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## CREATIVE METHODS IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, THEIR ORGANISATION AND CLASSIFICATION WITHIN CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF TEACHING

Sustainable development is a frequently used term namely in professional communication. Nevertheless its application in practical life activities is seldom a topic of concern. Development or developing of any activity certainly requires continuity in time and action as well as contact or connection within a net. Each new start on the "green field", without historical background or context, carries stagnation to a certain extent. Continuity, on the other side, comes out of previous knowledge and reassessment of previous experience. It also starts the new on a higher level of knowledge. Therefore, it may be stated that continuity in knowledge and in practical application is crucial for sustainable development.

Continuity is important namely in gathering, classifying, maintaining and delivering information. This is the main domain of education process. Written summaries or educational and teaching methods are the result. Creative aspect of teaching process is far more ephemeral than gathering of information and their transformation into a written form. Creative process, creation of something new, and its transformation into practical life or even its graphical form is a far more complex process than teaching concentrating on combinational memory. Remarkable is the grasp of a final work resulting from successively arising creative activity in the graphical form of a project. Such result of teaching process is rather rare and calls for creative endeavor of both the teacher and the student.

This aspect of education is followed by relatively small number of students and by a small number of schools within Europe. Therefore, the summarization of examples of creative work and their categorization into subject groups is valued in any field of creative work. The more it is valued in the field of landscape and park architecture in Slovakia, where, after the division of the former Czechoslovakia, the education in the field of landscape and land use architecture had to be established from the beginning. The record of creative activity results in a certain period and in the form of graphic images is the start for the future possible comparisons.

The idea of summarization and categorization of examples of creative projects worked out at studio tutorials has been developed for several years at the department of Landscape and Land use Architecture until it led to a research task. VEGA, a state research agency, has supported the project. The project under the title Landscape Architecture - system and classification of creative methods, managed by professor Gál, has been solved by a team of research workers: Lubica Lešinská, Daniela Gažová, Karol Kattoš, Pavel Lichard, and Eva Putrová.

### The project: Landscape Architecture - system and classification of creative methods

In recent years, the project belonged to core research activities at the Department. The research work was encouraged by an effort for meaningful use of students' studio works prepared within subjects of Landscape Architecture in both the BSc and MSc programmes. Each year, the studio assignments based on real site conditions and real commissions have resulted in numerous stimulating and inspiring solutions. It has been the variety of formal assignments resulting from real conditions, and a unifying method for architectural solution that gave rise to systemization and classification of students' creative solutions in landscape architecture.

- The following points can be considered as results of the research:
- database design for the model solutions: they represent broad variety of possible 3D solutions within the given landscape segments,
- systematic organization of the solved areas (sites): the areas were classified according to area, accessibility, and legislative criteria
- typological organization of the solved areas (sites), in which the creative methods were applied
- putting together of a catalogue (as a reasonably justified system)
- outline of a generally valid model of creative activities within landscape architecture, with horizontal and vertical interactions
- creative methods of landscape architecture and their characteristics in relation to differentiated landscape areas (urban, non urban) as well as to differentiated dimension (area) of the proposed solution: zone, settlement, region
- The research solution of the project took place on two levels:
- internal, represented by qualified classification of studio designs, based on discussion and confrontation of ideas,
- external, represented by a permanent confrontation of decisions on internal level with resources of external environment. The resources being divided into distinctive spheres:
  - proposals, preliminary studies, realised projects,
  - research projects, oriented to classification and systemization of works on landscape architecture, so called university (academic) research.



We would like to stress the contribution of the established international cooperation contacts with partner workplaces like Institut für Landschaftplanung und Gartenkunst, TU Vienna with a similar project Landscape Projects Database. The established cooperation and working relationships with TU Vienna led to incorporation of our Department to a prestigious European university organisation ECLAS (European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools), which enables a continuous exchange of topical information.

## Original research results

Landscape architecture is, like the border fields of architecture and urban planning; a creative activity, which currently, participates more and more at environment formation. Variety of the determining environment factors, present at individual environment types, is taken into account in creative activities of landscape design.

Basic characteristics of creative methods at landscape architecture design were specified in the project. They were specified for the case of a general model as well as for the case of applied designs. Then, a systematic classification of areas (sites) where the landscape designs had to be applied was worked out. Theory basis for the solution was applied also at deciding for the catalogue plan. (The catalogue for model solutions and methods of landscape design.)

