

SUMMARY

THE ART OF LANDSCAPE PLANNING AFTER LAND ART

The avant-garde of landscape architecture and the changes in the design of public spaces from the 1980s to 2016 with a significant reference on Nature-based Solutions.

Since prehistoric times, man has introduced artificial earth forms into the landscape. Examples include ancient geoglyphs, sepulchral mounds, viewing pinnacles and ramparts surrounding fortresses. In each of these cases, the structures had a different origin and function. In modern times, from the 1980s, large-scale earthen forms began to appear in public spaces created by landscape designers such as Maya Lin, George Hargreaves and Martha Schwartz. What made these projects different was the sculptural shaping of the earth masses and their significant impact on the architectural and landscape composition of the public spaces. In the early 1990s researchers began to see in these works a connection with art, especially with the land art movement, and later also with the avant-garde phenomenon of landscape architecture.

The avant-garde, as a term for creative work, originally referred to artistic endeavours of the early 20th century and included such movements in art as Suprematism, Neo-Plasticism and Dadaism. As a broader term, it refers to novel and innovative work that is followed by imitators. The avant-garde was discussed not only in relation to the fine arts, but also to literature, theatre, film and finally architecture. In landscape architecture, the avant-garde was connected not only with a sophisticated form of a work of art, but also with its function focused on both people and nature. The study of this issue therefore required a multi-criteria analysis.

The defining characteristics of the landscape architecture avant-garde are matched by contemporary trends in the design of ecological parks and the scientific idea of Nature-based Solutions (NbS). In addition to large-scale earthen forms, these two initiatives have formed the basis for further research. Ecological parks are characterised by the use of design practices that draw on knowledge of ecosystems and ecological balance. Among them, several types can be distinguished, such as a sustainable park, a park founded on ruderal areas or with biocenotic features. Nature-based Solutions is a new scientific concept described as an "umbrella" because it combines actions for biodiversity and human well-being as two equivalent factors. These solutions involve imitating nature or being inspired by nature's processes. The term was first used in 2008 and defined in 2009 by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), a union concerned with nature conservation in the broadest sense. Currently, the term NbS is a topic of international scientific discourse – in the context of its framework, added value and application in open and built-up areas.

Forty sites were initially analysed, followed by a detailed analysis of seven parks where earthen forms were located. A prerequisite for selection was also the response through the project to existing social challenges on the ground, such as environmental degradation and biodiversity loss, water security, climate change, natural disasters, or human health, which are directly and indirectly affected by the realized landforms. All the spaces studied were created either in Europe or the United States, in or on the outskirts of large cities, and no earlier than 1980. They were Mill Creek Canyon Earthworks Park (Kent, USA), Connecticut Water Treatment Facility (Connecticut, USA), Renaissance Park (Chattanooga, USA), Northala Fields (London, UK), La Vall de'n Joan, Parc del Garraf (Barcelona metropolitan area, Spain), Buitenschot Park (Amsterdam area, Netherlands), Governors Island Park (New York, USA). The analysis was based on literature studies and in some cases on site visits and interviews. The sites were assessed as Nature-based Solutions, using criteria developed in 2020 by the IUCN. Even though these parks were not intended to be NbS, a study on existing and already functioning sites for at least several years leads to useful data. Due to the specifics of urban parks, the facilities were also assessed on the scale developed by Vikas Mehta on the quality of public spaces. Additionally, data was taken from user ratings on Google reviews.

The study has shown that the parks analysed are characterised not only by a high quality of public space, but also a high rating as Nature-based Solutions. The results obtained confirm that the sites can be considered as avant-garde realisations and are expected to guide the next generation of contemporary parks. Regardless, however, their high value to society as well as to biodiversity and climate is undeniable. Perhaps it is this conclusion that is most relevant to the study carried out. The reliable analysis of sites according to criteria that describe nature-based solutions in highly developed countries is another contribution to the ongoing scientific discourse. The data obtained shows the features that parks model in this respect have and what their imperfections are, which may prove to be an important guideline for designers of landscape architecture.