

MAMAIA RESORT ZONAL URBAN PLANNING PLAN UPDATE
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URBAN DEVELOPMENT HISTORICAL STUDY

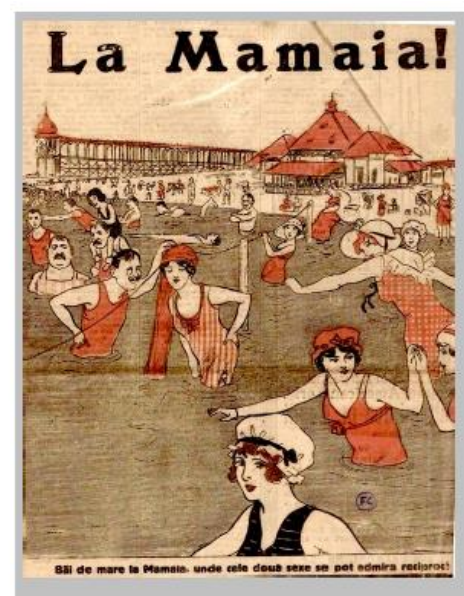


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1. General characterization of the resort

1.1 Physical landmarks of the settlement

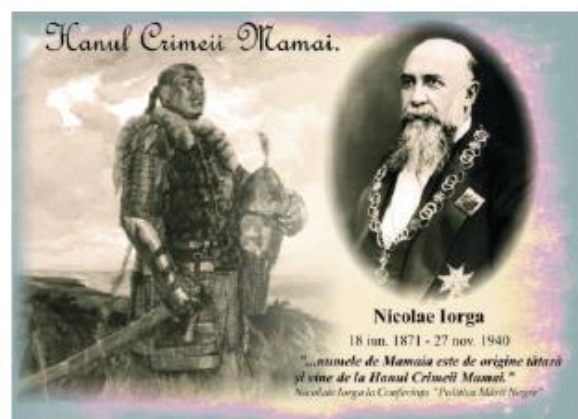
Located on the western shore of the Black Sea, the tourist resort Mamaia administratively belongs to Constanta Municipality, being linked to the north of the locality. Its geographical coordinates are: 44°14'47" northern latitude, 28°37'22" eastern longitude.

Mamaia is located on the sand belt that separates the salty waters of the sea from the freshwaters of Siutghiol lake, with a variable width between 250 and 400 m. Mamaia beach is the largest on the Romanian shoreline, with a length of about 5.2 km and a width that variates between 100 and 200 m in the north and 30 – 100 m in the south. The negative phenomenon of beach erosion determined a progressive narrowing of the beach, which also diminished its attractivity level.

North of Constanta municipality, the Tabacariei and Siutghiol lakes, both freshwater lakes, define together the lake complex through interconnection. For Mamaia's configuration, Siutghiol lake has a special significance due to the natural geometric limitation that it generates, as well as through the "landscape offer" in counterbalance with that of the Black Sea (Siutghiol lake has a surface area of 19 km², a volume of 88 million cubic meters, and an average depth of 2.5 m).

1.2 The origin of the resort's name

It is said that the name Mamaia was first used in 1799, in a note made by Alexandre de Launay who, upon passing through Dobrogea towards Constantinopol, mentioned a locality called "Mammay", also found with this denomination on a Russian map from 1855. The denomination, probably of Turkish origin, of the settlement was "Mamakioi", which would translate as Mamaia Sat (Mamay Kyoi).



At the "Black Sea Policy" conference, Nicolae Iorga, however, states that the name of Mamaia is of Tatar origin, coming from the name Crimean Khanate, Mamai, which temporarily had a camp in the region, the hospitality name having turned into Mamachioi.

The documentary ascertainment appears in 1906, when the resort is already recognized.

2. The history of the creation of Mamaia resort.

2.1 Formal, morphological, functional evolution. Development stages.

2.1.1 The 1905-1916 stage

At the end of the XIX century, the main beach in Constanta city was “Baile de la Vii” towards the southern waterfront of the city, a beach reached by a train that had its station in front of the current headquarters of Constanta Court. After 1899, when the Constanta Port expansion works were started by the engineer Anghel Saligny, the need to develop Constanta’s capacity so as to make it a summer resort for sea bathing also came up. The Baile de la Vii beach could no longer function. Anghel Saligny stated in 1904: “In order for the area to prosper as a balneary resort, Constanta city shall need a nearby beach where visitors can spend the day and even live in summer homes near the sea, aspect that is imposed especially for children, and as is the case of renowned beaches abroad such as Oostende, Scheveningen, and others.”

