

Journal of Geography, Politics and Society

2024, 14(1), 43–56

<https://doi.org/10.26881/jpgs.2024.1.05>



POMERANIAN LANDSCAPES OF MODERNIST ZASPA. CONCEPTS OF REVITALISATION OF THE HOUSING ESTATE

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Citation

Kurkowska A., 2024, Pomeranian landscapes of modernist Zaspas. Concepts of revitalisation of the housing estate, *Journal of Geography, Politics and Society*, 14(1), 43-56.

Abstract

Zaspas is a neighbourhood in Gdansk with a long locational history and numerous build-ups. It is situated in a complex landscape between the coastal strip and moraine hills. The housing estates built here in the 1970s followed the postulates of modernist urbanism, ignoring the topographical and natural specifics and the regional heritage. The result was an ergonomic but anonymous space with many current strengths and still apparent deficiencies. As part of the student projects, the topic of revitalising a housing estate was undertaken, especially as it is a global problem. Thus, the working methods can be evaluated and the advantages of these methods adaptable to further case studies can be presented. The article reports on two cycles of a course conducted at the Faculty of Architecture, Gdansk University of Technology. The objectives of the work, the methods and the results are presented with reference to the scale of the global planetary crisis.

Key words

landscape, housing estate, regeneration, Sustainable Development Goals, Research Through Design.

Received: 11 December 2023

Accepted: 12 May 2024

Published: 30 June 2024

1. Introduction

In the 1970s, on the site of a former Slavic settlement near Gdansk, annexing a post-German airfield, a huge housing estate was built. Formerly a Kashubian fishing village, over the years an agricultural village, then part of the Oliwa Cistercian monastery, later an industrial area under Prussian rule, in the 19th century annexed to the expanding Gdansk municipality, in 1909 it became a Prussian military area with an aviation character, to become part of the Free City of Gdansk in 1921, and in the 1970s to start functioning as an emerging housing estate, being a bedroom suburb of the city (more in: Daniluk, Wasielewski, 2012, pp. 14–17, 61–72).

In October 1973, the construction of the first residential building of the Zaspas housing estate

began. The housing estate under analysis is located in Gdańsk Pomerania¹, (also known as Vistula Pomerania), in the South Baltic coastal strip – on the Kashubian Coast, a short distance from the Baltic Sea coastline.

To the south, it is surrounded by a belt of moraine hills covered with mixed forests of Tri-City Landscape Park, which is the northern foreground of the Kashubian Lake District. There are many historical layers here. The landscape of the area is heterogeneous, with clearly differentiated vegetation and topography in a belt pattern, into which Zaspas is inscribed by its close proximity to the dunes and sand dunes of the coast and the

¹ According to the PWN Encyclopaedia, online version.

relatively nearby forest line of moraine hills, visible from the higher windows of the blocks of flats facing the southern side². The cultural fabric, due to its historical formation and current location within the agglomeration, is both a constraint and an inspiring challenge.

The newly designed housing estate fulfils the modernist postulates of access to light, green spaces, ensuring accessibility to various services and good transport links to workplaces (cf. Chomałowska, 2018). It still fulfils the postulates of the 15-minute city that are so much in demand today: “a walkable city” (an idea described in more detail by Jeff Speck, 2012). Formerly located on the outskirts, after half a century it is now located in the very centre of Gdansk, increasing its attractiveness despite the degradation of the fabric of the housing stock and the failure to adapt the quality of the degraded public spaces to the current needs of the inhabitants. For many years, the chaotically disposed, neglected public space, annexed for parking spaces and free-market, low-quality service facilities, together with the destruction of the original furnishings (in the form of small architecture comprehensively designed for the housing estate), no longer fulfilled its purpose. Time has only been kind to the trees. After several decades, they are quite an exuberant stand of trees in some places. Unfortunately, this growth was not controlled either, so the greenery is not the result of a coherent programme and spatial concept. Dorota Jędruch (2019) speaks of a specific landscape “which the block of flats nevertheless produces”. Indeed, this is a necessary layer to consider in landscape-scale design. Scale, density, repetition, and plastic brutalism provide an uneasy context for the fabric of residential buildings.

John R. Stilgoe (2016) suggests that landscape is a verb. Can we then try to say that we landscape space? This would make sense of the ongoing work of landscaping the space as one of the elements necessary to be considered for any changes and assuming a processuality in the shaping of an optimal landscape. By designing elements of Zaspas space, we are simultaneously landscaping it.

The estate under study is located in Kashubia, a suburb of Old Gdańsk, but the Zaspas landscape does not show these obvious connotations, although the etymology of the name – Zaspas – refers to a sandy dune (Daniluk, Wasielewski, 2012, p. 15). Why? What regional elements could be implemented here? What distinguishes today’s Zaspas and what

constitutes the local cultural landscape? These are some of the questions that the research was intended to answer, but in the process it became clear that the most important issue was to find out whether Zaspas, highly regarded by its inhabitants as a well-connected place to live, has the potential to become part of the current cultural landscape of contemporary Europe.

Habitation requires a sense of identity, intimate isolation, opportunities for seclusion and the fulfilment of individual needs and the creation of a community social bond. This feeling is disturbed in the case of the concentration of random people and services in small areas of housing estates, built up with tall and medium-high multi-family residential buildings, not only in the case of the housing estate under study, but also in many other medium-sized and large cities in Poland. Hence the conclusions of the analysis could lead to a unified method of working on the revitalisation of «block housing estates», as such a term has infamously become popular in relation to areas built up with intensive prefabricated buildings. This also applies to currently developed housing estates, as a warning to planners and designers to ensure that the landscape into which they inscribe concentrated block housing remains filled with values, i.e. it is properly designed.

The study was based on projects realised with students of the Faculty of Architecture of the Gdansk University of Technology according to the author’s concept as part of the course «Designing public spaces with greenery elements» (formerly, until 2023: Landscape design), conducted in the standard mode of first-cycle (undergraduate) studies in semester 5.

2. Study area and the adopted research methods

This Gdansk district was chosen as the area of the research and design study conducted at the Gdansk University of Technology because of the subject leader’s familiarity with the city and the close location of the research centre³, guaranteeing the accessibility of the study area for the subject leaders and students. As the subject was pursued as part of an international group, it was important that Gdansk is a good example of a multicultural city, whose complex heritage is analysed by Gregory Ashworth (2015) pointing to political and cultural changes over the centuries. Marked by the effects of the warfare of the last centuries, this makes Gdansk (formerly also known as Danzig) a representative place on a

² The hills are visible from the buildings at 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 Pilotów Street. They are a recreational area accessible on foot within 15–20 minutes’ walk, after crossing a railway viaduct and continuing through the districts of Strzyża and Wrzeszcz.

³ Faculty of Architecture, Gdansk University of Technology.

European scale, thus giving the layering of Gdansk a universal dimension. As a port city, Gdansk is a good example of a transit space for art, literature, crafts, music. Overcoming borders is an endless journey of numerous references, but also a source of historical and current Solidarity. Therefore, the example of the housing estate in the Zaspá district can be taken individually, or universally as an example of a housing estate typical of the 1970s and 1980s, built up with tall (predominantly 11-storey) prefabricated multi-family houses – “a block housing estate”, similar (through the typification of both residential and service buildings) to others, not only in Gdansk or Poland, but also in many European cities, where this type of housing estate is not necessarily connoted positively today (more: van Kempen et al., 2005).

After a number of preliminary analyses, a fragment of a housing estate in the district of Zaspá, located in Gdańsk between the coastal strip and the main arteries of the city’s vehicular communication, was chosen as the area of the subject covered by the project. The estate was originally under the responsibility of the Zaspá Tenant-Owner Housing Cooperative, established in 1972 (Daniluk, Wasielewski, 2012, p. 75). This estate was chosen because of its characteristics such as specific location, urban shape, buildings.

At the outset of the research, after a number of preceding analyses, three key zones of the estate and its associated transport nodes were selected for detailed study – the urban railway stop with its viaduct, the urban interior between the blocks and the estate’s recreational area functionally linked to the adjacent green area. In the course of the research, the research team focused on the urban interior in Pilotów Street surrounded by buildings 15, 13, 10, 8 and the school building (cf. Fig. 1.b).

