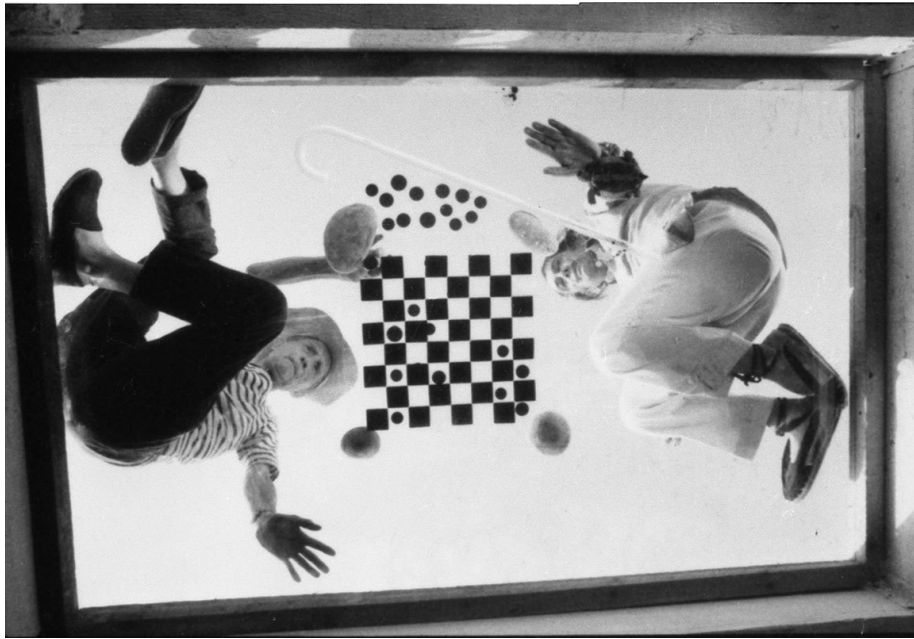


EL TABLERO DE L'ESTADELLA



Duchamp and Dalí playing chess, photo by Robert Descharnes and Paul Averty

New impulse into the urban fabric

The neighborhood of Torrent de l'Estadella is a part of the modern urban history of Barcelona. Its agricultural vocation first, then its industrial one, contributed to form the area, which appears well recognizable in the surrounding urban fabric.

Nowadays, the surrounding area is facing a series of gradual but massive changes. The goal is to provide a set of tools that will allow the area to take part to these changes, while maintaining its productive vocation. The transformation of the area has to be intended as a reuse of what is already there combined with a strategy of cautious substitution of necrotic zones, always respecting the historical urban form.

The proposal aims at bringing a diversity of usages of the urban space, allowing the area to stay active through time. Breaking the mono-functional character of the area and ensuring the coexistence of new and old activities will make this part of the city resilient.

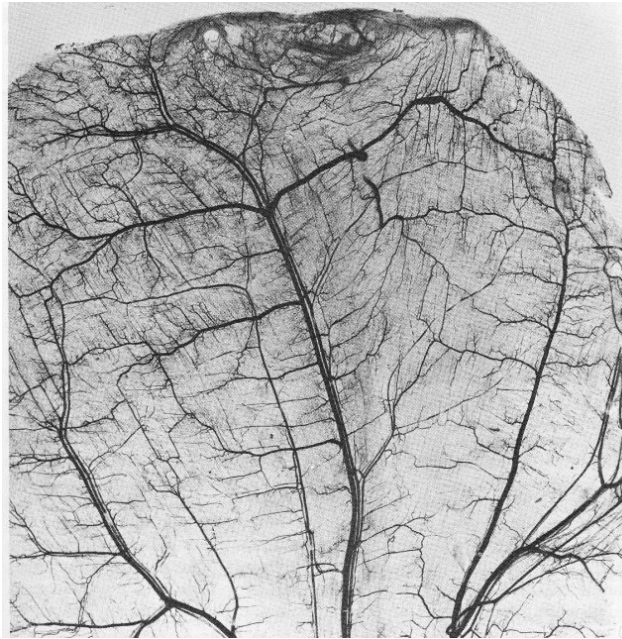
Phasing and method

The gradualness of the transformation plays a fundamental role in the intervention. It allows to show the community the potential of the area step by step, and, vice versa, it gives the possibility to see how the community reacts to changes. This can prevent hasty and expensive moves.

