

1st honorable mention in the Architectural Competition for the Landscaping of the Surrounding Space of the Monumental Area of Eptapyrgio, Thessaloniki - Greece

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The project constitutes the **1st honorable mention** at an architectural competition organized by the Ministry of the Environment (Greece). The main objective was the emergence of the special character of the Eptapyrgio monumental ensemble, the reinforcement of the area's relationship with the urban fabric as well as facilitating the needs of visitors and residents.

The site of Eptapyrgio has a special identity and atmosphere, abundant natural beauty and astonishing views. The site itself forms the inspiration for the project, its **genius loci** is wished to be maintained as well as the existing vegetal wilderness. Monument, **landscape and memory** are strongly attached to this place. The concept derives from the **defensive character of the walls** proposing a new soft vegetated mantle of protection and emergence. It is seen as a new layer of filtering from the urban tissue to the interior enclosed historical landscape that is the protagonist.

Main compositional tools of the project are:

- (i) **movements, flows and rest areas** in relationship with the existing topography, the castle walls, the views and the urban fabric
- (ii) **plantation** as a structural element - a smooth vegetated tissue-filter that reveals and protects gradually the monument and its surroundings.
- (iii) **the various spatial identities within the site** that are diagnosed and emphasized (the civic promenade, the entrance plaza, the network of paths that by crossing explain the site, the meadows, the amphitheatres that are organically interwoven in the landscape, the linear park, the enclosed landscapes).

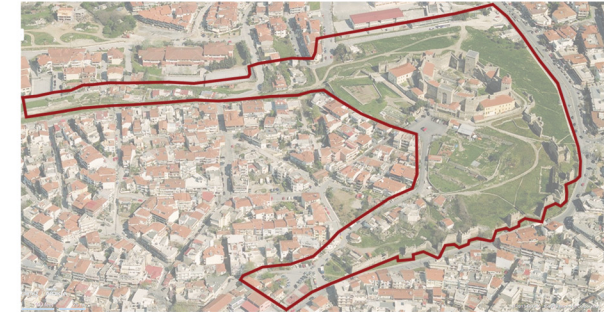
The main compositional gesture is the formation of a **path network** made by stabilized or natural soil retained by corten elements. The network as a tool for space narrative leads to an experiential relationship with the landscape and the monument. The paths follow the topography permitting all categories of users to wander. They are connected with rest areas on key viewpoints towards the walls, the urban tissue, the mountain as well as the sea.

In contact with the city, the **civic promenade** - a perimetric access zone - filters the movements in regards to the urban fabric. From this zone two **central plazas** lead the visitor to the Monument either directly (central entrance square) or indirectly following a spiral path adapted to the topography and the landscape. The project protagonist is the existing **natural meadow** which is maintained and regenerated. In this area plantation is used as the main compositional tool and except for the proposed paths and rest areas the historical landscape itself plays the most important role. A **path within the walls** is proposed for the interior of the monument which offers views between the voids of the castle towards the broader landscape, the sea and the city.

The proposed **amphitheatres** are embedded into the natural topography in the form of wooden sleepers (recycled railway wooden pieces from train lines - traviesas). The proposed **fence** is a significant architectural corten element that protects the monuments without competing it. Corten **bridges** with timber floor boards are proposed for the accesses over the monument walls. The **seating elements** follow the minimal concept of the project consisting of three types of prismatic corten forms.

The intervention has a strong **ecological -bioclimatic** aspect and uses few elements to organize the place. The natural arid landscape with the existing fields of natural regeneration is the protagonist that is enhanced with local dry species. All materials have a bioclimatic character. The project takes the ecological water management into consideration (underground rainwater basin) as well as the general encouragement of ecological consciousness.

The redesign of the significant cultural natural landscape of the monumental area attracts visitors all day long revitalizing the economy of the broader area. As far as the **economic viability** of the project some proposals to be mentioned are: 1) The park's public space could be used for organizing cultural events with reciprocal benefits to the funds of the municipality, 2) the low maintenance cost, 3) partial self-management by the inhabitants (public space "adoption" with benefits at the municipal taxes, collaborative services through smartphones applications).



existing



LEGEND

- - - study area limits
- - - expropriation area limits

SURFACES

- main paths of stabilized soil
- secondary paths of stabilized soil
- rest area type A
- rest area type B
- rest area type C
- new landscapes
- existing landscapes - pedestrian streets
- wooden surface
- buildings
- castle walls

NATURAL LANDSCAPE FORMATION PLANTATION PROPOSAL

- meadow lands
- vacant fields for application of urban biodiversity
- groundcovers - grasses
- slope stabilization - hydroseeding
- vegetal barriers - medium height shrubs
- dry brushwood / aromatic plants
- low height shrubs
- climbers/creepers
- evergreen trees - proposal
- deciduous trees - proposal
- existing trees

URBAN EQUIPMENT

- bench of corten base and wooden surface type A (no back)
- bench of corten base and wooden surface type B (with back)
- seating cube element - corten base and wooden surface - type C
- litter bin - corten cylinder
- drinking fountain - corten
- tree hole - corten metal ring
- fence

masterplan - project