

The Mezourlo suburban park project : landscape design in Greece

Autor(en): **Ananiadou-Tzimopoulou, M. / Naka, A.**

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International Architectural Competition for the New Acropolis Museum in Athens

The results of the competition have fully justified IFLA's efforts for the preservation of the historic hill of Philopappos, this green space that constitutes an important and integral part of the Acropolis archaeological area in Athens. In 1989, IFLA expressed deep concern about this International Architectural Competition, because the competition regulations indicated three possible sites for the museum building, two of them on the slopes of the Philopappos hill. A resolution of the IFLA Central Region Symposium that was held in Moscow-Leningrad in 1989, was categorically opposed to the eventuality of a museum built on any of these two sites and made a strong appeal for the preservation of the Philopappos hill. This resolution and a letter by IFLA, signed by the then president, Prof. Michály Mőcsenyi, the honorary presidents, Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe and Zvi Miller, and the chairman of the Historic Landscapes Committee, Hans Dorn, were sent to the Greek authorities, to the members of the competition jury and to all international and Greek organisations involved in the preservation of historic monuments and sites. Subsequently, direct contacts were made with the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Service of Greece, as well as with members of the competition jury and many of the architects contestants, while IFLA's appeal was being widely published in the press.

The campaign launched by IFLA has apparently been effective. The project that won 1st prize and a great number of the other 395 entries concerned the third alternative site, leaving the Philopappos hill unspoiled. In fact, at the official presentation of the competition projects, the 1st prize winners, the well known Italian architects Prof. Manfredi Nicoletti and Lucio Passarelli, referred to IFLA's recommendations in order to explain why they had avoided the Philopappos sites.

Communications with IFLA delegates and colleagues

During the IFLA year considerable time, as usual, has been devoted to communications and correspondence with IFLA delegates and members and with other persons or organisations interested in landscape matters.

Once again, however, the lack of any secretarial support for the region was strongly felt. This is indeed a real problem for all three IFLA regions and some solution should be sought within the framework of the proposed reorganisation of IFLA's administrative structure.

Der BSLA gratuliert

Walter Frischknecht 65jährig

Am 10. Januar 1992 feierte Walter Frischknecht, Landschaftsarchitekt BSLA, Zürich, zuletzt als Gartendenkmalpfleger am Gartenbauamt der Stadt Zürich tätig, seinen 65. Geburtstag.

In «anthos» 3/1990 konnten wir auf den Rücktritt des Jubilars nach 30jähriger Tätigkeit beim Gartenbauamt der Stadt Zürich ausführlich hinweisen. Als leidenschaftliche Gärtner- und Gestalterpersönlichkeit, die sich auch während vieler Jahre in der Redaktionskommission für «anthos» einsetzte, ist Walter Frischknecht seit seinem Rücktritt von der offiziellen Berufstätigkeit gewiss nicht einer trägen Ruhestandslebensweise verfallen, und er wird auch weiterhin aktiv in der Welt der Gärten sich umsehen und eigene Ideen zu verwirklichen bestrebt sein. Dazu wünschen wir ihm – nebst guter Gesundheit – eine beglückende Entfaltung seiner ausgereiften Fähigkeiten! HM

The Mezourlo suburban park project: Landscape design in Greece

Dr. M. Ananiadou-Tzimopoulou and A. Naka

Apart from its special interest for the city of Larissa and the surrounding area of Central Greece, the Mezourlo suburban park project offers an exceptional opportunity for landscape design, since it may be regarded as a cultural, creative, and ecological intervention upon the site.

The presentation of this project discusses recent trends in urban and landscape design through drawings and proposals. The plans illustrating the paper express and exploit contemporary theoretical aspects of landscape architecture, such as the "identity", the "meaning", and the "pleasure" of the landscape, "creative" landscapes, and the "spirit" of the site.

Introduction

This paper concerns the development of the Mezourlo site, a suburban area of 79 ha in Larissa, a city of some 140 000 inhabitants in Central Greece, on the national highway approximately midway between Athens and Thessaloniki.

The project presented here won the third prize in the Panhellenic architectural competition.

