



Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Faculty of Landscape Planning, Horticulture and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Landscape Architecture

New urban room within the city of Kranj

Eva Romih

Master's thesis in landscape architecture, 30 hp
Landscape Architecture Programme
Självständigt arbete vid LTJ-fakulteten, SLU
Alnarp 2012

Title: **New urban room within the city of Kranj**
Title in Swedish: Nytt urbant rum i staden Kranj

© Author: *Eva Romih* e-mail: eva.romih@gmail.com

Supervisor: Anders Folkesson, Landscape Architect LAR/MSA, Managing Director of Mellanrum AB.

Examiner: Pär Gustafsson, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Faculty of Landscape Planning, Horticulture and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Landscape Architecture

Assistant examiner: Eva Kristensson, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Faculty of Landscape Planning, Horticulture and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Landscape Architecture

Credits: 30 hec

Level: A2E

Course title: Master Project in Landscape Architecture

Course code: EX0545

Programme: Landscape Architecture Programme

Subject: Landscape architecture

Place of publication: Alnarp

Year of publication: May 2012

Series name: Självständigt arbete vid LTJ-fakulteten, SLU

Electronic publication: <http://stud.epsilon.slu.se>

Keywords: public space, interaction, urban design, square

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Landscape Planning, Horticulture and Agricultural Sciences

Department of Landscape Architecture



SLU, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Landscape Planning, Horticulture and Agricultural Sciences

Department of Landscape Architecture

This is a canvas where all my thoughts are painted.
Knowledge was gained to make a foundation on a canvas.
Design adorns the emptiness as colours embellish a canvas.

My painting is now exhibited.

I want to thank everyone who blended colours on a canvas, who inspired me, helped me and supported me on my way to the final make of this master's degree project.
Special thank to my mentor Anders Folkesson who lead me all the way through the process.

I hope you will find an inspiration for everyday life in a city.

Eva Romih

Malmö, 2 September 2011

My master project in landscape architecture is titled New urban room within the city of Kranj. The project aims at being an inspirational source for a revival of a public space in the city.

The first purpose of my master project is to, through literature study, gain knowledge about the revivification of a city and afterwards come out with some new ideas and design proposals that aim to bring an urban square of Kranj back to life again. Exploring what are the possibilities of reviving an urban square in the city and make it functional and memorable in one.

The second purpose is to explore approaches and methods to induce people to interact with elements in the square. To approach the idea of interaction, the final design proposal consists of elements for people to interact with. So the square can be constantly transformed.

My intention was not to provide the city with final proposals but to show possibilities how a square can be revived through a landscape architect's perspective. In conclusion I have linked designing results back to literature and evaluated them.

1.1. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	22
1.2. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	22
1.3. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	22
1.4. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	23
1.5. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	23
1.6. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	24
1.7. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	24
1.8. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	25
1.9. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	25
1.10. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	25
2.1. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	37
2.2. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	37
2.3. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	37
2.4. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	40
2.5. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	40
2.6. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	40
2.7. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	40
2.8. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	40
2.9. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	40
2.10. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	42
2.11. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	43
2.12. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	43
2.13. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	44
2.14. Kranj, Slovenia, 2011	44

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	12
1.1 Background	12
1.2 Questions at issue	14
1.3 Aim	15
1.4 Method	16
 CHAPTER 2: THE CITY	 18
2.1 Location	18
2.2 Background of the area	20
2.3 A Journey through the city	23
2.4 Analyses	27
Purpose of the analyses	27
Situation in the landscape	28
Kranj and its surroundings	28
Building patterns	32
Derrections and paths	33
Rivers	34
Public spaces	35
 CHAPTER 3: THE SQUARE	 36
3.1 Analyses of Slovenski trg	36
3.2 Weaknesses and strengths of Slovenski trg	47
3.3 Comparative case studies	48

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN PROCESS	52
4.1 Theories as a basis for the design proposal	52
Back ground, Concepts of interest	52
People and space	60
Public interaction in public space	63
Environmental design	65
Use of public space	66
History and identity of a city	69
4.2 Testing design concepts	72
4.3 Design inspiration	83
4.4 Discovering the shape	90
CHAPTER 5: THE FINAL DESIGN PROPOSAL	99
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS	120

1.1. BACKGROUND

THE CITY OF
KRANJ, Slovenia,
as an area of
interest

FACING A
PROBLEM =
the invasion of
shopping centres
at the outskirts of
Kranj

PEOPLE = the soul
of every city

Already since the time when I decided to study landscape architecture, I knew that one of my projects may deal with design proposals for my hometown Kranj in Slovenia. Kranj is a picturesque historic town above the confluence of two alpine rivers – the Sava and the Kokra. Due to its geographical position – on the junction of important routes, leading from the Northern Europe to the Adriatic Sea and from the Western Europe towards the Eastern Europe – Kranj is also a strong commercial as well as cultural and historical centre. It offers a pleasant atmosphere of a small town. Kranj, being the fourth biggest city in Slovenia, is the industrial, employment, traffic, educational, cultural and sports centre of Gorenjska. But it is also one of those cities which lost its soul after the invasion of shopping centres at the outskirts of the city. Small shops, bakeries, and museums are falling into oblivion. City is lacking greenery. Public spaces are not designed in a way that attracts people. The market, which once had an intention of being a meeting place, is nowadays empty and dull and few local growers are still persevering in selling their products there. There is only one playground in the city, which was renovated not long ago and seems very popular among young inhabitants and their parents. Main squares in the city do not stand out - some of them are even latent - and are lacking urban equipment and vegetation. Although the streetscape of Kranj tends to link together “meeting places”, few streetlights, shop windows, dull grey pavement, and flowerpots cannot “convince” people to make a stay in the city.

Inhabitants use streetscape as a pedestrian transition between places of employment and dwellings nearby. When the city holds an event, there are a lot of people coming to Kranj. At that time it turns out that Kranj has a potential to become a more attractive and friendly city for its inhabitants, as well as for tourists visiting our city.

U C T I O N

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS AT ISSUE AIM METHOD

In my opinion people are those who provide the soul of every city. A city may hold adorably designed public spaces, city parks and water fronts, but if people do not use all of these, the city looks joyless. It is something about the creativity of people who live in or run cities; as I see it their creative sense may determine the future success of their town.

Anyhow, it is important to get beyond the idea that creativity is the exclusive domain of artists or that innovations are largely technological; people need to understand that there is also social and political creativity and innovation. Every promising city should have as an intention to keep creative people within the city, in that way they can cooperate with each other and come out with innovative ideas to make the city more alive and attractive.

Well designed public spaces within the city have a tendency to help creative ideas. People there feel comfortably relaxed. More socially heterogeneous places simultaneously stimulate and challenge their visitors. Public spaces as such may also function as showcases for creative thinking and ideas.

AN ATTEMPT to incorporate social creativity and innovation into the city planning scheme

CREATIVITY - NOT solely an exclusive domain of artists

PUBLIC SPACES = the showcases for creative thinking and ideas

1. 2. QUESTIONS AT ISSUE

The following questions are formed as a guidance throughout my project:

1. In which way can public space encourage public interaction?
2. How can public interaction in particular be a part of placemaking?
3. Is the city life dependent on design of the urban rooms within a city?

The objectives are:

- Through literature study how people use public space and what is important when designing public space
- To explore approaches and methods to induce people to interact with elements in public space
- To gain an image how inhabitants of Kranj perceive their city
- To redesign the public space Slovenski trg, Kranj, in a way that encourages public interaction among its visitors
- To link the design results back to the studied literature

1. 3. AIM

The purpose of my master project is to, through literature study, gain knowledge about revivification of a city and afterwards come out with some new ideas and design proposals that aim to bring public space of Kranj back to life again. During the observation of people's behaviour in different cities, I have realized how important it is for a city to be designed in a way that attracts people.

With the design proposals for Kranj, I want to bring out new solutions which may help to resuscitate the city centre. My intention was not to provide the city with final proposals but to show possibilities how a city can be revived through a landscape architect's perspective. In conclusion I have linked designing results back to literature and evaluated them.

Revivification of a city and a revival of the square.

A variety of solutions for the square.

N

T

R

O

O

BACKGROUND

QUESTIONS AT ISSUE

AIM

METHOD

1.4. METHOD

Analysing the area of
interest.

Applying different
designs at Slovenski
trg.

Bringing forth an
attractive design
proposal for the
square.

First of all I studied literature concerning the phenomenon of a city and public space, how people act in urban environment and what is placemaking about. Further on I explored the term of interaction and how is it possible to achieve interaction among people while they are visiting public spaces.

Moreover, I am about to do a few case studies; investigations of city squares in Slovenia, Croatia, and Spain to get inspired for my further work. I also got an input of a variety of aspects from different people working within my area of interest, which proved to be useful.

In the second part of my Master project I focused on finding a variety of solutions to bring the city square of Kranj back to life and do design proposals which lead from studied literature. First I analyse the city and chosen area of interest to get useful information for the following designing process. The final proposal is a result of theoretical knowledge learned in the initial phase of the project and of my own view on designing public space in a way that stimulates creativity among visitors.

U C T I O N

2^{CHAPTER} THE CITY

LOCATION

BACKGROUND OF THE AREA

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CITY

ANALYSES

2. 1. LOCATION

A mental map aims to show with few lines the size of the country and its diversity.



MENTAL MAP OF SLOVENIA



White arrow shows where Kranj is located.

Slovenia is located in Central and Southeastern Europe.



Zoom in.



CITY

LOCATION

BACKGROUND OF THE AREA

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CITY

ANALYSES

Slovenia is a country in Central and Southeastern Europe touching the Alps and bordering the Mediterranean. Slovenia borders Italy to the west, Croatia to the south and east, Hungary to the northeast, and Austria to the north, and also has a small portion of coastline along the Adriatic Sea. It covers an area of 20,273 square kilometers and has a population of 2.05 million. The capital and largest city is Ljubljana.

2. 2. BACKGROUND OF THE AREA

“No matter from which angle it is looked at, the city of Kranj does not in itself inspire an exceptional impression. The church towers, factory chimney stacks and the crowded shapelessness of its new residential neighbourhoods are not sufficient reason for greater interest, for there are no restored ruins of some splendid mediaeval castle rising over the city as is so commonly the case in Slovenia.” (France Pibernik, France Stele, Kranj – A Town on a Promontory, p.82)

As it is mentioned in a guide-book of Kranj, the outer image of the city was in the 15th century under the influence of Turkish invasions into the city.

However, even if the city of Kranj is noted as quite small and tedious, it is the fourth largest city in Slovenia.

From the official web page of municipality of Kranj one may reach following information about the city; Kranj is a picturesque historic town above the confluence of two alpine rivers – the Sava and the Kokra. Due to its geographical position – on the junction of important routes, leading from the Northern Europe to the Adriatic Sea and from the Western Europe towards the Eastern Europe – Kranj is also a strong commercial as well as cultural and historical centre. It offers a pleasant atmosphere of a small town. Kranj, being the fourth biggest city in Slovenia, is industrial, employment, traffic, educational, cultural and sports centre of Gorenjska. But it is also one of those cities which lost its soul after the invasion of shopping centres at the outskirts of the city. Small shops, bakeries, and museums are falling into oblivion. The city is lacking greenery. Public spaces are not designed in a way that attracts people.

CITY

LOCATION

BACKGROUND OF THE AREA

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CITY

ANALYSES

The market which once had an intention of being a meeting place is nowadays empty and dull but few local growers are still persevering in selling their products there. There is only one playground in the city which was renovated not long ago and it seems very popular among young inhabitants and their parents. Main squares in the city do not stand out. Some of them are even latent, and are lacking urban equipment and vegetation. The streetscape of Kranj tends to link together “meeting places”. Few streetlights, shop windows, dull grey pavement, and flowerpots cannot “convince” people to make a stay in the city. Inhabitants use streetscape as a pedestrian transition between place of employment and dwellings nearby. When the city holds an event, there are a lot of people coming to Kranj. At that time it turns out that Kranj has a potential to become a more attractive and friendly city for its inhabitants as well as for tourists visiting our city.

2. 3. A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CITY

Once more I took a walk through the city, but at that time with another intention. I wanted to get an impression through the landscape architect's eye. I took already known traces, from my neighbourhood towards the old part of the city. This is the most common walk for all the people living in this part of Kranj. There is quite a lot of traffic in the main street, especially in rush hours. Nevertheless people walk on paved footway which is on the both sides of the street. Only a cycle track is lacking. Since traffic has been reduced in the city centre, Kranj has become a more and more pedestrian friendly town. It has two main entrances. There is a bridge on one side where bridge toll was taken in the past. From this direction one may experience the first sense of the city architecture, the way of city life. Streets are quite narrow, widened only where buildings are moved inwards. Those places became meeting points for citizens also known as city squares. There are not many of those who live in the city. Houses are more or less empty; few small shops occur on the ground floor. The very last or the very beginning point in the city, it depends how you look, offers a splendid view of confluence of two main rivers in the city,



22

1.1. Cankarjeva street



1.2. Tavčarjeva street



1.3. Presernova street

Pungart's church, a small coffee bar and a renovated children's playground with scarcely present greenery is found there. It is a popular spot among young families. In the north direction there is the city theatre and the main church. A few flowerpots define the boundaries between parking bay for people living in the city and the theatre entrance where the monument dedicated to the memory of our greatest Slovenian poet France Prešeren is placed. The city market is positioned nearby the main church. If in the past this was known as the most popular meeting spot in the city, today's image is totally different. The market is empty and tedious. Few local growers still has a glimmer of hope that someday market will become revived again. In my point of view that is truly possible but a lot of things need to be done before that. If I continue my way through the city in north direction I come to the main square in the city where the city fountain is. Few wooden benches around the well and grey boring pavement is all what this square offers to people. The square is not large but it holds great potential to be a cosy inviting urban room in the city. Built environment around the square gives a shade to the square so greenery has a role to soften the edges of surrounded infrastructure.



1.4. Cankarjeva street



1.5. Glavni trg

The main street of the city is narrow and shady since threestoryed houses stand along. Few street lamps and concrete benches are interweaved into the street sphere. Pavement is restored. Street artists are missing as well as life within the houses. The parallel street is even more narrow and dusky but it has its own story. It holds something mysterious; small boutiques, hairdresser's saloons and colourful houses. Where the two streets combine into one, another square in the city appears. It is a place where people stay with pleasure. Sitting platforms from small coffee shops are spread out on the street. So the place seems more cosy and inviting for people passing by. The place does not have a typical shape of a square but it is in general favoured among citizens. When I resumed my journey through the city I run into The Old Post Office which was demolished when Globus was built. Globus was for a long time noted as the biggest shopping centre in the city. At the moment of writing it is in a renovation process. Soon the city library will move in there. Existing shops still are meant to be located on the ground floor.



1.6. Glavni trg



1.7. The bridge above Kokra river

If you pass Globus, you reach the largest square in the city also known as Slovenski trg. It is surrounded by important city buildings; Town Hall, gymnasium, business centre and shortly present city library within the shopping centre Globus. Great importance is attached to this square. From time to time festivals, concerts and other activities are performed there. Daily it is used as a meeting place for all generations. Pupils occupy the square during their breaks; employees gladly run off their offices and spend their free time there; grandparents bring their grandchildren in the forenoon. Anyhow the place is still to a great extent used as a passing zone. The square is spacious and open. Grey paving tiles define its expanse. Wide open space is variegated by several flowerbed islets, three monuments, the iron casting model of the city of Kranj, few street lamps, litter bins and wooden benches. Those are positioned in a way that does not stimulate social cohesion among the users. As a schoolgirl I used to spend every break on this square but we always had a problem how to take a seat. Thus four persons sat on the bench while others found their place on the floor. When benches were all occupied, we sat on the edging stones of flowerbeds. In the late summer and spring time the square does not offer enough shade. Now when I look at the square with a different intention I may perceive defectiveness even at a larger extent. That is also why I decided to work with this area in my master project. In the north direction one may reach the central bus station, the skyscraper nearby and further on the city hospital. The area is built up with old-fashioned apartment blocks with business offices on the ground floor.



1.8. The library.



1.9. The library.



1.10. Arcades and a fountain.

THE

Further pages intend to show a situation of Kranj in landscape and moreover how the city is in a context with surrounding environment. Small scale analyses of Slovenski trg aid final design proposal to be functional and considered.

