

RESHAPING THE CITYSCAPE THROUGH SMALL LANDSCAPE DESIGNS

REMODELAREA PEISAJULUI URBAN PRIN AMENAJĂRI PEISAGISTICE DE DIMENSIUNI REDUSE

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Abstract. *The landscape-designs within the city need to fulfill a number of conditions in order to meet the essential purpose of increasing the quality of life and to contribute towards increasing the urban comfort. In the urban texture of Iasi city a multitude of abandoned, undeveloped, deconstructed public spaces can be found, which, besides a poor quality urban image and can become unsafe for the public. We will refer mainly to the spaces related to the pedestrian traffic and those located in their immediate vicinity, spaces of small dimensions, unutilized, without a precise destination, with a predominantly mineral structure and with constitutive elements (fronts, surroundings, pavements, constructions etc.) without special volumetric, architectural and artistic qualities, or even completely deconstructed. Through this paper we aim to identify such areas in Iasi and propose small landscape-designs who will increase the quality of urban space, will favor social contact, and will generate an improved image quality of unused and abandoned urban spaces.*

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

Rezumat. *Pentru a-și îndeplini scopul esențial de creștere a calității vieții locuitorilor și acela de a contribui la sporirea confortului urban, amenajările peisagistice în oraș trebuie să îndeplinească o serie de condiții. În textura urbană a municipiului Iași se regăsește o multitudine de spații publice abandonate, neamenajate, destructurate, care, pe lângă o imagine urbană de slabă calitate pot deveni nesigure pentru public. Ne vom referi în principal la spațiile afectate circulației pietonale și la cele situate în imediata lor apropiere, de mici dimensiuni, neutilizate, cu structură predominant minerală și cu elemente constitutive (fronturi, împrejurimi, pavimente, construcții etc.) fără calități spațial volumetrice, arhitecturale și plastice deosebite sau chiar complet destructurate. Prin acest studiu ne propunem identificarea unor astfel de spații în municipiul Iași și propunerea unor amenajări peisagistice de mici dimensiuni care să ofere un plus de calitate mediului urban, să favorizeze contactul social și în același timp să genereze o imagine urbană de calitate unor spații neutilizate și abandonate.*

Cuvinte cheie: *peisaj urban, spațiu public, grădini mici, spațiu abandonat, spațiu destructurat*

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INTRODUCTION

„It's in human nature to surround himself with a world of his own. To build a shelter and to form a settlement. To shape the nature and to improve the environment built by previous generations. O establish boundaries, landmarks, structures, symbols.” (Trişcu, 1985)

The city does not represent only the anthropic landscape, but also the heritage, the tradition, the culture, the quotidian, the sounds, the light and darkness, the vegetal, the air, the human element, the water, the sky, all of them assembling in spaces and landscapes which are in a constant motion and evolution, in fact, in landscapes that we perceive in a conscious or unconscious way. Wide phenomenon with complex landscape manifestations, difficult to know and influence in the gear mechanisms and urban forces, the city can be understood as a wave of zones and subzones, with its own strategic awareness of urban definition in relation to its inhabitants, but also with the external forces considered as structural elements (Grigorovschi and Răchieru, 2011).

Yoshinobu Ashihara (Ashihara, 1970) identifies within a city a positive and a negative space. The positive space is the built environment, and the outside space is the negative one. But, as Yoshinobu claims, the unbuilt space is not a negative pattern of the built space. It can be positive because it determines the built one, representing in the same time an essential element of the urban landscape. Therefore, the unbuilt space is organic, homogenous, consistent, representative and not just a simple companion or an envelope to the building. He contributes to a better quality of life for its users, mostly defining the urban image. The unbuilt space offers room for movement, communication and meetings and, when such functions and their circumstances are treated unitarily, the ensemble becomes cohesive and takes part in shaping the personality of the city and its inhabitants (Trişcu, 1985).