Landscape design plays an important role in the positive change of spaces. It is important to select methods and tools that are appropriate to the individual tasks (more in: Brink et al. (eds.), 2016). The research methods used in the study are presented in the order of application, although the individual research activities overlapped and sometimes occurred in parallel in successive research phases. The preparatory phase was the first to occur. It consisted of an analysis of the existing state of the public spaces of the fragments of the estate and adjacent areas adopted for the design work and a wider natural and cultural context, an archival search, including literature research and interpretation of the history of the estate, biodiversity issues, the social structure of the inhabitants, and ways of realising functions similar to those assumed. This was followed by Phase I, focused on User Centred Design (UCD) (Bullinger et al., 2010), which as a

concrete method was used to create pilot projects with the students (cf.: 3.1) due to the revitalisation assumptions recognising community integration as a key objective.

The final element of Phase I, the development of an idea and a set of problems to be solved in the student projects simultaneously opened Phase II. In this phase, the Research Through Design (RTD) working method (Cortêsão, Lenzholzer, 2022) was used when working with a new group of students – stemming directly from the nature of the architect’s work and based on analysis, trial solutions, asking questions and illustrating them with working concepts. The student projects were shown in the public exhibitions described later in the text. In Phase III, a questionnaire survey was conducted relating to the projects presented in the exhibition and the respondents’ experiences.

The pilot projects, created in the academic year 2020/2021, with the participation of students working in 10 teams of two or three people⁴ included spaces to activate the local community and visitors to the estate, in line with the initial revitalisation strategy towards repairing areas responsible for broadly defined well-being. In accordance with the principles of UCD, the users’ characteristics and their needs were initially defined, and the project area was identified. No explicit programme guidelines were given to the students, apart from the leading themes for the exercises: people, nature, communication. The obtained results, in the form of urban-architectural design concepts, confirmed the potential of the site and provided the starting material for defining design guidelines for the next phase of RTD and the basis for creating survey questions.

The projects prepared using the RTD method in the academic year 2021/22⁵ constituted the second phase of the research. Students worked in twelve teams of two or three. Balancing all elements is the basis of conscious design (Baranowski, 1998), so care was taken to familiarise students with the guidelines of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to the guidelines resulting from the analysis of the pilot projects, the projects primarily referred to the two selected Sustainable

⁴ Subject Landscape Architecture. Supervisor: dr inż arch. Agnieszka Kurkowska, 16 students within the framework of the ERASMUS project, 4th and 6th semester of the Bachelor of Architecture course at WAPG.

⁵ Course «Design of Public Spaces with Green Elements» (the change of the course name resulted from the Polish Accreditation Committee’s (PKA) post-inspection recommendations, but the continuity of the instructors and the research concept was maintained), lecturers: Agnieszka Kurkowska, Anna Wróblewska, Paulina Duch-Żebrowska; students within the ERASMUS project, 4th and 6th semester of a first-cycle (undergraduate) programme in architecture at WAPG.

Development Goals: SDG 11 and 15⁶, and more specifically, to the elements of care for nature and heritage contained therein. At the same time, the space was enriched with values derived from the diverse cultures represented in the students' countries of origin. This is important because, as Magdalena Żmudzińska-Nowak emphasises, "a place is a world of spatial and humanistic values, the latter being crucial for the origin, existence and development of a place" (Żmudzińska-Nowak, 2010, p. 106). Thus, new values begin to co-create

a new social and cultural landscape. Its challenge is at the same time to care for the well-being of all beings, with a focus on the experiences of the inhabitants. In their chapter on the landscaping of residential spaces, C. Smith, N. Clayden and A. Dannett (Residential landscape sustainability: A checklist tool, 2008) list health and well-being as one of the essential categories of a "check list" for the sustainable design of these areas, emphasising the importance of this aspect (Compatibility with SDG goals 3⁷ and 11).

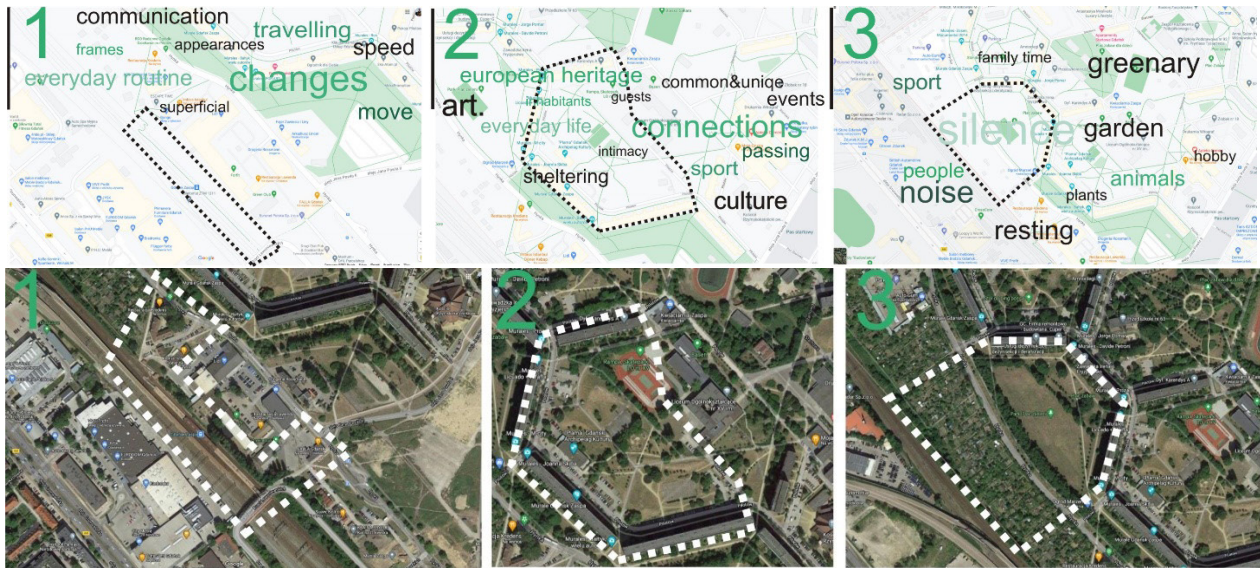


Fig. 1. Analysis area resulting from individual project tasks: a. on an area map b. on a satellite image. Source: compiled by the author based on resources <https://www.google.com/maps>

3. Project tasks

Following Jeff Malpas's narrative in a book under his editorship, *The Place of Landscape. Concepts, Contexts, Studies* (2011), which shows various contexts relating to landscape, the framing of this concept in the design process was treated experimentally, as the whole perception of space was incorporated. In the chapter entitled "Landscape as a King of Place-Relation", Malpas clearly outlines the relationship of the identification of space users with specific places, which seems apt as a path for the transformation of revitalised spaces. This framing of the theme also has its counterpart in the author's design methodology and is specifically expressed in the requirement to incorporate heritage elements from the regions of origin of the students developing the concept.

The introductory task to the theme (No. '0', Fig. 2 a. b. c.) was about the elements of the landscape. The

students were given the task of working individually on randomly assigned themes, which summed up to form a list of elements that make up the landscape of Zaspá. These landscape elements are, in non-validating order, people, ground, plants, animals, clouds, architecture, infrastructure, idea, sound, connections. The themes are deliberately and provocatively buzzword-like, as the students were expected to approach the subject unconventionally. Personal sensibility was important; being in the studied place was crucial. No formula was provided for giving the effects of analysis, observation, in-situ research.

The result was a response in the form of an account of a place with a different narrative character. Typically, the content condensed into slogans, and concise observations was enriched by the author's illustrations, so that the result gained a character of a poster. Given the subsequent public, collective presentation and discussion, the exercise proved to be an apt start to the work, freeing up the creative expression and opening space for spatial experimentation. It should be recalled that the conceptual stage of an architect's work can, and in

⁶ Objective 11: Sustainable cities and communities, Objective 15: Life on land.

⁷ Objective 3: Good health and quality of life.

