Prior to this intervention the site used to be a degraded fiscal property, that functioned as a bus yard, a police legal deposit, and a restaurant parking lot.

Underneath it runs the Maldonado stream culvert, covered by a concrete slab at a depth of only -20cm. Next to the site is a 5m high railroad embankment. The plot is strategically located at the end of Juan B. Justo avenue and works as a gateway to the Tres de Febrero park (also known as Bosques de Palermo, the Buenos Aires's biggest green space designed by Charles Thays in 1875). It is situated in the neighborhood of Palermo, an area that underwent a vertiginous residential and commercial expansion since the late 90's.

The design approach is influenced by the adjacent urban fragments: the grounds of the Sociedad Rural Argentina, the surrounding Avenues Santa Fe-Sarmiento; the opening of Darregueyra street expected for the near future, the implementation of historic preservation guidelines for the Tres de Febrero Park, and the proposal for the development of nearby railroad yards.

Specifically, the project seeks to minimize the impact of the fast traffic that runs along Bullrich avenue, improving pedestrian and cycle access to the park. At the same time it defines new landscape features, utilizing the earth made available by the tunneling works of a new subway line.

The project comprises the structuring of an existing 800 meter long embankment and the transformation of the sidewalk into a public promenade. This is achieved through a wider sidewalk of 12m on average, which is part of a series of longitudinal stripes ranging from high speed to quiet spaces. The first band of grass and aged tipas (tipuana tipu) buffer pedestrian and cyclist from automotive traffic. Cycle traffic is organized on its own lane. The sidewalk itself contains several bays that act as urban lounges. Next, a continuous concrete bench delimits the beginning of the slope, backed by a stripe of grass that works as a soft extension. Finally, plants for contemplation are arranged as undulating traces. Rhythmic use of retaining gabions defines longitudinal segments of varying slope, unifying the spacial criterion. This series is punctuated by an amphitheater and framed by triangular plazas at the corners.

Material choices for hard surfaces are constrained by concerns of durability, low cost, and consistency with other ongoing public works.

Hard materials, as well as the plant selection needed to be low-maintenance. The palette was kept to reinforced concrete, granitic slabs, and granite stone in large size –forming retaining gabions- and as loose finishing for pavements.

Likewise, the lack of a protective enclosure and of continuous surveillance dictated that urban furniture and fixtures be anti-vandalic. The stealing of these components –from inspection lids, to benches, to plants- is a common problem in urban spaces in many Latin American cities. To prevent this, fixtures must be designed according to precise specifications regarding their weight, fixing and anchoring systems, and mechanical parts.

Sidewalks are organized through a 6 meter grid made of granitic white slab, infilled with textured combed nonslip concrete modules. Extended bays and corner squares are finished with white and black slabs respectively. These materials are similar to another used in public spaces under construction, in the believe that it creates a collective identification of themselves along the city.

The continuous reinforced concrete bench is 1.10 m wide, in order to allow people to use it in non-conventional ways. Further up on the slope, undulating paths separate plant species and provide access for gardening, but are also open to use by the public. They are paved with 2 meter-long precast concrete slabs (smaller and lighter pieces were avoided to deter robbery). As they reach the gabions they connect with sloping paths covered with loose granitic stones. The gabions themselves allow the creation of varying slopes while contributing to retaining the soil, which is reinforced with geosynthetic fabric in the perimeter to avoid landslides originated by strong rains typical of the region.

Urban furniture is featured on the wider bays of the sidewalk and at corner plazas. It includes seats, water fountains, bicycle racks, wastepaper baskets. As a counterpoint to the linear concrete bench, groups of concrete seats are arranged informally. These seats are a reinterpretation of the dynamic BKF chair (also known as Butterfly chair), the classic Argentinean design of the 1930' by Antonio Bonet, Juan Kurchan, and Jorge Ferrari-Hardoy. A few low concrete tables complete these spaces as authentic urban lounges. Lighting design accompanies the general features of the project and creates a new scenography emphasizing night-time usage.

Landscape gardening criteria is set up by a selection of various species of high-resistant pasture (grass). The higher the slope, the higher the grass, increasing the final volumetric result. Based on considering the original tipas line (*tipuana tipu*, a species from the north of Argentina, yellow flowering) as a vertical wall that frames the view, the horizontal stripes contain a single species each, differing in size, shade and flowering periods –adding, in the middle band, a changing color on the big green plane slope in the same chromatic range. The final configuration of the stripe sequence from bottom to top: *bermuda grass, bulbine frutescens, euryops pectinatus*. The upper band existing native species is reinforced with new samples: *paspalum exaltatum + cortadera selloana* and *ipomea + thumbergia* climbing the railway fence. Each sector between gabions has an automated system of drip irrigation. Near the corner plazas, several palms are planted to provide shade and identity to the street-crossing.

The intervention proposes an ambivalent effect on the landscape, trascending the merely ornamental by accompanying the motorist in speed, while conforting the pedestrian with spaces for contemplation and urban relax.

Name of the project, city, country Parque Lineal Bullrich (Bullrich Lineal Park), Buenos Aires, Argentina Client Buenos Aires City Government Planning Bureau Director of City Government Arq. Ignacio Lopatin Architecture and landscape Arq. Natalia Penacini Landscape consulting Arq. Estela Viarenghi Construction management Arq. Raul Farji Site supervision Arq. Natalia Penacini Arq. Estela Viarenghi Engineering consulting Ing. Natalia Penacini Arq. Estela Viarenghi Urgation consulting Ing. Mattin Groppa Quantity surveying and quote Arq. Enrique Roberto Hydraulics consulting Ing. Norberto Cattaneo Collaborators Arq. Guillermo Radavero Arq. Miguel Messina Area (size of the project) Ha / 50m x 800m / Completion 2007 / Costs \$2.400.000 (peso argentino) equivalent to USD\$800.000 at that moment aprox.

Natalia Penacini received her architectural degree from the Universidad de Buenos Aires, where she also completed post-graduate studies in Urban Design in 2002. Since 1998, she has taught at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Universidad de Palermo, and Universidad de Flores. Also in Buenos Aires, she has been a collaborator for several architecture offices and a consulting architect at the Planning Bureau of the City Government, where she was lead designer for the Bullrich Linear Park. Natalia currently works independently on architectural and urban projects in Argentina and abroad, and as consulting advisor in urban design projects for the Inter-American Development Bank (BID).

































































