



## The Barcelona Superblocks programme starts to take shape

- » The winners selected by the jury in the two competitions for the design of the four green hubs and four squares in the Eixample district to be transformed during this political term of office, with the aim of moving towards a healthier, more local and more humane city have been announced
- » Participation has been very high, with a total of 86 entries assessed by the jury and analysed by the members of the Advisory Board
- » In the green hub competition, the four proposals chosen are those that best define what 21<sup>st</sup>-century streets should be like, and the teams will now work together to define a single public space model to be applied to Consell de Cent, Girona, Rocafort and Comte Borrell
- » The definitive street model will be based on a set of basic characteristics that have already been identified in the designs chosen: streets will be accessible and on a single-level; there will be no tarmac; pedestrians and renaturalisation will be given priority; and social uses will be encouraged
- » For each square, the design chosen is the one best suited to each location, and the final project will be drawn up by the design teams based on their own proposals
- » The intersections between Consell de Cent and Girona and Comte Borrell will become community and activity spaces, and the Rocafort and Enric Granados intersections will be transformed into green, landscaped areas that encourage people to relax and spend time there
- » The final project for each of the hubs and squares is expected to be completed in February 2022 so that work can commence in June of the same year. An investment of €37.8 million is to be made during this political term of office



## » Working towards an Eixample for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

The Barcelona Superblocks programme starts to take shape. Last November, the municipal government launched the main project for the transformation of public spaces in the city to make it healthier, more sustainable, and more people-oriented. Following previous experiences with the Poblenou, Sant Antoni and Horta superblocks, which are now well established and highly regarded both locally and internationally, the idea now is to make a quantum leap, consolidating this way of building the city and making it more friendly and accessible, striking a new balance between pedestrian and road traffic and increasing the number of green hubs in Barcelona.

In this context, Barcelona City Council is tackling the challenge of making the Superblock concept a reality in the Eixample district (Cerdà grid), rearranging mobility and creating new green hubs and new squares at street intersections. All with the aim of achieving greener public spaces where you can breathe more freely, and where there's more room for relaxing and enjoying a better quality of urban life.

With this new approach on the table, the municipal government held two competitions to define the new street model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and design four new green hubs and four new squares in the Eixample district that will significantly change how public space is used, as well as responding to the social and environmental challenges the city faces. The goal is to find an innovative answer to the need for a new type of public space that really does put people first, one that integrates natural processes, greenery, and biodiversity, and that optimises resource use by devising simple, rational solutions.

Since the competition was announced last November, there has been a great deal of interest and in terms of participation it has been a resounding success. A total of 86 entries have been assessed by the jury and analysed by the members of the Advisory Board as part of this process.

In the green hub competition, this analysis has led the jury to choose the four proposals that best define what the streets of the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be like. The chosen teams will now work together to define a specific single public space model to be applied to Consell de Cent, Girona, Rocafort and Comte Borrell. In the competition for the design of squares, the four teams that are to draw up the final project for the new spaces at the intersections of Carrer del Consell de Cent with Girona, Comte Borrell, Rocafort and Enric Granados have been chosen. The squares will be similar in size to those of Gràcia, with a surface area of around 2,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

The four green hubs and the four squares are a first step towards extending the Superblock model to the whole of the Eixample district. The final goal is to create 21 green hubs and 21 squares, providing 33.4 hectares of pedestrian areas and 6.6 hectares of urban green space. This will mean that one in every three streets will become a green hub, and that each resident will have one of these green hubs or squares no more than 200 metres away from their home.



## » The new green hub public space model

A total of 40 entries were submitted in the competitions for the new public space model and the future green hubs, which were very well received by the jury. From these proposals, those that can best help define the characteristics of the city's new green hubs have been selected. The Advisory Board has also helped in this process, holding three meetings to help make the selection.

The most highly rated entries were those that were best able to define a new street model, overcome the complexity of the technical requirements, and adapt to different needs and to changes over time.

The four winning entries were chosen by the jury based on these parameters, and the winners were selected in the following order:

1. Proposal: 'Caminar des del centre'  
Team: UTE b67 Palomeras Arquitectes, SLP + Ciertto Estudio, SCCLP
2. Proposal: 'De SÒL a SOL (invariants i variants)'  
Team: UTE ESTEYCO-CACERES ARQUITECTURA + ESTUDI MARTI FRANCH ARQUITECTURA DEL PAISATGE+ NABLBCN STUDIO
3. Proposal: 'Giraverd'  
Team: UTE GONZALEZ CAVIA Y CABRERA ARQUITECTURA URBANISMO Y PAISAJE, SL + FABRIC OFFICE, SCCLP
4. Proposal: 'Galeries de vida'  
Team: UTE GPO Ingeniería y Arquitectura, S.L.U. + AGENCE TER, SARL + Ana Coello de Llobet, S.L.P.

