

san martín de la mar square

landscape recovery by transforming a forgotten, unstructured and disused public space at santander

03 European Prize for Urban Public Space 2016
zigzag arquitectura bernardo angelini & david casino

J004



Evaluation

The new Plaza de San Martín de la Mar has succeeded in recovering the privileged location that this urban enclave used to have in the city of Santander. It generates a visual opening between the high-rise buildings and a place for the citizens who come from Reina Victoria Avenue or from the Bay itself to stop and rest. Its new condition of urban watchtower allows the visitor to enjoy exceptional views to the south and reincorporates lost images of the bay and of the passage of ships. Its new configuration as a headland and the new and intentional position of the trees and vegetation provide not only an ideal capture of the sights but also a visual escape.

The paving materials used produce an echo of the fishing nets which, spread on the ground, were continuously being repaired by the net menders, a craft which has now disappeared. The new Nets now capture spaces and guide visitors along the paths to find: places to go for a walk, sit in the sun, stop to have a chat or view the scenery. Besides these everyday situations, music, dance and magic shows as well as other events are organized.

The layout of the stands allows the meeting of different groups of people and a greater accumulation of public during the events. The citizens' acceptance has been optimal and the new plaza has been subject of very little controversy. The inhabitants are surprised to rediscover a place which had disappeared and enjoy having a view of the impressive landscape. Children now have a place especially designed for them and the topography obtained has also resulted in an excellent playing device which allows them to climb and jump on the stands.