The Ion Banescu is considered a founder of Mamaia, the mayor of Constanta between 1905-1907, at the initiative and under the direction of whom the Communal Council decided in 1905 to create a future resort north of Constanta. This was to be built on the empty sand belt between Siutghiol and the sea and was to occupy a surface area of 192 hectares. The necessary steps were taken, and the respective surface area was let from the Mamaia Sat village. The first tourist spaces were created on the empty sand belt, covered with dunes that reached even 6-7 m in height. The resort beach was to have a surface area of over 10 hectares with a significant width and began at Capul Singol (current Pescarie) stretching north to Mamaia Sat (currently Hanul Piratilor). The significant width of the beach offered the essential advantage of a possible sun exposure all throughout the day. The surface area was divided into several hundred plots and made available for purchase. 130 personalities and richer local inhabitants bought plots in the new resort at the price of 30 bani (RON 0.30) per square meter.

On August 21st, 1905, the Bucharest newspaper “Dimineata” wrote: “The climax of the sea bathing season in Constanta was also reached due to the admirable initiative had by the mayor Ion Banescu, to move the bathing areas to the superb Mamaia Beach”. The resort began to be renamed Baile Mamaia and, after a public auction, was to be taken by an entrepreneur. As a result of the auction, Mamaia’s first entrepreneur was a woman, Ecaterina D. Ionescu. The city administration was obligated to supervise ensuring the necessary conditions that would favor a good functioning of the resort. The drafting of the beach’s systematization and plot division plan was entrusted to the French architect Edouard Redont (1862-1942). The plan was published in the “La Roumanie” newspaper from August 27th, 1906, however, it is evident that almost nothing was built, outside the sea bathing pavilion, up to the first world war.

In fact, located north of Constanta, Mamaia “beach” was divided into plots for the first time in 1905, as a “facility” of the city, which was linked by railway. The large-sized land areas (between 600-2000 sq. m.) were redivided into plots in 1925, as the previous division “no longer corresponded to the times”. The smaller lands, of up to 400 sq. m., could be built with “four-sided villas”. The land areas did not see much construction up to the year 1916.

The official resort inauguration took place on August 28th, 1906, culminating with two trains making the route between Constanta and Mamaia.

Before the First World War, only several villas took shape and the Pavilionul de Bai, which also acted as a railway station. The pavilion was conceived by the architect Petre Antonescu. The resort benefited from a railway that linked it to Constanta, with a duration of one hour and a half. The route had a few stations and several layovers, and the ticket price was pretty steep (thus determining some people to make the journey by carriage).

The architect Petre Antonescu (1873-1965) designed Asezamantul Bailor (the settlement of Baile) in Mamaia as a wooden construction made after the model of a mountain house, with a very high ceiling, with a sharp slope, even though Dobrogea's climate did not justify such a building. The construction also acted as a railway station.



Pavilionul Bailor

Two long pavilions with gazebos at the ends spread out towards the north and the south, having 56 cabins each. There were also 80 mobile cabins (45 for men and 35 for women). Bathing areas were provided with safety ropes in the swimming areas. All these facilities were considered very modern.



Pavilionul Bailor – Railway Station



Pavilionul Bailor – Railway Station

The location started to become interesting for various investors, the first entertainment offers become reality by means of the installation of a gambling game and a carousel near the bathing area layover. The 42 people fanfare of the 34th Infantry Division played each week in Mamaia as of 1905.



Pavilionul Bailor



Pavilionul Bailor



Promenade



Open space with a wooden walkway in the area of the central pavilion of the bathing area.



On windy days with a rough sea, the benches could be protected with sunblinds and placed against the wind.