2. 4. ANALYSES

PURPOSE OF THE ANALYSES

_to better understand the context of the square

_to be conscious of users needs

_to point out advantages and defectiveness of the particular spot

_to throw light upon latent potential of the square

SITUATION IN THE LANDSCAPE

THE

LOCATION

BACKGROUND OF THE AREA

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CITY

ANALYSES

The image shows the city in relation to the landscape.



The image includes a vicinity of the city and surrounding settlements.



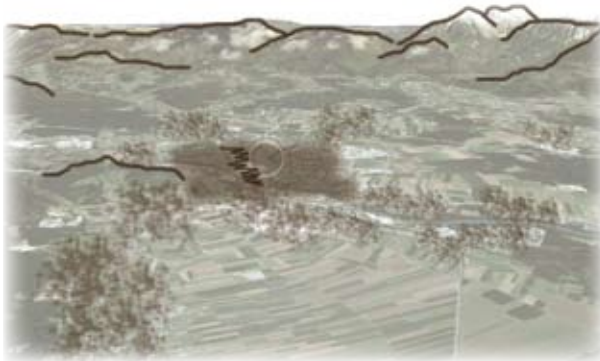
CITY

LOCATION

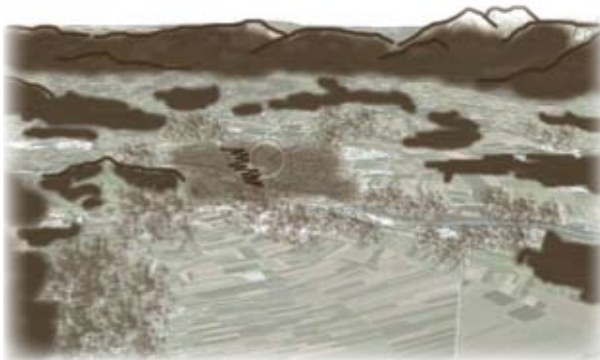
BACKGROUND OF THE AREA

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CITY

ANALYSES



The image aims to show built environment in relation to the surrounding mountains. Kranj lies at the foothills of the mountain range.



The image shows the green environment, mostly the forest and pastures.

SITUATION IN THE LANDSCAPE

KRANJ AND ITS SURROUNDING



Birds' eye view on Kranj and its surrounding area.



Incorporation of the old part of the city (south) and the newer one (north) - the wider context.

Red dot - Slovenski trg, my area of interest.



The surrounding built environment.

With thickness or the density of the line I want to show where the population density is present and with the colour where the industrial areas are located.

CITY

This image is important since it wants to show the old part of the city in relation to the location of shopping centers at the outskirts of the city.



Nearby housing is located between the old part of the city and the shopping centers at the outskirts.

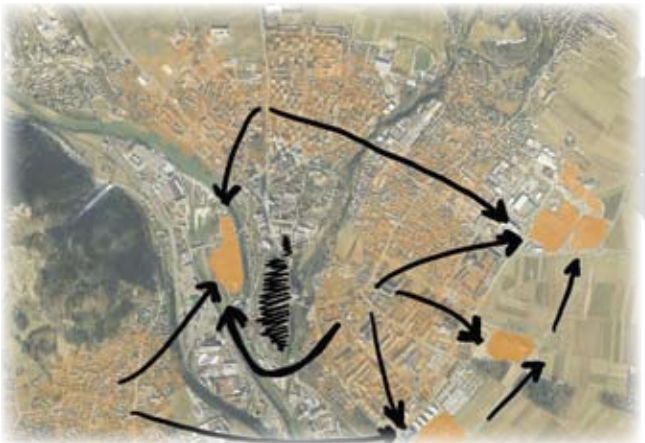


Since the old part of the city does not offer adequate spectrum of goods, people tend to visit the closest shopping mall depending where they live.

Transparent coloured spot = housing estate

Intense coloured shape = shopping centres

Arrow = direction of travelling



KRANJ AND ITS SURROUNDING

LOCATION

BACKGROUND OF THE AREA

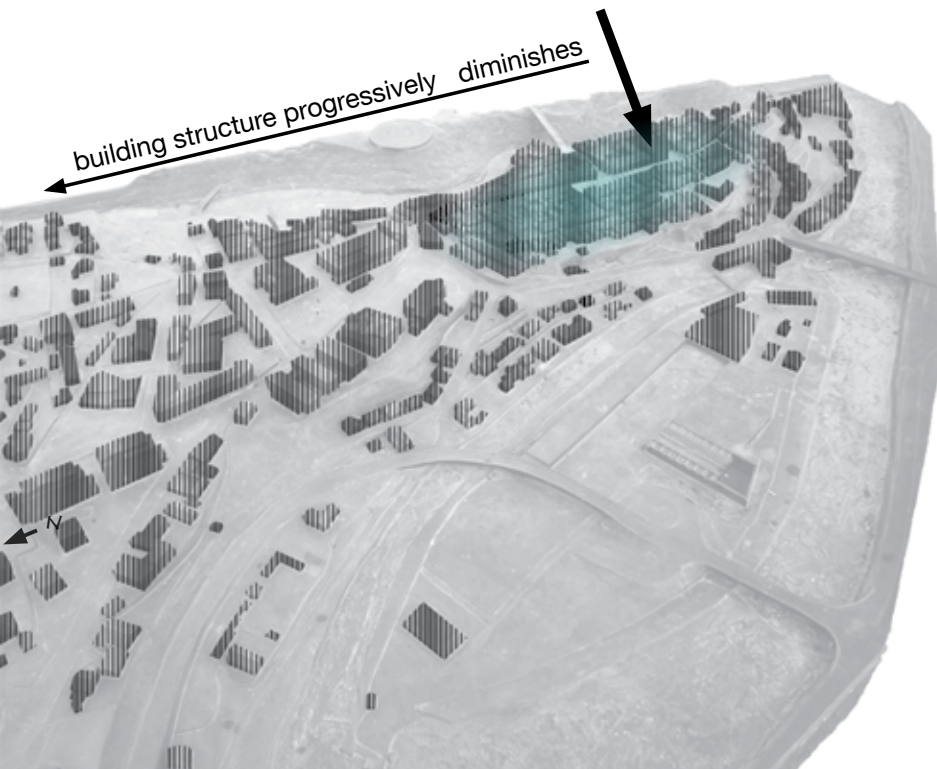
A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CITY

ANALYSES

BUILDING PATTERNS

The old city centre has a serried building pattern while northwards compact building structure progressively diminishes. Relatively high city infrastructure in the old part makes intimate and cosy urban rooms within a streetscape. Public space north of the old city centre is wider and more exposed to the sun. Therefore it is inviting for citizens and tourists to stop by.

COMPACT BUILDING PATTERN

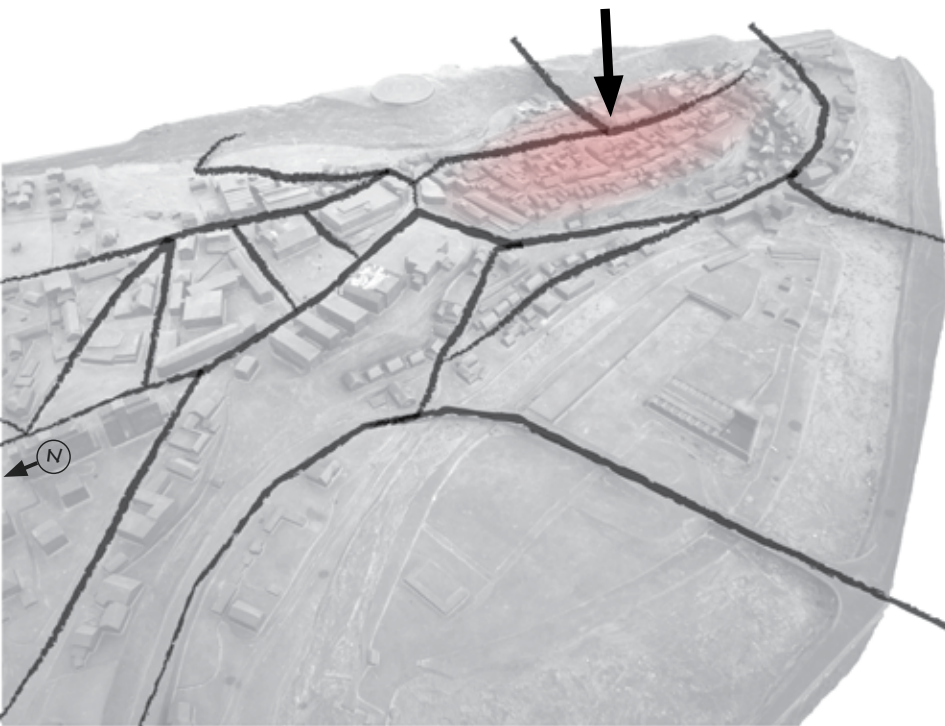


This image aims to show the building pattern of the city and how the density of the building progressively diminishes toward the north.

DIRECTIONS AND PATHS

The streetscape of Kranj is mystic and attractive. Colourful façades give a sense of warmth, especially when they are exposed to the rays of the evening sun. Streets are narrow and widened where the squares are located. Several of the streets are completely in the dark during the night. Cafés and restaurants play an important part in street life. Ground floors of the buildings are intended for shops and coffees while the other floors are empty. Attractive shops are moved to the distant shopping centres. Thus citizens do not shop in the city anymore and consecutively do not stay in the city as much as they did in times past.

PEDESTRIAN ZONE



A NET OF THE MOST USED PATHS
AND STREETS IN THE CITY

Analyses show the paths and streets which are mostly in use by citizens in Kranj. The main street through the city is intended for pedestrians. Several residents have permission to park and drive their vehicles into the old part of Kranj. The city is lacking cycle tracks.

LOCATION

BACKGROUND OF THE AREA

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CITY

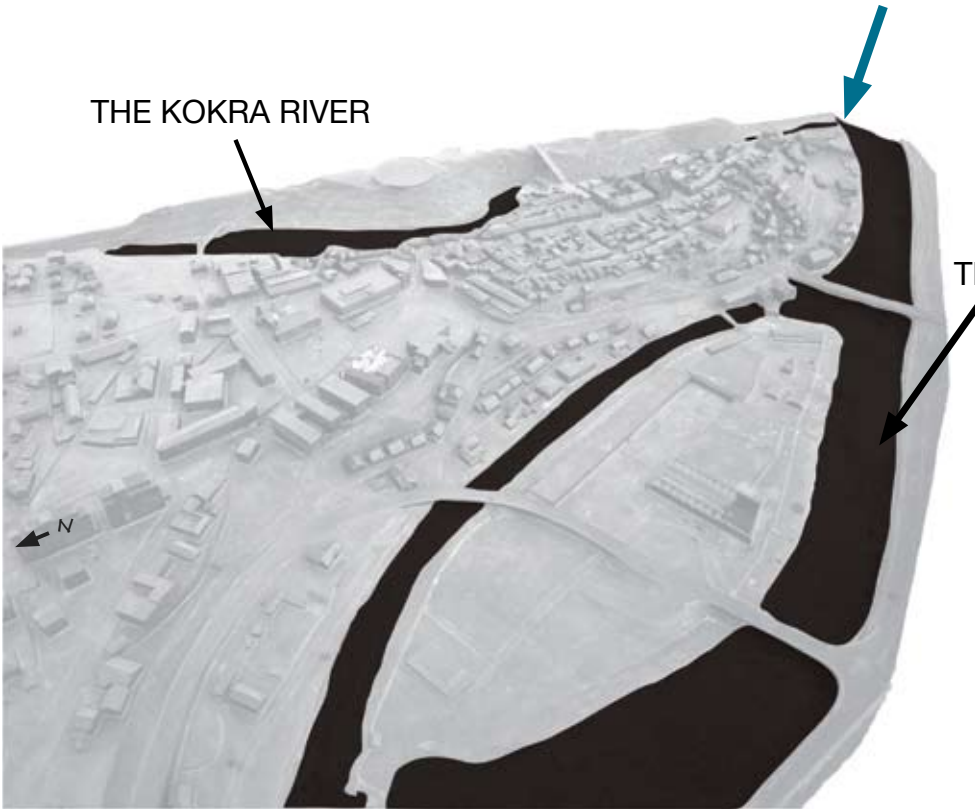
ANALYSES

THE RIVERS

THE CONFLUENCE OF THE SAVA AND THE KOKRA RIVERS

THE KOKRA RIVER

THE SAVA RIVER

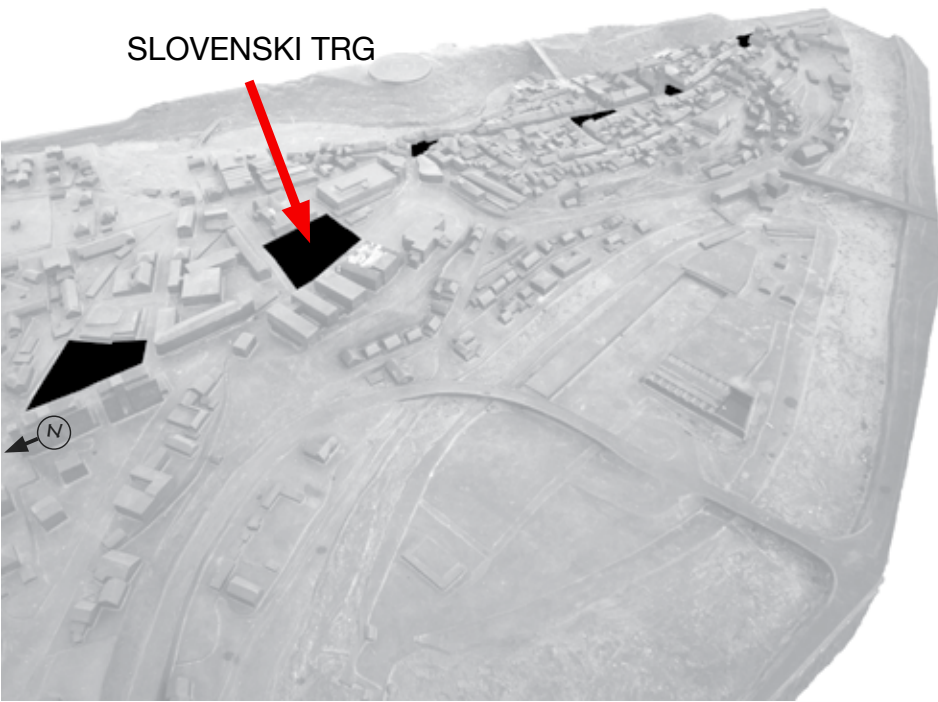


PUBLIC SPACES

The urban pattern creates amicable public space within the city centre. The public space is lacking vegetation or does not function as it should. Cosy nooks are craving for new urban furniture and a well designed lighting plan which may contribute to more frequent visit of the places also during the evening. Thus urban space within the city is mostly bleak. Streetscape is mainly forsaken unless there is a festival or any other cultural event in the city which attracts people also from other cities of our country.

THE SEQUENCE OF PUBLIC SPACES WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE

SLOVENSKI TRG



The streetscape of Kranj tends to link together “meeting places”.

I pointed out Slovenski trg, my area of interest.

3. 1. ANALYSES OF SLOVENSKI TRG

The further pages are intended to give a holistic view of the public square in Kranj – the area of interest. The purpose of contextual analysis is to reveal the present character of public square and to find possibilities how the area can be reshaped. Analyses helped me to find out notable elements and peculiarities of the area. Important is to identify, through investigation of the area, weak elements and strengths on the other hand. So to say, the designer needs to become aware of opportunities which are present but not visible at first sight.

In my analyzing process I took into consideration design aspects which are suggested by The UK Government's advisory Commission for architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in its document, " By Design" (2000, p. 16), which I found of great significance:

- _Urban structure: routes, spaces
- _Urban grain: the pattern of buildings
- _Landscape: greenery, natural elements
- _Light permeability
- _Density and mix: functional diversity, range of uses
- _Scale: height and massing
- _Appearance: details and materials

The purpose of the investigation was to bring forth the general objectives of the particular spot. I better understood the character of the area. The square definitively holds its unique identity. I realized that the square is lacking attractiveness although it is easy of access and navigable. Space is wide and open, enclosed with greenery. The square is known as a place with a variety of uses.

