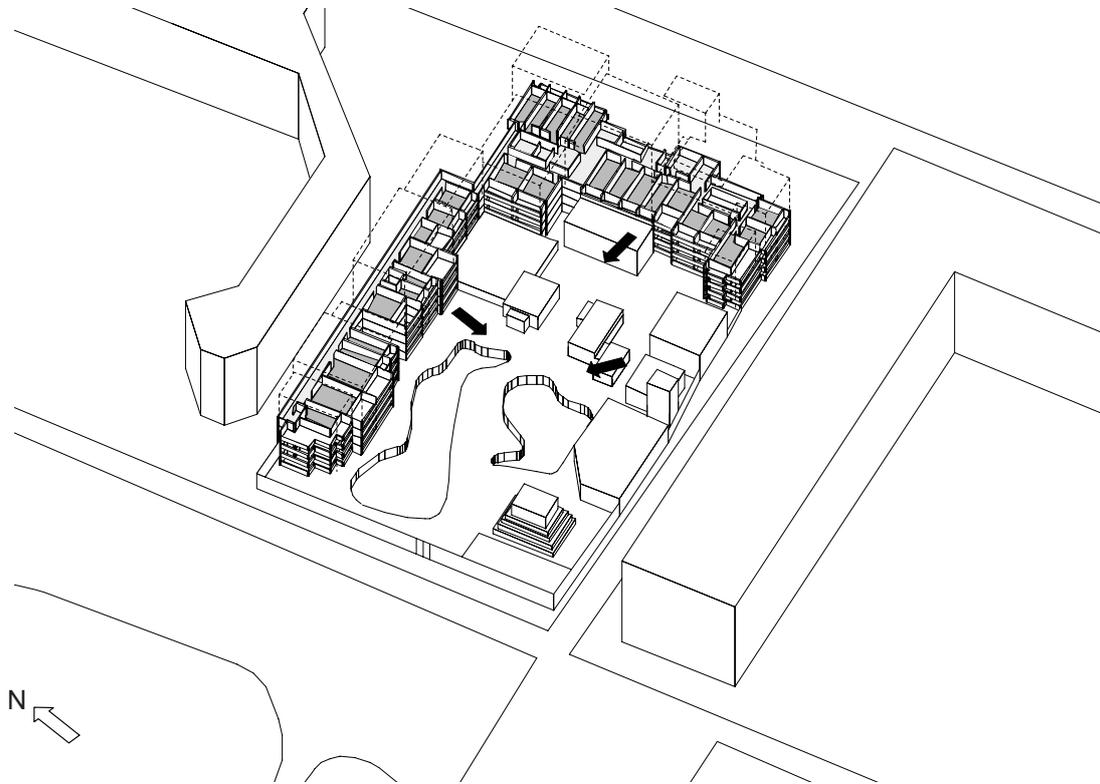
Simulated worlds and a trend to luxury







Simulation



simulation of a
mexican village

Village typology

From the 90ies till now, the development of the individualisation and introversion of the hotel- and apartment resorts comes to a climax with the trend today: the „village typology“

The architecture of those little villages is, like most of the built fabric in Tenerifa's south, not referring to the place. It exists of many little houses, pretending to be singular villas, but in fact they are connected through a corridor.

Each holiday campus simulates a little enclosed world, offering the tourist everything he needs (all-inclusive holidays). We can also call this phenomenon the “resort in the resort”.

With the trend of those totally controlled areas, which are leaving reality outside and exclude any stranger, terms as `privacy`, `being among similar` and `security` became always more important.

The view and the place around has no importance anymore and the resort could stand anywhere in the world – if the climate and the cheap service is guaranteed.



Simulation



Simulated Worlds

What we can see is the development of a place, responding to all kinds of wishes from their guests; people coming from cities as London, Berlin, Basel –to enjoy some days under the canarian sun, living in their small controllable world away from the big, complexe, globalized life.