The first place winner will be responsible for drafting the *Green Hub Public Space Model Document* in collaboration with the other winners chosen by the jury. This will establish the foundations for the development and execution of future green hub projects.

This joint work will be managed and coordinated by the Barcelona Superblock Technical Office, which reports to the City Council's Chief Architect's Office, with the support of all the municipal technical services involved in public space, and the municipal company BIMSA. A participatory process is currently underway in which the most important local organisations and associations are also considering what this new street concept should be like, and their conclusions will need to be incorporated into the definition of this new public space model as well.

Once the *Green Hub Public Space Model Document* is ready, each team will use it as the basis for drawing up the project for the green hub that they have been assigned: Consell de Cent in the case of the team that won first place, Carrer Girona for the one that came in second place, Carrer Rocafort for the one in third, and Carrer Comte Borrell for the team in fourth place. In order to make the new green hubs consistent with each other, and ensure they provide urban continuity, future redevelopment projects will be bound by the content of the model document.

## » Basic premises for the new 21<sup>st</sup> century street model

A number of basic premises have been selected from the four winning green hub proposals to be taken into account when drafting the *Green Hub Public Space Model Document*.

The new green hubs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century must involve reclaiming the streets for the people: more family life and local commerce, and less noise and pollution. The aim is to achieve this by:



**Giving full priority to pedestrians:** Ensuring straight, uninterrupted routes. Private vehicles will be permitted for access only, and will need to respect a 10 km/h speed limit. (In the case of Consell de Cent, the large green hub that will be created in the Eixample district will provide a direct, linear link between Parc Joan Miró and Passeig de Sant Joan).



**Streets that ensure accessibility for everyone:** Single level streets running from building to building along the entire length of the section.



**No more tarmac:** Road surfaces will be made from recycled materials, helping us move towards carbon neutrality.



**An explosion of greenery:** Particularly in those places where it can have the greatest effect: chamfers and squares.



**A space that encourages community life:** leisure areas and children's play areas where families and local residents can meet.



**A street that encourages shopping locally:** Ensuring a welcoming space, with loading and unloading zones and waste management areas.



**A new sustainable street model:** using rainwater and installing solar energy systems to provide the power needed for street lighting.

## » **The green hub proposals**

The four entries chosen by the jury in the green hub competition are therefore the starting point that establishes the foundations on which the *Green Hub Public Space Model Document* will be based. These are basic, non-definitive proposals that will eventually be consolidated in the redevelopment projects for the four new hubs based on the conclusions in the document.

### » **Caminar des del centre**

With regard to this proposal, the jury highlighted the wish to reclaim the streets for local residents, the concept of walking out from the city centre, and the idea of a new pedestrian approach and experience. The jury also valued the commitment to a single, open, versatile space and the desire to recover something of the look and feel of the city streets in past times. The planting of a new row of trees making a reorganisation of space possible and the creation of a new leisure area, are also worth noting. This proposal has a particular focus on the value of ground floor premises in terms of the physical layout and day to day life of the street, with an emphasis on public and commercial activities. And lastly, the jury highlighted the sensitivity of the drawings and the overall design.



## » De SÒL a SOL (invariants i variants)

Here, the jury highlighted the commitment to creating a vision for the whole of the Consell de Cent hub, and the distinction between the different types of space present throughout: squares, intersections, interchange sections, quiet-garden sections and mosaic sections. The definition of a new street layout was also very highly valued, with criteria based on the concepts of continuity and change; the importance of the subsoil, permeability and the way that plant life can restructure space, and with an overarching vision of a green urban landscape pulling it all together.



## » Giraverd

Here, the jury valued the break in the longitudinal axis leading to a reversal of the vehicle-pedestrian hierarchy, particularly at intersections, as well as the variation in the density of the greenery in the wider parts of the chamfers.





Broadly speaking, three different approaches were taken with regard to the squares. Some teams emphasised the idea of a central area, structuring the space in a concentric way, either emptying or filling the central area; others saw the square as an extension of the hubs, and arranged the space in a more isotropic manner, and yet others retained the idea of an intersection and the square into two or four parts.