3

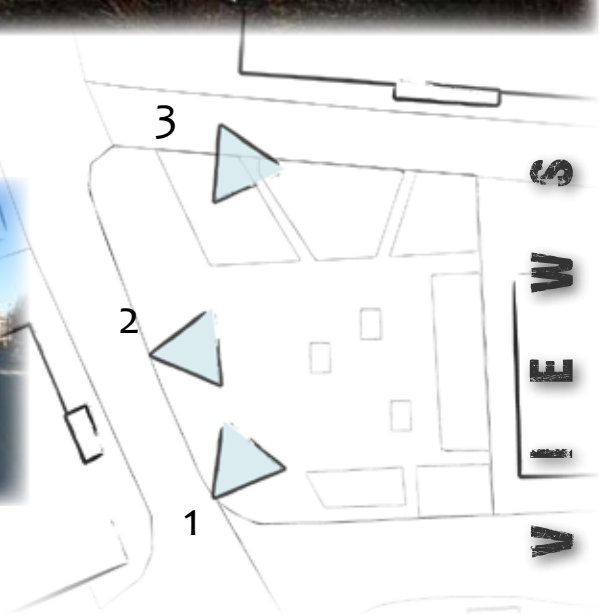


2.1. Slovenski trg. Entrance.

2



2.2. Slovenski trg. Platform.



1



2.3. A statue. Academic sculptor Lojze Dolinar.

The sketch tends to show the three-dimensional aspects of the square, how the central surface of the square is related to the surrounding facades and building's height, and how the greenery at the square soften the edges of the surrounding built environment

ANALYSES
OF SLOVENSKI TRG

WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS
OF SLOVENSKI TRG

COMPARATIVE
CASE STUDIES



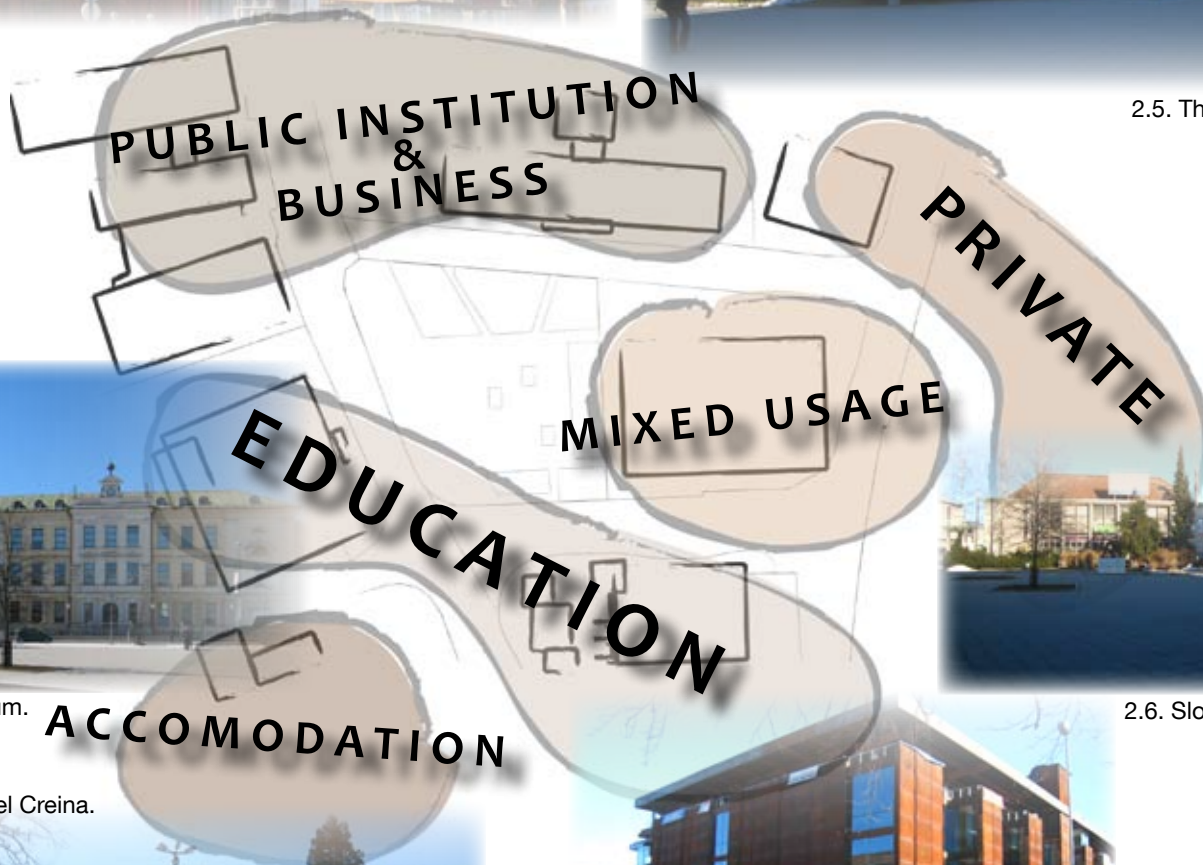
SPATIAL UNDERSTANDING

2.4. Public institution.



2.5. The city hall.

U
S
A
G
E



2.9. Gimnasium.



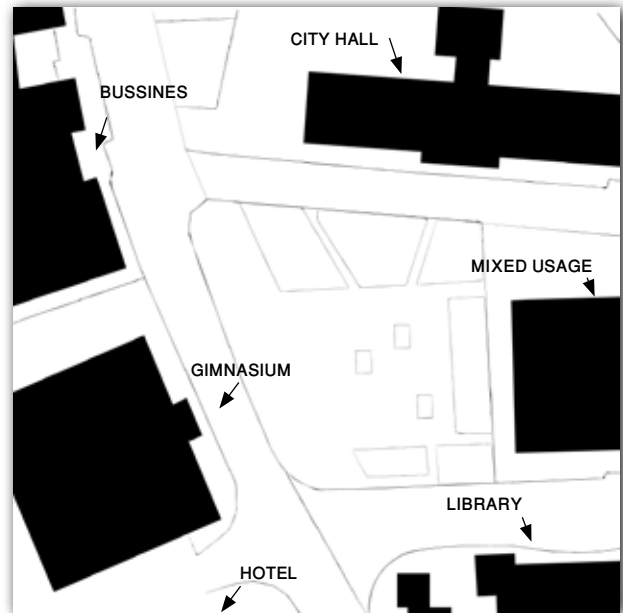
2.6. Slovenski trfg.

2.8. Hotel Creina.

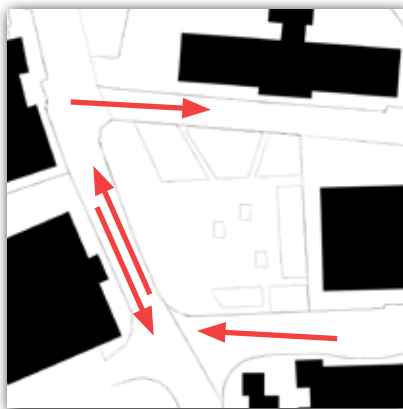


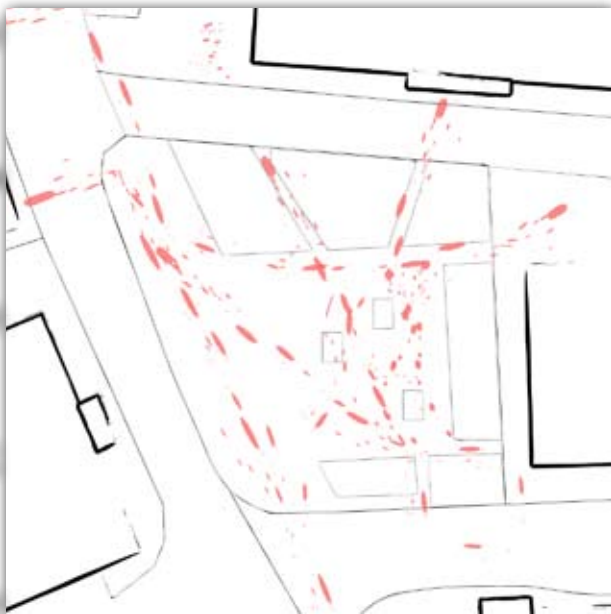
2.7. Globus.

The square is enclosed mainly with high buildings; gymnasium and business building westwards, the city hall in the north, buildings of mixed uses in the east, the library in the south and hotel Creina towards southwest. Thus the open view towards surrounding mountains is obstructed. High buildings give shade to the square and moreover make the square more integrated. A diversity of surrounded buildings offers to people a variety of usage. In the morning it is mainly shelter for scholars and employees who spend their breaks there, for grandparents who bring their grandchildren to spend forenoon at the square. However the square is mostly used as a transitional zone.



A space between buildings is used as a transitional space or parking lot. Directions of spaces indicate the entrances to the square. The square is in the north and south surrounded by one-way road while traffic westwards goes both ways.





When observing the movement through the square during the day, I perceived the square as a transitional zone since it connects the city hall and Gymnasium with the old part of the city of Kranj as well as the police station and city bank in the north. An analysis gives me an information how the square needs to hold free space which acts as a passage. But on the other hand the movement shows where people may want to stop and how the square can become a new living room within a city centre where different activities take place.



Wooden benches are positioned on the verge of the pavement and in front of grassy patches. Benches are placed in a row along each other. Thus social inclusion among the people sitting there is interrupted. Benches are mostly occupied during the morning and afternoon. Background greenery gives to the existing sitting area a feeling of safety but does not offer enough shade during warm sunny days.

An investigation of the area concerning sitting possibilities gives an input that the square is lacking diverse sitting options.



2.10. Sitting equipment in the square. Slovenski trg.



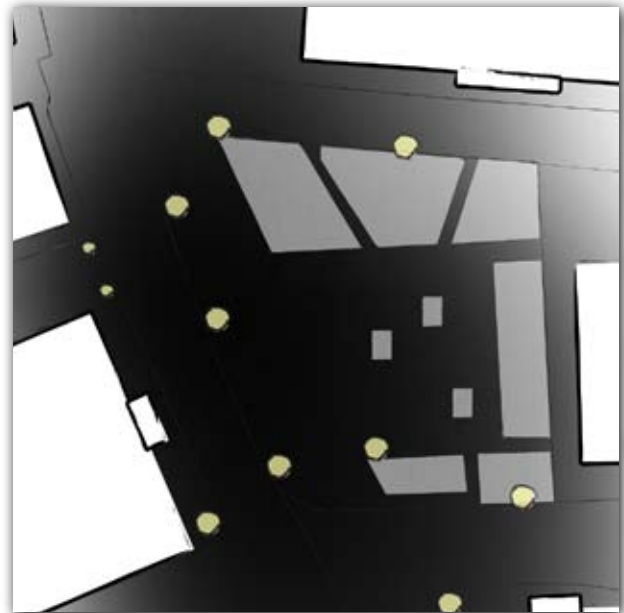
2.11. Open space surrounded with vegetation. Slovenski trg.

Vegetation take nearly half of the square. Paths from different directions divide the greenery into six grassy patches with relatively high vegetation. Three rectangular floor patches of ground are located in the middle of the square. One of them has a tree in the middle while the other two are covered with flowers and grass. The presence of vegetation gives to the square a feeling of enclosure but on the other hand views outwards are obstructed. The space under the trees is not in use as well as flower pots in the middle of the square does not have any function. Although the square is one of the most green space in the city centre, it does not make good use of the vegetation it holds.



2.12. View from Slovenski trg toward Globus.

The square is equipped with public lights. A passage is illuminated by the street lamps, while sitting area and entrance paths are mainly in the dark during the night. However well designed, the lighting plan may promote the spot as a pleasing urban space also during the night.





To the four historical significant monuments of our society great importance is attached. Two of them are erected at the passage while another two are located in the middle of the square. Monuments give to the square a sense of magnificence. Monuments are not visible during the night since they are not lit up.



2.13. Statues in Slovenski trg.



Fundamental observation of the area brings forth defectiveness of the urban equipment and design details. Owing to inappropriate ground floor for skaters, the square is in good condition. But all the same some detailed investigation shows what needs to be repaired and more carefully designed.



2.14. Details in paving. Slovenski trg.

Analyses point out advantages and defectiveness of the particular area. Detailed investigation of the area contributes to better understanding of the square. Observing people walking through the square informs me that the square is mainly used as a passage but on the other hand people find it also as a pleasing shelter within a city centre. I kept an eye on people sitting at the square; since benches are placed in a row, communication among the users is cut off. A square as such needs to offer to people a variety of sitting possibilities (cubes, pillows, hammocks, deckchairs, benches) which may also contribute to creative thinking (for example a user has a possibility to construct and conform his own seat wherever he wants at the square).

Surrounded buildings are well connected to the square. However it is always possible that you find new connections between spaces. Parking areas are properly hidden behind high surrounding vegetation.

The traffic direction around the square has been changed recently. This does not affect the square. Four monuments are of great importance for the city of Kranj, but if the square is to be revived, they may be displaced to another square in the city. Passersby do not even know why they are placed there and which message do they bear. Lighting of the square is poor. People do feel safe there also during the evenings. The square is longing after more intimate lighting plan. Observing details at the square sets me thinking that long lasting materials should be used at the square to assure continuance.

THE

Just like every urban square also Slovenski trg has its own weak points which influence the designing process. But on the other hand strong and unique details of the square are unveiled to be emphasized and revived.

3. 2. WEAKNESSES and STRENGTHS of Slovenski trg

—

+

_poor in urban furniture

_shape

_noted as a passage

_relatively rich in greenery

_open/wide

_open/wide

_encircled by traffic roads

_accessibility

_closed view of the mountains

_position of the square

_shade

_diverse programme of surrounding buildings

_maintenance

3. 3. COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

When travelling around and observing European city squares, I decided to do a case study for three squares close at hand; Tartinijev trg in Piran (Slovenia), Narodni trg in Zadar (Croatia) and Placa Major in Palma de Mallorca (Spain). Several similarities between them were perceived but on the other hand they differ from each other a lot. I did shallow investigations which are presented in further drawings: entrances, open area, building pattern. All three squares have an intention to be pedestrian friendly zones, free of traffic. First of all those three squares are noted for their shapes and purpose. I found it interesting how they are incorporated into the street pattern within the particular city. They all arouse public interest since they are all placed within the city centres and are all used as passages through the cities. Different festivals and other cultural happening take place in those squares, they are centres of attraction.

The following sketches and drawings have an intention to present characteristics of the three squares and to draw a parallel to Slovenski trg in Kranj, my area of interest.

ANALYSES OF SLOVENSKI TRG

WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS OF SLOVENSKI TRG

COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

Placa Major



Narodni trg



Tartinijev trg



Slovenski trg



Public space within the city is usually defined by surrounded buildings. All investigated spots verify earlier statement. While Placa Major, Narodni trg and Slovenski trg have a similar shape, Tartinijev trg is well known for its unique oval shape. None of the squares is directly surrounded by traffic roads except Slovenski trg.

All examples show that the use of surrounding buildings define the purpose of the square. All four squares have the same intention, to be an urban room for the citizens.

Placa Major



Each city has its own net of paths and accesses. Thus public spaces within the cities are differently accessible, some of them are easy of access while others are almost inaccessible. Placa Major in Palma is accessible only from two directions. The main shopping street in Palma is broken off where Placa Major appears.

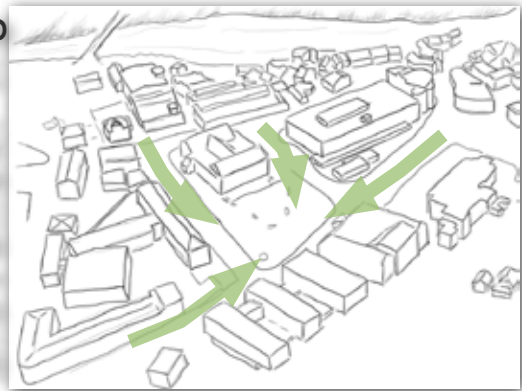
Narodni trg



Tartinijev trg



Slovenski trg



On the other hand Narodni trg in Zadar has more accesses than Placa Major but owing to dense building structure, a feeling of closeness is to a great extent present. Tartinijev trg is the most accessible one, it is also the most opened since it has open view toward the sea. The square is accessible from the littoral zone of the town as well as from the old town quarter. Slovenski trg is accessible from almost all directions since it is open and wide. Accessibility is thus dependent on density of surrounding structure.