Simulation



Luxury shopping cells as artificial worlds

Plaza del Duque





Undefined interspaces



236 cells



Abinque Isla Bonita I



Abinque Isla Bonita II



Acapulco



Achacay



Agave



Agaves, Los



Aguamar



Alamos, Los



Alisios, Los



Altamar



Altamira



Amanda 3 Orlando



Andalucia



Andorra



Apartamericas



Arcos, Los



Atalaya Court



Atamanes y Tegueste



Atlantico



Atlantida



Azahara



Bahia



Balcon de Atlantida



Barranco



Bel Air Apartamentos



Bellamar



Beril TS, El



Beverly Hills Club TS



Beverly Hills High TS



Birinquen



Bitacora



Bonanza



Borranzo



Bouganvillas, Las



Brisas, Las



Brozos, Los



Bucanero



Buganville Plata



Bungamericas



Caledonia



California



Canary Island
Holiday Club TS



Cardon, El



Cardones, Los



Carlbe



Castalia Vistamar



Castelia Park



Castle Harbour



Catleya



Cerromar



Chayofita Fuentes



Chipeque



Chunga, La



City Garden
EA Ciudad



Cleopatra-
Julio Cesar-
Marco Antonio



Clininca Vintersol



Club Atlantis



Club Miraverde CO



Club Olimpos I TS



Club Olimpos II TS



Club Tropical Playa



Club Villamar



Colina Blanco



Collina Park



Colon Guanahani



Colon I-II



Columbus



Compostela Beach
Golf Resort



Compostela Beach
Resort



Compostela Beach



Conquistador



Copacabana



Coral Beach



Cortijo, El



Costa Adeje
Palace



Costa Adeje



Crisol



Cristianos



Cristiansur I



Cristiansur II

Simulation



Dalias, Las



Diamantes, Los



Dorado, El



Edificio Simon



Esmeralda



Estrella, La



Eucaliptus



Europe Villa Cortes



Fayser



Flamingo TS



Flores, Las



Floritas, Las



Funchal



Gala



Geranios, Los



Gran Antelia Park



Gran Hotel
Bahia del Duque



Gran Tinerfe



Green Golf Resort



Guayarmina
Princess



Hacienda del Sol



Hibiscos, Los



Holiday Park



Hollywood Mirage



Horizonte



Island Village



Jacaranda H



Jacaranda



Jardin del Duque



Jardin Tropical



Jardines de Nivaria



Lagos de Fanabe



Laguna Park I



Laguna Park II



Madrigueras, Las



Malibu Park



Mango



Mar-Ola



Mare Verde I-III



Marylanza



Mediterranean Palace



Mimosas, Las



Mirador del Duque



Neptuno



Noelia Sur



Oasis Golf Resort



Oasis Mango



Oasis



Ocean Beach



Ocean View



Olimpia



Olimpia II EA



Olivos, Los



Optimist



Orlando



Oro Blanco



Oro Negro



Palm Beach Club TS



Palmeras del Sur



Palmeras, Las



Palo Blanco



Panorama



Paradero I, El



Paradero II, El



Paradero III, El



Paradise Club TS



Paradise Court



Paraiso del Sol I



Paraiso del Sol II



Paraiso Royal



Park Club Europe



Park Hotel Troya



Park Ocean y Las Algas I



Park Ocean y Las Algas II



Park Ocean y Las Algas III



Park Ocean y Las Algas IV.



