PROJECT CONCEPT

Building further on strong foundations

preserve, reuse, reduce

Looking carefully between the past and the present, this submission proposes solutions that build on the existing context, searching for hints of past states, but also looking towards innovative and sustainable technologies for a reconciled future that prepares carefully for the uncertainties of climate change ahead. As Dobrich reimagines itself as an important economic and cultural centre in the north-east region of Bulgaria, this approach will bring it to the forefront of contemporary practice. Some of the distinctly Dobrich elements that this scheme embraces are:

- The site's earlier forest and 'riparian past' natural history, alongside more formal cultivated parks and contemporary carefully cared for ecological zones
- A city that has distinctly visible stages of development - medieval, 18th,19th and early 20th Century classic styles; the bold abruptness of Soviet scales; and more recent reconciliatory approaches
- The accompanying rich and diverse cultural histories that run in tandem with these great periods of change
- A water story of diverted, dammed and culverted rivers, and current drainage patterns across vast open impermeable plazas and contrasting finely grained networks of streets
- The highly graphic paving pattern across almost the entire Zone A area which acts as a unifying carpet
- The almost entirely pedestrian biased focus to the Zone A area
- Existing patches of mature trees dotted throughout Zone A, generally not in grand avenues, and instead in vibrant pictorial compositions

The project proposes a methodology that avoids the 'tabula rasa' of heavy demolition and instead seeks opportunity in the existing, and uses systems of amplification, spatial definition through additive elements, and selective carving into existing conditions.

Forest Islands and Rivulets

informed by this broader vision, a first key approach considers the existing paving as a ground zero across the Zone A area. As a way of understanding and working with the existing and potential future storm flows of water across currently impermeable surfaces, the paving is cut into and ground down to form small rivers, rills and even ditches that guide water and people

across this section of the city and potentially beyond. These interventions are often hard-edged in form and in places take cues from the existing paving patterns.

By contrast, additive elements above the surface are considered as ‘islands’ that are predominantly curvilinear and softer in nature, in the way alluvial deposits create sculptural forms across the floodplain. These new topographies are defined to consume the existing raised tree planters and create compositions on a scale that can mediate between expansive paving and monolithic building backdrops. They are the sites for new contrived forests that learn from the former native vegetation, that also spill over into the paving beyond, generated through sophisticated scripting methods. The islands are quieter retreats and viewing spots within the city and are laid down in locations that otherwise have the potential to be ferociously hot in summer and thus act as important heat and carbon sinks. Along with the new visual water courses and associated vegetation, the forest islands create important microclimates within the city.

This combination of elements - alongside lightweight demountable structures for markets and events, new lighting hardware that complements the existing provision, public art potential for augmenting existing paving patterns and building facades - forms the basis of a kit of parts that defines a new Dobrich eco-system.

Four plazas

Boris III plaza, Demokratsia Plaza, Vazrazhdane plaza, Svoboda plaza.
The currently mega-scaled plazas exist in ways quite difficult for an individual person to grapple with. The scheme defines locations that would suit large congregations of events, and then frames those with the new forest canopy and island topographies towards the edges. The dramatic building forms around are served up in an altered way visible through the thickets of new forest growth. In the plazas, the result is a series of interlocking ‘clearings’ in the wider city forest that support both regular daily life, all year round, but then also the exciting programming that already occurs in Dobrich. Dedicated cycle routes skirt the open spaces alongside the island forms generating new lines of energy not in conflict with the pedestrian user. It is envisaged that during the construction of the islands, utilities - electricity and mains water points - would be accommodated to serve special events. Sleeves cast into selected replacement paving blocks would carry temporary lighting and lightweight structures for special events.

Streets

Between the plazas across Zone A, much narrower and largely traditionally grained streets have the potential to become rich connectors across the city. Some have more cultural identities, whilst others are predominantly residential. The amplification of the current tree canopy to become the proposed forest overlay helps to celebrate and also unite these different

characteristics. Here the combination of islands and water courses are on a smaller scale, and the reference point from the natural landscape is more ‘valleys’ and ‘chasms’. Cycle routes are envisaged on some streets and omitted from others where spatial availability and land use governs the most appropriate choices.

Permeability at the Core of the Reimagined Dobrich Landscape

Existing Landscape

The current predominant surface throughout Zone A is impervious to water, with isolated raised planters and drainage grates. Whilst the graphic image of the paving is celebrated in this proposal, a shift toward water management, retention and distribution within the site is fundamental to the future thinking. Prior to any changes on the site however, a qualified dendrologist must provide a full botanical report and perform health assessments including the need to provide prophylactic treatments, all recommended pruning and removal, and a list of climate-adapted species for replacement. Trees would be logged in a “taxation document”, indexed with notes.