Analysing the needs of each place, it was concluded that two of the squares could become more community-centred, neutral and flexible spaces. These were the squares at the Consell de Cent - Comte Borrell intersection, as this is the centre of the neighbourhood and the place where many local activities (such as markets, concerts and public events) take place; and the intersection with Carrer Girona, as here there is a metro station, and it is a crossroads and a meeting point. The Rocafort and Enric Granados intersections, on the other hand, could be more like garden areas, encouraging people to enjoy some leisure time there, and with a more exuberant explosion of greenery.

Following these lines of thought, the jury chose the proposals that could best meet these needs, that could structure each space in the best possible way, and that give the squares a distinctive look, giving each its own particular character.

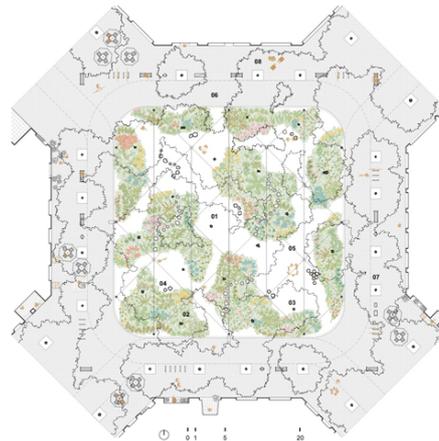
A winning team has therefore been chosen for each of the four squares. Each team will be responsible for drawing up the final project based on their design and way of structuring space. The teams that came in second and third places for each of the squares, have been awarded a cash prize.

### » Consell de Cent - Rocafort Intersection: 'El parlament de les espècies'

The proposal for the Carrer de Consell de Cent - Carrer de Rocafort intersection bears the title 'El parlament de les espècies' ['The parliament of Species'], by 'Estudi08014. Arquitectura, ciutat, territori, S.C.P.P'. The jury saw it as a strong proposal that would create a large, square, natural space covering 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> in the centre, with a concentric layout based on the uses to which the square may be put both now and in the future.

The surface of this permeable central space is gravel, and includes a pleasant leisure area, plus a green space with trees and flowerbeds. Around the central space is a tiled area, with pathways branching out from it.

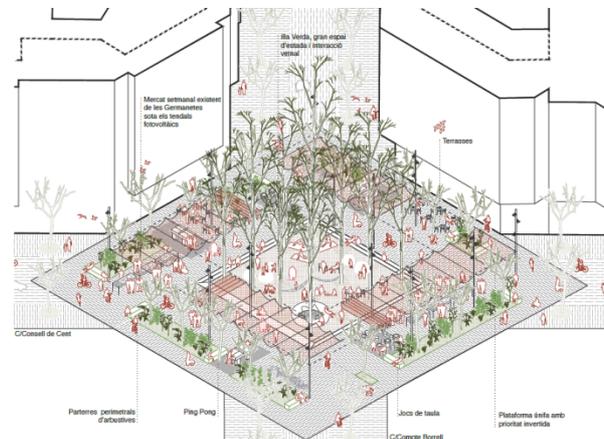
The renaturalisation strategy is well thought out, as it provides permeable ground surfaces with plants and shade that create a space aimed at lowering temperatures as well as reducing pollution.



### » Consell de Cent - Comte Borrell intersection: 'L'illa de les illes'

'L'illa de les illes' ['The Block of Blocks'], the design submitted by 'UTE CLARA SOLA-MORALES + ALBERT CASAS ALVAREZ + FREDERIC VILLAGRASA ALVAREZ', will become a reality at the Consell de Cent - Comte Borrell intersection. This proposal involves a square with a concentric layout with a permeable, naturalised square area in the middle, together with a leisure zone with 16 trees that create a pleasant setting. An area around this will be available for the local activities that already take place here.

Visually this is a clear, clean proposal, and the layout makes it very flexible in terms of accommodating the diversity of uses to which the space will be put.



## » Consell de Cent - Enric Granados intersection: 'Jardín ILLA'

A “naturalistic neighbourhood garden”. This is what the Consell de Cent - Enric Granados intersection will look like, according to ‘UTE GPO Ingeniería y Arquitectura, S.L.U. + LAND LAB, laboratorio de paisajes, S.L.’, creator of the winning proposal, ‘Jardín ILLA’ [‘BLOCK Garden’]. It will involve the creation of a large garden in this already fairly traffic-free area which is currently used for commercial purposes. Play and leisure areas and lot more greenery will give local neighbourhood life a boost.

