REVITALIZATION GUIDELINESS

Recommendations

Version 1
07 2018

The HICAPS project deals with the treatment of historical castle parks and questions the role the parks could play in the present-day society. This questioning comes foremost in light of opening certain aspects of heritage and natural environment in the public sphere. Contemporary conditions of dealing with such delicate questions are not favourable of long-term planning, thorough investigations or design research. However, if public good is the end-goal of interventions that deal with historical parks, certain procedures, including accessibility, must be taken into account. In light of the environmental changes we are facing, the issue proves to be ever more poignant.

More detailed information can be found in studies: *Participatory Approach Towards Better Accessibility In Historic Parks And Gardens* and *A Value Of Historical Parks And Gardens With Recommendations For Their Preservation.*

When considering the task of interpreting the historical parks in terms of form, two approaches are possible if taking accessibility into account:

1) The first is designing the desired form as an in-between, a link connecting the monument to which the garden belongs, and its surroundings. If so, the elements that make the historical garden accessible to different groups of the disabled need to be designed in a way that are meaningfully incorporated in the overall design concept.

2) The second possible approach is first taking a disability into account and developing the form of the garden as a spatial experience accustomed to the use of the disabled. In this case design elements should follow the principles of experience out of which the form is then developed. This approach is an alternative way, not as frequently used as the first one.

In both cases, whether the form comes first or whether the form is developed in relation to a certain disability, a close attention has to be paid to three key aspects:

i)   how heritage is interpreted in the new setting;

ii) which methods are applied regarding public participation;

iii) how accessibility is achieved in relation to *different* disabilities.

The aim of the document is to give a broad sketch of criteria in relation to different design approaches regarding form and the three different aspects. These criteria are then interpreted in the categories posed by the project:

a) accessibility to cultural and environmental heritage objects for people with disabilities;

b) educational thematic trails dedicated to different target groups;

c) innovative educational concepts for attracting e.g. schools, families, general public to cultural and environmental heritage objects;

d) 3d visualization models of historical objects for management, maintenance of educational purposes;

e) public events of initiatives facilitating the management of the park, e.g. gardening, cleaning etc., involving citizens and greater public.

The first step that has to take place with any design approach is architectural and garden heritage evaluation. The evaluation analysis considers the spatial criterion, originality, authenticity, credibility, recognition of expression, use of material and design. It also deals with assessing the range and level of conservation of design and the material substance of elements, preservation of the original use and its compatibility with the new.

- **The spatial criterion:** evaluating the occurrence and the role in geographical, visual and physical space: assessing whether the occurrence of the design is a dominant part of space and a unique, prominent and indispensable element in space or is spatially unaccented.

- **The criterion of authorship:** evaluating the work of the artist or a group of artists, craftsmen or school and the level of contribution to the recognition of the artist or a group of artists, craftsmen or school.

- **The developmental criterion:** evaluating the significance, the stage in the development of a certain kind of design, the originality of the material design, expression and building or technical aspect.

- **The typological criterion:** evaluating the designs, that are relatively numerous and don't satisfy the criterion of uniqueness. The characteristics of such designs are widely spread, but important, because they represent a typical example and are an expression of certain socio-economic circumstances and functions.

- **The historical criterion:** evaluating the connection between the design and special historical events, habitual, emotional or legendary continuities, political events and patriotism.

- **The cultural-civilizational criterion:** evaluating the indicators of the interconnection of material, chronological, social and spiritual relations, evaluating the wholesomeness, connectedness and co-dependence of specific parts of heritage, the developmental continuity and richness, diversity and the intertwining of different natural and historical phenomena.

- **Uniqueness criterion:** evaluating whether the design stands out from general typological characteristics, assessing uniqueness and rarity in terms of the kind, form, significance, material, age, the choice of vegetation, construction and technical structure, performance and design.

After a considerable amount of analysis is done and various aspects of the project are evaluated, **the concept of revitalization of the historical park should be considered principally through the question of form in relation to its new content and its surroundings**: to determine whether the new programme is something that should gain a dominant character in the city fabric/landscape and to consider how to achieve this without compromising the value of the historical garden; OR is the new programme designed in a way that should be almost invisible, hidden and consequently the historical aspect guides the design principles. This decision is made as experts meaningfully and equally participate in a dialogue to come to an agreement about the role of the historical park in the present-day society.

One of the main aspects that soon becomes decisive of future development of such projects is **the status of the historical park in terms of ownership**, which, in most cases, determines what the content of the monument is going to be and thus its level of publicity. Nowadays parks and gardens are mostly seen as places for free time and leisure that have recreational and didactical purposes. Historically, however they were designed as an antipode to the cramped city life, bringing nature in an urban environment that also played a role in regulating climate change and water conditions. As protected locations today they function as barriers against the often destructive city development that could violate the present status of urban life. The private gardens were once an extravagance and served as a display of one's wealth and power, while the parks today are in public use and represent an indispensable part of a person's living space.

The question of ownership thus opens a dilemma that needs to be addressed very carefully in the initial part of the project and considered individually from case to case. **Namely, regardless of the fact that historical parks are private or public, they represent crucial points in a spatial network that speak of the society's past relation to its environment. This relation can be read through the form of the park, which represents nature in its historical perspective.** Defined as "historical parks" these spatial locations are recognized as having value for the public domain and consequently, no matter what their ownership status might be, public interest should be the guiding principle of the design approach.

