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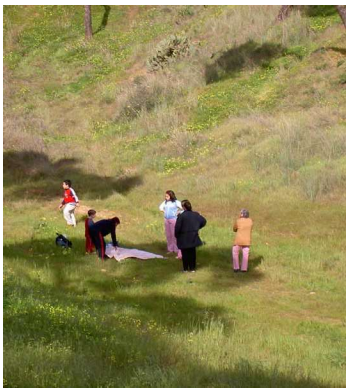
SUSTAINABLE REHABILITATION OF AN URBAN SPACE: THE GREEN LUNG IN HUELVA











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Design safe, comfortable and healthy environment. Design for diversity, identity and local context. New governance approach and new regulations
City scale
Changes in lifestyles and people needs. Energy and water expenditures. Soil degradation and loss of biodiversity

In 1892 the people of Huelva would go to the sanctuary of Virgen de la Cinta, and along the way named Paseo del Conquero they enjoyed nature and the woods and made them a living space. Following diverse urban circumstances, this tradition derived 100 years later in Huelva's citizens' claim to regain this land in what would become the great park of the city, the current Moret Park. Through the Moret Park Association –formed by more than 30 organizations including ecologist groups, political parties, residents' associations, ONGs and trade unions- and in consensus with Huelva City Hall, the basic intervention criteria were established and the new park was consolidated as the new GREEN LUNG OF HUELVA.
Moret Park design Project was developed following the research carried out by SAMA (http://seminariodearquitecturaymedioambiente.blogspot.com.es/). Such research deals with the development of a design project through collaborative work with Moret Park Platform, based on sustainability criteria. For this purpose, SAMA uses its technical knowledge in the fields of architecture and sustainable urban design and –through a process of meetings, debate and discussion- adapts its successive proposals to the needs and demands of the different collectives and potential users integrating the platform. The objective of the project is to create an urban forest in a participatory process.

The park includes a part of "La Joya" orientalist necropolis and contains several burial mounds of the Tartesic epoch along a line of small sandstone hills that constitute a very peculiar matter for a public open park.

Inside the park, the children area, the skating and bike trial racetrack for young people, the barbecue area for family groups, the lagoon divided in two parts on different levels, one for telecontroled boat models, and the other, larger, for oar boats, and a natural scenic space, are shaped as the most important elements within the whole area, due to its natural characteristics as well as its landscape potential that favours a unifying design based on the vegetation and topographic characteristics of the hole area.

The project in general aims for the maximum adaptation of the different facilities to the location, the best contribution of the project to the site and landscape is the fact that it hardly modifies them. Rather than built, the auditorium is shaped into the dry stream bed through the use of natural elements (trees and vegetation) as they do the rest of equipment: children playground, skating, barbecue zone, lagoons, etc. The building process and technology used relate to the garden construction systems with the innovation of using wood planks to form walls and terraces.

All the equipment, facilities an especially the scenic space for Moret Park have been developed in close collaboration with the Huelva people –represented by the PARQUE MORET ASSOCIATION which gathered residents' associations, ecologist groups, sport associations, child and third age care institutions.

This has been a continuous relationship from the initial proposal winning the national competition to the final development of facilities, paths, and the overall design of the park, based on the reinforcement of the existing Mediterranean forest. The great simplicity of the design conveys an immediate understanding of the different facilities and their use.

A minimum impact on the environment implies a strong integration into the landscape, vegetation and nature of the place through the continuous use of such vegetation and trees: a forest inside a forest. The robustness of the construction guarantees its durability as well as an easy maintenance. Wind power is used for the extraction and recycling of water of the lagoons and photovoltaic energy is used for lighting.
Due to the main use of wood elements and vegetation, the costs of this project are half the equivalent in conventional building. Maintenance of this space is guaranteed by the local Parks Delegation of the city as it is minimal.

The design is naturally integrated in such a way that it becomes landscape itself. The woodland is mainly compounded by Mediterranean pine, quercus and cork trees and cypresses, the latter forming a cornice in the fashion of historical Greek enclaves. The background vegetation includes wild aromatic plants (thyme, lavender...) offering a variety of colours and textures throughout the different flowerings and seasons.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that urban development design in collaboration with citizen organisations is possible. In order for this to be possible, it is necessary that people gather around collectives, associations or platforms that allow the dialogue both with the professionals and the public bodies involved in the project development.

A project designed in collaboration with citizens has a much wider acceptance among users, as it is clearly proved by the large numbers of people turning on the opening event and the daily reality of the park. This is directly related to a responsible use and maintenance of the park and its sustainability through time as a key urban element of the city.

References

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