

Lighting was an essential element in the revitalization of Nauener Platz, in Berlin, with the active participation of the local community in its project

IMPROVING A PUBLIC SPACE

Nauener Platz, a square located in the Wedding suburb of north-west Berlin, is striking for its visual harmony: the contemporary design of its urban furnishings, together with the distinctive lighting, make it into a pleasant and inviting space.

But it has not always been so: until a short while ago, its dilapidated physical state, together with the constant presence of drug users, had caused Nauener Platz to be shunned by the local community, and principally by small children and the aged.

An initiative by the Nauener Neu movement, set up by local inhabitants, made possible the renaissance of this square, whose location is of immense importance to the region and which covers a considerable area. "The renewal of Nauener Platz became necessary due to the neglected state of the physical space, to changes in the demographic structure of the region and to increasing demands on the use of this space," explains lighting designer Marta Felizardo, from Studio Dinnebie, the firm in charge of the lighting project for the new square.

In the autumn of 2009, the renewal project was initiated, having as its goal the transformation of the square into a gathering place for all of the area's inhabitants. Thus the fresh concept of this space takes into consideration the expectations of all the various different generations of users, quite as much in respect of the installation of urban furnishings as of the lighting.

The lighting in the new Nauener Platz

The main aims of the project developed by Dinnebie Studio are to enhance and improve the spaces created by the new landscaping proposals. The project seeks the improvement of these spaces through the conscious and deliberate use of lighting, so as to make them safer and more attractive, as well as minimising energy costs.

During the project's conception phase, "the active participation of the local population was fundamental in determining where and how the lighting should be used, always looking to ensure the night-time safety of these spaces, yet without neglecting to define certain key points where a more poetic approach to the lighting applications could and should be contemplated," explains lighting designer Jan Dinnebie. In this way, the notions of a "light-handrail" and a "light-tree" emerged, as too the multi-coloured lighting of the passageway through the building at the square's centre.

One of the conditioning factors in this project was the application of new technology and/or technical innovations so as to reduce operational costs



and maintenance, quite apart from optimising durability and achieving a high level of protection against vandalism.

Within the new landscaping project, dividing the square into several different zones according to its use and the specific characteristics of its various users, there are, basically, five different lighting zones.

1. Surroundings of the Haus der Jugend

The Haus der Jugend (Youth Centre) occupies a building, located at the centre of Nauener Platz, dividing it into two separate parts, connected by a public passageway through it at ground level. This building houses a number of rooms devoted to sports, cultural and educational activities, for children and young people, also being provided with a café which is open to the general public. Installed all along the façades, LED wall lights (12 x 2.2W) provide the lighting of the access to the building and its immediate surroundings.

2. Haus der Jugend passageway

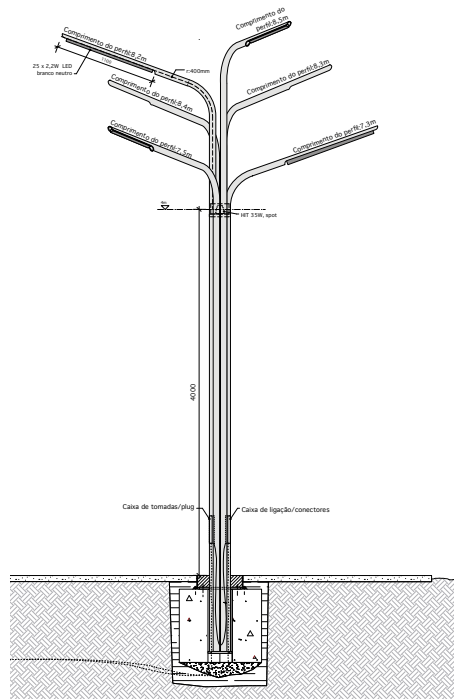
The bright levels of lighting in the passageway promote a greater feeling of safety here, where formerly it was dingy and lifeless. Polycarbonate tubular lights with fluorescent lamps (T-5, 35W) provide good protection against eventual acts of vandalism. The lights are arranged in sets of three lights each. The first set is made up of two red tubes and one white, while the second is fitted with two green tubes and one white. The third set, for its part, is composed of two blue tubes and one white. "The RGB lamps are fitted with filters of the same colour to reinforce it, since the coloured lamps used without filters produce a tone that is overly 'pastel'," explains Dinnebier.