Theoretical approach and intentions

In this project we have attempted a synthetic approach to the site:

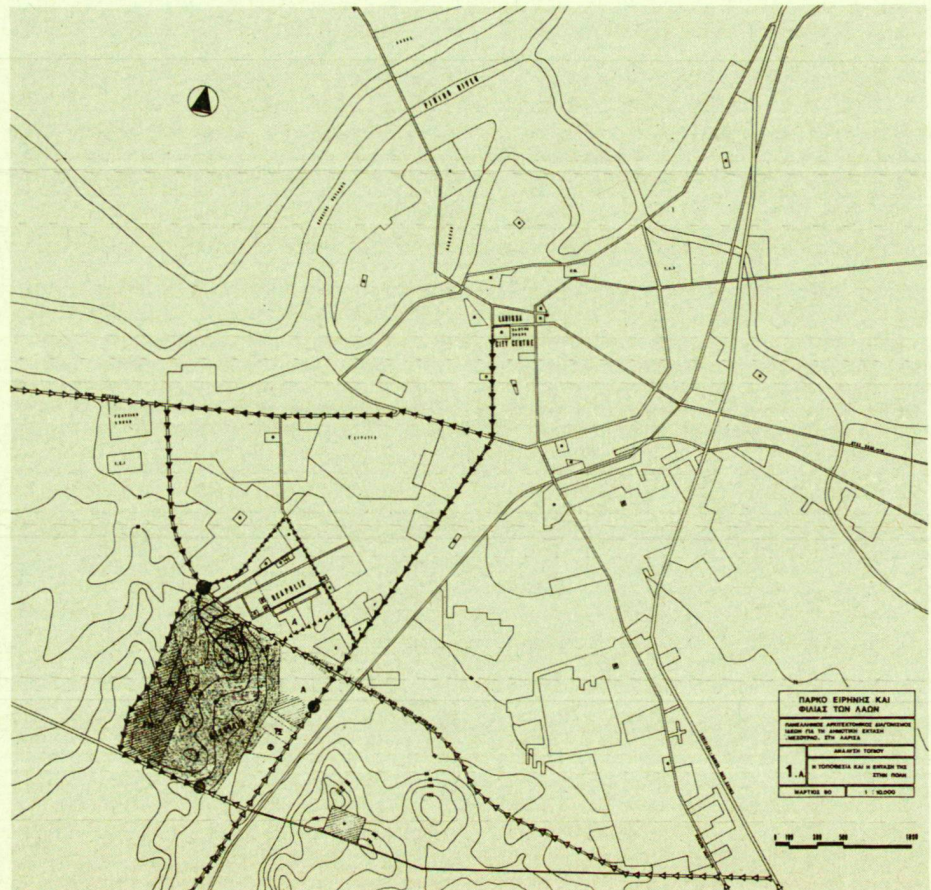
1. in the context of the wider region and with particular reference to the city;
2. within the confines of the site itself in relationship to its immediate surroundings.

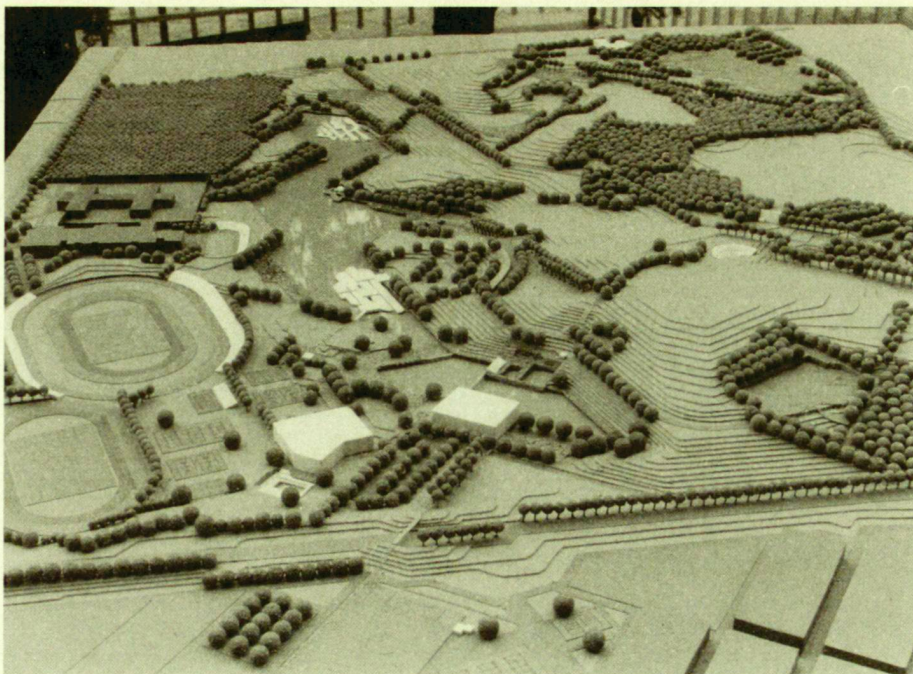
The approach has a socio-ecological and perceptual orientation, involving a reading of the space and a landscape and site analysis within the context of the synthesis (Ananiadou-Tzimopoulou, 1988). Its objective is to determine the site's features and its potential and capacity for development, and to make it stand out and be