In 1906, there were fish restaurants and cabins, all made of wood. People dressed according to La Belle Epoque changed into sleeved swimwear. Equipped with lighting posts on the beach, the resort could be visited all day. A small park was also created in 1913. Up to the first world war, it is ascertained that tens of thousands of Romanians visited Mamaia annually.



2.1.2 The 1924-1940 stage

In fact, the 1924-1940 stage is the richest one with regards to the creation of certain reference objectives of European level, both as style and facilities.

In 1924, the initial plot division plan is reupdated, reducing lots to surfaces between 300 – 500 sq. m., and expanding the plot division towards the north, in successive stages, up to the Mamaia Sat locality.

An unfortunate event at the beginning of the second decade (winter of 1921-1922) made Pavilionul Bailor in Mamaia be affected by a fire that ruined the central building and a large part of the lateral wings where the beach cabins were. Given the need to rebuild after the war and this incident, no activities to enhance the resort's balneary-tourist role were undertaken.

In order to restart the subsequent functioning of the Baile Mamaia establishment, a "temporary" location was built where its tourist function could be carried out during the summer. The two wings of the beach cabins in the north and south of Baile were once again made functional and the land was reconfigured, including moving the railway line. There was now a road that passed in front of Baile from Constanta, and the railway line was built on the bank of Suitghiol lake. The lateral pavilions were kept functional, however, gradually, access to their area was no longer restricted through separation fences.



The coastal road project in the year 1921

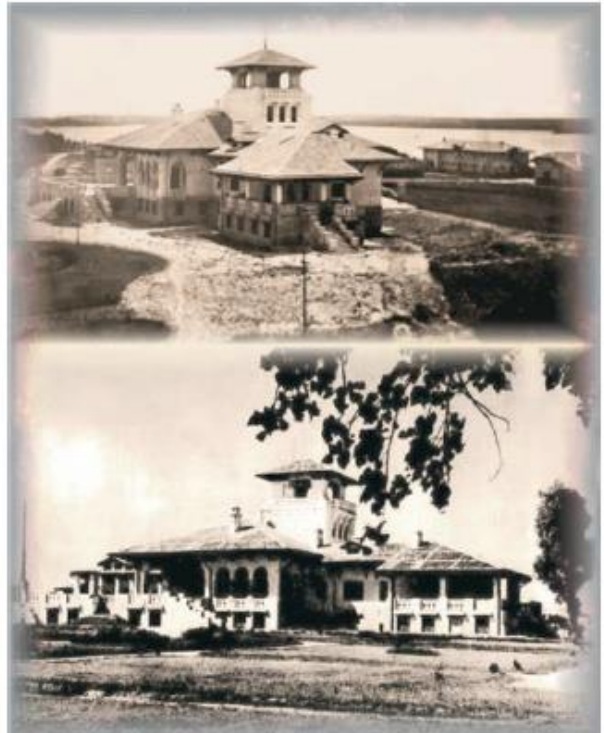
Source: Arch. Radu Cornescu's archive

The wooden walkway had maintained its structure from the previous period, offering an agreeable swimming spot. In 1924, there was a buffet, a class restaurant, a bodega-confectioner's shop, a comfortable and luxurious boat. To be noted is that in the "Guide to Constanta and Techirghiol" from 1924, Mamaia is referred to as a beach, yet there is no information anywhere of a hotel.

Another significant moment in configuring a part of the resort is the construction of a small Romanian palace on a 4-hectare land area between the lake and the sea, destined for the royal family. The land represented a gift given to it after 1920, by the Constanta notabilities. In the north

and south, the city hall divided into plots several hundred land areas, which it subsequently sold until 1940. Various villas and small palaces appeared on those respective lands. The royal palace conceived as summer residence for the royal family had the appearance of a villa with several bodies, located in the middle of a 3.4-hectare park. The construction works lasted about 2 years, being completed in 1926. The anteproject and the palace plans were entrusted to architect Mario Stoppa. The execution, also belonging to an Italian company, was supervised by the architect Constantin C. Dobrescu. Good construction materials were used, provided by companies known for the quality of their products or through auctions. The palace with three main levels, benefited from the most modern of facilities and an elegant landscaping of the plot associated to the building. Upon the death of King Ferdinand in 1927, the building was given by the royal family to Princess Elena, the mother of King Mihai I. The park landscaping was modified in accordance with the will of the new “owner”, but also as a result of the location being equipped with water pipes.