The design takes advantage of the fact that one of the façades on the square is the seminary building which already has a garden, and the new plans echo this by coming up with an asymmetrical proposal that creates a pleasant space that is both larger and more natural. This will be part of a series of green spaces and areas of biodiversity running from the university gardens to Plaça de Letamendi, passing by the seminary and through this new square.



## » Consell de Cent - Girona intersection: 'SUPERESCOCELL'

The ‘UTE UNDER PROJECT LAB, S.C.P. + BOPBA AQUITECTURA, S.L.P. i la seva proposta ‘SUPERESCOCELL’ team and its ‘SUPERESCOCELL’ proposal will determine the structure of the the future square at the Consell de Cent - Girona intersection. Based on the idea that tree pits are the minimum natural unit of the Eixample, the project amplifies this element until tree pits become a metabolic ecosystem to be enhanced, extending it throughout the square wherever possible, taking into account the metro station below ground. This is why the permeable green part is primarily situated on the mountain side, which means that it gets lots of sunlight. It also allows play and leisure areas to be located in less densely green areas.

An abundance of trees and plants are used very effectively, but the square can still be crossed on foot. The use of ground floor premises is also well thought out.





## » Next steps

Following the announcement of the winning teams, the next step on the road to making these transformations a reality is to draw up the final projects. In the case of the green hubs, the first place winner will draft the *Green Hub Public Space Model Document* in collaboration with the other three teams, under the direction of the Barcelona Superblock Technical Office. Once the model is ready, each of the four teams will start drawing up the final project for the green hub they have been assigned:

- 1st classified: UTE b67 Palomeras Arquitectes, SLP + Ciertto Estudio, SCCLP
- Proposal: 'Caminar des del centre'
- Work: drafting of the public space model in collaboration with the other three teams, and drafting of the final project for the Carrer Consell de Cent hub.
  
- 2nd classified: UTE ESTEYCO-CACERES ARQUITECTURA + ESTUDI MARTI FRANCH ARQUITECTURA DEL PAISATGE+ NABLABCN STUDIO
- Proposal: 'De SÒL a SOL (invariants i variants)'
- Work: drafting of the final project for the Carrer Girona hub.
  
- 3rd classified: UTE GONZALEZ CAVIA Y CABRERA ARQUITECTURA URBANISMO Y PAISAJE, SL + FABRIC OFFICE, SCCLP
- Proposal: 'Giraverd'
- Work: drafting of the final project for the Carrer Rocafort hub.
  
- 4th classified: UTE GPO Ingeniería y Arquitectura, S.L.U. + AGENCE TER, SARL + Ana Coello de Llobet, S.L.P.
- Proposal: 'Galeries de vida'
- Work: drafting of the final project for the Carrer Comte Borrell hub.

Regarding the squares, the chosen winners for each of the four intersections are now starting to draw up their respective final projects:

- Team: Estudi08014. Arquitectura, ciutat, territori, S.C.P.P.
- Proposal: 'El parlament de les espècies':
- Work: drafting of the final project for the square at the Consell de Cent - Rocafort intersection



- Team: UTE CLARA SOLA-MORALES + ALBERT CASAS ALVAREZ + FREDERIC VILLAGRASA ALVAREZ
- Proposal: 'L'illa de les illes'
- Work: drafting of the final project for the square at the Consell de Cent - Comte Borrell intersection.
  
- Team: UTE GPO Ingeniería y Arquitectura, S.L.U. + LAND LAB, laboratorio de paisajes, S.L.
- Proposal: 'Jardín ILLA'
- Work: drafting of the final project for the square at the Consell de Cent - Enric Granados intersection.
  
- Team: UTE UNDER PROJECT LAB, S.C.P. + BOPBA AQUITECTURA, S.L.P.
- Proposal: 'SUPERESCOCELL'
- Work: drafting of the final project for the square at the Consell de Cent - Girona intersection.

The plan is for the eight final projects to be ready in February next year, for the work to commence in June 2022, and to be completed in the first quarter of 2023. The municipal government will invest €37.8 million in these initial transformation processes; €32.8 million for the green hubs, and €5 million for the squares. This will mark the start of the implementation of the green hub programme, which will set out a new paradigm for building a new concept of the city. The roll-out will continue in the future, and will be allocated more resources at a later date.

The participatory process linked to the project, which is divided into three-stages, will be taking place at the same time. The first stage involves meetings regarding the definition of the green hub public space model at both city and district level until May. From June to October, the drafting of the final projects will be monitored at neighbourhood level; and the conclusion of the final projects and the monitoring of the works will be carried out at district and neighbourhood levels between October and March 2023.