PREVIOUS STATE

Paral·lel Avenue, one of the main arteries in the city of Barcelona whose past is deeply rooted to theatre, performance and leisure time, had gradually suffered degradation and had become a somewhat sad street. Added to the lack of residents on the street, there was a perception that it was a city space allocated exclusively to vehicle traffic. In parallel, the large width of the roadway caused separation and a barrier effect between the opposite pavements on which pedestrians walk. Intersections with other streets operated solely as traffic and parking hubs, creating a strong visual impact and a lack of continuity for pedestrians. The previous bike lane also created hazardous situations due to its location imposing the pavement and due to intersecting with vehicle turning left and public transport users.

AIM OF THE INTERVENTION

The revitalisation and revival of the allure and energy of Barcelona's Paral·lel Avenue are the starting points for remodeling this urban axis. The avenue is characterized by bordering three different city chapters -Glòries, El Poblenou and Sant Andreu- and the avenue recognizes the different nature of its pavements, areas and ways of meeting with the city urban grids that converge there. The unifying thread of the works is the improvement of pedestrian connectivity, both width-wise between the two pavements and lengthwise along the entire avenue, and the creation of new spaces to be used by citizens. Order and coherence, and imbuing the urban space with dignity are hence the starting points for the works.
DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

The main remodelling works are: moving the bike lane into the centre of the avenue, with the integration of new large-scale pedestrian crossings; the creation of new squares as receptacles for activities where the avenue meets the Eixample urban grid; the parking of intersections with the streets of Poblenou; and the installation of new multifunctional columns.

Shifting the bike lane into the middle of the avenue divides the width of the roadway, reducing the impact of the vehicle traffic and improving the feeling of proximity between the two pavements. It is delimited by longitudinal patterns filled with plants and robust concrete protection elements, whose asymmetrical triangle-shaped design acts as an edge on the vehicle side and as an indented plane flush with the paving on the bicycle side. On the pedestrian crossings, this central area is paved with granite, as a protective area in the middle of the avenue.

Where the north pavement of Parallel Avenue meets the streets of Eixample, each of the six new squares shares a unique space that integrates the road network and steps within and three areas for pedestrian crossings. Granite paving with continuous joints between areas and pedestrian crossings running the entire length of the squares, let the unique personality of the space be appreciated. This unity nature is strengthened by a network of light points.

The Parallel column was designed as a multifunctional medium capable of bringing together in a single article, with utmost flexibility and versatility, LED lighting both functional and decorative, communication elements, cameras and sensors.
ASSESSMENT

The remodelling of Paral-lel Avenue represents the first step to revitalize the human nature of the surrounding area. New spaces in which to meet and chat are gained, with urban furniture strategically placed, encouraging social activities in these public spaces.

The large pedestrian and bicycle crossings, the relocation of the bike lane and the new median plants have managed to bring the pavements on both sides closer together, inviting pedestrians to cross and adding a touch of warmth. The new bike lane is clearly defined and protected along the entire avenue. Finally, the placement of the Parallel columns complies with the needs of future smart city developments and ties all the works together in a striking, unified way, with elegance, rhythm and order that is highly attractive to residents.

We shall expect that citizens take on these new spaces on their own and that they fill them with activities, to be able to see the full potential of Paral-lel Avenue.