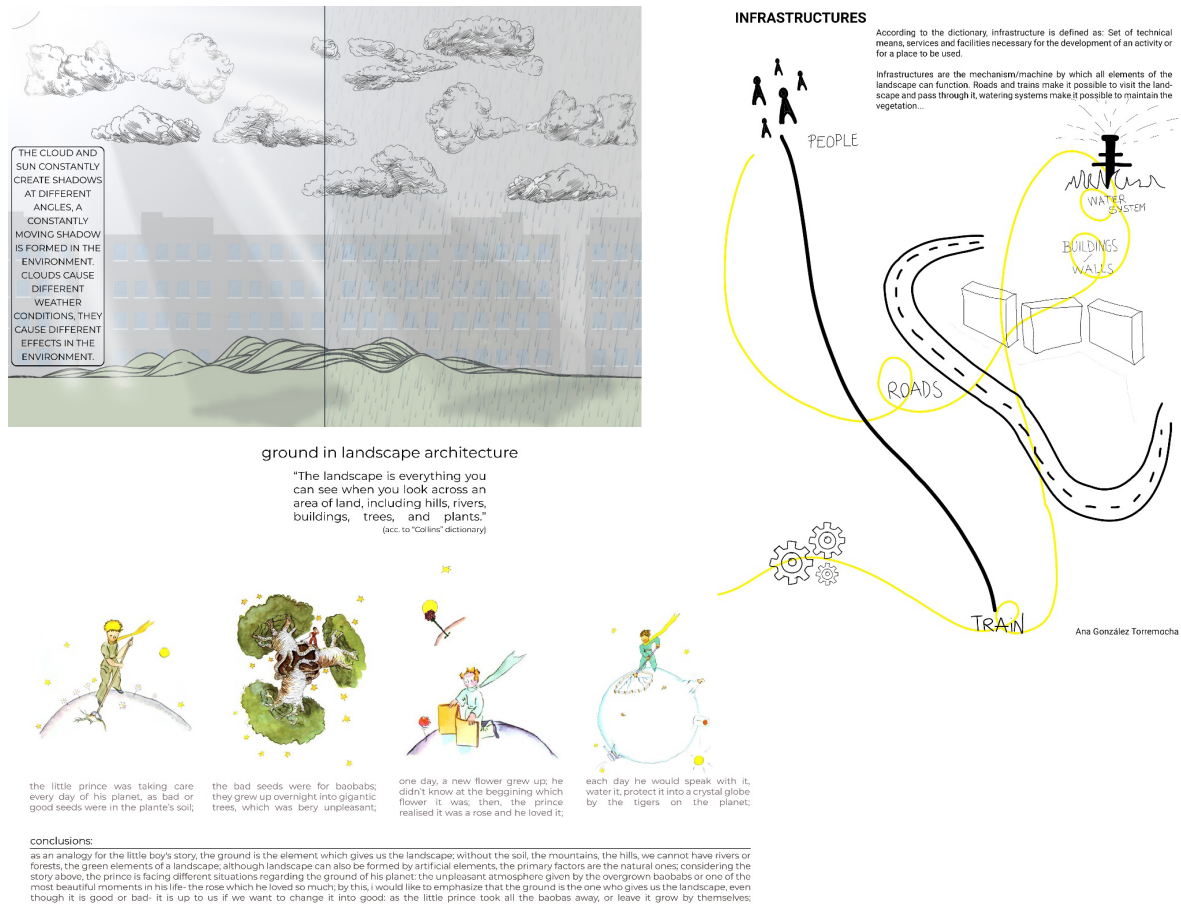


Fig. 2. Task «0», a. Anil Gucuk b. Ana Gonzalez Terremocha and c. Alexandra Posdarie.
Source: Author's archive.

fact should, take this direction if one is interested in obtaining innovative solutions. With parallel multi-team studies, it is important to obtain a variety of creative expressions to maximise the expansion of the research field.

The next task, introduced in a non-obvious way as the second task, was «Analysis of Pomeranian landscapes» (Fig. 3 a. b.). The students, in groups of three, were given the task of conducting a research PACA identifying the features of landscapes, their genesis and assets worth maintaining or acquiring in the small area covered by the target project. Thus, the area for the assignment was limited to Gdansk Pomerania, taking into account the specific elements of the living and non-living environment present, the characteristics of the Baltic coastal strip in this section, an in-depth analysis of moraine hills and the essential features of regional settlements.

The performance and public discussion of the introductory tasks allowed for the recognition of the situational background and contexts associated with the next three strictly design exercises. All of these design tasks were directed towards achieving a specific goal. Each of the three themes – 1,2,3 – (Fig. 4, 5, 6) was based on three stages of the task

work. Projects were conducted in teams of two. Students started with gathering ideas by answering the questions: what? for whom? how? why? In this way, a preliminary validation of the various concepts was conducted, allowing a leading idea to emerge, which was presented and described in the second stage. The third stage was the execution of the conceptual design and its public presentation with a joint discussion of the various approaches to the thematic issue.

As mentioned, the students made three conceptual projects during the semester, preceded by in-depth analyses of the themes. The first task (Fig. 4) was a communication space: a railway platform in Zaspá, thematically focused on transit and the person of the traveller. The second task (Fig. 5) is a social space: the designated semi-public interior of the "Młyniec" cooperative housing estate, dedicated to residents supported in their sense of identification with the place. The third task (Fig. 6) was a space for biodiversity: a designated recreational area next to the blocks of flats and allotment gardens, whose primary users were to be animals, with humans only accompanying them while enhancing their well-being.

POMERANIAN LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

MIDDLE POMERANIAN PHYSICAL ASPECTS

KASHUBIAN LAKE DISTRICT is a metropolitan part of the Danubian Lake district. The Pomeranian Lake district is the northernmost of all Pomeranian Lake districts. The average height of this area is 110 meters above sea level.

KASHUBIAN LAKE AREA

PEOPLE OF KASHUBIAN

HOUSES OF KASHUBIAN

KASHUBIAN FOREST TOWER

KASHUBIAN CULTURE

Kashubian is the name of their culture, their language and their nationality. These days, the Kashubian community includes about 800,000 people. It's rural architecture consists of wooden houses with pitched roofs.

LEGEND

- GREEN AREA
- INTENSE AGRICULTURAL AREA
- SEA AND LAKE
- SEASHORE
- RESIDENTIAL
- CITY

In the Pomeranian region, the land has been specialized for various uses. These areas can be classified as industrial, horticultural, agricultural, forest and water areas. The majority are residential and industrial areas.

FAUNA AND FLORA

INFRASTRUCTURES

In these photos we can see some of the roads and railway stations of the Pomeranian Voivodeship, and we can also see some of its infrastructure, such as the Zaspas station or the station in Gdynia.

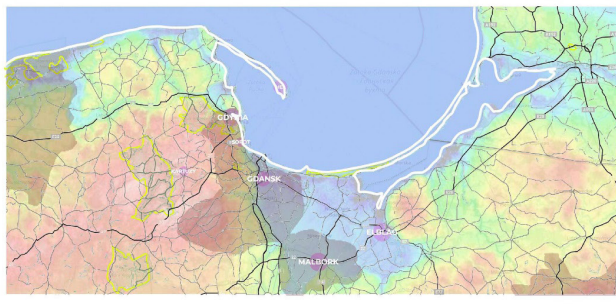
The picture below shows the road network in Pomerania, and the picture on the right shows the railway infrastructure in this area, as well as how the different towns in the voivodeship are connected.