Pedestrian public spaces are the structural elements of any built framework, spaces of social cohesion, areas of coexistence and of urban outbreaks designed programmatic to attract all types of audience, to bring together all the citizens and to boost the city's urban area; shortly, the showcase of the city. The image of the city and, therefore the definition of life's quality, depend largely on public spaces which occupy a major and heteromorphic role.

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

As in other cities in Romania, the urban texture of Iasi comprise a multitude of abandoned public spaces, undeveloped, unmaintained, deconstructed which besides the poor quality of the urban image and lack of urban public, can become unsafe for the public.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This paper is considered to be a synthesis of studies realized with the 5th year students of the „G.M. Cancacuzino” Faculty of Architecture Iasi, for the Landscape discipline.

This paper mainly refers to the pedestrian traffic areas and those situated in their immediate environment with a direct connection with the latter, without a precise destination, but with a predominant mineral structure and having constituent elements (fronts, facing, pavements, constructions etc.), without a volumetric, architectural and special plastics qualities and even deconstructed.

Mainly, small, public, unused and undeveloped spaces were studied. This process aimed to identify such spaces in the city of Iasi and to propose small landscape designs called „mini-gardens” to provide a better quality to the urban environment, to promote social contact, to generate a high quality urban image to unused and abandoned spaces, not taken into consideration until now.

The study was carried out in several stages. Phase I involved identifying, studying and multi-criteria analysis of the areas. The analysis criteria of the public spaces used by students were established as a result of a previous study conducted at the Landscape discipline. In the second phase of the project solutions to revitalize the urban deconstructed areas were proposed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Mini-gardens (Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3) – small landscape designs, obtained and presented in this study have diminished dimensions and use vegetal elements for landscaping, the presence of mineral elements (bank, small fountains, artworks, minimal displaying systems, pavements, etc.) being minimal. It is also worth mentioning the versatile character of these gardens, because the landscaping solutions proposed can be adapted and replicated for the city’s wide use.

The quality of the spatial planning was emphasized, in order to promote human contact, socialization, recreation, etc. These facilities were intended to generate vivid public spaces, multifunctional, attractive and accessible to everyone.

The proposed designs for the small gardens had to meet the following urban goals:

- Usage of local, natural, sustainable and high quality materials;
- Usage of local plant species adapted to the urban environment, without expansion and space invasion direction;
- Developing pavements which allow water draining;
- Developing an efficient lighting system, adapted to ensure space safety;
- Realizing a low cost landscape design;
- Compliance planning in respect with the spirit of the place and in accordance with the specific area and the city;
- Creating a space that allows the urban space to be restored by vegetal elements, relating to the mineral urban.



Fig. 1 - Landscape proposals in Iași: a) Arcu Street; b) Cantemir Boulevard; c) Sf. Lazăr street – the esplanade in front of Faculty of Construction;