Parque Cristina A



Parque Cristina B



Parque Cristina C



Parque Cristobal

Simulation



Parque de Las Americas



Parque de Sol



Parque La Paz



Parque Margarita



Parque Royal



Parque Santiago I



Parque Santiago II



Parque Santiago III



Parque Santiago IV



Parque Santiago V



Paso, El



Pinta, La



Piramides, Las



Piteras, Las



Playa Azul



Playa Flor



Playa Honda



Playa Ohd



Ponderosa



Portosin



Princesa Dacil



Pueblo Torviscas



Punta, La



Rebeca



Regency Beach Club



Residencial Beril de Duque



Residencial Dinastia



Residencial Duque



Residencial El Camison



Residencial Garajonay



Reveron Plaza



Riu Arecas Tenerife



Riu Palace Tenerife



Rose Marie



Royal Sunset Beach TS



San Marino CO



San Rafael



Santa Amalia



Santa Maria



Saucos, Los



Siesta, La



Sir Anthony



Sirena, La



Sol Tenerife



Summerland



Sun Beach Sol



Sunset Bay



Sunset Harbour



Sur y Sol



Tajinastes, Los



Teguste



Tenerife Princess



Tenerife Royal Garden



Tenerife Sur



Terracas CS, Los



Terrazas del Duque



The Heights



Tinerfe Garden



Torres de Yomely



Torres del Sol



Torviscas Playa



