Redevelopment of the New Waterfront

Nikiforidis - Cuomo architects
Prodromos Nikiforidis, Bernard Cuomo

For the New Waterfront, two major characteristic areas are distinguished, which set the principles for the basic choices of the project.

The walk, right above the limit between land and sea, is without interruptions and distractions. The paving of the coast, from the White Tower to the Concert Hall, is handled equally, without hierarchies and alterations to its width. A cast floor is constructed along the waterfront length and all its width. The floor is differentiated at the ending of the breakwater towards the sea by using a wooden deck of bangkirai.

In the inner side of the breakwater, the alternative of a shaded walk is offered. This walk with the proposed sitting-rooms among the trees, is particularly useful during the summer months as an intermediate limit-filter between the two discrete parts of the coast front: the paving and the green zone.

At the opposite side of the linear route, 13 green spaces are formed at the inner side, as a succession of "green rooms - gardens", each with a special thematic characteristic. It's not about big "parks", but "rooms" of small size that remind of the house gardens that existed in the area and reached the natural seashore, before the landfill of the coast. The gardens are protected spaces and have their own introversion. The differentiation, the possibility of visual isolation, the shading, the surprise, the discovery or the reveal of the different, the game, the soft floors, the green: the gardens follow different ways of synthetic language, glorifying the familiar and the private, creating new collective spaces in a local scale.

The redevelopment offered people a new urban open space near water with multiple functions with every part accessible by all citizens. People embraced it, created new habits and started participating in the maintenance of the public space.

Moreover, apart from reduced water consumption with the lowest possible energy consumption, the irrigation autonomy from the city water supply network is remarkable and the ease in the pinpoint of defaults and failures.

Thessaloniki, Greece
Commission date: 2000
Construction dates: 2006-2014
Client: Municipality of Thessaloniki
Gross floor area: 23.8 ha
Cost/m²: 146 €/m²

"The composition challenges the limit between land and sea, between natural and constructed landscape, by introducing two basic architectural gestures. The breakwater is the linear unifying element, functionally (as a continuous walk) and conceptually, upon which green spaces/rooms/gardens with special thematic characteristics and architectural qualities/atmospheres are introduced."
Christianna Pantelatou