Proposed Landscape

A core concept of our proposal is a functional urban forest. By augmenting the planting within the Zone A territory, our project will grow the urban forest canopy by XX percent and increase overall permeable areas. The expanded canopy will improve the microclimate and lowering summer temperatures. Increasing the permeable areas allows groundwater recharge and can mitigate urban flooding in extreme weather events. The scheme proposes the interplanting of new trees within the current planting pockets and expansion of planting beyond the existing planting areas. These “forest islands” include new trees and understory plantings. The islands are designed to have stormwater interception basins to capture and infiltrate street water runoff.

Parking

Overall, the distribution of parking at the perimeter of the pedestrian zone feels carefully considered and functional, and largely avoids conflict with pedestrian traffic. In general, the locations don’t seem to form visual competition with the larger streetscape, and are particularly suited with regard to handicapped access and large vehicle servicing traffic for special events. However the surfaces are largely impermeable which could be mitigated as part of the larger surface water strategy, and the spaces can be programmed for multiple uses - such as markets - at certain times of the week that drivers can plan around.

Lighting

As with all aspects of this project's approach, in the first instance the desire is to upcycle the existing condition. In tandem with further investigation, an approach that re-lamps the existing pole lighting with high-efficiency LEDs, potentially with colour-changing capabilities, to achieve a slightly warmer version of the existing ambient canopy is a desired starting point. This adjusted existing lighting layer would then be supplemented with low level bollard lighting to map cycle routes and key pedestrian pathways as a much more intimate, low to the ground, experience. Carefully considered framed lighting to exaggerate particular architectural features of the more culturally important buildings would also provide a soft reflected light to the key plazas and also to punctuate the connecting streets at various intervals. The lantern effect of light spill from surrounding residential and commercial buildings would also be considered to help create a comforting feeling for this area of Dobrich by night. Energy efficiency, maintenance and flexibility of space use should be paramount considerations for the development of a detailed lighting scheme.

Engineering

The minimal replacement of selected areas of existing paving and the new 'forest islands' provide the opportunity to develop utility strategies to support a flexibility of use, without widespread disruption.

- **power supply concept**

This must clarify the general power supply in the competition area as well as new locations requiring additional power supply, taking into account current trends for optimal energy efficiency, use of renewable energy and independent sources.

- **water and sewerage concept**

This is expected to clarify water management at a conceptual level, to address technological issues related to water supply, drainage, sanitation and irrigation, and to incorporate aesthetic and functional solutions for water use;

Project Value

Project takes careful consideration of budget distribution across the areas,
25-septemvri street receives upgrade of emergency vehicular access road, new planting islands, refurbishment of existing pedestrian area pavement and furniture and lighting upgrade. existing subgrade communication will stay intact to reduce project budget.
Vazrazhdane Square is partly located on a building structure which increases building costs, we propose on structure landscape which will transform old building to an attractive destination, this part has to be planned with close coordination of existing business on the plaza for optimal solutions

Svoboda Square key attractor becomes forest islands which receive the biggest portion of the budget this lush landscape will give new contemporary identity. existing pavement gets minor upgrade as required.

NO	DESCRIPTION	SQUARE METERS	PRICE PER SQ.M	TOTAL
	25-septemvri street			
1,10	Planting islands	3000	€ 50,00	€ 150 000,00
1,20	Vehicular grade path	2300	€ 100,00	€ 230 000,00
1,30	Pedestrian paving refurbishment	5400	€ 50,00	€ 270 000,00
1,40	Lighting and Furniture	N/A		€ 60 000,00
				€ 710 000,00
	Vazrazhdane Square			
2,10	Landcape on Structure	3000	€ 300,00	€ 900 000,00
2,20	Pedestrian paving refurbishment	2500	€ 50,00	€ 125 000,00
				€ 1 025 000,00
	Svoboda Square			
3,10	Vehicular grade path	1100	€ 100,00	€ 110 000,00
3,20	Planting islands	9400	€ 170,00	€ 1 598 000,00
3,30	Pedestrian paving refurbishment	16200	€ 50,00	€ 810 000,00
3,30	Lighting and Furniture	N/A		€ 150 000,00
				€ 2 668 000,00
	Design Services			
Design Fee				€ 200 000,00

Grand Total	€ 4 603 000,00

Looking Beyond the Confines of Zone A

As part of the analysis of the site, it became clear that the successful renovation of Zone A relies heavily on understanding how it connects to the wider city and region beyond. To the west, a considered connection to the main railway station, for example seems pertinent and potentially quite beautiful, and to the south, it appears quite possible, with some adjustment to the ring road layout, to create an almost seamless connection to the vast Park ‘Sveti Georgi’ beyond, drawing the concept of the urban forest in from the outside. Whilst we recognise these areas are not included in the scope of the project, conversations around the impact of a vastly upgraded Zone A on the wider city are both exciting and necessary.