Udalla Park



Veracruz



Veramar



**Villa Mandi
Golf Resort**



Villa Tagoro



Villaflor



Vina del Mar



Vinas, Las



Virginia



Vista Mar



Vista Sur



Vistabella



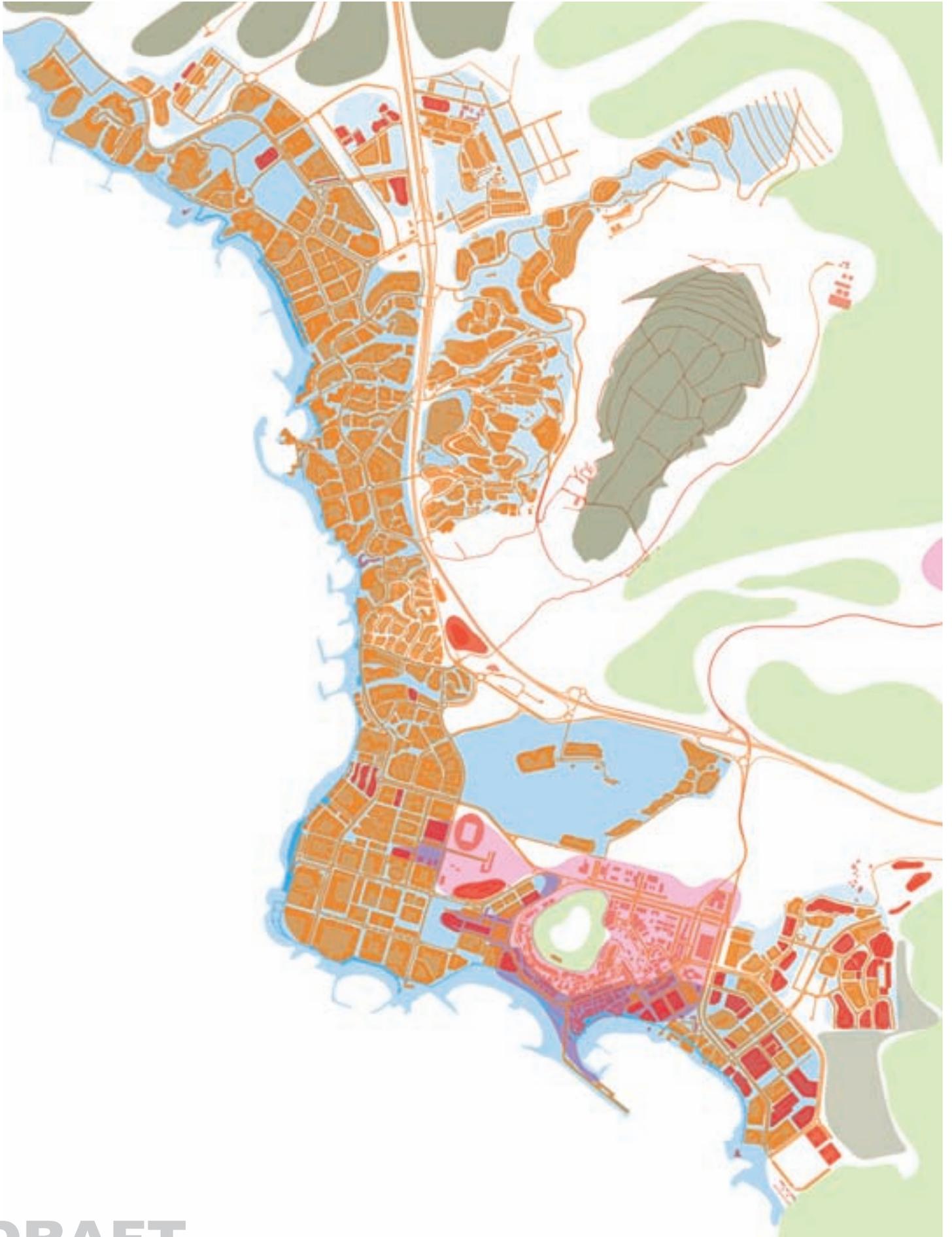
Vulcano



Yaiza Jamaica



Yucca Park S



Synthesis

We compare Los Cristinanos/Las Americas/Costa Adeje with a primitive creature, consisting of hardly differentiated cells, basically the holiday resorts.

The collectivity of these cells forms the organism, Los Cristinanos/Las Americas/Costa Adeje.

For the most part, the cells operate independently from each other.

The cells only solve the tasks together which are important to survive: the streets and specific infrastructure.

This complex cellular structure without center can be divided into characteristic zones, depending on the topography, the clientele, the built fabric in terms of volume, architecture and wealth.

Appendix

Appendix



Apartment House Guayero

Los Cristianos

built 1967-1971 by Sansón-Chirinos
y Vicens arquitectos





Magma Arte y Congreso

Las Americas

completed 2005 by Fernando Martín

Menis



Colonies

Paloma Beach

guests mainly from the UK
and even English staff!