Placa Major

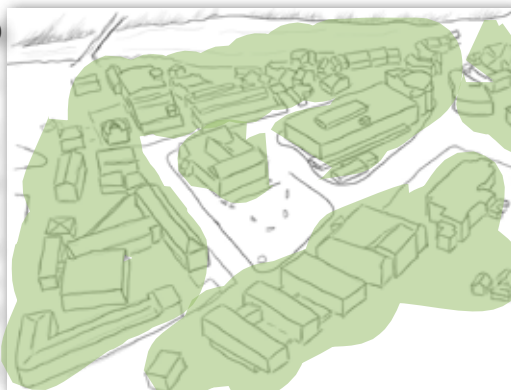


Public spaces are enclosed with relatively high building structures. Placa Major in Palma and Narodni trg in Zadar are for the sake of the square shape more interweaved into the building structure and thus more shaded during the day than Tartinijev trg in Piran and Slovenski trg in Kranj..

Narodni trg



Slovenski trg



Three investigated squares are surrounded also with resident apartments. They are all of the greatest interest among the public since they are all noted as a popular meeting points within each city. Slovenski trg has resident apartments just in the north but that does not change the purpose of the square which is similar to others, to bring people back to the city centre.

Tartinijev trg



4. 1. THEORIES AS A BASIS FOR THE DESIGN PROPOSAL

Background, Concepts of interest

The reason why I choose interaction as the main lodestar in my project is the curiosity of how the landscape architect can improve the urban environment in a creative way, and how users of urban space perceive public interaction and involve themselves in it. After visiting some European metropolises I can draw out my own notes how I have experienced a square that encourages public interaction; what is important for me while making a new design, what I think brings benefit to a square and what people like when making a stay on a square. As a complement it was necessary to get an input from relevant literature. I have studied several authors which I found interesting and appropriate concerning my subject.

On the basis of theoretical facts from environmental psychology and urban design, I can better understand how an urban environment may stimulate interaction among its users. How much space is needed that one feels safe but not secluded, that one's privacy is not bothered but still there is a feeling that one is part of the society - all this information is drawn out from literature about environmental psychology. On the other hand it is necessary to attach a great importance to a variety of uses which take place on the square; how surrounding buildings do affect the use of a square, and in which way movement patterns influence the users of an urban environment.

Public space

“Open space is an essential part of the urban heritage, a strong element in the architectural and aesthetic form of a city, plays an important educational role, is ecologically significant, is important for social interaction and in fostering community development and is supportive of economic objectives and activities. In particular it helps reduce the inherent tension and conflict in deprived parts of urban areas of Europe; it has an important role in providing for recreational and leisure needs of community and has an economic value in that of environmental enhancement.” (Council of Europe, 1986) (Woolley H., 2003, p. 7) Different activities contribute to diversity of urban spaces. Benefits coming out from such activities have a beneficial influence on human well being. Public space has an educational role; it is an environment where people learn how to interact with others. On the other hand public space can be recreational area or an intimate spot for those who are seeking tranquility and quietness. Woolley (2003, p.20) continues that “every particular open space is a reflection of a variety of aspects”.

Where people with different cultural background are present, designer must necessarily take into consideration that people have their own expectations and desires. To get over such difficulties it is required to obliterate cultural boundaries to a certain extent and make design for open public space accessible as much as possible to the great number of people.

The basic explanation of “Public space”, according to Wikipedia is;
public space is a social space such as a town square that is open and accessible to all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level. One of the earliest examples of public spaces are commons. For example, no fees or paid tickets are required for entry, nor are the entrants discriminated based on background. Non-government-owned malls are examples of ‘private space’ with the appearance of being ‘public space’....

Subconsciously popular places are given a value which is presented through frequent visiting and people’s behaviour.

Creativity

When discovering characteristics of a creative city I come across an interesting book; “The creative city”, where author Landry (2000) interprets creativity as:

2. “An outcome of individual, organisation or city; and it is dependent on qualities which could be thought of by them in an open-minded way”.
3. “A process of discovering which bring forth a possibility to be evolved”.

Further, Landry (2000, p. 4) in his book The Creative City mentions what needs to be considered for the purpose of a creative city. In the foreground is people’s ability of learning and listening. Creative city is expecting people to be able to think out of the box and additionally striving after long-term aims in the planning process. Creativity, commonly related to science and art, is in Landry’s opinion “a power of thinking and ideas which shape people’s mind set”. (Landry C., 2004, p. 4)

To make city attractive, designers and people involved into revival of a city must be aware of weak points in the city design but on the other hand be able to recognize unique characteristics of particular area, used them and make the best out of them. As culture affects the image of every city, I feel sure that city’s uniqueness is often related to cultural background of a city. Landry believes that “culture is a mirror of society, it shows visage of the city, its uniqueness and peculiarity”. (Landry C., 2004, p. 4) Referring to numerous cities, Landry also believes that the integration of outside populations in the city is a source of creative potential or of conflict on the other hand. “Innovative solutions need to be found to fill up a gap between cultural divisions in the city and thus make city successful”. (Landry C., 2000, p. 22)

Creativity is a process of discovering and holds a possibility to be evolved. Creativity comes out of an individual, group of people or citizens community. As people “form” creativity, it is dependent on qualities which could be thought of by them in an open-minded way. Thus every particular problem is handled in an integrated and holistic way taking into consideration a variety of aspects. This is a flexible way of solving problems. (Landry, 2000, p. 4-13)

Culture

Culture, expressed through peoples' thinking, their habits as well as activities, has historical, industrial and artistic traces. These are presented through architecture and urban environment interweaved with cultural activities which take place there, and through performances of visual and contemporary art. Moreover culture has a great contribution to social inclusion, personal behaviour and people's well-being, mental and physical.

Landry believes that cultural resources are treated as imaginative resources which stimulate creativity. It turns out that sense of culture is perceived through the identity of a place and its values. When the city brings forth its local distinctiveness, it might vibrate as a whole; that means that one must see and understand its fundamental message which is applied through architecture, arts, people, and their activities.

The contemporary city strives after cultural, economical, social and environmental sustainability. It is of importance to be aware of new urban trends. As I have already mentioned, uniqueness within a city needs to be revealed, and one must be able to make something out of it in a fresh and innovative way. In deference to distinctness of cities; their position, weather condition, culture, inhabitants, etc, every city may become known for something else that makes it unique. (Landry, 2000, p. 20)

Vibrancy in the city is achieved with inviting urban places holding different kinds of events. Beside economy, politics and social role, cultural heritage of the city plays an important part in uniqueness and distinctiveness of a place. Like that culture may be perceived as a visible way of people's daily life. (Landry C., 2000, p. 39)

"Cities are brands and they need glamour, style and fizz." (Landry, 2000, p. 31)

Place making

Place making is a term that began to be used in the 1970s by architects and planners to describe the process of creating squares, plazas, parks, streets and waterfronts that will attract people because they are pleasurable or interesting. Landscape often plays an important role in the design process. (Wikipedia)

Patsy Healey in her book “Making Better Places” (2010, p. 33) writes that place cannot be seen just as physical form but it is represented through social and political concepts and activities. The importance lay on people’s interpretation of place considering the meanings and values they put in their surroundings. In this way, people are able to have influence on their nearby environment. I agree upon author’s argumentation of place qualities being the result of combining our experiences of materials in our surrounding and the meanings we give to them. Moreover, Healey (2010, p.34) describes how through an input of physical experiences of objects and constructions, imbued with given values and meanings of every individual, one might feel a sense of place or in other words quality of place. Complexity of relationships between people with different cultural backgrounds living in diverse societies might appear as a source for place quality. Patsy Healey writes: “So collective place-making efforts that aim to expand the opportunities for ‘human flourishing’ in the places of daily life need to proceed with great sensitivity to who lives where, what they do, what they know, how they get on, how they relate to each other, what they care about and feel that they ‘need’.” (Healey, 2010, p. 35) Discovering the term of placemaking, I strongly feel that placemaking is a basic principle of any further urban design process.

Fleming in his book “The Art of Placemaking” (2007) puts out four urban design objectives which need to be taken into consideration when improving and enliven lost spaces in cities of the Modernist era. He suggests:

1. Orientation: this covers the research that reveals the layers of meaning, and only then affirms the metaphors through interaction with community.
2. Connection: this refers to the design of that meaning in a holistic and integrated way throughout the site.
3. Direction: this provides the visual clarity that links the place-making elements so that the visitor can clearly navigate the space.
4. Animation: this tests how the varied uses and activities that can build complexity in and around the space will be deployed.

People and space

Tony Cassidy in his book *Environmental Psychology - Behaviour and Experience in Context* discusses how social environment in terms of urbanisation affects the use of space as well as crowding and privacy in the city. Crowding in city is a consequence of a massive migration of people from countryside to the cities. So the overcrowded cities are fighting toward the invasion of personal space. For the same reason are people in cities experiencing the reduction of privacy. Judging by my own experiences and author's comments, people living in cities seems less helpful. Cassidy attaches importance to Kevin Lynch (1960) who has formed an opinion that urban planning must focus on the city in a way that takes into account the way people/inhabitants perceive and see their city, how they imagine the city in their minds. The physical environment of a particular city is in a strong relation to its social identity. The author sets out an evidence explaining adaptation of people to faster life in the city; walking faster, eating faster etc. but on the other hand he also writes about the positive side of living in the city. In comparison to country living, city offers all that people need; medical facilities and educational institutions are just close by and employment and educational opportunities are better covered than in the countryside. (Cassidy, 1997, p. 123-127)

Designing an urban room within the city makes me realise how personal space is important and how it differs from individual to individual. It can be described as an invisible bubble around us which defines how close to us we will let other people, and the opposite. We become aware of our personal space when it is invaded. However the "invisible bubble" around us is variable regarding different circumstances in our physical environment. (Cassidy, 1997, p. 127)

When designing an urban room for social inclusion in the city, personal space needs to be taken into account. The idea of personal space is described in different categories. According to Hall (1996) an importance lay on range of public distance which is described as a zone of 3.5 meter or even greater.

The tendency of every individual is to maintain personal space between itself and others. In this manner we also “form” various distances for different people, friends, partner, and strangers. Different sizes of personal space also vary from different cultures. An “invisible bubble” of personal space has an elliptical shape; in that manner it is bigger in front and behind us. That is why we tolerate people coming closer to us at the sides. (Cassidy, 1997, p. 128)

Cassidy (1997, p.130) explains that dimension of our personal space depends on different factors; personal characteristics of every individual, age, the nature of the relationships as well as its social and cultural background. Difference in personal space is also identified among different gender; males needs more personal space when interacting with other males while females need less personal space when interacting with other females and even less when interacting with males. People tend to feel that in a way they own the environment where they live and therefore they feel responsible for it. Furthermore, it is likely that invasion of territory in public domain induces people to move somewhere else. But if it comes to invasion, people act angry which may lead to a conflict. When talking about privacy, it turns out that privacy is of larger importance than personal space or territoriality. People strive to ensure the control of access to our subjective and objective spaces which are reserved for our personal use. If we lose this control, we might feel distressed.

Altman (1975) defines privacy as a boundary control process between individual and others; it has the intention to find balance between solitude and intimacy. (Cassidy T., 1997, p. 159, 160)

Public interaction in public space

Within this master project I decided to discover a term of interaction and try to make a final design proposal which is eye-catching at once and thus stimulate people to get involved into the public space.

In my project, the goal is to add an interactive and playful layer to urban elements and objects people already know. In this way I want to strengthen the interaction between elements and their users.

Quality public spaces attract a wide cross-section of the public and the consequent mix of people contributes to the vibrancy of towns. Some of the most important elements in designing for inclusion include people of all age groups and with different social background. Such design needs to involve public in decision-making.

Modern and inviting urban spaces attract a crowd. Every individual contributes to the vibrancy of the town. When designing spaces for inclusion, a design needs to be purposed for people of all ages and social statuses. Public spaces intend to promote diversity and tolerance. An important part of a successful design is public involvement and consultation. Public spaces which are under different security regimes are more visited among elderly and families. As elderly and parents often set an example to children, public spaces also intend to be spots where children and young people observe others' behaviour, how do they interact with other people and elements in space. A designer role is to make public spaces as inclusive as possible. In this way people are allowed to choose by who they want to sit or interact with in public space. (Holland, 2007, p. 9-12)

Elements define physical scene of public space as accessible and comfortable or the opposite. Precisely and wisely usage of equipment makes public space inviting and user-friendly. As street furniture needs to satisfy people of all ages, the design of it, is always a challenge.

Elderly always look after safe seating while young people like to discover different seating positions. Thus designers and local authorities may take into consideration a variety of possible urban equipment. Lighting and sound have relevant and crucial value in every urban fabric.

Urban spaces need to be designed in a way that permit people to just “be”, to let them discover a place on their own and interact with people they find similar.

Designers often come across an interesting question, whether it is better to make urban spaces for people just to let them be there doing nothing, or places that are operational but not in use since there is no one hanging around. (Holland, 2007, p. 9-12)

Environmental design

Cassidy in his book “Environmental psychology” (1997, p. 172) reminds us how the design of the physical environment affects us. Consequently it is important to think simultaneously about social and formal design in the initial phase. The intention of every physical environment is to provide health and satisfaction among all users. For this reason it is necessary to gather all the important information considering activities which might take place in this environment, the number of people using the space, their need and expectations. Besides shape and size of the space, the designer needs to bring into focus other aspects such as noise levels, colour, lighting, when designing a physical environment. A proper dimension of personal space and privacy need to be achieved to avoid feelings of crowding or seclusion, or in other words to promote sense of satisfaction and well-being among the users. Cassidy (1997, p. 197) sets out the importance of effective design which promotes social inclusion on the one hand and offers privacy in the same measure.

Use of public space

The purpose of urban environment in the city is to be in constant use. Streetscape should entertain passersby. Thus street artist, musicians and others play a significant role in a revival of a city centre. In the era of the social networks invasion people need to be given places where they would like to go, to see each other, to come into touch with new people, interact and enjoy. (Gehl J., Gemzøe L., 2003, p. 10)

Usage of public space has varied in the course of time but it always, more or less, has acted as a meeting place, marketplace and traffic space. In other words city has always provided social gathering, and interaction. Usage of public space has varied in the course of time but it always, more or less, has acted as a meeting place, marketplace and traffic space. In other words city has always provided social gathering, and interaction. People have come to the city centre to share their opinions and ideas with others, to participate in important events, festivals, town meetings etc. Almost every city owned its unique market place where goods were exchanged and services offered. Nowadays the market places in small cities are losing their purpose. Huge shopping malls on the outskirts of cities replaced them and became sheltered urban rooms. As Gehl (2003, p. 13) puts out, the market place gradually has become a part of the private sphere and thus has cut off the public arena. In the 20th century radical changes in city planning redirected traditional usage of cities. An invasion of cars caused the transformation of traffic networks within a city. Thus pedestrian areas became disturbed. By that time the traditional role of the city fully changed.

Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe in the book “New city spaces”(2003, p. 13) write how changes in society during the last century make the vitality of public life in central Copenhagen of special interest. When I pondered their words I became aware that people on the streets

and in the squares have chosen to be there because they want to, not because they need to. To achieve that, urban designer must consider desires and ideas coming out from people. Citizens have to be given a possibility to participate in decision-making. Merely this way a variety of alternatives might be presented. In book *New city spaces* (2003, p. 14) four different types of cities are presented, with regard to variety of cultural patterns, historical backgrounds and other conditions which make every city different to others. The traditional city was formed in the middle ages. It was intended for people and their movements through the city. The size of the middle age city was in proportion with pedestrians and their use of space. Coinciding with the appearance of public spaces, the city offered new meeting place, marketplace and traffic space. In cities where traffic has crossed frontiers, physical space disappeared. When history is not incorporated into city planning, abandoned cities have appeared. Cities like that scratched out public life in public spaces. The abandoned city is made of asphalt. It takes away the social cohesion since it does not offer any public places. As Gehl (2003, p. 16) describes, those cities have no intention to be pedestrian friendly.

When it turned out how important public life in a city is, city planning tried to bring back public spaces. Pedestrian traffic-free streets were created, with the intention to invite people to shop there. In the course of time the importance of public life in public space was on the increase. At that time pedestrian areas within the city were complemented with vegetation and urban furniture. Barcelona was the first city to promote public life at such extent.