used by the people of the city and the region in general and by visitors. The intention is that the proposed spatial organising principles should arise from a deliberate correlation of existing and new desirable characteristics, with a historical, sociological, ecological, and perceptual orientation and a clear emphasis on creative intervention in the site.

The general intentions regarding the development of the Mezourlo site into a contemporary park are outlined below. Some of them reflect current discussion and objectives in modern urban and landscape design, while others may give food for thought concerning either "the landscape of urban peripheries where town and nature enter into a new kind of relationship" (Koolhaas, 1989), or the theory of landscape architecture in general (Meeus and Vroom, 1986), with special reference to parks in particular (Puttledge, 1971). For Mezourlo our plans propose:

1. to emphasise what the park's name means and thus give the space a symbolical dimension;
2. to seek and bring out the site's "identity" (Ananiadou-Tzimopoulou, 1990);
3. to create a space which the inhabitants of the city can "experience" fully on a day-to-day basis, in the short term as a park on the outskirts of the city, and in the long term as a new suburban centre, as Larissa expands towards Neapoli and embraces the park's northern section. It should be a place for relaxation, walking, recreation, and play, a place for communal activities, of both a cultural and a social nature; a space full of memories, meaning, and activity (Ananiadou-Tzimopoulou and Fatouros, 1990); a structure for information and communication, bringing together widely differing activities, and offering a wide variety of information, where the public is free to choose as it likes (Barre, 1989);
4. to create a park which transcends the limits of a purely local feature, able to attract and entertain inhabitants of the wider region who might come on a day trip, and complete strangers who are merely visiting the area (Provost, 1986; Vexhland, 1981);





5. to create a natural space with better ecological conditions than the urban environment, directly correlated with the natural and the urban landscape, in contrast to the present isolated, "faceless", and inhospitable site;
6. to emphasise the manipulation of the space, which, together with certain correct decisions will enable the site to express its full potential (Corajoud, 1989);
7. to create a well-designed space, upgraded both ecologically and perceptually, with human intervention and the design well in evidence;
8. to create a new "cultural" and "creative" landscape, a landscape for "pleasure" and "life" (International Federation of Landscape Architects, 1988);
9. to bring out the "personality" and strong character of the new landscape, its own "spirit" (International Federation of Landscape Architects, 1989), uniqueness, and special significance for the city.

The site: concept and proposed image

The site, with an area of some 790 000 sq.m., has no strong natural character of its own. In view of its present limitations (it is isolated, has no particular internal interest, is surrounded by

specific structures, such as the district hospital, prison, technical college, sports centre, and medical school; some already existing and others under construction or designed and planned fragmentarily, and with no connection with the site), the site at present seems restricted, introverted, and unwelcoming.

On the other hand, certain of its natural features, such as the relief, the existing vegetation (a planted pine wood on the hill to the north), orientations, slopes, aspects, small elevations, perspectives, and views towards the city, seem to be the site's "hidden" dimension, waiting to be discovered, brought out, and exploited (Fig. 2).

As far as the site's historical memory is concerned, the ruins at the top of the hill inspire a new symbolism and point up the significance of the "Park of Peace and Friendship between Peoples".

Stages of construction

It is proposed that the work be carried out in three stages with a view to rational planning, comparatively economical construction, and, as far as possible, completion of individual sections so that they can begin to function on their

own as soon as possible and be enjoyed unencumbered by work going on in the rest of the site. Priority is given to the hill with the existing pine wood – the area for cultural events – the entrance to the park, and the space between the park and the city; as also to the excavation of the lake, the landscaping, and the mass plantings throughout the site. Next come the work on the lake, the sports complex and its car park with the east entrance. The final stage includes the amphitheatre, the zoo, the exhibition of aquatic plants, the indoor and outdoor swimming pools, small car parks, alternative pedestrian access from the city, south entrance and car park, and finishing off and linking the road through the park.

