

Pirelli Industrial Pole

Settimo Torinese, Italy
2007-2012

In the early 2000s, Pirelli entrusted the Renzo Piano Building Workshop with the project to reconfigure its production site at Settimo Torinese. Here a new factory for making car tires has been built alongside its historic plant turning out truck tires. Sandwiched between the two buildings and connecting them is the “spine”, a central block containing the offices, research and development laboratories and communal areas for the firm’s employees.

The new factory, featuring a roof that filters natural light, stands beside the existing one. They are linked by two transversal paths buried beneath artificial hills. In this way the two facilities, despite having independent production lines, share the output from the rubber-compound production plant and the warehouse for finished products located respectively in the old building and the new.

The project placed people, with spaces of social focus where they can gather and meet, at the center of the production site. In the strip of land between the two factories, the “spine” has been built. Some 400 meters long, this is a rectilinear complex consisting of twelve buildings in structural metalwork raised from the ground – like the beads of a necklace strung on a long glazed walkway raised above grade and running through them – while other covered walkways connect it with the two factories.

Occupying a central position on the “spine” is the canteen, while to the east are set the employees’ changing rooms, with a total capacity of 1200 lockers. In the opposite direction there are the volumes of the offices and the factory management, and places for gatherings and entertainment like the library and the union hall preceded by the reception. The latter welcomes visitors into a double-height glass volume with the entrances to the two factories set in its sides. The first and last links on the “spine” host special functions: on the one hand a multipurpose space – the Pirelli room – which can be configured in different ways, and on the other a soccer field for employees. The roof is a complex system that controls solar radiation, houses the energy systems – such as solar thermal and monocrystalline silicon photovoltaic panels – and has water-permeable brise soleils at the sides in the areas above the tree-lined spaces.

The Renzo Piano Building Workshop, with the Franco Giorgetta practice, also designed the landscaping. This includes a new strip of forest towards the southern edge of the site and reforestation areas on the east and west sides of the complex, with the planting of various species of poplars. The central axis takes the form of a long tree-lined avenue – a sort of garden between the industrial facilities – adorned with some 450 cherry trees and extensive green areas beside the employee parking lots.

L. Ciccarelli