The authors note that the last 20 years of the 20th century contribute to growth of public life and public spaces in the city. Public space strategies are not anymore just an European domain; they have become worldwide. A combination of various aspects is presented which refers to different urban visions.

Importance is focused on safety, changes in traffic routes, human well-being, including reduction in noise and pollution. Considering all these aspects, the city might be provided with better places where people can live, interact and calm down. At the end of the introduction, the authors admonish us that urban tradition has no longer been a part of city planning. What happens in cities today is a totally new phenomenon. Public spaces in the city must meet the needs of the people, by that it is meant that public space need to stimulate people's senses and their imagination. Interaction with other people should not be disturbed. To sum up the authors' thoughts I might conclude that new meaning and significance is given to the city as meeting place.

History and identity of a city

In my point of view the historical background of a city also has a great contribution to the image of the city. Hence it follows that the identity of a city is closely linked with its history. So when making a design for an urban environment within a city, it is necessary to have an insight into the history of a city. Historical information is often an efficient source for further analysis which may show activities that urban environment address over the time. Thus places intended for festivals or other kind of gathering can be founded out. Those places are also main local spots in the city where collective identity is reinforced. Nick Corbett describes in his book “Revival in the square” (2004, p. 30) how important an understanding of the past is. Knowing history informs us about the present of the city and helps us to provide future image of a city. Since the citizens and visitors are often enchanted at historical facts of a city, one way to promote the identity of a city square is to lay stress upon prominent monuments which take place there or to expose plaques associated with important local events and famous people.

When looking after popular urban spots in town, city squares attract attention in the first place. If a city square is well designed, it excites curiosity among its users. The position of a square is of the greatest significance. A square surrounded with important buildings attracts more people in case they have an interest in them. Moreover, if square is surrounded with buildings where different activities are addressed, a square become more inviting.

A range of uses and activities which can be perceived along axial and convex lines present the image of the street or open space; its usage and liveliness. Bill Hillier believes that square is well positioned when it is in good relation with movement patterns. It is also significant that different spots are designed from which the lines of movement can be seen. (Corbet N., 2004, p. 52)

Kranj is a small city and it is densely developed as some of the fortified medieval cities are. If you reach a hill nearby, you can see the city of Kranj in its totality.

What I found interesting in Corbet's writing, is the summary of The Council's Streetscape guide from London where one may find some important principles for active streetscape. The first significant aim is a reduction of muddle. Secondly the selection of high-quality materials in a limited range may be precisely picked out. Thus a design of streetscape may be clean and simple, in good proportion with colours. Furthermore local character needs to be visibly present. It is always good if we find a way how to maintain and keep existing, how to preserve historic paving and street furniture but in the meantime improve surrounding environment. (Corbett N., 2004, p 52)

As the author writes, a square should be placed in the city in a way that accessibility to the square is good. Accessibility in such case also means good physical and visual permeability of a square.

PROCESS

4. 2. TESTING DESIGN CONCEPTS

Further pages intend to present the first step in my design process. The idea is to make a variety of possible proposals based on the existing directions in the square. To limit the possibilities I had a detailed insight into some design proposals presented in Jan Gehl's book *New city spaces*. When coming out with my own proposals for Slovenski trg, I lean on Jan Gehl's vision of diverse public spaces regarding the different architectural features in the square and a variety of possible types of spaces. With regard to his idea of a variety of public spaces, I take aim at Slovenski trg being a themed square, to hold a monumental touch or to be simply divided by different surfaces.

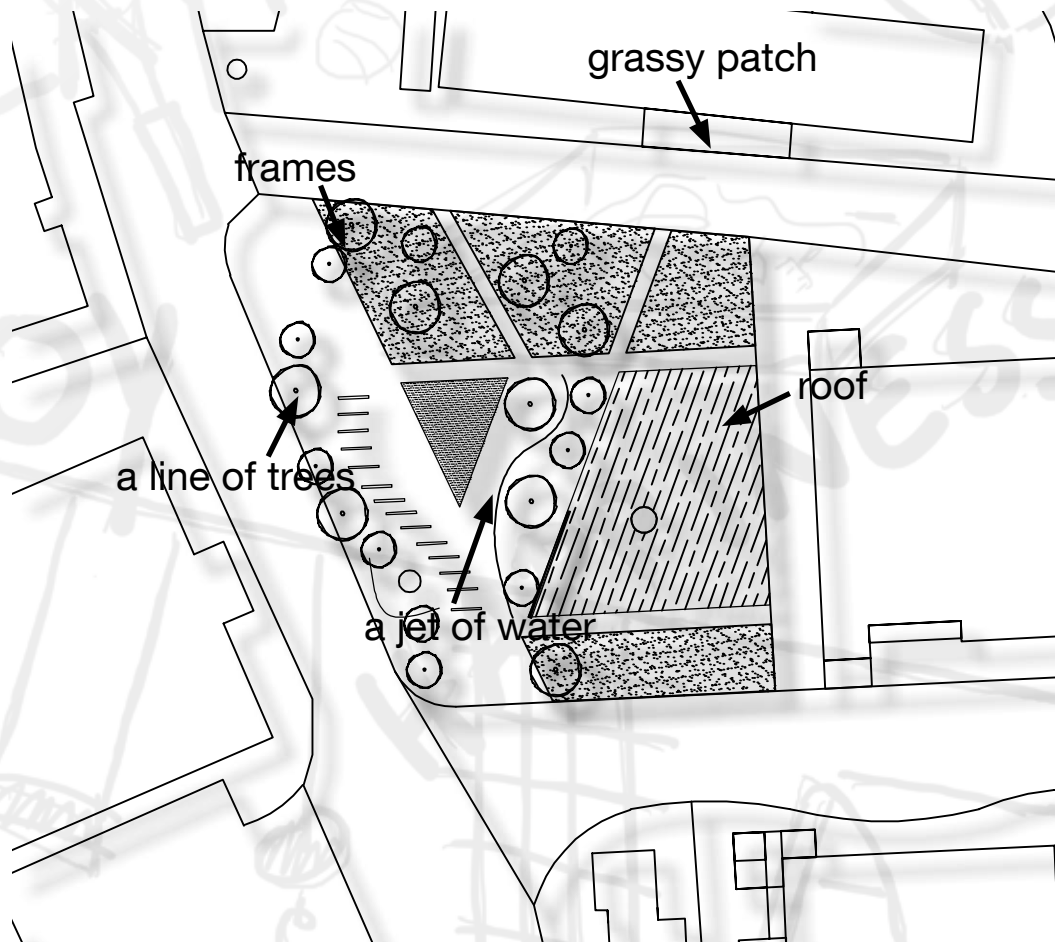
My further design proposals are based on Jan Gehl's division of the group of new public spaces (Gehl J., 2003, p 87).

In the initial phase of drawing design solutions for the square I focused on the *investigated directions* of the square as well as on the fact that the square is mostly used as a passage.

1. Introducing a theme (e.g. playfulness) into the square.
2. Slovenski trg as a monumental square.
3. A set of elements to divide the square.

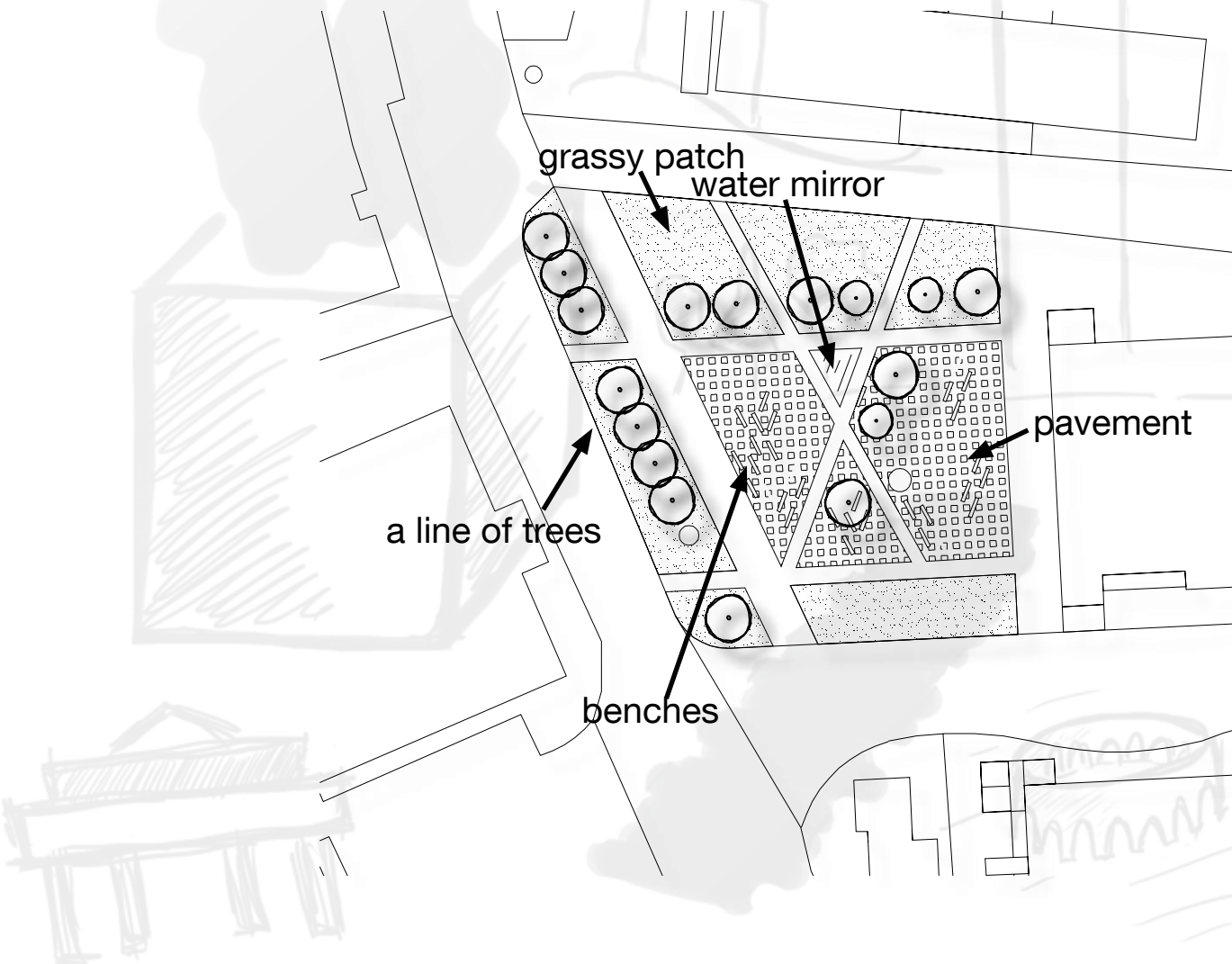
1. How is it possible to introduce a theme (e.g. playfulness) into the square?

The first design proposal has an intention to introduce a theme into the square. Grassy patches stick to the similar shape as the existent ones, moreover they are extended. Sitting furniture takes place under the built structure in the east side of the square. Retaining walls are purposed for climbing and drawing. In the middle of the square there is a sand box in triangular shape. Water element is located between the sand box and built structure and it is surrounded by trees. Thus pleasant microclimate for children is achieved. A passage of the square is enriched with another built element. Fourteen frames in a row narrow the main passage of the square into a corridor. A line of trees escort a succession of frames. A design of playground satisfy users' needs but still does not promote creative thinking.



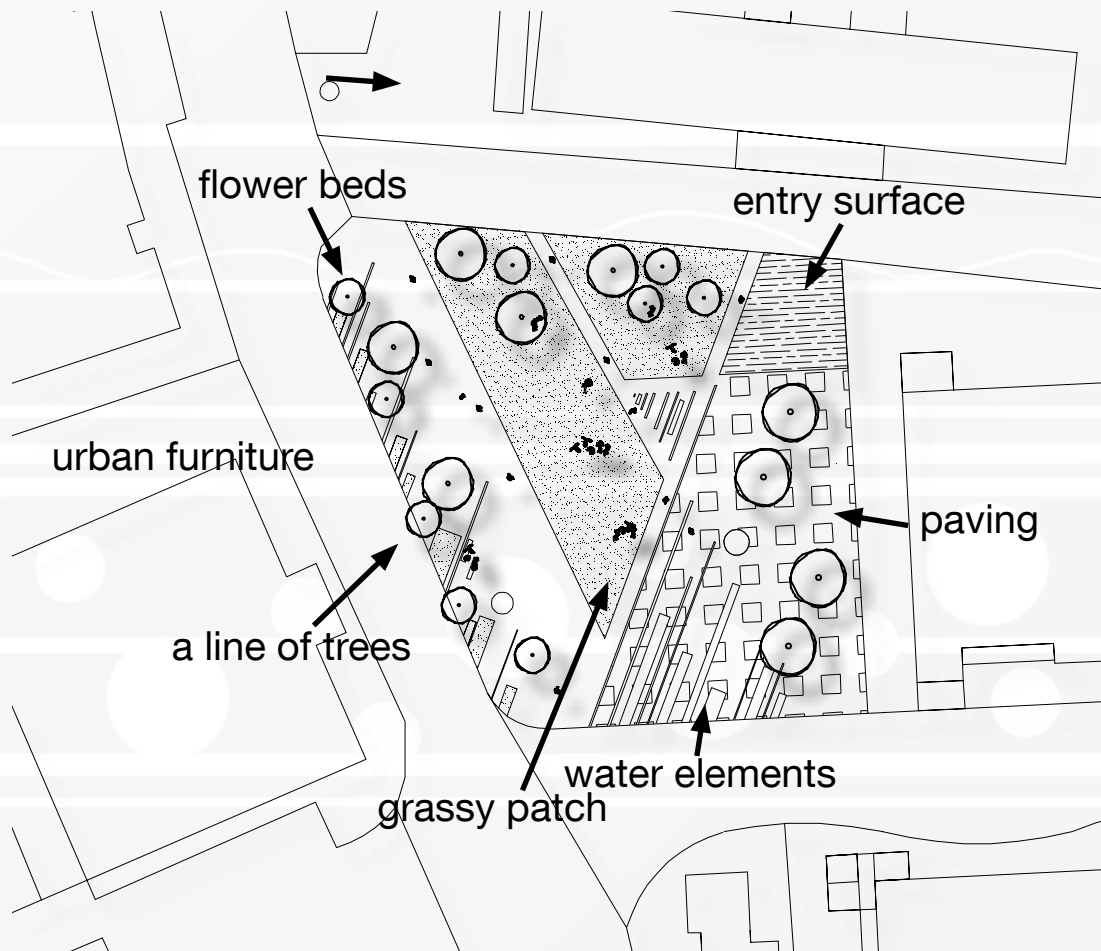
2. How does Slovenski trg look like if the square holds a monumental touch?

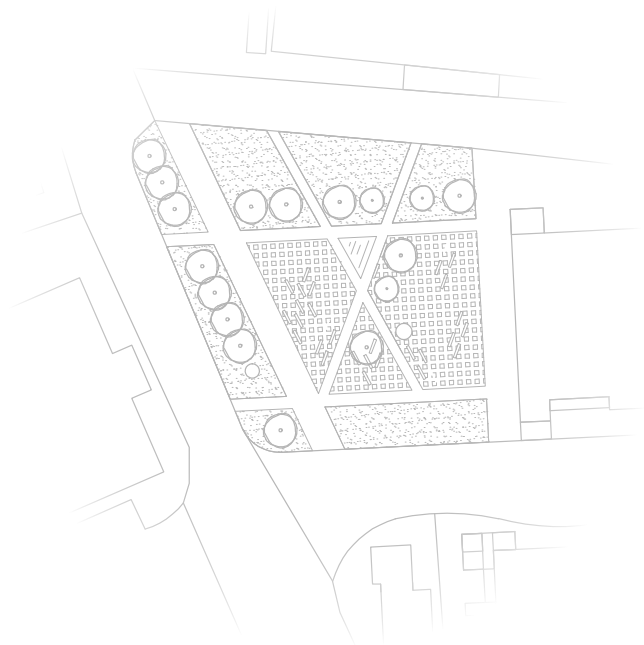
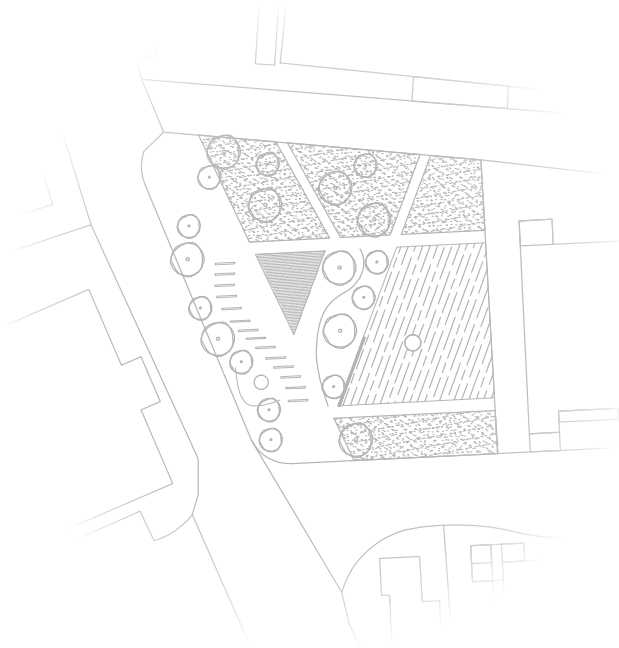
To emphasize a monumental touch at the square I applied to the square water mirror and long narrow paths which cut the entire surface into pieces. A promenade is accompanied with an avenue planted with trees on one side. Clearness of the space gives a feeling of transcendence. Benches are placed at the paving area which steps out because of the pattern. The existing directions of the square are highlighted and space between paths is filled up in a different way. Even if I want to add a creative sense into the square, monumental squares are usually not purposed for people to be involved by their creative acting.