ROADS

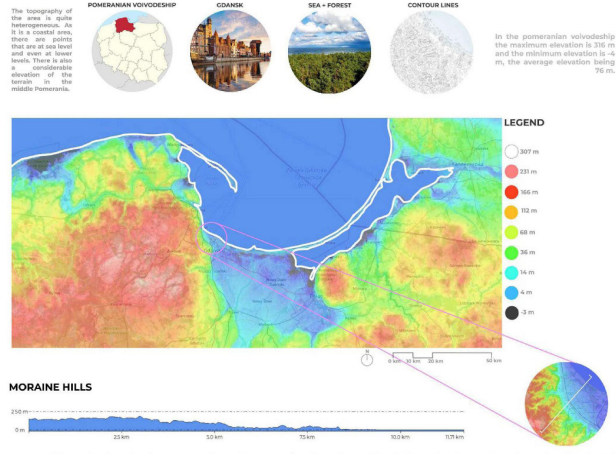
Train roads Secondary roads

TRAIN

SHYNTHEIS MAP



TOPOGRAPHY



GDANSK UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY - FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE 2020/2021 - TEACHER: dr inż. Agnieszka Kurkowska - AUTHORS: inż. arch. Ana González / inż. arch. Patricia Sola / inż. arch. Selcan Erzi Sen / inż. arch. Melike Uluyürek

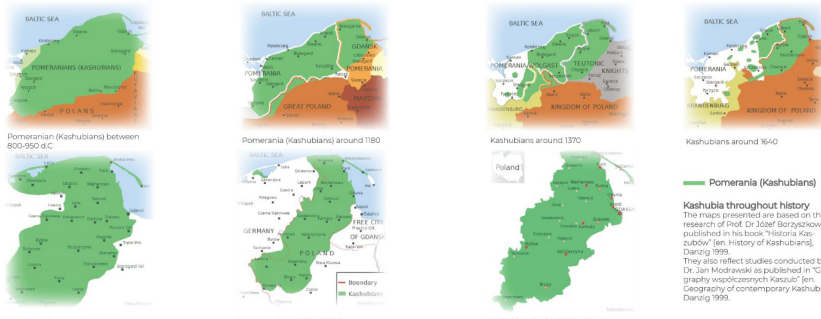
eng. arch. Phd Agnieszka Kurkowska

LANDSCAPE TASK 01

ANIL GUCUK
A.A. BAHADIR SEZER
ALICE TRIPOLI

GDANSK UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
2020-2021
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

HISTORY OF MIDDLE POMERANIAN AND KASHUBIAN



The Polish name of Pomerania, Pomorzcie, means near the sea (po - e - morze). Originally Veleti, Obodriti and Kashubians lived in these areas. Later in Pomerania there were two political centers, Gdansk and Szczecin.

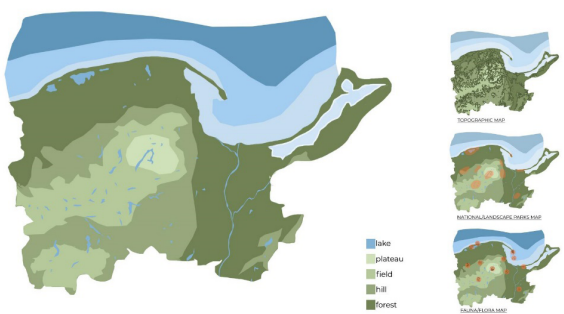
Polish Pomerania is nowadays divided into three different voivodships:

- Voivodeship of Western Pomerania (according to the German tradition: later Pomerania).
- Voivodeship of Pomerania (according to the German tradition: Pomerania).
- Voivodeship of Kuyavian-Pomerania (according to German tradition comprising a part of Ancient Prussia and the Land of Chełmno).



The name derives from the mythological Griffin (gryf in Polish, Greif in German), erect and screaming, present in the family arms, which appeared for the first time in the seal of Duke Casimir I of Pomerania in the 1190s. Used at the beginning only as a battle emblem, the dynasty changed its name into Greifen only from the 15th century.

MIDDLE POMERANIAN LANDSCAPE: ALIVE AND NON-LIVE ELEMENTS



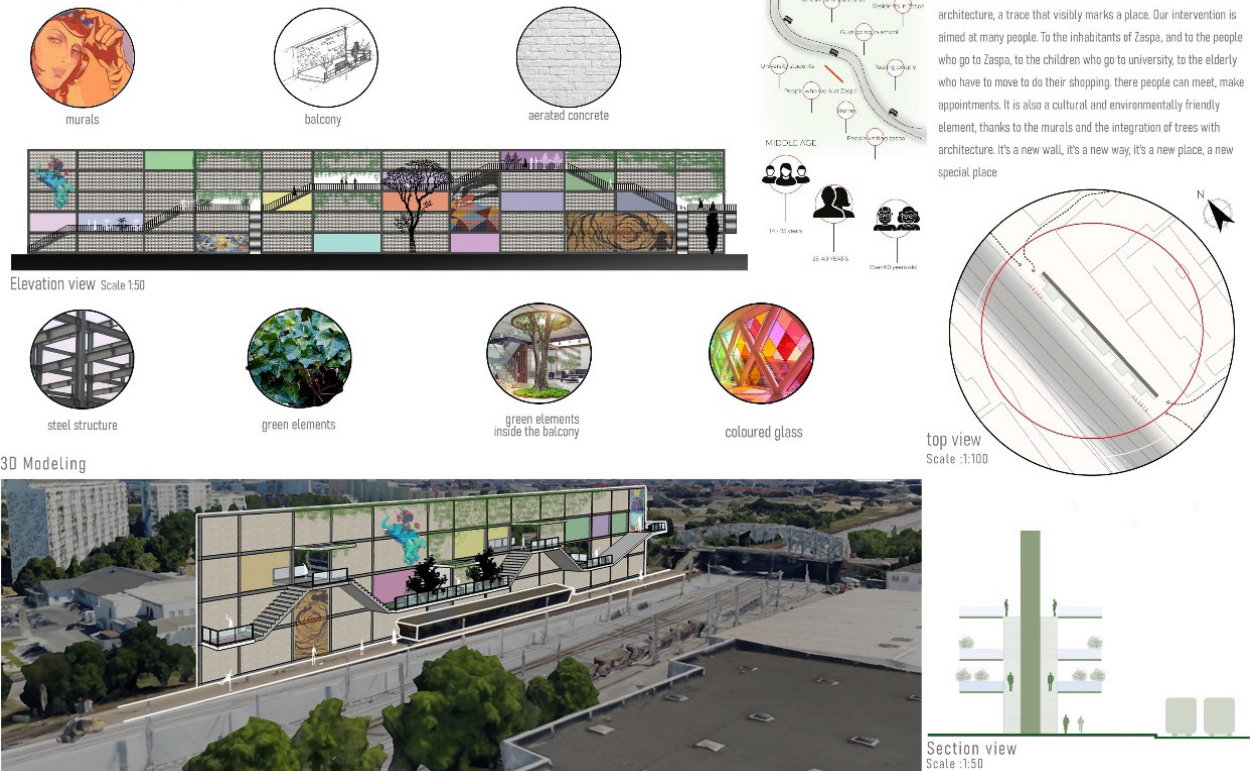
Most of the region is coastal lowland, being part of the Central European Plain, but its southern, hilly parts belong to the Baltic Ridge, a belt of terminal moraines formed during the Pleistocene. Within this ridge, a chain of moraine-dammed lakes constitutes the Pomeranian Lake District. The soil is generally rather poor, sometimes sandy or marshy. It consists of lots of natural or landscape parks, some of them including Słowiński National Park (a UNESCO-designated biosphere reserve), Tricity Landscape Park, Vistula Spit Landscape Park or Kashubian Landscape Park. Among the protected or rare fauna and flora in the region, we can observe the dune region, home to many species of birds, the pine forests, the seals/sea gulls or the rare cloudberry flower found in Hel region. The beaver is one of the species that lives in Widyż Landscape Park, along with lobelia, a rare flower found only in Zaborski Landscape Park.

MIDDLE POMERANIAN LANDSCAPE: SEA SHORE / KASHUBIAN AREA / TRICITY



Fig. 3. Landscape analysis, exercise 01, a. Ana Gonzalez + Patricia Sola b. Anil Gucuk + Alice Tripoli + Bahadir Sezer.
Source: Author's archive.

