

PROBLEMS OF PEDESTRIAN TRAILS IN URBAN SPACES

PROBLEME ALE TRASEELOR PIETONALE DIN SPAȚIILE URBANE

DASCĂLU Doina Mira¹, DASCĂLU V.², COJOCARIU Mirela¹

e-mail: doinamira@yahoo.com

Abstract. *Many urban spaces are mostly revealed by walking along or inside them. In this context, pedestrian trails play a special role because it mediates perception, establishes the speed, succession and character of landscape experiences. The walkways represent a means of directing or controlling landscaping. Trails development can be dotted with elements or points of interest, consisting of vegetation or constructed objects. Along alleys, the trails can be dilated in some places, becoming areas of ambient interest with resting places, water games and vegetal compositions. Navigating or scrolling along a trail, the landscape's perception must be controlled and dosed so that we do not reveal too much at once, nor do we strain the viewer by preventing it from penetrating in depth. The relaxation places must offer physical and psycho-emotional comfort, both through the elements of their design and by the aesthetic arrangement of the adjacent frame.*

Key words: walkways, landscaping, alleys, design

Rezumat. *Majoritatea spațiilor urbane sunt dezvăluite mai ales prin parcurgerea lor. În acest context circulațiile pietonale au un rol special deoarece mijlocesc percepția, stabilesc viteza, succesiunea și caracterul experiențelor peisagistice. Un mijloc de a direcționa sau controla parcurgerile în peisagistică îl constituie traseele. Desfășurarea traseelor poate fi ambientată cu elemente sau puncte de interes, prin vegetație sau obiecte construite. De-a lungul unor alei, traseele se pot dilata în mod studiat în anumite locuri, devenind zone de interes ambiantate cu locuri de odihnă, jocuri de apă și compoziții vegetale. În parcurgerea unui traseu, percepția peisajului trebuie controlată și dozată astfel încât să nu dezvăluim prea mult dintr-o dată, dar nici să nu tensionăm privitorul împiedicându-l să pătrundă vizual în profunzime. Locurile de odihnă oferite trebuie să dăruie confort fizic și psiho-emoțional, atât prin elementele design-ului lor, cât și prin ambientarea estetică a cadrului adiacent.*

Cuvinte cheie: trasee, peisagistică, alei, design

INTRODUCTION

Trying to introduce us into the spatial landscape universe, the great theoretician of modern landscaping John Ormsbee Simonds confessed that "many aspects of the art and science of design are revealed to the landscape artist when he realizes for the first time that he does not deal with surfaces but with spaces and volumes." (Simonds, 1967). A way of directing or controlling landscaping is

¹University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Iasi, Romania

²"Gh. Asachi" Technical College, Iasi, Romania

the circulation called trail. "Nobody ever noticed a place except in a certain time, or a time at a certain place" (Trișcu, 1985). Following a route, the landscape's perception must be controlled and dosed in such a way that we do not reveal too much at once, nor do we strain the viewer by preventing it from penetrating in depth. That's why Simonds drew the attention of specialists involved in landscaping: "Do not design schemes that are meaningless or cold shapes. Better design a human experience" (Simonds, 1967).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The paper analyses how the outdoor activities are influenced by the perception of the environment. Most urban spaces are mostly revealed by walking through them. In this context, pedestrian circulations play a special role because it mediates perception, determines the speed, succession and character of landscape experiences. Ignoring the principles of environmental psychology can lead to disturbing effects that cause environmental and mental discomfort. The successful combination of the effects of ambient elements creates the attractiveness attributes of places. Consequently, depending on landscape elements introduced in the city space, residents, as users of the environment, can benefit from the possibility of socialization, recreation and improvement of the quality of life. Individuals can experience feelings of physical and psychological welfare, the feeling that a space is well designed and built.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