1. Intervention on the public space

In the first instance, it is important to bring people in the area. Nowadays, the site is merely functional to the industrial activities and the area is strongly dominated by cars and heavy traffic. Moreover, the urban tissue lacks space for pedestrians and slow mobility. The current functions ensure its activation only during the working hours, with a complete lack of facilities that can attract people during the evening or in the week end.

Since the beginning, the project aims to make the urban fabric more livable with a non-invasive intervention



Photomicrograph of a vascular pattern. From Smaje, Zweifach, and Intaglietta (1970)

on the road surface. The first step towards a wider public space transformation starts from the reduction of the road section and the increase of the pedestrian area. Different kinds of urban furniture are introduced: the public space is populated by seating elements, shading systems and lighting features. The furniture is meant to be temporary, leaving a minimal impact in terms of cost and time consuming. The chosen materials follow this purpose: the combination of wooden furniture and painted asphalt stresses the transience nature of this first transition and strives to activate the space and prepare it to a wider transformation. The involvement of local people will be therefore determining to reveal the success of this first phase. The transformation flows into the area through the public spaces. The urban fabric becomes a capillary system.

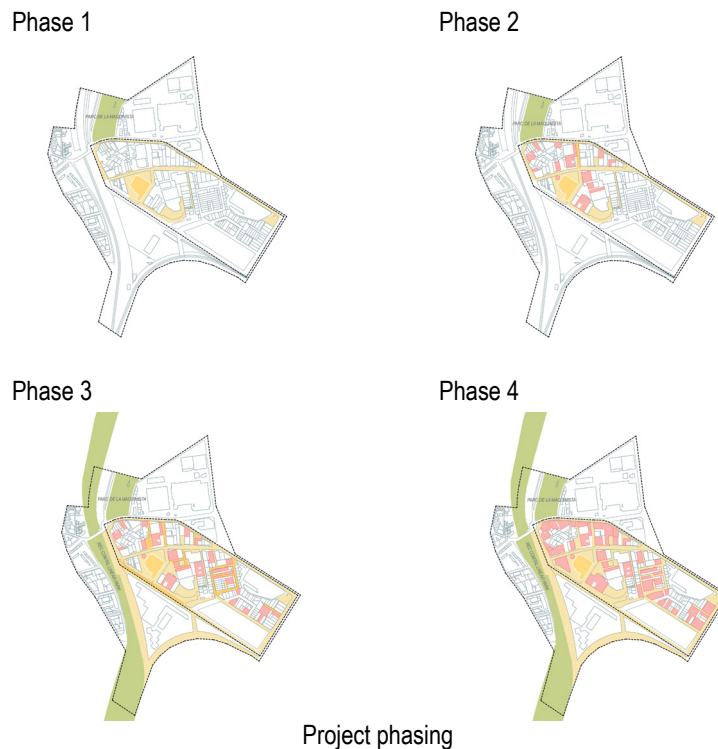
The inactive vaulted building between Torrent de l'Estadella and Carrer de Cordelles has a central role in this regenerated public network; in this first phase, putting in safety and cleaning up of the building will give a chance to install a temporary set of activities that can attract citizens. The greatness of the space is perfect to host markets, temporary cafés, venue to host events and artistic performances. "La Catedral de la Cultura" could be the name of this regenerated building.

2. Intervention on the industrial parcel

Once the community has become familiar with the area, its perception will change: citizens discover that this part of the city can be used also for leisure and not only to work; landowners start to see opportunities to develop their properties in a different way than before.

The proposal adopts a meticulous approach in order to keep the transformation sustainable and flexible through time. As we cannot know how many landowners are involved in the area, what we can do is to propose a model of intervention on the recurrent size of the industrial parcel. We observed that the most recurrent parcel is a rectangular surface of approximately 12x45 m, currently filled with an industrial warehouse. This elongated proportion has some similarities with a *medieval townhouse lot* because it maximizes the entrances from the street, while exploiting the surface of the plot along its depth. The assemblage of this kind of parcel and its variation has composed the urban form until today.

This sort of *industrial townhouse lot* is still full of potential and it is part of the history of the site. We thereby propose a prototype of mixed use parcel, which, in this second phase, can be inserted in the inactive area. A



productive space is located at the ground floor, whose height is aligned with the existing industrial warehouse; depending on the activity to be installed, this allows to exploit the full height of the space or to divide it with a mezzanine. 3 to 6 levels of residences with a plan of 12x19 m are located on top of it. The roof of the industrial ground floor is a garden for the residences.

This self-sufficient prototype can be combined with the adjacent parcel if the neighboring landowner decides to convert his property too. Following the same layering of program, the first level becomes a sort of elevated ground floor, a common garden for the residences which provide an unprecedented view on the area and towards the surrounding city.