3. Which elements may divide a wide surface of the square? How can they be interweaved into the square?

The third design is about to find the invisible directions of the square which has been given an intention to divide the entire surface of Slovenski trg into a new composite character. Vegetation, water elements and lighting were found as the most applicable to attain a desired result. Excessively long lines of elements act as a barriers but on the other hand they function as a guidances in wide space. The intention of the large grassy patch is obvious, to offer people a vast area for contemplation. Urban furniture is placed along the passage and on the paving surface which is connected to the city library close by.





ONLY STATIC ELEMENTS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO STIMULATE C

ONLY STATIC ELEMENTS A

ONLY STATIC ELEMENTS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO STIMULATE CREAT

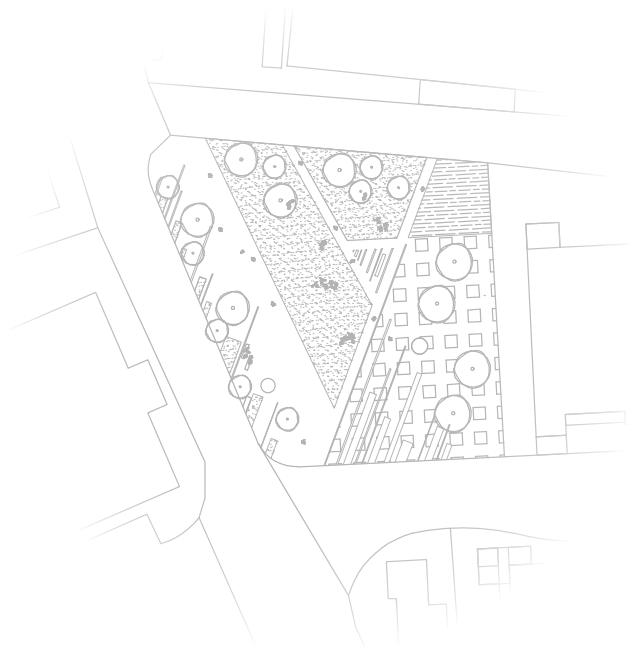
ONLY STATIC ELEMENTS ARE NOT ENOUGH T

ONLY STATIC ELEMENTS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO

ONLY STATIC ELEMENTS ARE NOT

PROCESS

THEORIES TESTING DESIGN CONCEPTS DESIGN INSPIRATION DISCOVERING THE SHAPE



CREATIVE ACTION AMONG THE USERS.

RE NOT ENOUGH TO STIMULATE CREATIVE ACTION AMONG THE USERS.

IVE ACTION AMONG THE USERS.

TO STIMULATE CREATIVE ACTION AMONG THE USERS.

D STIMULATE CREATIVE ACTION AMONG THE USERS.

ENOUGH TO STIMULATE CREATIVE ACTION AMONG THE USERS.

DESIGN

4. 3. DESIGN INSPIRATION

The very first thought coming to my mind when thinking about creativity, is a composition of different elements which can whenever be set apart and combine together in a new formation. I found an inspiration in LEGO cubes. This very day I shall still turn the old box of my LEGO cubes and try to invent new variations in LEGO formation. LEGO cubes presented as a movable element are everlasting.

Movable elements excite the user's interest in moving them through the space if they are there for this purpose. In this way the user can unleash his imagination and creativity by composing a variety of elements in different creations. This principal idea leads the way in my further designing process.

Slovenski trg, as a wide open space within a city of Kranj, holds a great potential to bring in the idea of movable elements where the users of the square are those who have the power to vary the formations at the square. Thus a change of space is not dependent just on nature but also on an individuum.

Thinking about a composition recalls to my mind a variety of exercises done in the very beginning of my study. A creative mind, rich imagination and the ability of abstraction had a great contribution to the final product. And so it is also nowadays. All together is a play of thoughts and ideas. There is no limit. Nothing is wrong and nothing is right.

In such manner also a design of Slovenski trg may work. Everything is allowed. Everything is possible. A variety of formations are reflections of individuum's creativity.

A designing part of my project has a purpose to interweave a theory with my own reflections on studied themes. A final design may be a result of all the experiences I got during my study of landscape architecture.

When thinking about a design for an urban square within a city of Kranj in a relation to the studied theory, a variety of ideas overflow my mind. First of all I want to test out how different design proposals work at the square. Jan Gehl in his book made a division of spaces regarding the different architectural features at the square. He also presented a variety of possible types of spaces. I had a detailed insight into some of them and try to come out with my own proposals regarding his descriptions of particular spaces. In this part of a process the idea of creativity was to a certain extent excluded.

Further design process has an intention to combine studied literature with my own reflection about creativity and a design for the particular area in Kranj. I have already mentioned that I found an inspiration coming from my childhood - in LEGO cubes and the endless possibility of their formulation.

It seems important to me to incorporate into a design process my knowledge about composition gained in the very first and all further years of my study of landscape architecture.

Diversified principal ideas have crossed my mind when narrowing down my thoughts and knowledge gained after several months of studying literature and investigating the area in Kranj. Discussions with my friends and people at the square brought a fresh view on the entire project. Above all I started with sketching and thus experienced a variety of proposals which might be suitable for the particular square in Kranj.

I took up the challenge when I decided to try out how creativity may be applied to an urban square in a small city such as Kranj.

PROCESS

THEORIES TESTING DESIGN CONCEPTS DESIGN INSPIRATION DISCOVERING THE SHAPE

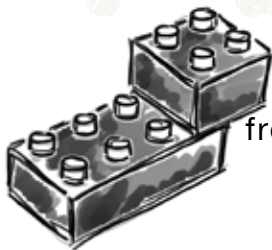
I stayed focused also on some other important elements which contribute to the sufficient design of the square; personal space, environmental design, the usage of the space and other factors which contribute to sufficient design. However my purpose was to bring forth a unique design proposal for the area but on the other hand to test out how different design solutions suit the square.

It is more about the principal ideas not so much about detailed design since my request is to meet with a response of users after they see how the square may be redesigned.

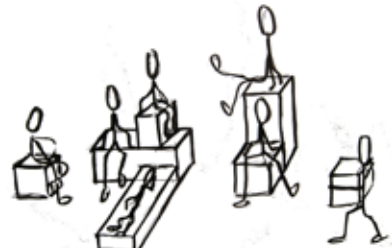
I was inspired by Gehl to introduce
a theme into the square...

PROCESS

1



from lego cubes to the new sitting formations

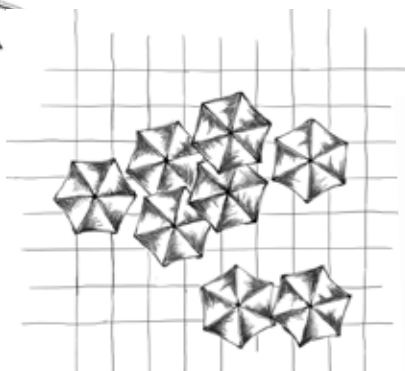


from a water tap to the puddle and playfulness

2



from an umbrella to the shelter and creativity



3

DESIGN

PROCESS

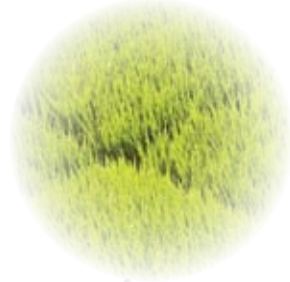
THEORIES TESTING DESIGN CONCEPTS DESIGN INSPIRATION DISCOVERING THE SHAPE

CUBES



WATER TAPS

GRASSY PATCHES



UMBRELLAS



PEOPLE



S

T

N

E

M

E

T

E

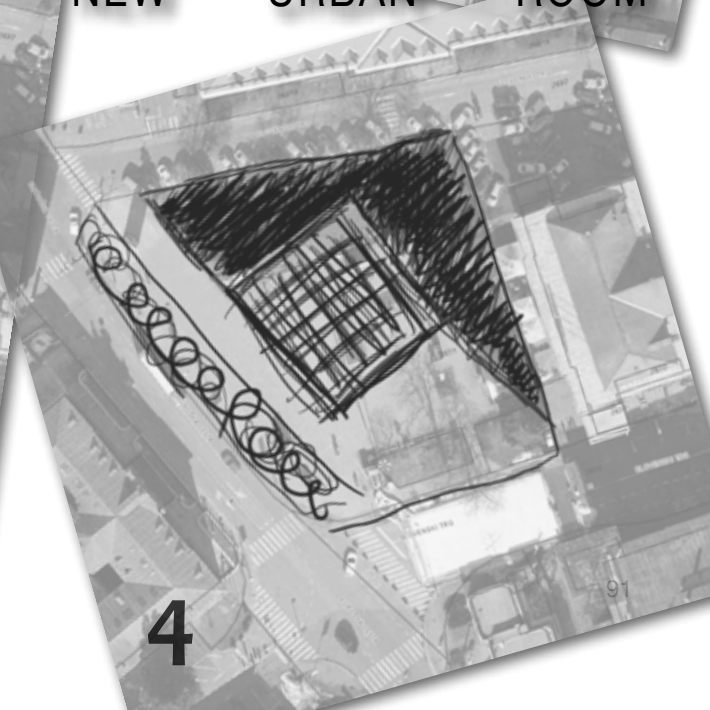
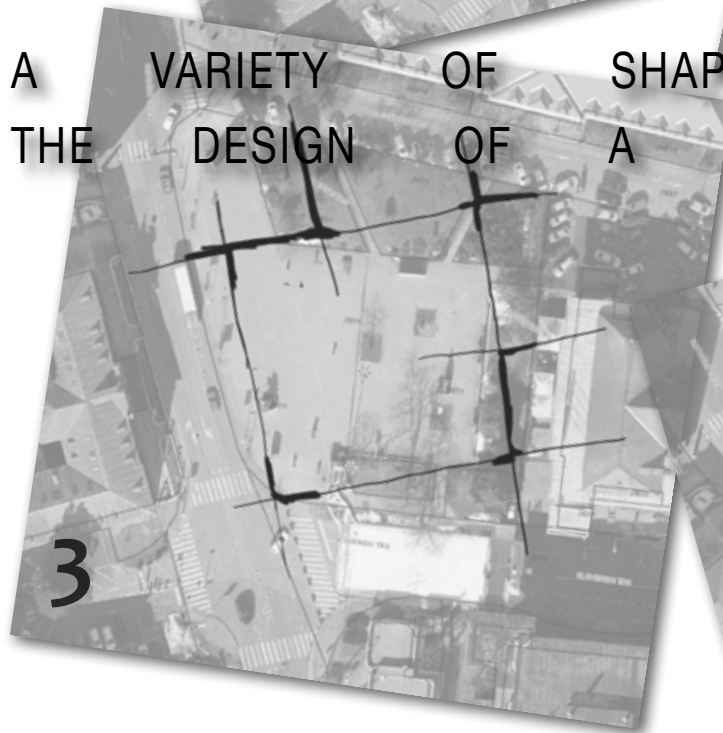
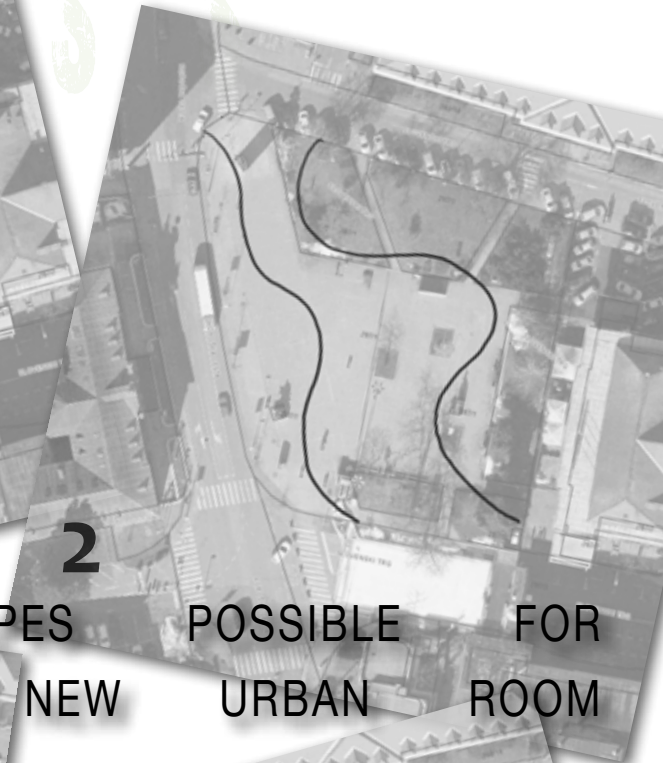
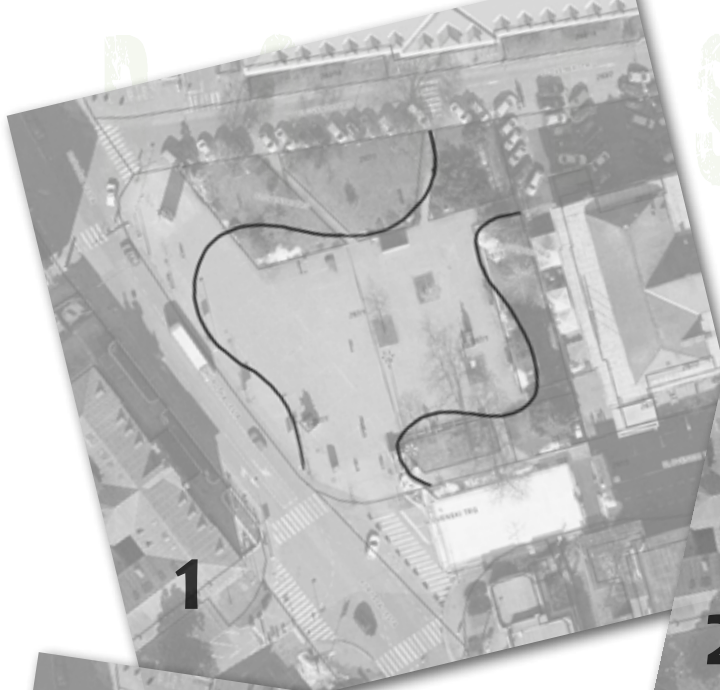
4. 4. DISCOVERING THE SHAPE

When trying to come out with a new form for the square, I was confronted with difficulties; how to chose a suitable shape and work with it further on. In one way it may be convenient to work on with an organic form since the square is placed in the middle of built environment, but on the other hand I want a design to be a continuation of its surrounding. I found a square shape easy to combine to other shapes which may appear at the square, focusing on grassy patches on the edges of the square.