The WALL



ZASPA NEW GREEN TASK 1

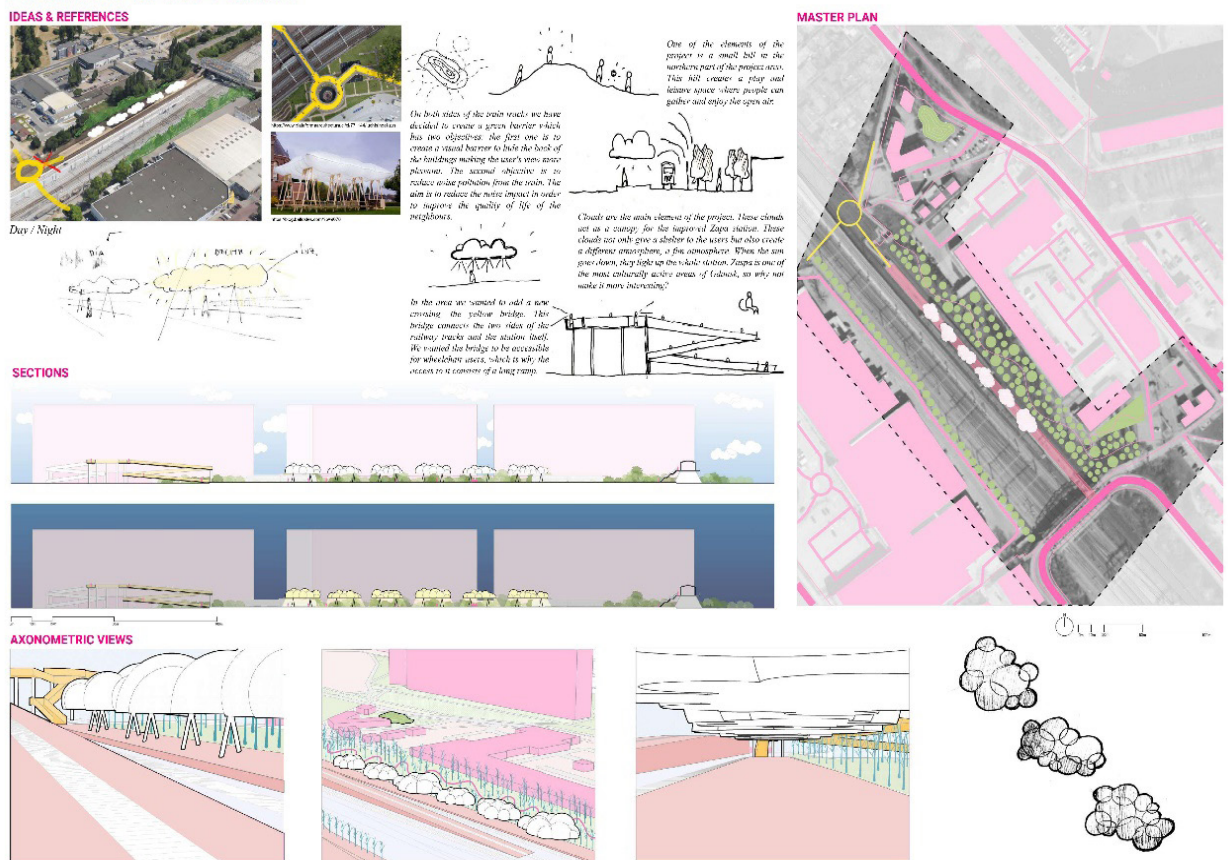


Fig. 4.1. Student projects. Task 1. Communication space: railway platform in Zaspá, a. Ana Gonzalez + Patricia Sola, b. Anil Gucuk + Alice Tripoli + Bahadir Sezeer, and c. Alexandra Posdarie + Beyza Kocadag. Source: Author's archive.

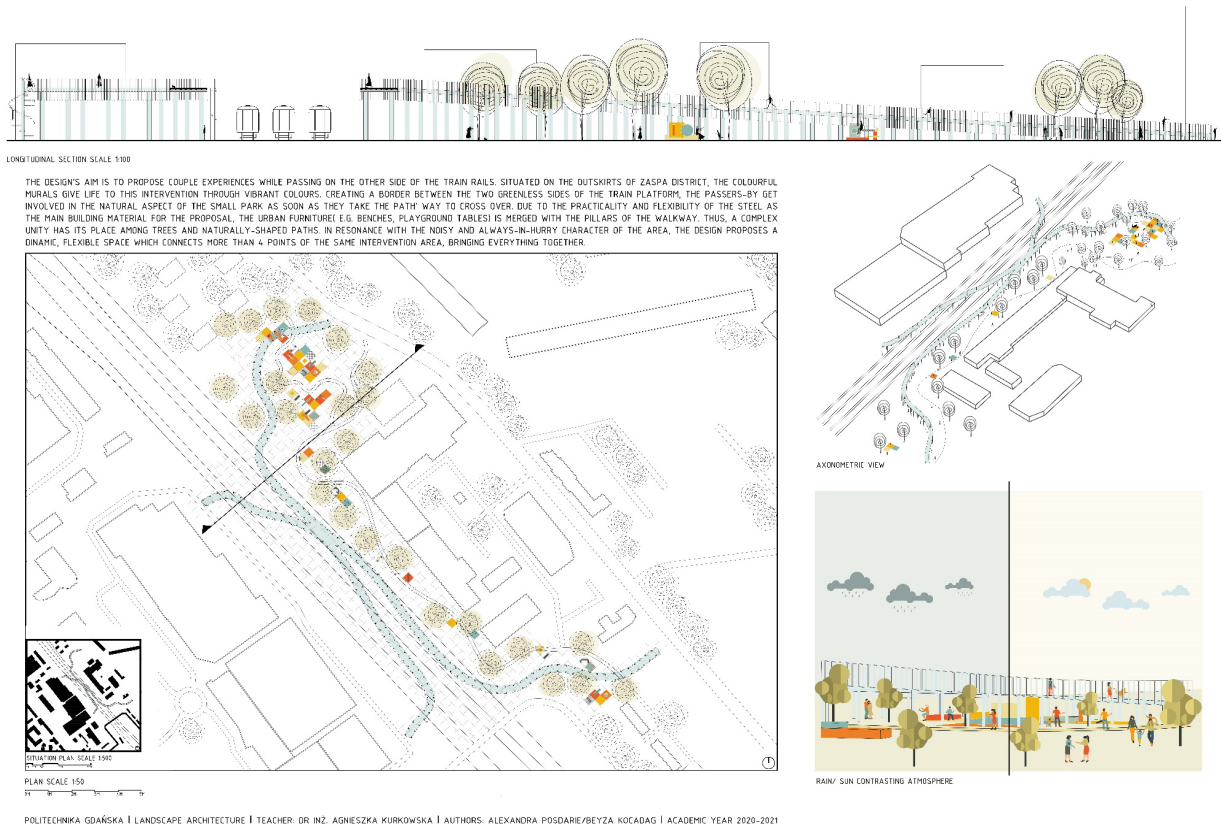


Fig. 4.2. Student projects. Task 1. Communication space: railway platform in Zaspá, a. Ana Gonzalez + Patricia Sola, b. Anil Gucuk + Alice Tripoli + Bahadir Sezeer, and c. Alexandra Posdarie + Beyza Kocadag. Source: Author's archive.