The following results were reached:

- a general model of creative activities participating at landscape design, the model expressed internal relations within the field of landscape architecture as well as the relations with border fields that participate at the process of design,
- establishment of a professionally justified system of creative methods for landscape architecture, their horizontal and vertical relations,
- a catalogue, made up of typical designs and plans, worked out for real landscape sites,
- interconnection with neighbouring methods of research in European environment and in Slovakia.

The research results proved the growth of topics within landscape architecture as a specific professional field. The field that together with architecture and urban architectural planning participates at landscape structuring. This activity of landscape structuring is a purposeful evaluation a subsequent creation of sets with optimised representation of natural elements and communities.

## Catalogue of model designs

From the point of view of continuity of education within the field landscape architecture, the most valuable part of the research project was the catalogue of model designs worked out as results of teaching and learning process. The designs were selected according to their quality of solution and were allocated into groups.

- The catalogue was divided into four fields: The lower units are types, subtypes and individually assigned themes.
- Selection of model solutions: model solutions were selected so that they characterised variety of assigned themes.
- Quality of solution and creative access: the quality of solutions, the inventiveness of their creative elaboration by students and their tutors were taken into account.
- Division of the catalogue has been simplified for its possible use in further teaching: the catalogue with introduction and conclusion was transferred into a digital form.

The catalogue includes thirty-two students' designs, tutored by the authors of the grant project and two samples of teachers.

Typological division of areas (sites) The structure of the catalogue is based on typological division of areas (sites), which were organised according to selected criteria into a system.

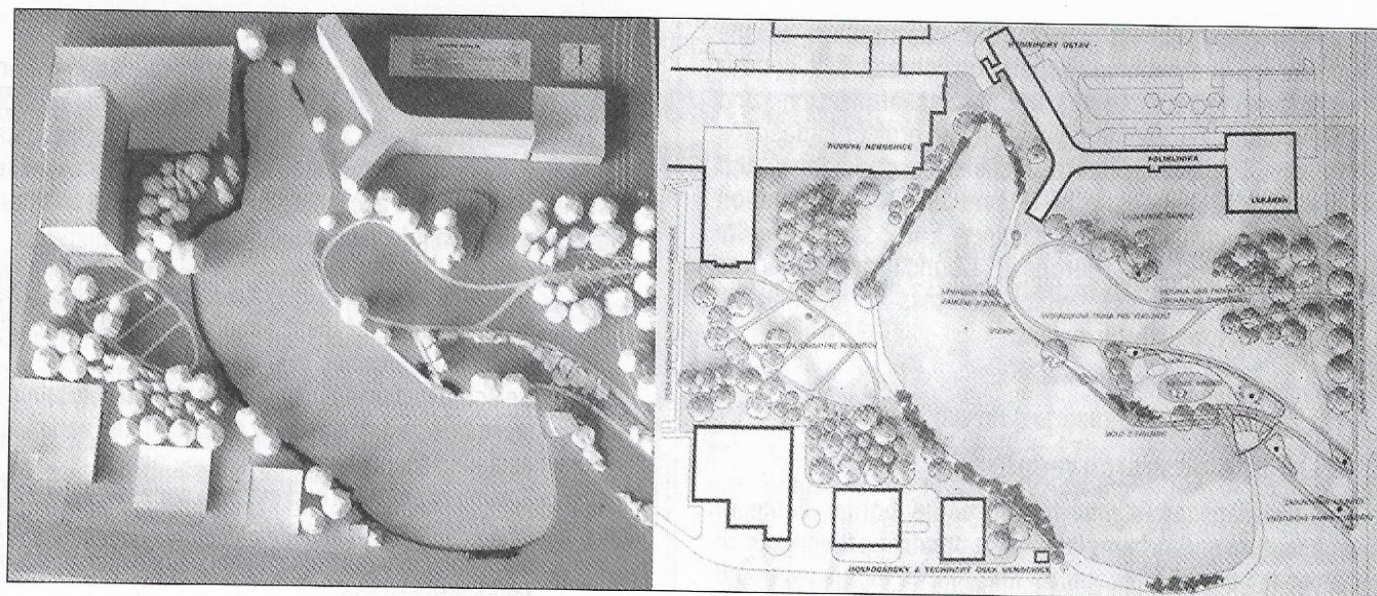
- the areas (sites) were divided according to their position, accessibility and protection into types
- a type of an area, piece of land, or grounds is a basic typological unit,
- types of land are gathered according to their locality and other criteria into fields,
- grounds specific features are taken into account in sub-types
- a particular design or solution is a topic/theme
- each solution's peculiarity is the design method

## Fields

Fields are the basis for division. They were specified according to localisation and importance of the area in the landscape. We based this decision on relation between landscape and settlement, their mutual positions (interface) and tertiary landscape structure represented by legislative protection of valuable areas.