The royal palace was built in the immediate northern vicinity of the Mamaia park that delimited the first plot division. Subsequently becoming the Aviation Officer's Casino, the construction was an element of a significant value, that influenced the style of the works created in Mamaia until 1940.

As of 1930, the palace becomes the property of King Carol II, who will use it as a summer residence. Queen Maria kept only approximately 3000 square meters of the park, where she requested that Stirbey Villa be built, also very modern, but which, as a result of the king's subsequent order, she donated to the Mamaia Hydroaviation Flotilla.



Stirbey Villa (today maintained without the minaret roof).

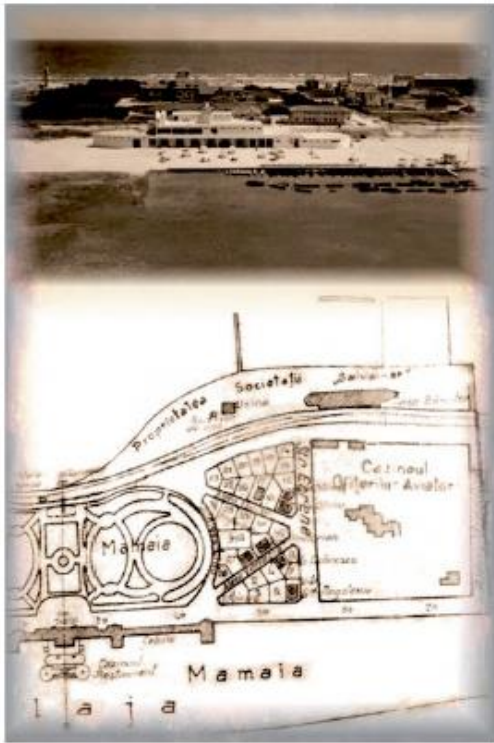
In 1930, construction began on the Mamaia Casino and the bath buildings. The Project was given to architect Victor G. Stephanescu to be executed, architect who had previously built in Constanta: the Mosque and the Ovisiu Square City Hall Building. On August 15th, 1935, the Mamaia Casino was inaugurated before King Carol II, the members of the Government, and the Constanta notabilities. The Casino park was created between the bath establishment building and the new railway line.



The execution of 600 bath cabins and of a concrete bridge, with sea slides and a bar at its end, started in the first days of the year 1936. The Casino walkway in Mamaia, rebuilt with concrete and an unmistakable platform, became an uncontested attraction, remaining in time a true symbol/landmark of the resort. The casino had modern spaces, with a discrete note of elegance and comfort. The casino's construction was done on a modernist style, with neo-Romanian influences.



Introducing the Siutghiol lake within the interest scope of the profile activities in Mamaia came to be by creating the nautical yachting base in the immediate western vicinity of the balneary-tourist ensemble created in 1934. The nautical base was the property of the "Salvamar" (lifeguard) Company and had as main symbol the building "Casa Barcilor" (boat house), built according to the plans of architect G.M. Cantacuzino.



Casa Barcilor (with plot division plan)