Gran Hotel Bahia del Duque

Costa Adeje, built in 1993

724 beds, village typology



village
simulation



DRAFT
© ETH Studio Basel



André, local inhabitant



**elderly people
spending the winter on the island**

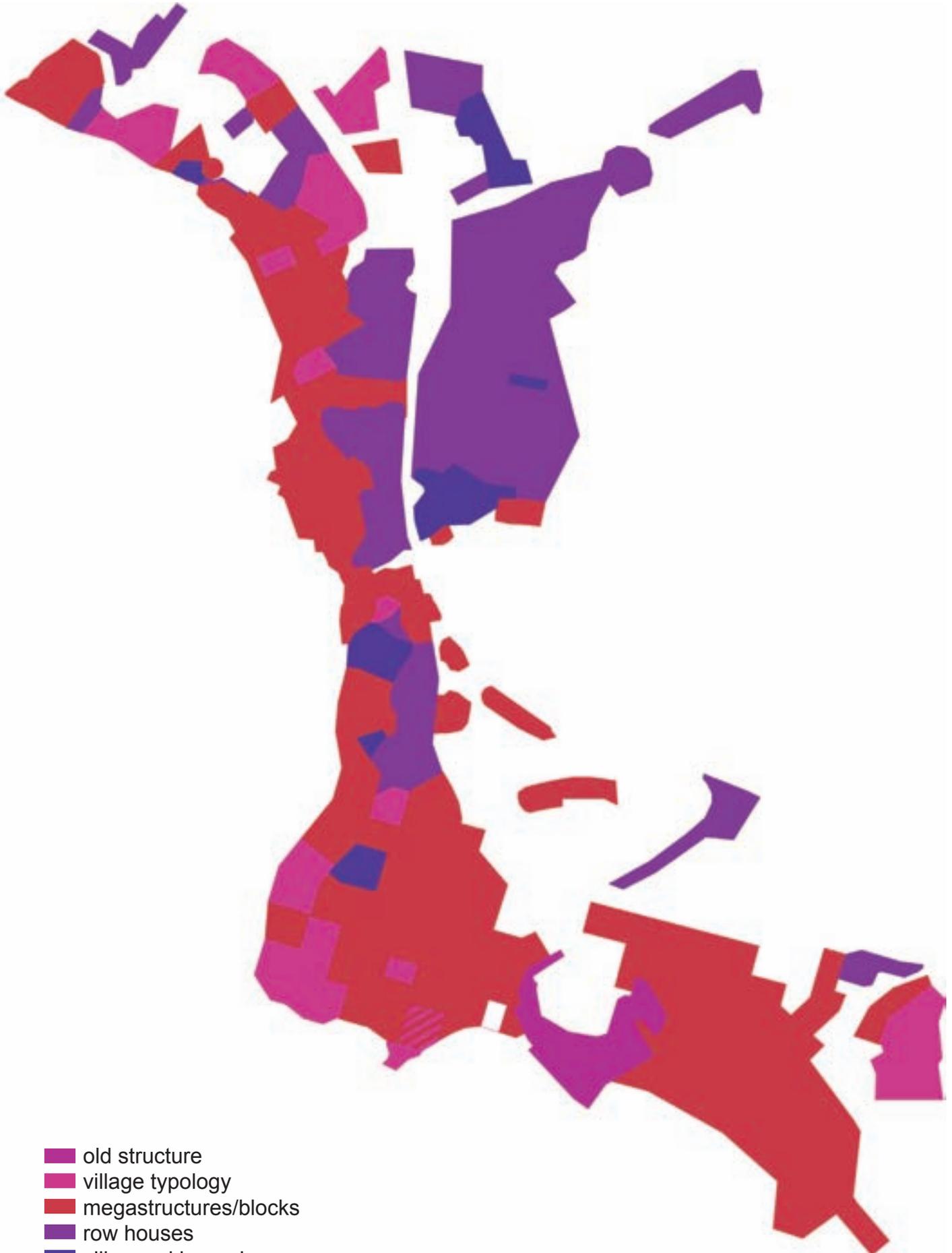


simulation of urban space

Impressions

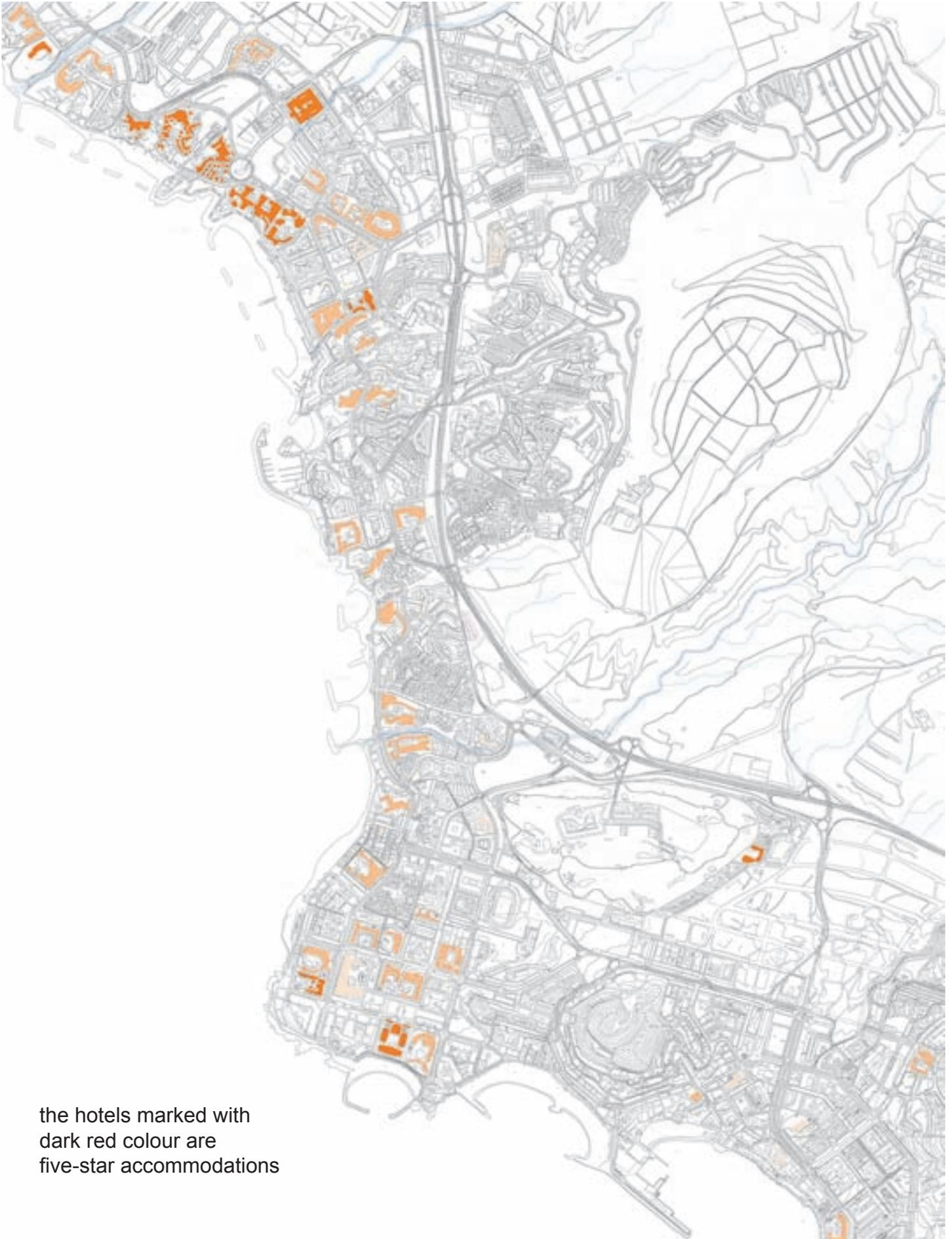


Differentiation in the size of the built fabric

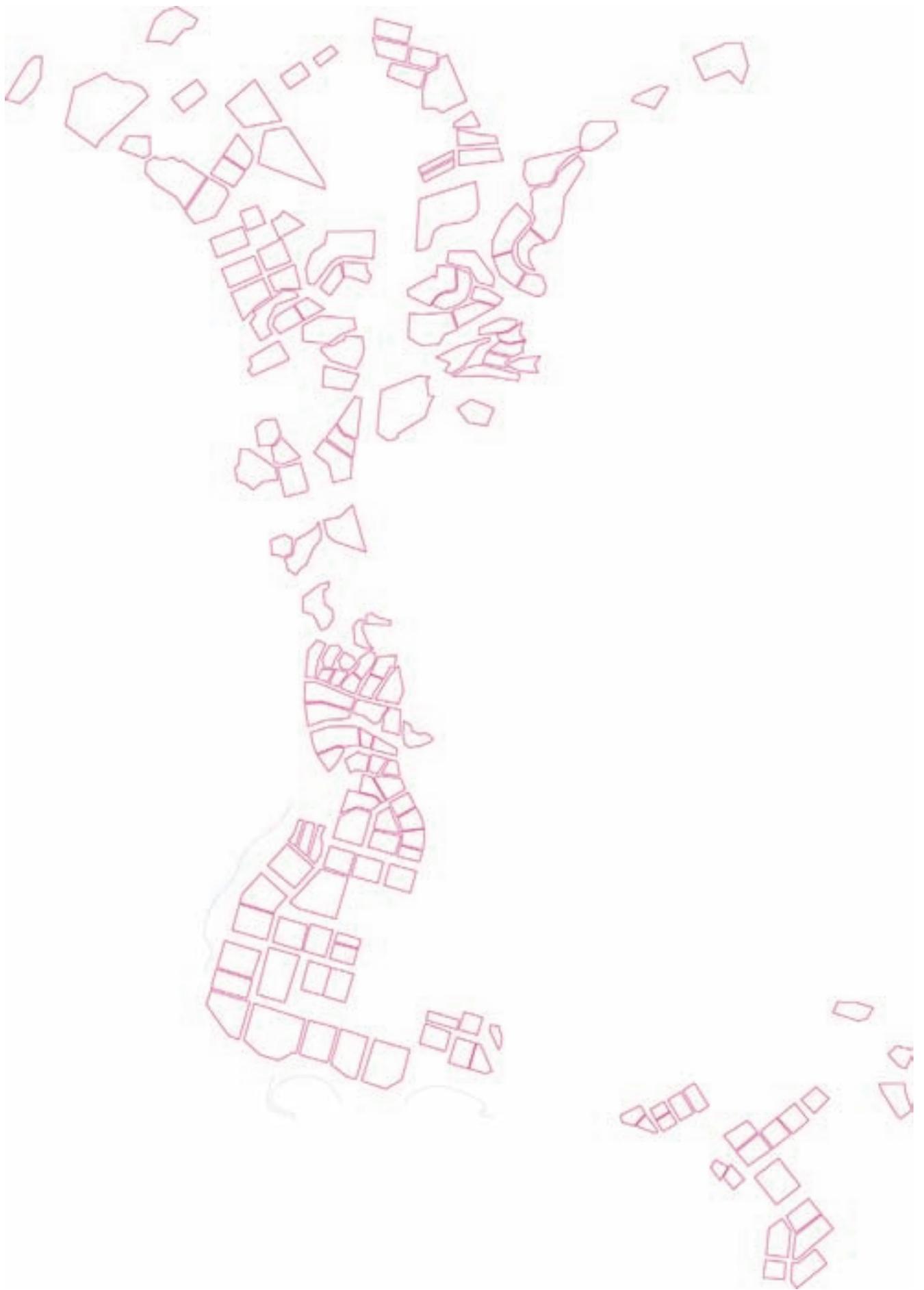


- old structure
- village typology
- megastructures/blocks
- row houses
- villas and bungalows

Economical topography



the hotels marked with
dark red colour are