Fields			
I. Open landscape	II. Interface of urban and open landscapes	III. Urban landscape	IV. Protected areas
Types	Types	Types	Types
- landscape segment - area in landscape - line in landscape	- town and landscape - village and landscape - specific problems	- public spaces - reserved spaces - specific spaces	- monument preservation - nature protection - specific areas





Names of fields are based on category "settlement landscape" (settled landscape). This category is considered as basic from the point of view of population concentration, social relations and territorial problems to be solved.

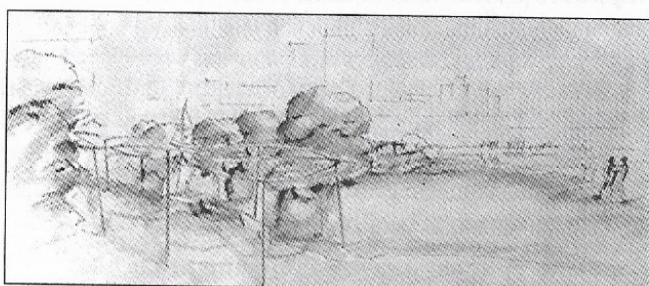
### Fields and their characteristics

Individual fields and types of areas were shortly characterised in the theoretical part of the catalogue. The sub-types appear at individual samples of model solutions. The line up of fields starts by large landscape areas followed by smaller segments in settlement direction or towards areas in landscape.

## Open landscape

Open landscape is understood as extensive, non-bounded land with small concentration of population, with predominance of natural and biological elements, with prevailing natural and ecological processes. Social bonds are of low significance and are concentrated in points with tenuous effect on environment.

Basic typological unit is a landscape segment, physically open-ended, of unsettled area, with ongoing more intensive interventions in comparison to its neighbourhood. Regional dimension is reflected strongly in bounds. Division of open landscape area is based on the area extent, its localisation in country, and on environment determining factors. The area can be divided into types:



- Landscape segment, is a part with regional dimension and local particularity. The segment is characterised by one or more marks that distinguish the area from other areas. Local character of the segment cannot be ignored at landscape design. - Area in landscape: is a smaller area of specific character with one or more characteristic marks. Landscape design should stress their particularity. Dimension of area in landscape is of local character but it can be of over-regional importance.
- Line in landscape: is characteristic by its length and connection of localities. These are above all routs of different nature. They are important for regulation of ecological and social processes. They have local dimension.

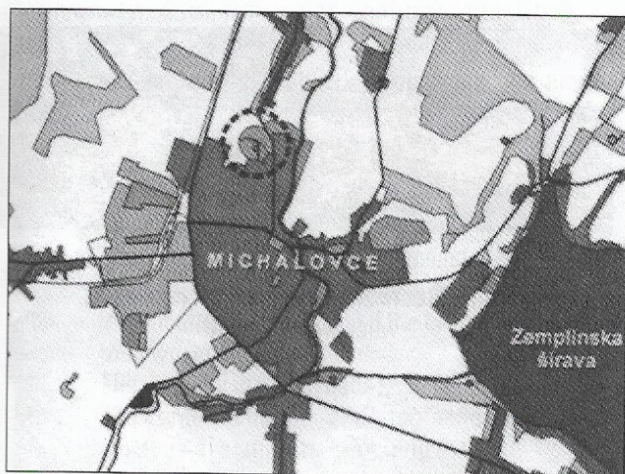
## Interface of urban and open landscapes

Interface of urban and open landscapes is a non-bounded contact area between built outskirts of a settlement and the neighbouring countryside. It represents natural background for the settlement, which is attacked by different contacts that need to be managed. Elements of natural, biotic and technical character are in close neighbourhood or intersect in this area. The aim of landscape design in this area is the harmony of both neighbourhoods that can be reached by suitable arrangements (modifications) without suppression of the desirable natural character. Town and landscape are basic typological units. They are characteristic by their location and contact to settlement, whereby the contact can be of physical character or even at sight.

Division of the interface is based on its localisation in country and on the character of the settlement's borderline or even on the specific factors of that environment. The interface can be divided into types:



- Town and landscape: is a contact area between a town and landscape, which creates a specific border area of the off settlement and settlement land with high visitors attendance. It is often created by miscellaneous environments around one settlement, often caused by extensive settlement perimeter or width of the border area.
- Village and landscape: is a contact area of a village and landscape. It creates border area between an off settlement land and a small settlement (village). It is of homogeneous character. The visitors attendance is of local character.
- Specific problems: are applied in exposed contact areas and in specific environments with numerous landscape- creative elements requiring specific evaluations, access, procedures and solutions.