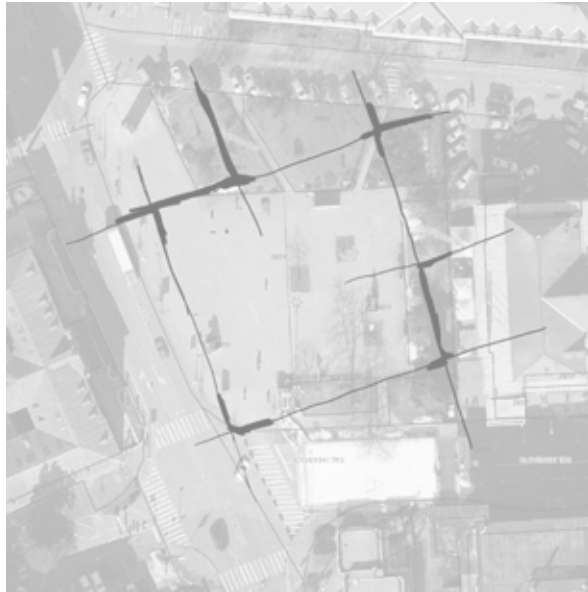
Organic shapes (1 and 2) offer a lot of possibilities for further process. However, I got stuck when applying to the square more than two organic lines. Since I want to leave the south - north direction through the square passable, I abandoned the very first sketch. The second sketch points out the existing passage of the square but on the other hand cuts the connection to the city hall.

I moved on with some other experiments, circles and triangles, which did not seem to be effective at all.

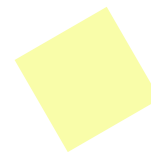
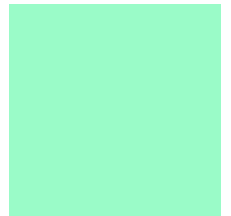
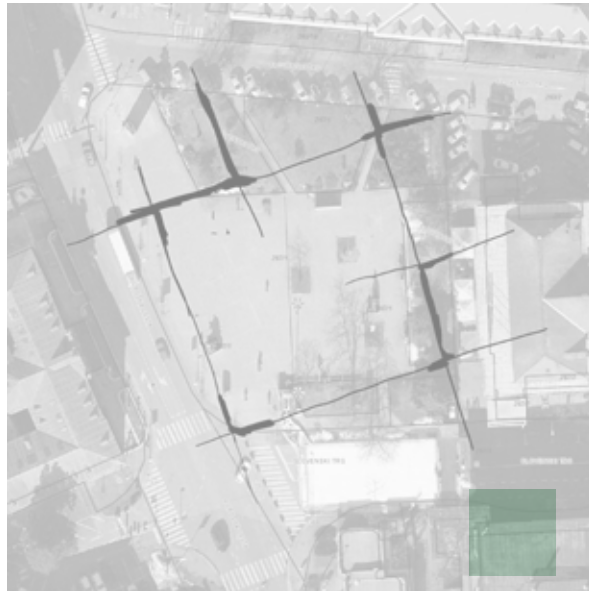
In the end I stick to the square shape as the most appropriate and adaptable for the particular area.



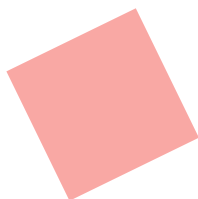
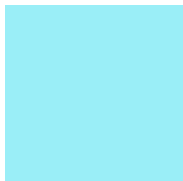
A VARIETY OF SHAPES POSSIBLE FOR
THE DESIGN OF A NEW URBAN ROOM

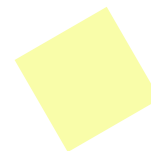
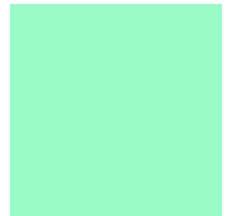
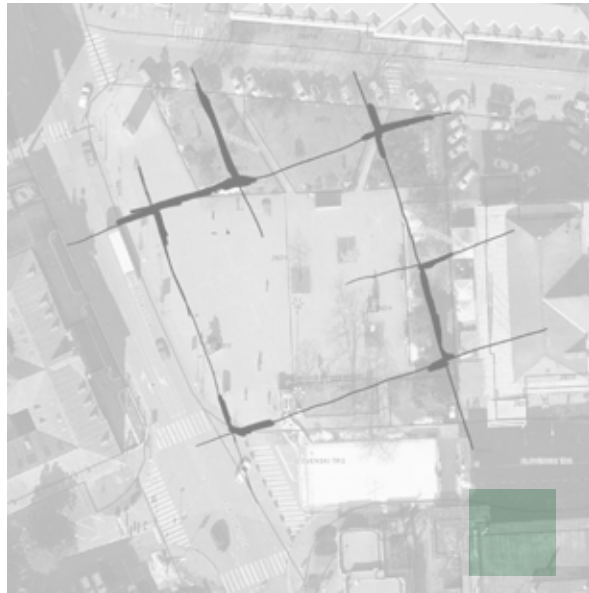


PROCESS

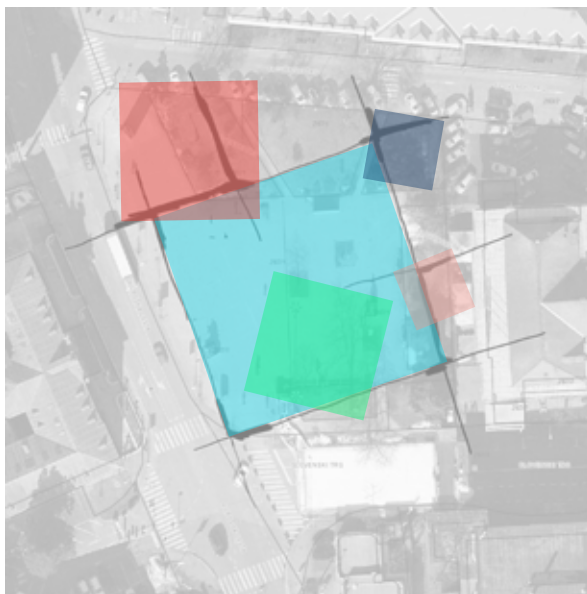
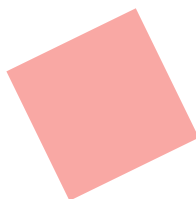
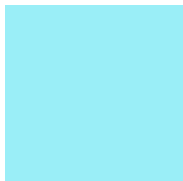