five-star accommodations



Sources

Fernando Menis, Arquitecto, Santa Cruz

Old pictures by the photographer Ramon Dominguez

Estate agent Christiaan Weerd, Los Cristianos

Community of Arona

Centro Cultural de Los Cristianos

Various interview partners
(local people, hotel receptionists, tourists)

GRAFCAN (Cartográfica Canaria SA)

books:

BASA n° 28 “Canarias, Turismo y Ficción”, Las
Palmas, Primer Semestre 2005

“History of Los Cristianos: from a small fishing vil-
lage to a busy tourist resort”, Nelson Diaz Friaz,
Graficas Sabater, Tenerife, 2004

webpages:

www.gobcan.es/istac

www.arona.org



Aerial Photo, Grafcan, St. Cruz 2003



Postcard



Ramon Dominguez, Photographer, Los Cristianos



History of Los Cristianos, Nelson Díaz Frías



History of Los Cristianos, Nelson Díaz Frías



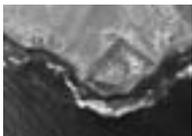
History of Los Cristianos, Nelson Díaz Frías



Ramon Dominguez, Photographer, Los Cristianos



Ramon Dominguez, Photographer, Los Cristianos



Aerial Photo, BASA n°28



History of Los Cristianos, Nelson Díaz Frías



History of Los Cristianos, Nelson Díaz Frías



Guía de Arquitectura Contemporánea Tenerife 1962-1998



Ramon Dominguez, Photographer, Los Cristianos



Postcard