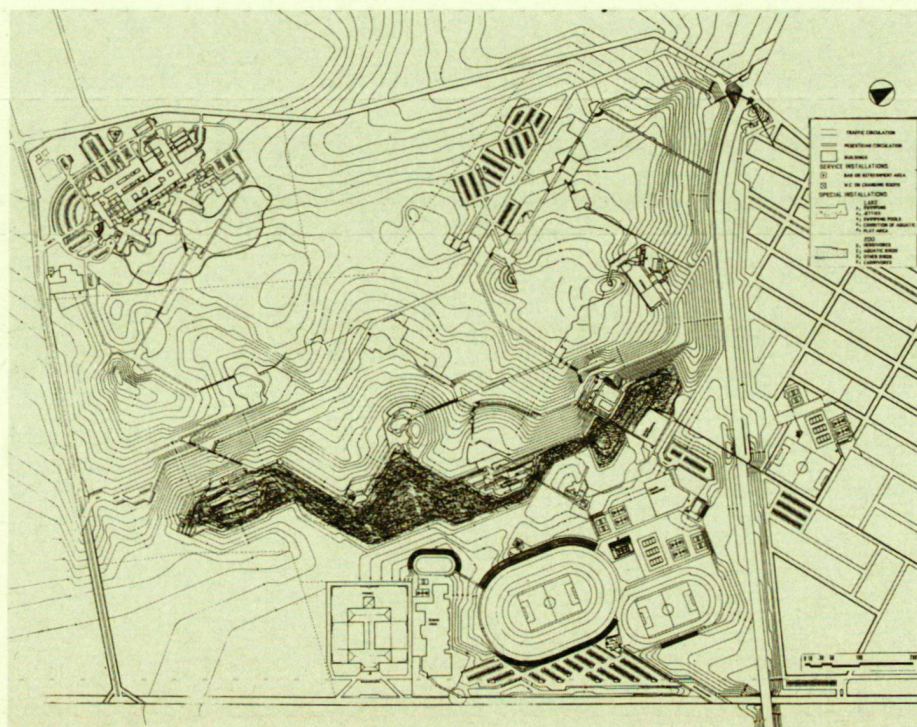
Concluding remarks

The proposed solution simultaneously creates a natural reserve, so that the cost of maintenance will be extremely low. Large areas of the park will need no physical attention at all, and the same applies to the majority of the plants. On the other hand, considerable efforts will have to be expended to keep the site clean, owing to the anticipated large numbers of visitors.

An important factor is that, whereas the park will not only pay for itself but also bring in considerable extra revenue for the Municipality, we have deliberately planned that there shall be neither an entrance fee nor any obligation to make use of the facilities while on the site, nor yet any commercialisation of the park itself. The basic idea and the intentions behind it do not involve turning the project into a Disneyland.

The primary aim is to make a contemporary suburban park out of the Mezourlo site; and this has a twofold significance for us and the landscape design we propose: to make the most of the site's physical, historical, and perceptual dimension; and to create a new, symbolic space, upgraded both qualitatively and ecologically, fulfilling new intentions and people's desire and demand to experience and enjoy it.

We should like this project to be understood as a continuing exchange between recent theoretical trends in landscape architecture and urban planning and design and their practical interpretation in landscape design. It is also an endeavour to contribute to current concepts and research concerning large parks, their role in a city's life, and the transformation of their landscape.



PRODUKTE + DIENSTLEISTUNGEN

Pinus uncinata – ein Relikt aus der letzten Eiszeit

Kaum eine Pflanze des heutigen Baumschulsortiments vereinigt so viele positive Eigenschaften auf sich wie die «Hakenkiefer». Sie konnte die bewaldete Nacheiszeit nur überleben auf ausgewachsenen Hochmooren mit einem pH-Wert von 4 bis 5. Sie verträgt jedoch problemlos einen pH-Wert von 8.

Wo andere Pinusarten mit grossem Aufwand nach 20 bis 30 Jahren aus dem Hausgarten entfernt werden müssen, erreicht die Hakenkiefer erst 3 bis 4 m Höhe.

Schneelasten, die einen Pinus silvestris zerstören, können der Hakenkiefer nichts anhaben. Krankheiten wie die gefürchtete Föhrenschütte sind ihr unbekannt. Wenn Pinus-montana-Typen im Winter gelb werden – die Hakenkiefer bleibt dunkelgrün. Sie fühlt sich wohl bis zu einer Höhe von 1800 m über Meer. Der Wurzelballen ist flach. Auf Dachgärten und in Trögen verträgt sie eine Erdschicht ab 15 cm Stärke. Temperaturen von –45°C sind für die Haken-