## Urban landscape

An urban landscape is understood as a bounded land area, with urban structures, high concentration of population, with prevailing non-biotic elements and relatively rare natural elements. Negative factors, accompanying the development of society are concentrated on a relatively small area. To eliminate these factors, equally intensive (revitalising or salutary) means are important. Urban landscape is characterised by large diversity of man-made (artificial) environments on, above and under the ground level.

Basic typological unit is area with natural elements, with different area of space, in different environment, with different functional use and programme.

Areas are further divided according their accessibility for residents. Division of urban landscape is based on the criteria of the area accessibility or on specific factors. It is further divided into types:

- Public space of urban structure - is a bounded area with natural elements, it is accessible for all residents of the area.
- Reserved space of urban structure - is, as a rule, physically bounded area with natural elements, accessible (not fully) to a particular group of residents (some private areas are included as well). - Specific space of urban structure - is an area with natural elements and with other specific attributes, with another landscape-creative element, with cultural or historic aspect.

## Protected areas

Protected areas are from historical, cultural or natural point of view valuable areas, requiring specific treatment so that their legislatively protected aspect is preserved or reconstructed. Basic typological unit is an area with natural elements or an area of natural character, that is legislatively protected.

Division of the protected areas is based on character of their legislative protection or on specific aspects of that area. It is further divided to types:

- monument preservation - is an area with natural elements of notable cultural, historical value, legislatively protected by the state monument protection.
- nature protection - they are areas of natural essence with notable natural value, legislatively protected by state natural protection. They are in contact with larger multifunctional areas and could be attacked by their neighbourhood.
- Specific areas - include areas with cultural, historical value and other specific attributes, or they are part of protected areas.

## Creative methods of landscape architecture and their characteristics

Creative methods of landscape architecture are specific because they must take into account genius loci with its natural elements, the locus that will become subject of creative landscape design. Creative activities in landscape architecture are influenced by three components that enter the creative process and create the design framework. The genius loci as well as social conditions and the creative impact of the author are important for overall final result. Result of the creative activity - the remake of the locus, represents a total accumulation of retained and added elements of material or non material nature that are a complex of intellectual imprint of the author.

At the process of design, it is important to consider:

- individual access to the locus under design: identification of specific features of the locus should be part of preparation activities,





**Figure: Recreational area in forest park,**  
Michalovce, Complex Design

- search for the genius loci, its discovering and make up: is a specific part of the design work, it is in fact the essence of landscape design in the broader sense of the word,
- harmony of natural and designed new elements, the harmony should express proper compositional relations,
- design of visible and covered compositional relations: this is the so called "inner ginger", that is included by the author of the design, and that should transfer ideas over to the recipient,
- selection of the best creative method for the given locus: design of the new solution with reconstruction, revitalisation, restitution, as the used methods for the locus adaptation,
- selection of the best possible solution respecting specific aspects of the locus: ecological, historical, archaeological, natural landscape are the facts that must be taken into consideration for the future design result.

One characteristic feature of each of the selected model solutions was the creative method for that particular solution by its designer. This was evaluated at the process of selection of the works for the catalogue.

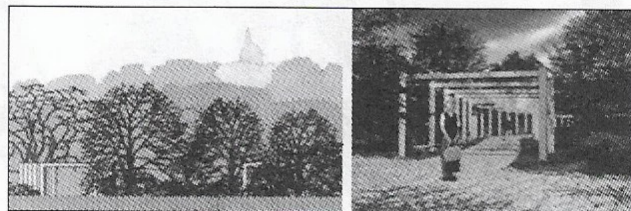
### **Application of the research results in further research and in teaching process**

Research results can be understood as establishment of systematic (precise) evaluation and registration of creative design results within the field of landscape architecture. Whereby landscape architecture has to be understood as developing creative field in the conditions of Slovakia. The layout of the catalogue of model solutions is

an open system that enables further advance and supplement. The research results can be used at applied research, aiming at development of theoretical basis of landscape architecture as well as at specifying the assignments for landscape design.

The research results document the effort for theory basis development for landscape architecture, covering broad topic access and progressive methods used at studio design. In this way the range of routine practise is broadened and the field of landscape architecture can offer a higher quality of teaching process.

*Translation by: Danica Brečková*



**Figure: Recreational area in forest park,**  
Michalovce, View