The prototype allows a great number of combinations according to the situation to be faced; instead of entirely designing a big area with a great gesture, this way of proceeding prevents the project from being completely stopped by the resistance of a few landowners. The urban fabric, with its regular division in parcels, can be intended as a big chessboard. As in a chess game, the combinations of moves are almost infinite and the following move as to be carefully pondered taking into account the circumstances and possible future scenarios.

This method of intervention allows a great adaptability in relation to future changes that could occur in the surrounding area. This modular system of intervention on the parcels combined with the light intervention on the public space enables to rapidly respond to the changes in the neighborhood. The conversion of the parcels can expand or shrink according to needs.

In this second phase, the goal is to intervene on the inactive areas which face the existing residences and the future development of the ex-Mercedes Benz area, in the northern part along Carrer de Sant Adrià, and on the inactive parcels around the new public centrality represented by La Catedral de la Cultura. This seeks to create a synergy with the surrounding area.

The addition of floors to the existing plinth of industry breaks the horizontality of the area and it creates a visual connection with the surrounding city. The new residences along Carrer de Sant Adrià could six stories high in order to handle the urban scale of the street and to emphasise the access to the area.

3. *Intervention on the streets*

The complete transformation of the streets is achieved with the intervention on the road section and the materials aimed to create green boulevards of shared space between pedestrians, bikes, cars and trucks. For the

productive use of the area, a service zone is maintained with sufficient distance between the new rows of trees. The wide asphalt surfaces are transformed into local stone paving and connected with the new street level of the linear park. The use of the stone allows to convert the road into a more livable space for people while creating a better permeability of the surfaces and a more pleasant temperature of the areas. Water tanks for the collection of the water, with enough capacity to respond to the new reality of heavy rains, are located underneath the paved surfaces. The new green boulevards descend directly from the linear park, embracing the area and creating its extension into the site. The existing trees are maintained and the number is increased with local species in order to guarantee appropriate shading and to cool down the hard surfaces. The green areas of the neighborhood are intensified and green roofs are introduced on top of the new buildings. The roofs are equipped with water collectors featuring a reclining system to use for irrigation. Along the roofs we can find a variety of vegetable gardens, pollinator gardens and extensive green areas that blend together a diversity of plants that aims to guarantee seasonality of the vegetation and to host bees, butterflies and insects that in it can find sufficient nutrition and livable environments.

At the end of this phase, the program has been completely put in place. The interventions on the parcels expand also on the south of the area, mainly combining new productive spaces and facilities.

The proposal provides 25000 m² of residences, 25000 m² of new production space and 25000 m² of facilities. With the exception of "La Catedral de la Cultura", all the program is distributed in the inactive areas provided by the competition brief, which means 49000 m², approximately 17% of the total project area.

The intervention gives the possibility to recover the old productive purpose at the ground floor of the inactive areas and, at the same time, it intensify them by the addition of a variety of new functions. We could say that the productive spaces act as the plinth on top of which the process of intensification can take place.

4. Possible further intensification

As already mentioned, the flexibility of the method allows us to imagine a possible future scenario in which the intensification can continue without breaking the consolidated urban structure.

Open to everybody 24/7

The transformation in the life of the area is enormous. The intensification does not only pass through a more efficient way to inhabit the space, but it is even more an intensification of the uses of this space during the day and the week. Nowadays, the mono-functional character of the area causes a lack of activity during non-working hours, which also means a lack of surveillance and consequently a low feeling of public safety. Immediately from the first phase, the proposal aims at giving a use of the area in the evenings and during the weekends by introducing a set of cultural and leisure activities. With the subsequent phases, the transformation becomes radical from this point of view: thanks to the introduction of residences and facilities, the area is continuously alive, night and day, during the week and the weekend.

This is also the starting point to attract a wide variety of people differing in age, interests and ambitions. In addition to classic industrial functions, the intensification provides a diversified range of productive activities, which also means a stronger economic structure of the area: for instance, spaces for crafts and start up, workshops for the production of art and commercial spaces are located at the ground level of the residences.

Public space and facilities act as a binding force between residences and production spaces. La Catedral de la Cultura becomes a space of identity for the community; next to it an inter-religious chapel acts as an inclusive space.

The proposal provides a varied set of apartments sizes which can ensure a social mix. Each residence block can count on generous common spaces which can be open towards the shared garden at the first level, on top of the production plinth.