Fig. 2 - Landscape proposals in Iași –Anastasie Panu Street

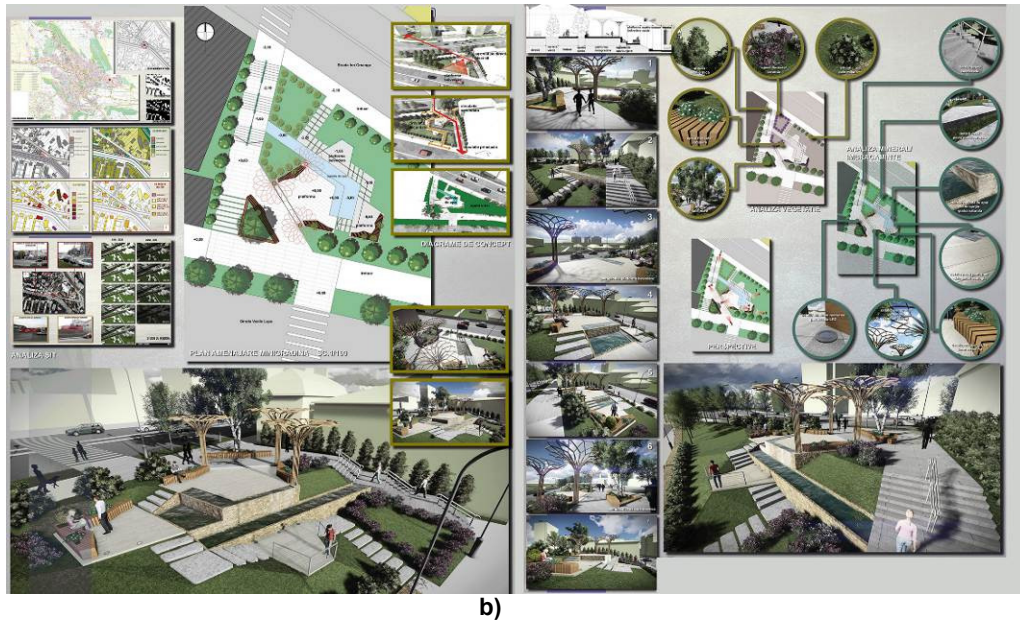
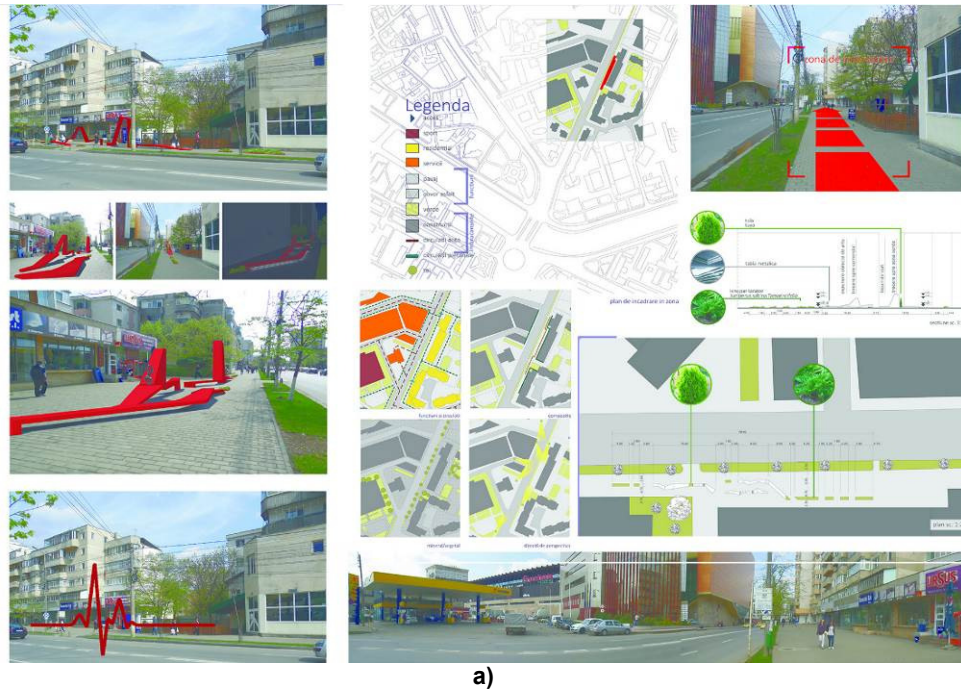


Fig. 3 - Landscape proposals in Iași –a) Sf. Lazăr Street; b) Tătărași – Vasile Lupu Street

CONCLUSIONS

The city, although a coherent whole, appears as a complicated agglomeration in a continuous transformation.

Landscape designs in the city must meet the following conditions in order to fulfil the essential purpose of raising the quality of life of the human settlement residents:

- a) To be equally through the city;
- b) To be qualitative;
- c) To be accessible to all residents and city visitors.

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

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