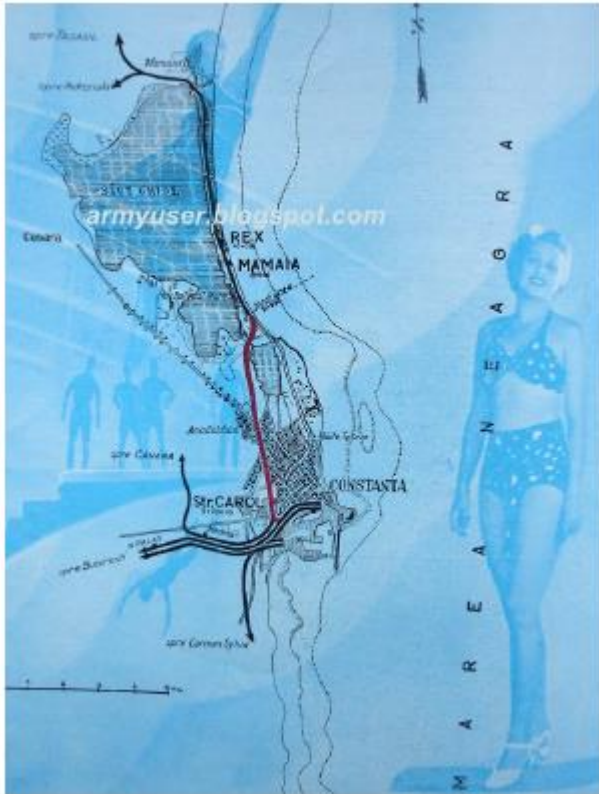
Casa Barcilor

The request to enhance the attractivity degree determined the Constanta Local Council to decide in 1935 the construction of two high-capacity hotels, even if it did not have an adequate financial potential. In 1936, they realized that carrying the project out involved City Hall finding a funding solution. It associated with the National Tourism Office and hired architect G.M. Cantacuzino to elaborate the project for a high-capacity hotel. Subsequently, Romanian Autonomous Railway Undertaking was cooped. City Hall suffered the costs of certain complex arrangement expenses (roads, networks etc.) in order to supply and access the future hotel that would become their main user.

Between 1925-1938 was the period of time during which most of the buildings before the Second World War were built. It began with the construction of 35 villas, most of them around the Royal pavilion and the Casino (built in 1935), and in 1934, the first villa with the purpose of a hotel was created, the Albatros villa. The first hotel is built between 1936-1938: "Grand Hotel Rex Mamaia" (arch. G.M. Cantacuzino, in collaboration with arch. V. Arion). This was going to be the most spectacular and well-equipped profile unit on the Romanian shoreline, it being considered at the level of the best known hotels in Bucharest and the European resorts. The placement of the hotel kept in mind the last plot division plan and the resort organization plan that stipulated an alternation between quiet spaces (private villa areas) and areas with balneary-touristic activities, by combining the aforementioned with generous and well-organized green spaces.



The plan drafted in 1938 illustrates an organization of a resort that is perfectly adapted to the narrow land, with land “packs” destined for villas, alternating with planted spaces or spaces dedicated to certain special destinations, such as the one reserved for the Royal Palace. The railway, located on the bank of Siutghiol lake, is doubled by means of the proposal of a new boulevard-promenade similar to the one towards the sea, signaling the orientation of the new resort towards the two large water surfaces.

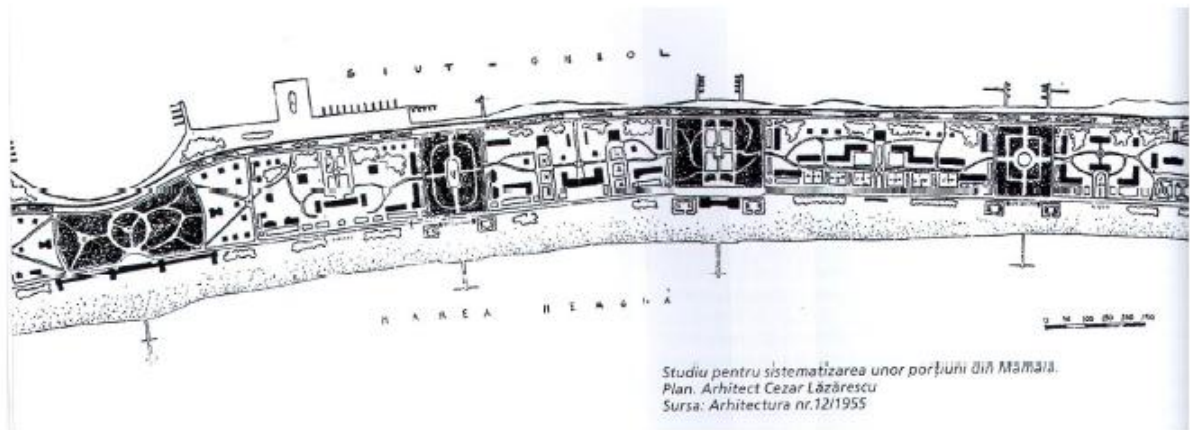


The map of the railway line conceived as an urban and suburban line, with a length of 11 km between Constanta and Mamaia, Rex (layover). The line was started in the spring of 1938 and was in use in the summer of the same year.

