

SMALL LANDSCAPE DESIGNS, A PREMISE FOR URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract. Pedestrian public areas are the structural elements of any built framework, social cohesion areas, areas of coexistence and urban outbreaks designed programmatic to attract all types of audience, to bring together all the citizens of the city and to boost the city's urban area; in short, showcase of the city. The quality of the urban space is determined primarily by the quality of the public spaces corresponding to the city, the spaces that the city offers for the common use of the inhabitants. This paper refers mainly to the pedestrian traffic areas and those situated in their immediate vicinity with direct connection with the latter, without a precise destination, with a predominant artificial structure and constituent elements (fronts, fencing, flooring, construction, etc.) without volumetric, architectural and special plastics qualities and even completely deconstructed.

Key words: urban landscape, urban public space, small gardens, abandoned places, deconstructed spaces

1. Context

The city is not only the anthropic landscape (Haff, 2003), but also the heritage, the tradition, the culture (Molotch *et al.*, 2000), the quotidian (Mofat and Morgan, 2012), the sounds (Prato, 1988), the light and the darkness (Smart, 2000), the vegetal (Modi and Dudani, 2013; Pauleit *et al.*, 2010; Singh *et al.*, 2014), the air (Molina *et al.*, 2007; Pudjowati *et al.*, 2013), the human element, the water (van der Steen and Howe, 2009), the sky (Yamashita *et al.*, 1986), all of them assembling into

spaces and landscapes in a continuous motion and in a continuous development (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny, 2004), in fact, in landscapes that we perceive consciously or unconsciously (Özgüner and Kendle, 2006; Pop, 2013). Wide phenomenon with complex landscape manifestations, difficult to know and influence in the gearing mechanisms and urban forces, the city can be understood as a felting of zones and subzones (Chang and Huang, 2008), with its own strategic consciousness of urbanity definition in

relation to its inhabitants, but also with the external forces considered as structural elements (Grigorovschi and Răchieru, 2011).

Pedestrian public areas are the structural elements of any built framework, social cohesion areas, areas of coexistence and urban outbreaks designed programmatic to attract all types of audience, to bring together all the citizens of the city and to boost the city's urban area (Hillier *et al.*, 1993); in short, showcase of the city (Trișcu, 1985).

The quality of the urban space is determined primarily by the quality of the public spaces corresponding to the city, the spaces that the city offers for the common use of the inhabitants (Ionescu, 2013). Therefore, for a public space important are the number of users and the closeness of the space to the public, in terms of using that space, but also of its recognition as a landmark for a place, a neighborhood or a city.

As in the other cities in Romania, in the urban texture of Iași is found a multitude of abandoned, undeveloped, unmaintained, deconstructed public spaces which in addition to a poor quality of the urban image and lack of urban public, can become unsafe for the public.

2. Materials and Methods

This paper refers mainly to the pedestrian traffic areas and those situated in their immediate vicinity with direct connection with the latter, without a precise destination, with a predominant artificial structure and constituent elements (fronts, fencing, flooring, construction, etc.) without volumetric, architectural and special

plastics qualities and even completely deconstructed.

Basically, several small public unused and undeveloped spaces were studied. This process aimed at the identifying of such locations in the city of Iași and the proposal of small landscape designs „minigardens” to provide more quality to the urban environment, to promote social contact, to generate a high quality urban image to unused and abandoned spaces, not taken into account and unkempt.

3. Results and Discussion

Small landscape designs - „minigardens” - obtained and presented in this study have reduced dimensions and use vegetal elements for the landscaping, the presence of artificial elements (bank, small fountains, artwork, minimal exposure system, display, pavement etc.) being minimal. It is also worth mentioning the versatility of these gardens, landscaping solutions proposed being available for multiplication and adaptation so as to allow their use at the scale of the whole city.

It was emphasized the quality of spatial planning, so as to promote human contacts, socialization, recreation etc. It was desired that these arrangements to become a living public space, multifunctional, attractive, accessible to all.

Planning proposals for small landscape designs had to meet the following urban goals:

- the use of local, natural, high quality, durable materials;
- the use of local vegetal species adapted to the urban environment, without

- trends of expansion and invasion of the space;
- the development of floors allowing the leakage and the infiltration of storm water into the ground;
- the achieving an efficient energy lighting system and adapted to ensure the safety of the space;
- the making a landscape design with low costs;
- the compliance planning in respect with the spirit of the place and in accordance with the specific area and the city;
- the making of a space that allows the regaining of the urban space by the vegetal element in relation to the artificial urban.

4. Conclusions

The city, though it is a coherent whole, appears as a complicated agglomeration in a continuous transformation.

The landscape designs in the city, in order to fulfill the essential purpose of raising the quality of the life of the human settlement residents must meet the following conditions:

- a) to be fair located throughout the city;
- b) to be qualitative;
- c) to be accessible to all residents and city visitors.

If these conditions are satisfied, urban landscaping will have a social, economic and ecological impact contributing to increase the urban comfort.

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