It is **only through the form of the historical park certain questions can be aesthetically accessed and these are related to the phenomena of nature.** If sustainable development is the future

perspective of present day society, then the relation between space and nature is one of its pivotal points of reflection. The historical park can elucidate the themes that are becoming more and more obsolete in the present-day spatial planning. These include the question of the ecosystem, different species, water systems, solar cycles etc. Historical parks reveal past relations to time in a sense that the parks through form negotiate the link between different tasks and sequences of activities and natural phenomena; regarding seasonal concepts of spatial predictions and procedures. In these developments sequences of tasks have become reference points.

The process of design, therefore, is not the only important process. **To make historical parks approachable and to allow for the described themes to resonate in the public sphere**, the process of becoming needs to be a part of the general awareness of the community the garden belongs to in order to live. **The principles of participatory design approach are therefore necessary to follow.**

Public participation is the process by which an organization consults with interested or affected individuals, organizations, and government entities before making a decision. Public participation is a two-way communication and a collaborative problem solving with the goal of achieving better and more acceptable decisions. While revitalizing historical parks and gardens, different people should be involved in the public participation process. In general, three main groups of the participants are:

- Government: politicians, city management, service areas;

- AEC professions: owners/investors, architecture and construction companies, building companies, supporting companies;

- Public: who live there, who work there, and who talk about it.

The methods, processes and tools of how to go about the questions of participation when revitalizing historical parks are carefully considered in a separate document.

Taking into account the broad scope of this project as described above (through the question of form, public interest, ownership, historical evaluation, participation), the document proposes **general guidelines and notes to be considered when approaching the question of historical parks** through the following categories:

1.) accessibility to cultural and environmental heritage objects for people with disabilities;

If the primary purpose of the garden design in to enable accessibility to cultural and environmental heritage objects for people with disabilities, different types of disabilities need to be considered.

Disabilities relate to different impairments that define disability groups such as: wheelchair users; people with reduced mobility, arm or hand impairment; visually impaired people; people with hearing impairment; people with asthma and allergy; people with learning disabilities, people with reading disability etc.

It is mandatory, however, that the disabilities in question are interpreted meaningfully in the overall design approach and that designing singular elements is not the final outcome of the project. The form of the project therefore addresses the issue of disabilities in a meaningful way whether the form is achieved through the firs or the second method of design (page1). Design elements should follow the concept in a way so that the overall form addresses the issues related to the question of public good.

2.) educational thematic trails;

The first step, when educational and thematic trails are considered, is developing the content of the theme and simultaneously thinking about the aesthetic values of the park in question. Themes should be meaningfully developed and related to the history of the park. Each theme needs to be developed in collaboration with specialists and considered against key curatorial decision. In this process spatial considerations should be as important as thematic ones.

Design elements should support the design concept that speaks of the overarching theme coming out of the above considerations (page 1-2) be it in terms of physical or virtual presence.

The themes should have a modest presence. Spectacular representations should be avoided. This category allows for a broad interpretation of the landscape in its widest sense.

3.) innovative educational concepts for attracting e.g. schools, families, general public to cultural and environmental heritage objects;

Design approach, when innovative educational concepts are considered, should be developed in collaboration with experts of the field. The research phase should focus mostly on target groups and their relation to environmental and heritage objects. However, after it is clear, which are the educational concepts and for which public, a design concept should meaningfully mediate these questions and the questions of the environment via formal principles. Namely, the design principles should holistically encapsulate key spatial elements that "hold" the spatial experience of the historical park and to which an individual educational tools refers. Educational tools should have a modest presence. Spectacular representations are to be avoided.

4.) 3d visualization models of historical objects for management, maintenance of educational purposes;

Building realistic 3D models is not appropriate when representations of gardens with objects is in question. Instead it is advised to take advantage of open-source apps that have integrated possibilities of 3D presentations combined with photo/video walk-through or visual tours and maps. Such apps (and possibly web pages) have platforms that build a public and have certain strategies when issues of education, management etc. come into question. It is therefore proposed to understand this category not only in terms of 3D visualization, but as "Representation of historical objects (including parks) for management, maintenance or educational purposes in IT environments".

Given the speed of change of these environments and new tools that emerge on the web on a daily basis, the project is proposing a selection of those that could be beneficial for the HICAPS projects. None of the examples include a 3D garden. Instead, they offer visual material that works in combination with plans. We propose such tools to be used in combination with abstract 3D models. The advantage of using IT in such a way is wide accessibility for public use, promotion of heritage on on-line platforms, educational aspect integrated, the possibility of building interactive environments. In this way heritage becomes integrated in daily lives of people.

5.) Public events of initiatives facilitating the management of the park, e.g. gardening, cleaning etc., involving citizens and greater public.

This category is important for developing public presence of the relevant themes described above (page 2-3) in everyday processes that involve local people and greater public. If the primary purpose of the revitalization of the park is to be developed in this category, it is necessary to think of its design in such a way that allows for a certain amount of freedom when it comes to distinct areas of the park premises. The overall form should solve key aspects of the location in terms of its aesthetic value as well as practical issues such as: entrances, services, communication, access for maintenance, storage, water supply, electricity, etc. These aspects should be mediated via spatial elements, while distinct areas are allowed to vary according to a set of regulations that are a result of public initiatives. This approach allows for adaptable regulations that are to be followed when management activities take place. The activities, however, should have a modest presence. Spectacular representations should be avoided.