COMPOSITION OF TRAILS is supported by the science of using the axes and the arrangement of interest points and areas of interest along them. Also, controlling the pauses and rhythms of positioning/organizing of the landscape morphological elements along the route and adjacent areas can lead or guide, can reveal or conceal mysteriously, encouraging, attracting, and prolonging walks in a particular direction, or certain favorable outlook. In navigating a route, the perception of the landscape must be controlled and dosed so that we do not reveal too much at once, nor do we tense the viewer, preventing our eyes from penetrating into the depths of the alleys. Trail development can be surrounded by elements of interest, called points of interest, consisting of vegetation or built objects. Routes along alleys or axes can dilate from place to place, and they become areas of ambient interest with resting places, water games and vegetal compositions. In landscaping, the trails are mainly created via pedestrian circulation routes. Alongside these, non-circulating visual axes can be opened during the course that leads the perspectives to important points or centers of interest (Dascălu and Cojocariu, 2016).

DISTINGUISHING AND MASKING of the interest points or areas of interest become the means by which the arrangements can be put to good use, stirring curiosity and focusing more attention. The composition technique consists of placing landscape objects or vegetation so as to reveal or mask certain objects.

Also, filtering images through vegetation groups or among various objects (statues, fountains, pergolas, etc.), using the principle of the perception gradation, contributes to the viewer's pleasure in discovering certain details. The images below illustrate some possibilities of perception (fig. 1, fig. 2).

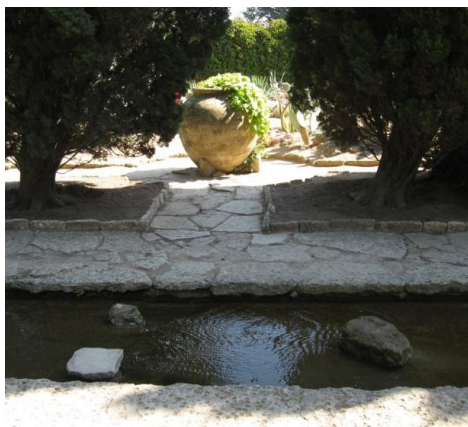


Fig. 1 Filtered perception through vegetation to an interest point
Balcik, Bulgaria - photo Dascălu D.M.



Fig. 2 Filtered perception through neogothic pillars
Balcik, Bulgaria-photo Dascălu D.M.

SUCCESSION, GRADATION AND RHYTHM are basic elements in trails design. Simonds draws attention to the importance of succession: "Deliberately designed, succession can be a highly effective compositional process. Succession expresses in the landscape composition a set of perceptions or experiences that have a continuity. Successions have no meaning unless and until they are lived by man" (Simonds, 1967). Succession involves targeting. Grading involves accumulation. Rhythm involves repetition, alternation between accents and

breaks. The rhythm can be static-linear or dynamic-directed. It can be obtained using volumes, surfaces, colors, light, functions, either by condensation or by dilution of interest (fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Succession and rhythm of interest points (palms and benches) along the promenade in Kuwait – photo Dascălu D.M.

Succession, gradation and rhythm have as effect the perception of time, involving movement, scrolling, searching for interesting details to be admired. The movement adds to the three-dimensional perception of the landscape the perception of the fourth dimension, means the time. It is important to understand that time can be perceived, capitalized and controlled by dosing, creating rhythms and breaks in landscape compositions (Dascălu and Cojocariu, 2016).

THE OBJECTS AND THE PLACES FOR RELAXATION ALONG TRAILS have become, in the last hundred years, indispensable for the quality of life, playing an important role in urban comfort (Dascălu and Dascălu, 2016). Urban public spaces, squares, gardens and parks need resting places. Inspired by indoor furniture, recreational items are presented in a wide variety of types of benches, seats and modules, fixed or movable, with or without a backrest, some of which are multifunctional.

Relaxation places can be classified according to several criteria: by the nature of the materials used, by color, shape and volume, by style, etc. If we take into account the number of people who can use them simultaneously, we can distinguish between individual, semi-collective and collective places. The role of resting places in any type of public space is of particular importance. If they are given opportunities to sit down, people spend more time in landscaping, if the places are of poor quality, the pedestrians will not stay but continue their journey. The existence of favorable conditions for sitting down stimulates the activities (reading, resting, conversation etc.) that are vital for the quality of public spaces and the public environment (Jurov, 2006).