The PARASITE

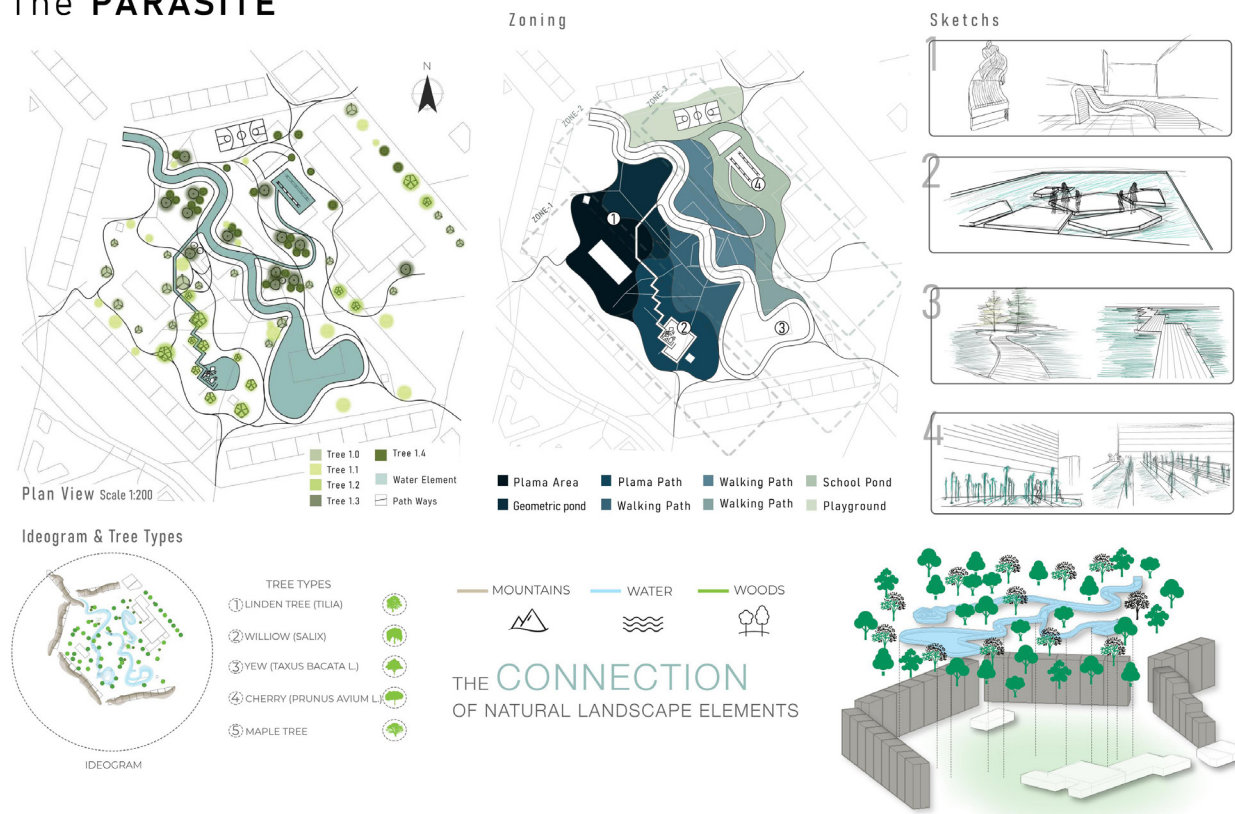
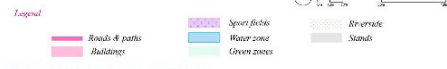


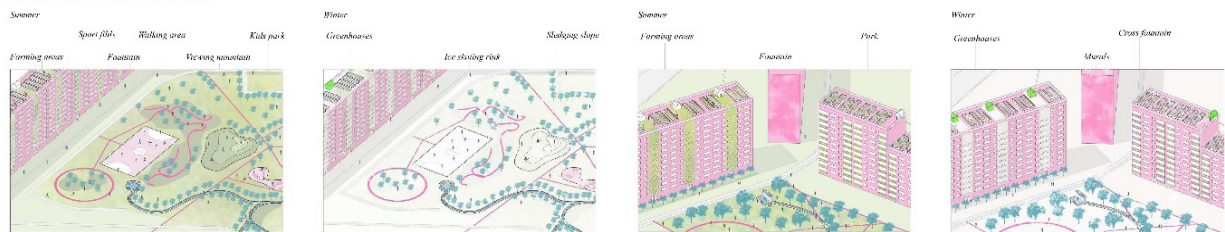
Fig. 5.1. Student projects. Task 2. Social space: semi-public interior of a housing estate in Zaspá, a. Ana Gonzalez + Patricia Sola, b. Anil Gucuk + Alice Tripoli + Bahadir Sezeer, and c. Alexandra Posdarie + Beyza Kocadag. Source: Author's archive.

ZASPA NEW GREEN TASK 2

MASTER PLAN



AXONOMETRIC VIEWS & ACTIVITIES



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This project consisted of local residents. We want to improve their neighborhood and make it a more pleasant and comfortable place. At the same time, we want to attract a certain public interested in culture and quality outdoor spaces. For this project we wanted to rehabilitate the area taking into account the needs of the neighbors and making them participate in all the activities.

We wanted to put a major area, with an artificial river, a fountain, some flower beds, a green expanse to rest, read, spend a nice time... we also wanted to incorporate a playground for all children in the area, a sports area to practice: soccer, a nice and beautiful area for walks...

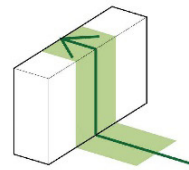
As a consequence of all this as we had infrastructures, we have put a couple of bars for the maintenance of the white area and the correct functioning of the artificial river.

All this is near to the Zaspá cultural center, which is also an element to improve the adjacent area.

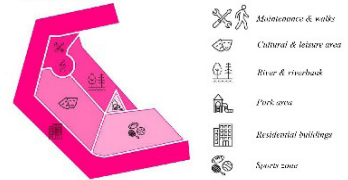
In addition to improving the green and recreational area of this small part of Zaspá, we also wanted to make a small improvement in the buildings, asking them to account also for the landscape of this area.

What we have done is to make a continuous green space on the roof of the buildings upwards and flowers on the facades, paying it with the green areas of the ground.

GREEN DIAGRAM

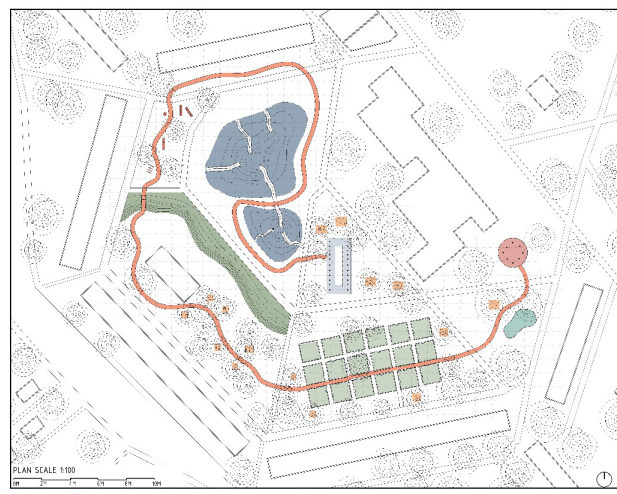


ZONES DIAGRAM



- Movement & walk
- Cultural & leisure area
- River & riverbank
- Park area
- Residential buildings
- Sports zone

SECTIONS

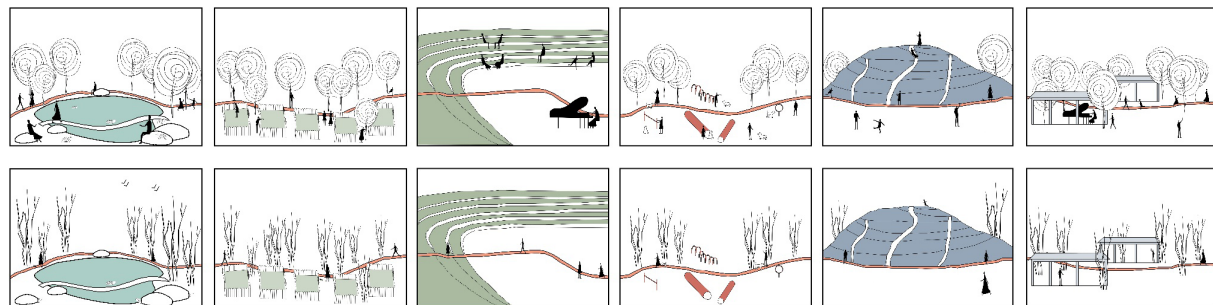


THE ORANGE PATH

THE DESIGN, LOCATED IN ZASPA DISTRICT, IS MEANT TO BRING TOGETHER THE PEOPLE BY ITS DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE IN THE SAME SPOT. THIS, THE ORANGE PATH OFFERS THE PASSERS-BY AN EXPERIENCE, GUIDING THEM TOWARDS ONE OF THE ENDING/ STARTING POINT. EVEN THOUGH THE ACTIVITIES INVOLVED IN THIS "TRAVEL" ARE DIVERSE, EVERYONE CAN FIND ITS INTEREST IN AT LEAST ONE OF THEM. THEIR MEANING IS TO CREATE A COMFORTABLE, FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE WHERE ALL CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE CAN FIND THEIR PLACE AT.