The war induces the stagnation of balneary-tourist activities, most buildings in the resort being periodically requisitioned for the accommodation of the German troops (the Rex hotel was one of the most requested). During 1944, all the resort had been requisitioned to accommodate soviet troops, many buildings suffering severe deteriorations, up to destruction. In 1947, Rex hotel, which belonged to the CFR Regional 1 was exempt from requisitioning due to its poor state and it proposed for repair interventions.

2.1.3 The stage after 1955

After the Second World War, Mamaia resort gradually began to gain a new look, always remaining the largest and best equipped resort on the coast.



In 1956, the Hotel Bucharest was built with a restaurant, and in 1958, the Albatros Hotel and the Casino Restaurant-bar were renovated.

The beginning of 1958 meant raising the terrain compared to the sea level by withdrawing and pumping mud and sand from the sea and the lake. The filling exceeded 500,000 cubic meters. The designed land occupation density was of 120 visitors per hectare, the beach quota associated to a visitor being of 8-10 sq. m. of beach. The urban planning composition imposed on the land area was based on a major rhythm made of tall buildings (10-13 floors) placed at 200 m distance, with small ground floor + 4 floors hotels, restaurants, and other mixed function buildings (commerce, culture, recreation) between them. This aired placement allowed a correct exposure of the rooms (towards north and south), ensuring air circulation and offering a free view of the sea and lake. The important circulation was deviated on the Siutghiol bank, the seashore having only a pedestrian road. The entrance to the resort was marked by two tall hotels: Parc and Perla, the entire composition being homogeneous and clear.

Between 1959-1962, the road and the Modern, Palas, Central, Pelican, Tomis, Midia, Histria, Aurora, Meridian, Doine, Flora, Victoria hotels and their restaurants were built. Alongside these hotels, there were also others, smaller ones (Neptun, Ovidiu, Select, Dacia, Perscarus, Delfin, Lotus, Dunarea, Delta, Sulina) and the Sirena Restaurant. At the entrance into the resort, two signal buildings were imposed, that is two vertical hotels: Parc and Perla. This tourist ensemble was created under the coordination of architect Cezar Lazarescu and enjoyed a significant reconnaissance in the modern world, but also in the urban planning specialists and architects' world.



A part of the marshlands and swamps were drained on the bank of the Siutghiol and a part of the villas that made up the former Mamaia resort were demolished. Most sites had a forced labor regime. The Road was built along the Siutghiol lake, and along the beach, a sand protection made of concrete plated with calcareous stone was built. Only after the opening of the part from the sea of the resort by finishing the hotel ensemble did work start towards the Siutghiol lake area, and the dryland area began to be arranged, as well as the green spaces of the bank with a concrete curb.)



The Modern, Palas, Central, and Pelican

Among the effects pertaining to altitudes, we see that, among the few villas that succeeded in surviving from the inter-war Mamaia is that located next to the Flore Hotel. (it barely escaped the bulldozer, the boulevard curb passing next to the villa's foundation)



In the year 1959, the Tomis, Midia, and Histria hotels were built north of Rex Hotel (renamed 1 Mai).



Through the new constructions that began to appear, a new current of ultra-simplified forms was instituted, forms that were more and more adequate for type-building design requirements. Exceeding the 4-level limit was often avoided so as to not use elevators. The blade hotels were designed in a shape that emphasizes Mamaia's isthmus' curvature. An attempt was made to soften the dominant cube perspective of the buildings through the soft curves of basins or alleys and flower spaces. Even the pavement mosaic tried to diminish the inhibitive shock of the straight shapes, highly repeated.

In order to obtain a unit perspective, the placement of the buildings was also rigorously conceived, and the succession of large and small volumes was especially alternated, meant to emphasize each other. The commercial spaces, with one level, alternated largely as parallelepiped with large windows, with interior spaces that allowed lighting on the four sides of the modular body.

The public lighting was well supported by the ensemble of the poles with double lighting bodies that created an unusual image of the resort at night. The lighting poles on the pedestrian walkways also had simple and stereotypical geometrical shapes.