In the first hours of the night, the RGB lamps of the complex are switched on, lighting up the whole area with a white light that falls off into coloured shadows. In the small hours, the RGB system cuts out and white lights are turned on, so as to keep the space lit with minimal energy consumption.

3. Central area and children's playground

The central space serves as a stage for various kinds of events and activities, both in the daytime and at night. Here too, the old wall lights have been replaced with more modern fixtures using LED technology.

The green "light-tree", with its six illuminated "branches" (20 LEDs of 2.7W), is located at the boundary of the playground area, so as to provide



Designed especially for Nauener Platz, the "light-tree" harbors 20 LEDs on its "branches"; located between the central area of the square and the adventure playground, it illuminates both spaces. The small beams of light that emanate from its base resemble tree roots



illumination for the spaces on either side. This light, which has become an important land-mark of Nauener Platz, also acts as a high-voltage power supply for concerts and other events.

4. Reinickendorfer Strasse pavement

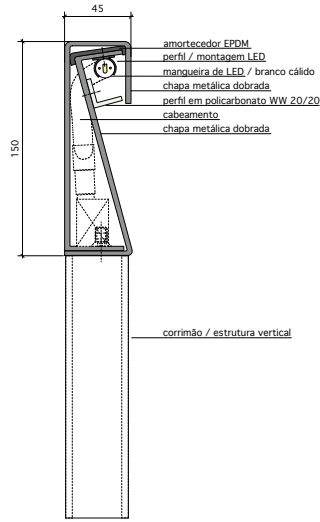
In terms of landscaping, the widened pedestrian pavement along Reinickendorfer Strasse, located at the northern edge of the site, has as its goal the visual and physical connection of the square-street interface, where a resting area for the young and aged was proposed. In this connecting space a solar light was suggested, as this provides extremely economical lighting and can be installed without the need for connection to an external power supply. The light demonstrates what can now be achieved in terms of lighting using this technology, serving moreover as the object of study as to its full-time operation.

5. Northern boundary of the square

The Nauener Platz site has its northern limit bounded by the "light-handrail", which illuminates the pavement at the same time as it creates a kind of "control line", outlining the silhouette of anyone moving around in its vicinity. The decision to integrate the light (LED cord of 0.1W/m) into the railing was the result of tests with various different lighting effects, carried out in conjunction with the local inhabitants, seeking to determine a type of lighting that was both pleasing and efficient and that would also improve the safety of this locale.

In October of 2009, just over a year after beginning the work, Nauener Platz was handed back to the people of Wedding, who now make intensive use of this space they helped to reconquer. The designers' satisfaction is also apparent, as Marta Felizardo makes clear: "I think this project is of special interest, since we rarely get to put into practice lighting design in projects of a social nature. A lot is happening in Berlin today, but almost all in the central areas. When we get the chance to do something like this in a more suburban area and reach a different stratum of the population, it's really wonderful." (By the editors) 

The "light-handrail", also designed specifically for the project, is intended both for safety purposes and for the visual comfort of users. In addition, it is an element of considerable visual impact, contributing toward the identity of the square



Nauener Platz / Corrimão LED studio dinnebieber



Above, colored lights illuminate the passageway beneath the Haus der Jugend building, promoting a greater sensation of safety. On the left, the plan of Nauener Platz indicates the position of the lighting equipment



NAUENER PLATZ

Berlin, Germany

Lighting Project:

Arch. Jan Dinnebieber, Arch. Jan Blieske / Studio Dinnebieber

Landscaping Project:

Arch. Barbara Willecke / planung.freiraum

Project Coordinators: Mrs. Regina Rossmannith / Berlin-Mitte District; Harald Hartwig / List GmbH

Suppliers: BWF (fluorescent lamp filters); EPS Soltec Solartechnik (Streetsun solar light); Erco (Powercast wall lights); Hatec (light-tree LED modules); IKU (light-handrail LED cords); Metalbau / Stefan Fittkau (light-handrail, light-tree and integrated spotlight for light-tree); Osram (T-8 fluorescent lamps); Philips (lamps for light-tree); Zumtobel (Tubilux ceiling lights)

Photos: Andreas Süß and Marta Felizardo