AXONOMETRIC VIEW

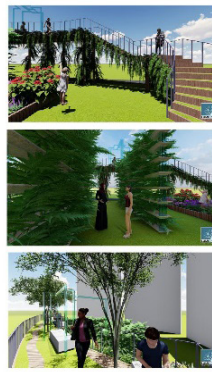
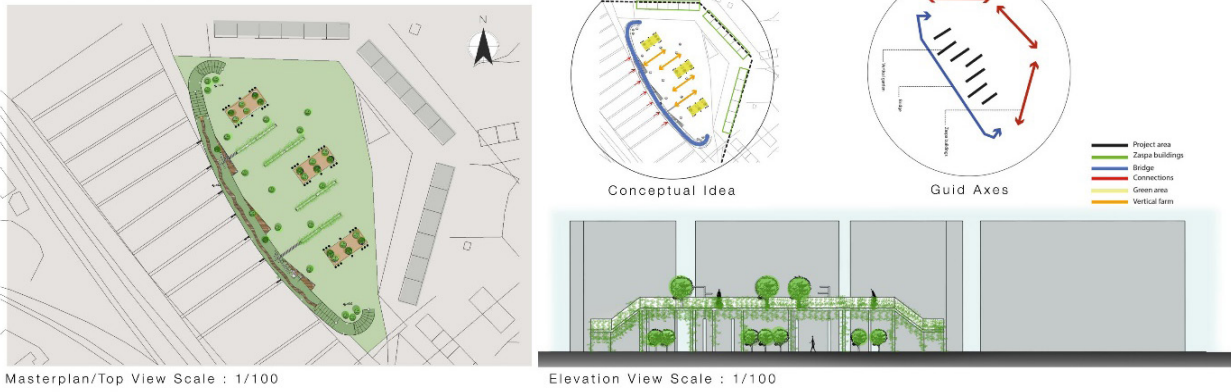


SPRING/ AUTUMN CONTRASTING ATMOSPHERE

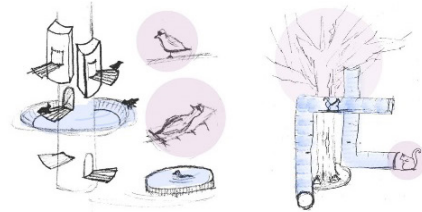
POLITECHNIKA GDAŃSKA | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | TEACHER: DR INŻ. AGNIESZKA KURKOWSKA | AUTHORS: ALEXANDRA POSDARIE/BEYZA KOCADAG | ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021

Fig. 5.2. Student projects. Task 2. Social space: semi-public interior of a housing estate in Zaspá, a. Ana Gonzalez + Patricia Sola, b. Anil Gucuk + Alice Tripoli + Bahadır Sezeer, and c. Alexandra Posdarie + Beyza Kocadag. Source: Author's archive.

ARTIFICI HILL



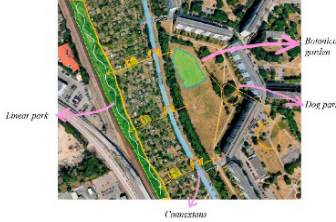
The projects design idea came from a basic shape of a bridge but then it evolve to become an artificial lifted hill to make the surrounding like it is still in nature. While designing the project the connection to animals, flowers, people and etc. was important. That is why the design evolve to become an artificial lifted hill.



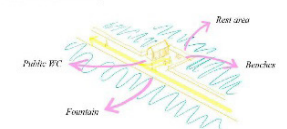
ZASPA NEW GREEN TASK 3

IDEA

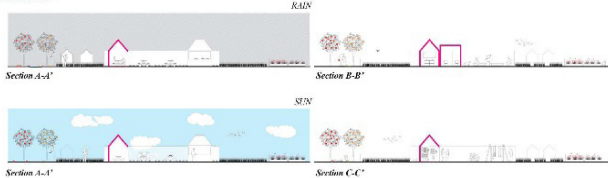
Final idea



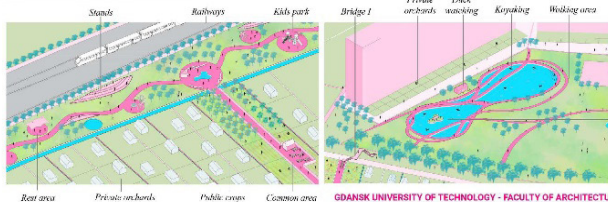
Detailed idea (Connections)



SECTIONS

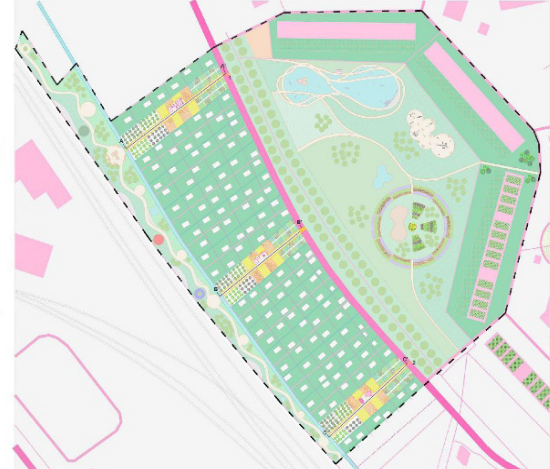


AXONOMETRIC VIEWS & ACTIVITIES



SITE MAP

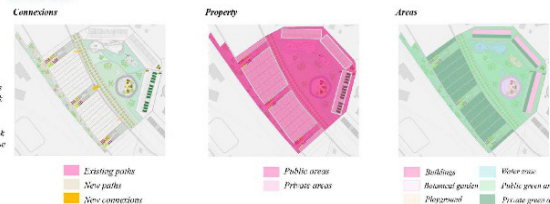
PROJECT APPLICATION



LEGEND



LAND USE



GDANSK UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY - FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE 2020/2021 - TEACHER: dr inż. Agnieszka Kurkowska - AUTHORS: inż. arch. Ana González / inż. arch. Patricia Sola

Fig. 6.1. Student projects. Task 3. Biodiversity space: recreational area and allotment gardens in Zaspá, a. Ana Gonzalez + Patricia Sola, b. Anil Gucuk + Alice Tripoli + Bahadir Sezeer, and c. Alexandra Posdarie + Beyza Kocadag.
Source: Author's archive.