In 1962, the two large hotels with 14 floors each located at Mamaia's entrance were finished: Parc and Perla. Five other hotels were built between them: Dacia, Pescarus, Delfin, Lotus, Select. Perla Hotel had a space on the ground floor dedicated to services and, of course, for its own location, a restaurant with a terrace. The last floor actually held a bar that offered an incredible perspective of the resort and the city. The commercial complex in the Perla Hotel was a concept of modulated monovolumes to which the parasolar beams were supported by metallic poles which conferred an image similar to vine espaliers.



In 1963, the building of the Summer Theater was opened to the public. The general landscape of Mamaia in the '60s was completed with beautiful water basins (some kept even to this day), around which there were lamps and decorative and monumental art objects. The Summer theater was, perhaps, a first try to escape the monovolume structure.



In the '70-'80s, the northern part of Mamaia was arranged, and the Caraiman, Alcor, Vega, Amiral, Ambassador, Savoy, Lido hotels were built with a more complicated architecture compared to the hotels in the southern part of the resort, wishing to simulate a "Romanian Miami-Beach". Furthermore, the Orient, Vatra, Hanul Piratilor restaurants appeared on the resort's map, as well as the Sunquest discotheque, the bungalow villas in the north, the Mamaia and Hanul Piratilor tourist stops etc. With regards to recreation, a teleski track was built on Siutghiol lake, several piers, tennis fields and minigolf fields, windsurfing nautical bases, aquatic slides etc.

We can also add that, in order to offer entertainment possibilities and to better advertise the Romanian traditional folklore element, Satul de vacanta (Holiday village) was built in the southern extremity. The idea, generous as it was, amounted to nothing more than a rather brutal way of implementing the rustic element and it degenerated even more through the cumulation of houses that were representative of regions and dedicating them to be traditional Romanian restaurants.

After 1989, numerous hotels were modernized (Perla, Flora, Majestic, Bucharest-laki etc.), and other appeared (Mamaia, Scandinavia, Bavaria etc.). The commercial network was diversified, and the recreational possibilities were numerically amplified and diversified. We note "Aqua Magic" and the cable car built in 2004, that allows seeing the southern and central parts of Mamaia from above (it is true that the cable car route makes the relationship between the Casino and the Royal Villa with its installations create a rather unfavorable overall image of all objectives). Furthermore, the nautical sports and flight enthusiasts can satisfy their sports passions successfully (the facilities on Siutghiol lake and those occasionally held on sea).

A third development stage contributed with a large volume of executed works (a large number of constructions and a quantitative volume, through a high building regime). From an urban planning perspective, the organization was adequate, the height alternations, the arrangements, and even the construction materials created a coherent image, the public spaces and the green spaces being generous and varied. The mass tourism induced, however, an "overproduction" of accommodation spaces, food services spaces, commerce and health spaces, obtained at times in the detriment of the

interior comfort (small accommodation spaces, modest finishings, small flexibility in transformation due to constructions on rigid engineering structures).

Equally, rather rich facilities were created for specific sports (nautical ski on Siutghiol lake, as well as tennis, minigolf etc.). To this we add the fact that Mamaia's beach had an impressive width (100-200 meters in the north, 50-100 meters to the south), a very fine sand, and the water depth at shore had a very slow progression over a great distance, thus favoring swimming for those that were less familiar with nautical sports. Statistically, the number of tourists grew, reaching 352,000 in 1987. Of these, 90,000 were foreign tourists.

In conclusion, we can mention that, between 1959 – 1965, the southern part of the resort was the most developed one (starting with Parc Hotel), and the northern part evolved especially between 1965-1989. After 1989, adapting function to the market exigences, in the context of an accentuated privatization process and migration process of a part of Constanta's population so that it may live in the resort, led to serious prejudices to its good function.

3. Territorial planning. The context of development of settlements on the Romanian shore of the Black Sea.

Having started way before the first world war, the development of the seaside resorts continues alertly during the inter-war period and after the second world war. In this last stage, the resort reorganization aims at adapting to a mass tourism that is in full swing.

At the beginning of the '50s, the shoreline sees a series of localities with various characters: fishermen's colonies,