In order for the sitting place to be attractive, they must meet a number of requirements as for climate, space, location, configuration, but also for material, shape, texture, color and volume. In urban spaces and beyond, there are many examples of situations where objects are placed either mistakenly or randomly in a non-functional manner that causes discomfort (fig. 4, fig. 5).

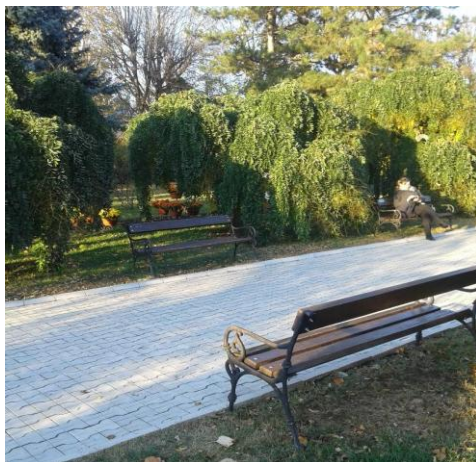


Fig. 4 Non-functional manner of placing benches in the green spaces-photo Dascălu D. M.



Fig. 5 Non-functional and non-aesthetical way of placing benches - photo Dascălu D. M.

The location of the resting places will determine the choice of those objects that are positioned offering protection and privacy, a good microclimate, the view of the surroundings/belle view, with the back protected.

The type of furniture is a criterion that differentiates users by age and temperament. Young people can easily sit down in multiple ways without using specially designed objects: straight on lawns or dredges, on various edges / borders, on the statue's trunk, on the jardinières, etc. For older people, adequate furniture is nevertheless an essential prerequisite for resting. A well-equipped public space should have comfortable arrangements for urban rest: benches, seats, chairs, decorative frames with resting seats.

Urban furniture must be adapted to some sustainable contemporary requirements such as: the use of multifunctional and removable furniture to allow multiple uses and locations so that urban space can be efficiently used without shocking it or leaving it unfurnished; integrating vegetation into furniture should be carefully designed, not to limit its use by discomfort; the fitting of the furniture and its positioning should favor both socialization and intimacy and protection; the furnished areas with adequate resting places should be present in as many urban spaces as possible, adapted to the areas and avoiding crowding; the textures of the materials must be judiciously adapted to the site, preferably natural and ecological, but also time-resistant; the color scheme harmonized with the environment should be suitably chosen for the functions; the stylistic adaptation of the furniture to the characteristics of the urban framework is necessary in order to avoid stylistic aggression.

CONCLUSIONS

Public pedestrian trails open to all must possess attractive features and, implicitly, provide a rich experience of meanings and well-being. Applying the principles of environmental psychology to landscaping can activate the elements of ambient attractiveness and contributes to the creation of spaces that will generate beauty and balance. The relaxation places offered in this way must give physical and psycho-emotional comfort, both by their location and design details, as well as by the aesthetic surrounding of the adjacent frame.

REFERENCES

1. **Dascălu Doina Mira, Cojocariu Mirela, 2016** – *Design Peisagistic*, Ed. Ion Ionescu de la Brad, Iași, p.36-47.
2. **Dascălu Doina Mira, Dascălu V., 2016** - *Trends in sustainable landscaping over the last decades*, *Lucrări științifice*, Anul LIX, Vol 59, nr.2, seria Horticultură, Ed. USAMV Iași, pag. 283-289
3. **Jurov C., 2006** - *Arhitectura ambianțelor*, Ed. Capitel, București, p. 64-69.
4. **Simonds J. O., 1967** - *Arhitectura peisajului*, Ed. Tehnică, București, p. 32.
5. **Trișcu A., 1985** - *Spații urbane pietonale*, Ed. Tehnică, București, p. 72-75.