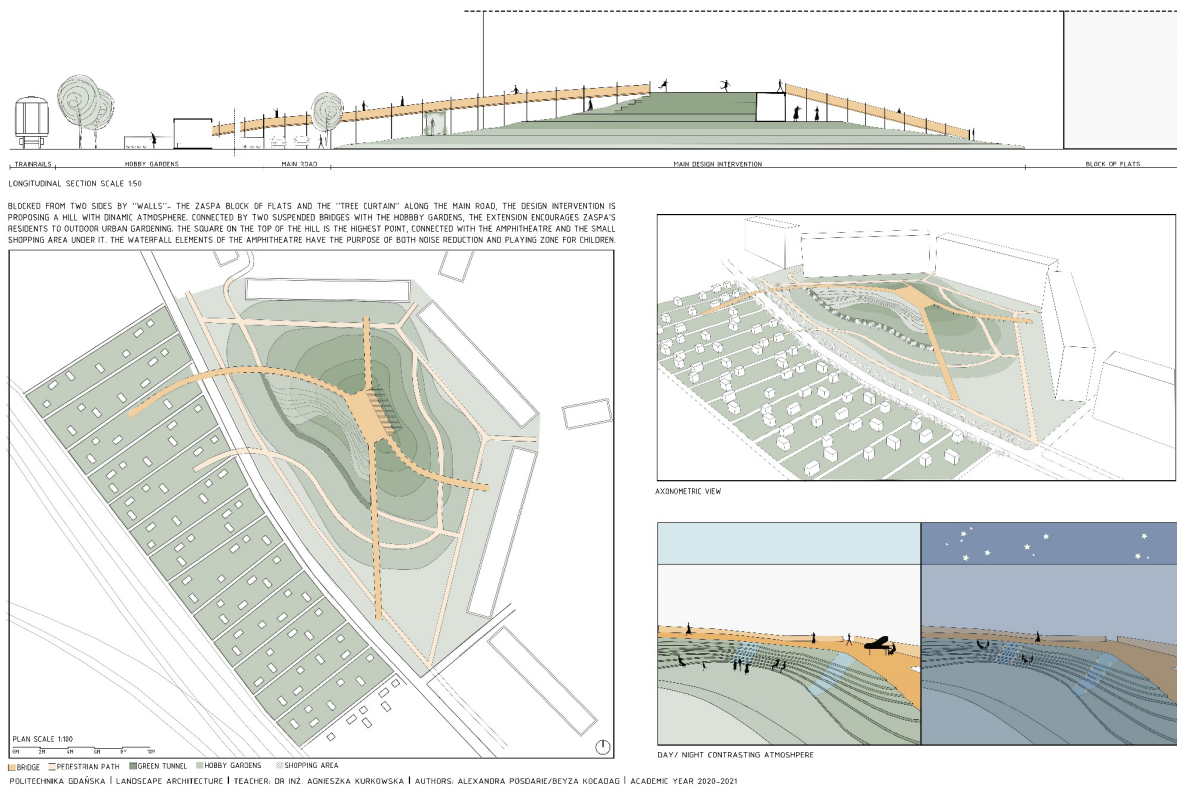


Fig. 6.2. Student projects. Task 3. Biodiversity space: recreational area and allotment gardens in Zaspá, a. Ana Gonzalez + Patricia Sola, b. Anil Gucuk + Alice Tripoli + Bahadir Sezeer, and c. Alexandra Posdarie + Beyza Kocadag. Source: Author's archive.

The deliberate avoidance of a framework of formal restrictions – the absence of strict instructions on the scope of the project – aimed to leave the sphere of creation free of constraints. No legislative restrictions were introduced, and abstract – ideological – concepts were consciously allowed. In each case, the designed space had to be presented in the form of a scaled drawing of a plan, section, sketch, and spatial presentation (axonometry, perspective). The presentation board had to include an element of the first stage: research and development of the concept outline. The presentation had to consider self-selected, two opposing situations of being in space, e.g. day and night, sun and rain, summer, and winter. This aspect of the task drew attention to the different aspects of how public space is used by its users. The perspective of the defined target user was also important. The tasks differentiated the prerequisites for designers in this respect. At the same time, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mentioned in the introduction were relevant, as their implementation nowadays seems to be only a legitimate necessity in the revaluation and development of space.

At the end of the course, in 2022, an evaluation of the effects was carried out in the direction of examining the implementation of the specific objectives, and more specifically whether "nature"

and "heritage" (which are elements of the Sustainable Development Goals) have the potential to be social integration factors in the spaces of residential areas based on the example of the Zaspá study. For the purposes of the study, a diagram of the working method is presented graphically (cf. Fig. 7).

4. Summary

The projects and the accompanying research work address the topic of transformation not only locally, but also within the common heritage of Europe, the common future of the inhabitants, whose present is predominantly made up of blocks of flats, which are the common model of a multifamily house. In line with the declaration of the UNESCO World Conference 2022, it is necessary to seek impulses for the strengthening of cultural diversity and its role in sustainable development in the perspective of Agenda 2030. This implies the need to promote social participation and human multiculturalism, particularly relevant for the promotion of a solidarity society (cf.: Berry, 2011), obviously strongly linked to Gdansk's contemporary history. It is advisable to promote multilateral cooperation and dialogue, which is what was attempted in the didactic, exhibition and research process.

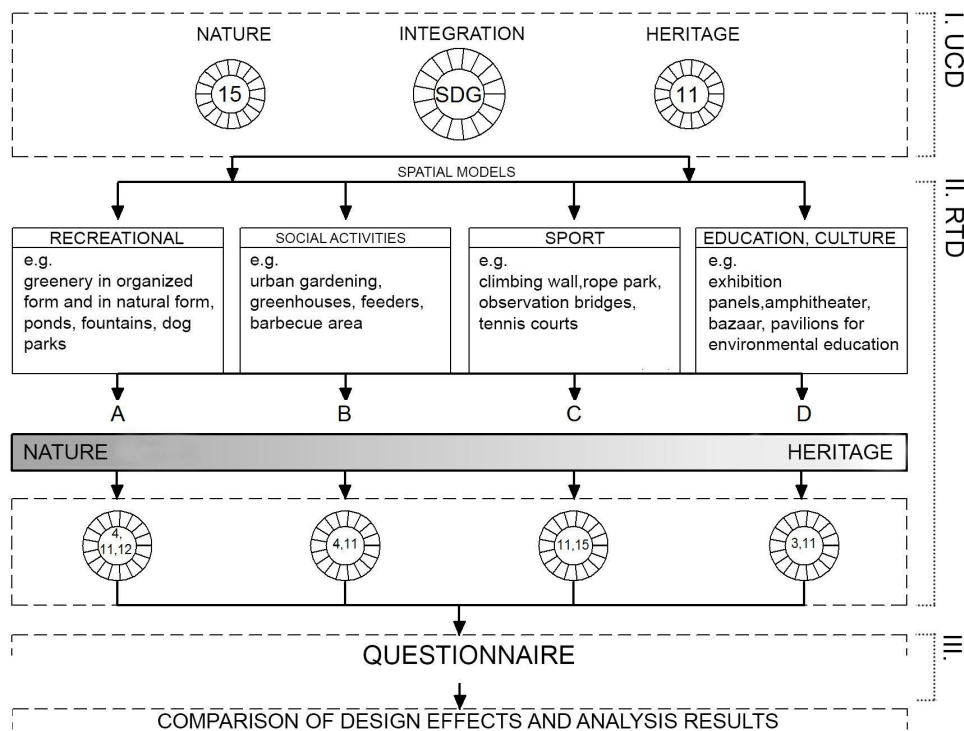


Fig. 7. Research framework, illustration by Anna Wróblewska, (the numbers of SDG goals appear in the circles). Source: Author's archive.

The original method of working on the project results in spatial solutions that go beyond the local experience of the designers. As a result of the open approach in landscape design and the outlining of specific objectives for individual tasks, and above all the deliberate admission of the multiculturalism of the young international designers, numerous surprising, non-obvious answers were obtained. They proved interesting for external stakeholders developing plans for the restructuring of the contact areas of the Grunwaldzka Avenue belt (adjacent to Zaspas from the south-west) and for the residents of the estate. The projects were invited to three public exhibitions. The first one, summarising the activities in 2021 was held at the «Plama» – a cultural centre of the Gdansk Archipelago of Culture in Zaspas («ZAS!pa», July 2021). The second exhibition presented the result of the work in 2022 at the Gdansk University of Technology as part of the International Conference «Flexible Planning. The Search for Innovative Didactic Instruments» (preceded by a local, de facto fourth autonomous exhibition of a set of student works at the Faculty of Architecture organised by the Department of Environmental Design as part of the XXX European Heritage Days, «Zaspas Nova», Sep. 2022) selecting the best proposals for spatial solutions. The last exhibition of the series is still (Dec. 2023) presented

in the public space, at the invitation of the City Pro company, by the pedestrian passage connecting the Gdańsk districts of Wrzeszcz and Zaspas via a railway viaduct. This gave the wide audience a chance to learn about the development potential of Zaspas landscapes. There has also been an exhibition in the virtual space since Dec. 2022, through which a wider audience has been reached and a broad survey could also be conducted based on the works presented here.

The completed student projects using the chosen method allow us to deepen the research and initiate further research when resuming the topic in the upcoming summer semester of the academic year 2023/24. The topic covers a good scale, and the students' skills allow them to aptly solve the design problems posed, and Zaspas is a research field with universal characteristics so the obtained results can be applied by analogy to other settlements in the country and abroad. Thus, the gained knowledge and skills will allow other analogous design tasks to be undertaken effectively. It has also been confirmed that care for the landscape is a good direction for revitalisation, allowing the creation of designs for public spaces oriented towards the needs of the community and responding to current challenges to the planet.

⁸ Subject leader: Agnieszka Kurkowska, Bahaa Bou Kalfouni.

⁹ Subject leaders: Agnieszka Kurkowska, Anna Wróblewska, Paulina Duch-Żebrowska.

¹⁰ The results are presented in the article by: Kurkowska A., Wróblewska A., Duch-Żebrowska P. entitled "Nature and heritage – Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as factors of social integration in housing estate spaces. Zaspas study" [in:] HOUSING ENVIRONMENT 43/2023

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