PROCESS





PROCESS

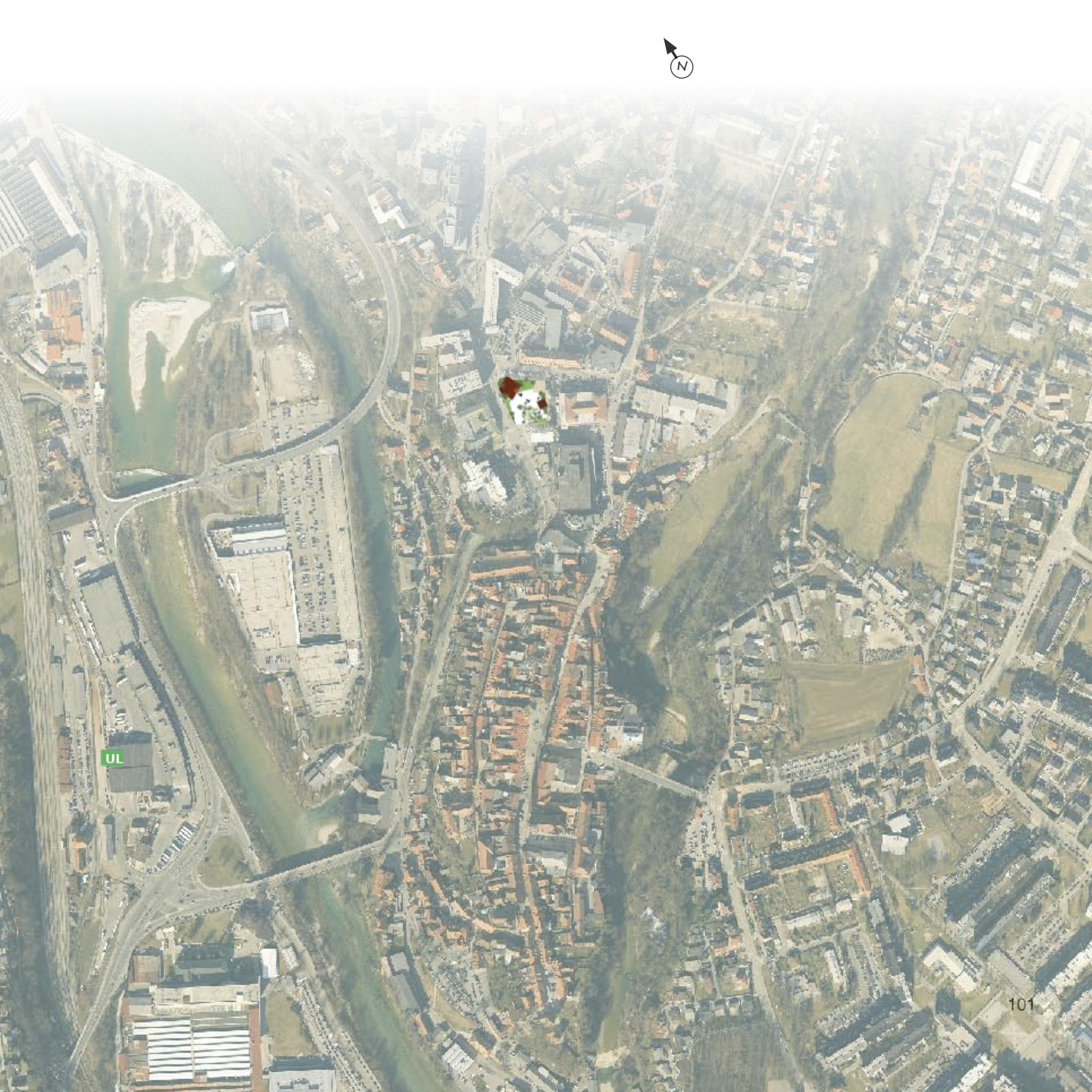


THE FINAL DESIGN PROPOSAL

**THE FINAL
DESIGN PROPOSAL**

DESIGN

5 THE FINAL DESIGN PROPOSAL



101

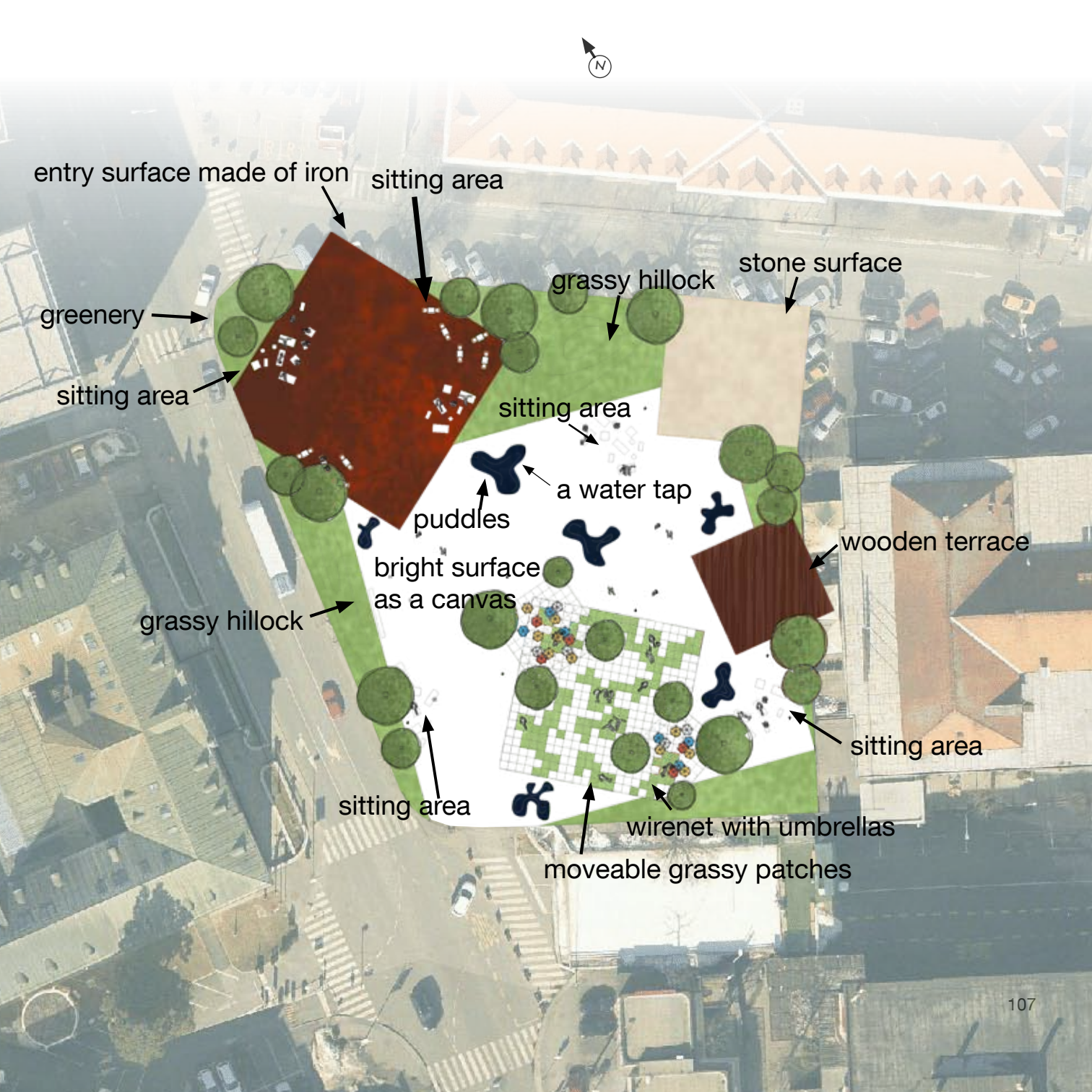
DESIGN



DESIGN



DESIGN



entry surface made of iron

sitting area

greenery

sitting area

grassy hillock

stone surface

sitting area

puddles

a water tap

bright surface
as a canvas

grassy hillock

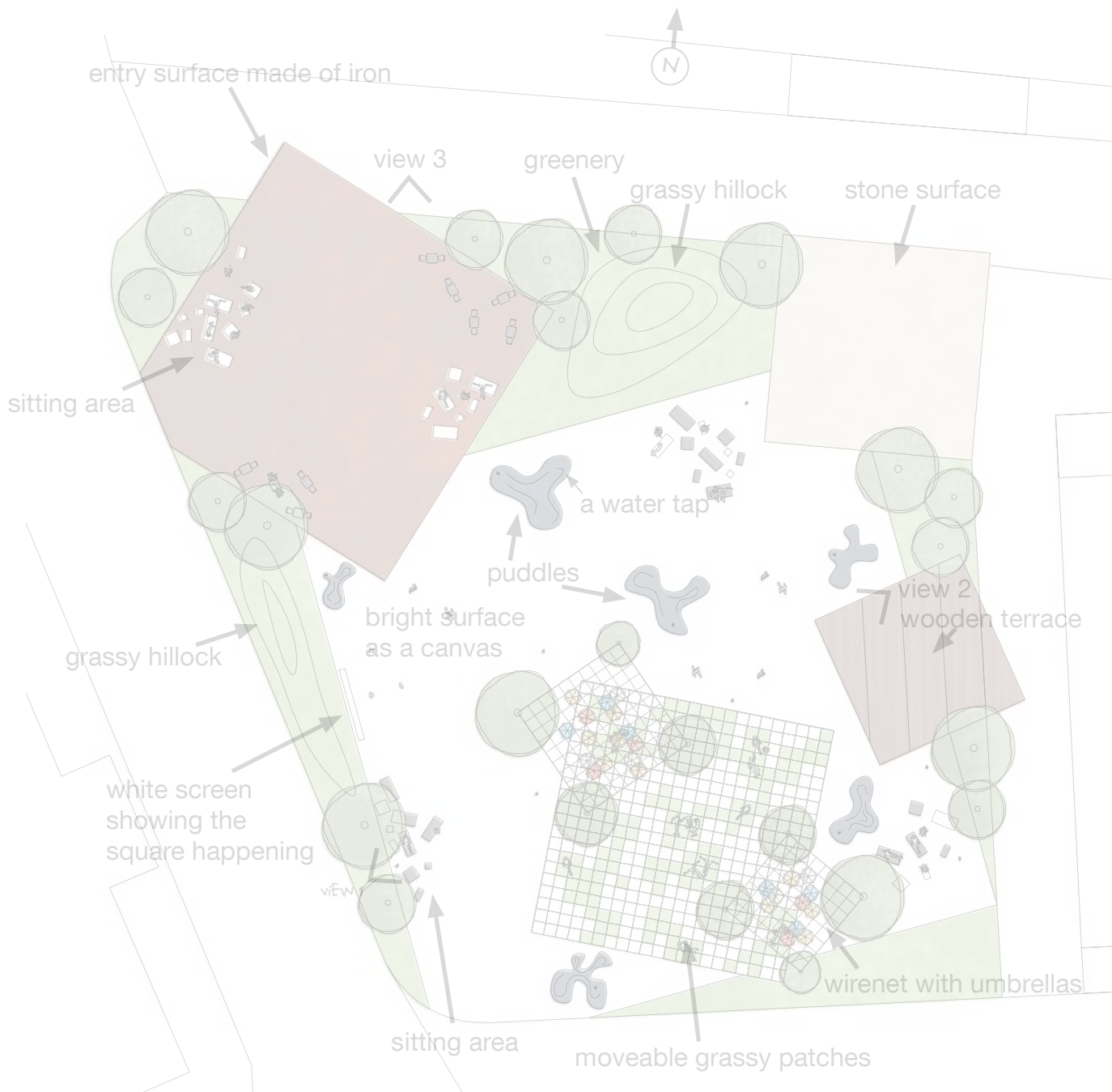
wooden terrace

sitting area

sitting area

wirenet with umbrellas

moveable grassy patches



DESIGN

The final design proposal is meant to become a new urban room within a city of Kranj, public space where people can unleash their creative mind, to come into touch with strangers or to calm down somewhere under the crowns. Not to lose the thread of my ideas about creative design, I focus on the elements which to my mind awake one's imagination. Movable urban furniture, movable grassy patches, movable shade, temporary water elements in a combination with convenient choice of materials prove to be a feasible idea for a design of Slovenski trg. The idea is to bring forth a design proposal which is more or less self maintained but on the other hand users are those who are responsible for an outcome image of the square. Movable elements enable the square to be seen as a "never-the-same" urban room. By this means that the new urban room has the infinitive number of possible variations. The final design proposal for new urban room in Kranj tends to be readable and navigable for its users. Therefore the square is still open towards the surrounding environment since this particular public space is related to the building structures around, it may be seen as a library's living room, Gymnasium's spot for relaxation and a shelter for the employees from surrounding shops and business departments. In general, Slovenski trg is perceived as one of the most popular meeting point in the city. With movable elements I want to achieve a changeable image of the square. Grassy patches are placed on the largest surface of the square. They are a part of the rail net placed at the ground (20 m x 20 m), where one piece of grassy patch is 1m x 1m. Each square of grass it is possible to move in to directions. Thus one can assure desired space for himself or a group of people. Eight trees are placed at the particular spot to offer a shade during the sunny days. There is also a wire net fasten to the metal construction among the trees, in size of 8 m x 8 m. Wire nets are purposed to be the frames for users' umbrellas. One can open his umbrella wherever he wants to get enough shade. During the winter time, a wire net may be used as a handle for candles etc.

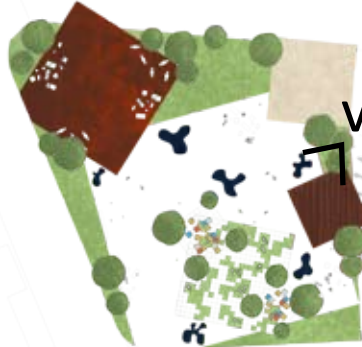
D E S I G N

Sitting furniture is designed in a human scale and it is made of light materials so that almost everyone has a possibility to rotate it to whichever direction he wants. Small cubes are possible to be moved along the space. There is also basic furniture at the square, tables and chairs for those who want to spend their lunch time on the spot.

A question how to apply a water element which is different to fountains but still hold a typical characteristic of water, such as mirroring, murmuring, cooling has raised. An adaptation of water taps to the square seems an interesting idea. Thus one has a chance to open a tap, built in the ground and make a water puddle for itself. It is about rainwater which is gathered at the edges of the square. People may find it interesting especially during the hot summer days while during the winter, taps are closed because of the safety reason.

According to Egan (1992) “being creative is an attitude of mind and a way of approaching problems that opens up possibilities; it is ‘a particular flexibility which can invigorate all mental functions’.” (Landry, 2000, p. 14)





view 1

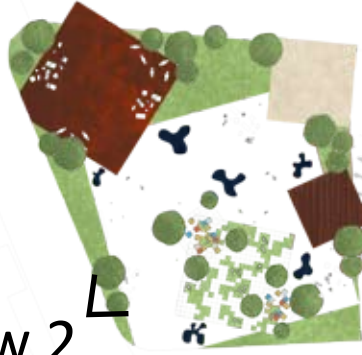


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100

D E S I G N



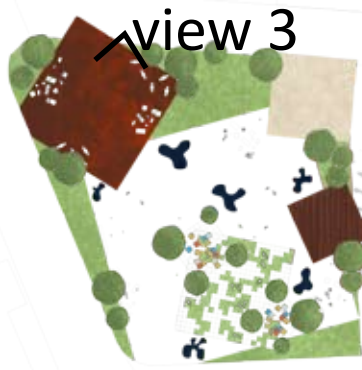
view 2



VISUALISATION 2



view 3

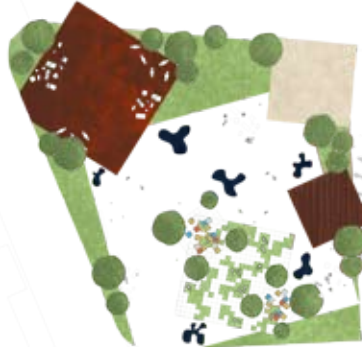


VISUALISATION 3



D E S I G N





view 4

VISUALISATION 4

There are five diversified platforms present at the square. The largest one is bright and it may be perceived as a painting canvas for children's imagination. Others are mostly seen as the entrances into the square. The surface made of iron in the north of the square is meant to be a mirror of the city library which is made of glass and partly covered with iron squares. There one can find a variety of sitting possibilities.

Stony square in front of the city hall holds a touch of formal. The view toward the entry of the city hall is now more open than it was before. Surrounding vegetation contributes to the feeling of grandeur.

Wooden terraces are connection between the square surface and a bar in lower level. Chairs and tables can be now placed on the terrace and thus more inviting for passersby.

There is already mentioned surface which does not have all characteristic from others but it is designed as a rail net in the ground of the square. The space between the rails is from the same material as the surrounding surface.

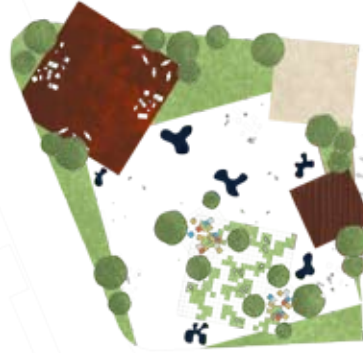
A decision to incorporate movable elements into the square turns out as a good idea. To invite people into the spot and attract them to be a part of making a temporary square composition may be due to the square's inconstancy to a great extent achieved.

There is also a big screen placed at the square where everyone can see how the square was modified through the time and how many different combinations are possible to be reached. What is present on the screen may have an influence on people rather to make a halt in a new urban room than to take a short cut through the square.



VISUALISATION

view 5



6 CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Being in the “new urban room” at Slovenski trg when writing conclusions and reflections about the process of my work, it once again corroborates and inspires courage to the idea of my final design proposal. I can surely become accustomed to the new environment at the square which is for the time being still just in my imagination.

The basic idea of this master’s degree project was to bring forth the principal solutions for Slovenski trg in Kranj. The fact that I have been passing the square almost every day for the past 20 years, contributed to the choice of the area of my interest. I want the final design proposal to be a reflection of my thoughts and ideas from the perspective of a landscape architect as well as from the perspective of an inhabitant living in this city for 24 years. When standing in the middle of the square and observing its surrounding in the initial phase of this project I was curious how is it possible to bring the square to its users, and the other way round. Perceived openness of the square is for the student of landscape architecture as a blank canvas for an artist. Not easy to approach. But it seemed like a joyful trip through my own findings, thoughts and reflections about what I want to bring forth with this project. It is important to think simultaneously about social and formal design in the initial phase. This is often hard and it takes time. But the final make is better if one knows how to correlate functional design with an eye-catching proposal.

To solve the problem of selection of study literature I decided to focus on theory which enlightened me about the phenomena to which attention need to be paid when designing a public space. I lean on the concepts which prove to be a base of my project - concepts of public space, interaction and placemaking were studied in depth.

REFLECTIONS

As a landscape architect I seek an inviting and visually accomplished design. At the same time, I need to take into consideration that the new design is purposed for a broad spectrum of people, which all have their own desires and expectations. Thus it is important to equip the spot with heterogeneous possibility of usage. A pleasing design with ordinary furniture is not enough. This is why I endeavoured the square to be an spontaneous outcome of public interaction. Second, it was to achieve an incessant modification process at the square. By that I mean users to be given a chance to be involved in a modification process of the square whenever they stop by. A new urban room within the city of Kranj is a public space where people interact with others as well as with an urban equipment. Thus users are the key element in my project. In the elementary phase I was thrown into a dilemma; public for place or place for public? During my design process I found out that public and place are closely linked with each other and almost cannot function separately. The new revival of the square let people to do what they want at the square. At the same time a design needs to be attractive and inviting for people. Social inclusion in such place should not be neglected. That is why I looked for knowledge about the phenomenon of social environment, concerning use of space, crowding, and privacy.

As Cassidy points out, people living in cities are, owing to crowding, less helpful and behave in a more antisocial way. Out of this came the idea of movable elements placed at the square. I see people striving after social inclusion, but in the existing square urban furniture does not offer users a chance to be social since benches are placed in a row one beside the other. Present sitting equipment is suppresses social behaviour at the square that is why groups of people usually sit on the floor in the middle of the square since they do not have any other option. So I may say that is not always about people not being social, but rather about a weak design where chance for social inclusion is cut off.

CONCLUSIONS

When designing an urban environment the requirements of personal space need to be taken into consideration. Requirements are different from individual to individual. Personal space can be described as an invisible bubble around us which defines how close to us we let other people, and the opposite. People may feel responsible for the environment they are part of. But if their privacy is bothered they are forced to move somewhere else. Thus the idea of movable cubes intended for sitting may be seen as the most convenient idea for those who need more personal space, to move along the square and find a place where they can be alone. But on the other hand the purpose of movable cubes is inverse - to bring people together, close to each other. For those who prefer traditional sitting furniture, they can find it at the entrance platform.

To continue with a historical background of the square, history is often an efficient source for further analysis which may show activities that urban environment address over the time. The tree Slovenian Tilia was set in the middle of the square when we attain the independence. Slovenski trg is named after our identifiable tree. Now I perceived a historical touch through the presence of Gymnasium and the city hall close by. Since the historical mark of the square is disappearing it would be interesting to introduce the evolution of the square to its users. The historical picture of Slovenski trg may be shown on the screen, which meant to be a virtual inspiration where modifications of the square are going to be present.

As my design proposal is thought to be a principal idea of what I think may stimulate public interaction at the square, I did not deal with the appearance of crime at Slovenski trg. Prudent designed places do not prompt vandals to steal or destroy elements within the urban space which are needed for a place to function as intended, either some pieces

REFLECTIONS

need to be brought to the square by people on their own or the equipment is already there. This is how the idea of wire net with umbrellas should work; each user hang his own umbrella on the net to assure shade or to be protected against the rain. While parents are lacking elements for the child play, moveable cubes are intended to be moved so they can take a cube and bring it beside the water tap where their child finds an enjoyment.

Referring to the theory and the concept of public space, Slovenski trg is meant to be one of the most popular meeting spots in the city since it is a wide, open area surrounded by all the important building structures in the city; the city hall, the Gymnasium, the city library and other infrastructures with mixed usage. I redesigned Slovenski trg with an intention to bring more people into the square. Since the square is perceived as a place where people are given a chance to use their senses, I set the users and their needs in the first place. Thus the image of the square is dependent on them. Of course users need to be given a suitable equipment to interact with and to make it possible to unleash their imagination. Moreover, diverse activities has a beneficial effect on human wellbeing. When observing people being at Slovenski trg, I became aware of people choosing be there because they want to, not because they need to.

All in all the idea beyond the attractive and inviting public space is to bring forth innovative thoughts and turn to advantage unseen potential of the space, or in other words 'making something out of nothing'. As every city has a potential to promote itself in a unique way, it is believed that every city holds its own tale and has 'something'. (Landry, 2000, p. 8). And so Kranj has this 'something' as well and landscape architect's task is to bring it forth and bring people back to the city.

CONCLUSIONS

When making a design in Slovenski trg which stimulates interaction between people and the interaction to the urban elements, in my point of view the landscape architect's role is through finding this 'something' in the area offer a variety of solutions to make urban design vibrant and interesting for people. The bounds of possibility which a creative profession such as landscape architecture is, are generally undefined regarding imaginativeness. Of course it comes to limitations when talking about particular legislation and rules. Moreover, reverie is broken off when you need to do an efficient design within the framework of particular limitations; when you need to satisfy the client in the first place. The size of the place, conditions of a different kind, purpose of the space etc., illustrate another type of limitation for the landscape architect. As already mentioned before a good landscape architect should know, regardless of limitations and occupation, how to make a beneficial design which will bring people to the place. As Nick Corbett writes, urban designers seek to understand the three-dimensional qualities of space. Moreover a successful designer tends to make clear and readable design.(Transforming cities,revival in the square, 2004)

To conclude, the central point of my project is the desire people show through the creation of 'places to be' – at any time and with any kind of company. As authors in the article describe the interaction of 'time', 'space' and 'season' is in focus of every crowded urban space. Some people seek after quiet places and privacy while others are looking for an activity and conversation within an urban environment. Peoples' lifestyles are unlike, some prefer security and comfort at first while others are more open for some adventures and unpredictable situations. Consequently the need for undefined but safe places is inevitable while designing urban rooms within the city. From the landscape architect's perspective functional and eye-catching design of urban spaces brings people back to the city and in such a manner makes the city centre vibrant and revived again.

REFLECTIONS

Literature

- Cassidy, T. (1997). Environmental psychology : behaviour and experience in context. Hove: Psychology Press
- Clark, A., Holland C., Katz J., Peace S. (2007). Social interactions in urban public places; Bristol : The Policy Press
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. (2000). By design. Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice. London: Month
- Corbett, N. (2004). Transforming cities : revival in the square. London : RIBA Enterprises
- Flemming, R. Lee. (2007). The art of placemaking : interpreting community through public art and urban design. London ; New York : Merrell Pub. Ltd.
- Gehl, J. & Gemzoe, L. (2003). New City Spaces. 3.ed. Copenhagen: Arco Grafisk A/S
- Gaventa, S. (2006). New Public Spaces. London: Mitchell Beazley
- Healey, P. (2010). Making better places : the planning project in the twenty-first century. Basingstoke ; New York : Palgrave Macmillan
- Holland, C., Clark, A., Katz, J. and Peace, S. (2007). Social interactions in urban public places. Public Spaces. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.
- Landry, C. (2000). The creative city : a toolkit for urban innovators. London: Earthscan
- Landry, C. (2006). The art of city-making. London ; Sterling, VA : Earthscan
- Woolley, H. (2003). Urban open space. London ; New York : Spon Press

Also inspired by:

- Drasler, A., (2005). O krajini z risbo. Ljubljana: Arhitekturni muzej Ljubljana
- Golicnik Marusic, B., Niksic, M., Coirer, L. (2010). Brussels.
- Kucan, A. (2010). All shades of green. Ljubljana: Muzej in galerije mesta.

Internet sources

Farlex. [online] (2011). Available from: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/urban> [25 July 2011]

Farlex. [online] (2011). Available from: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/living> [25 July 2011]

Kaliopa d.o.o. [online] (200). Available from: <http://gis.iobcina.si/gisapp/Default.aspx?a=kranj> [14 May 2011]

Mestna občina Kranj. [online] (208). Available from: <http://www.kranj.si/podrocje.aspx?id=0> [14 May 2011]

Wikipedia. Homepage. [online] (2002-2010). Available from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Placemaking> [15 August 2011]