

SKRA.



New and old *intertwined*

Sustainable Urban Design
School of Architecture, Lund University
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ABSTRACT

A stark political system change in Warsaw and an enormous economic spurt have given prominence to private initiatives, leaving behind several public spaces and relevant buildings or at the will of speculative developers. Sports facilities, being one of these public spaces, are having problems of funding, restoration and maintenance, leaving them neglected, though there is a need of them functioning. One of them being Skra, a stadium and four swimming pools designed by the architecture collective "The Penguins" in the 50es and 60es. Iskra - Workers Sports Club, was one of the first in Poland to introduce the artificial surface, tartan, making it possible for big international sporting events along with the four swimming pools, attracting the whole Warsaw to its doorsteps. In addition to the pools and the arena, changing rooms and a café was introduced. The architecture of this complex has a historical significance as it has many characteristics of post-war modernism. However, today it is referred to as the biggest shame in Ochota and that it is time to say goodbye to 95 years of history.

This sports area is presently facing an unknown future, some of its more public functions are being used despite the physical conditions and its architecture shape is being lost in the process. Even though the harsh conditions, the area is still used by sports clubs and athletes. This thesis attempts to revitalize an example of polish architecture history and restoring its new role in public life.

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1. introduction

1. Introduction.



warsaw
central station

Population
City - 1 753 977
Density - 3,372/km²

100 km

Structure of the research,

WHAT

This thesis is investigating a historical space for sports called Skra that was built after the second world war and is placed in a central park called Pole Mokotowskie in Warsaw. The built structure is deteriorating as a result from the treatment of such facilities during the last 20-30 years; the facility has been rented out for minimum charge to different owners while not performing its original purpose. The facility is almost used for its original purpose today. However, as the current tenant is renting a space of 21 ha and only using a small portion of the plot for track and field and rugby, the facility is not entirely used to its full potential. The space was designed for multiple forms of sports within one space.

The culture of sports and the design of such facilities has also changed compared to the era of Soviet Union. During that time, sports was practiced in a mass, collectively and almost obligatory whereas its more individual, free and spontaneous today. Sports facilities were more pompous, reflecting and honoring the state. Today, sports facilities are seen in different scales, often multipurposed and still honoring the nation.

Skra is therefore not interacting with the times of today when it comes to design nor diversity of functions. Its lacking maintenance and users since one sports club is barely able to rent the entire site. The design is characterized by large scale structures while the orientation within such structures are perceived as difficult. The area is invisible to the spontaneous user due to the barriers created by the large traffic and fences surrounding the site thus poorly connected to the surrounding park and the city.

In summation, Skra isn't accessible to the rest of the potential users therefor not visible for the type of changes needed so that it will be part of the city.

Figure 3. The arena.



Figure 4. The watchtower.



Figure 5. Concrete slide.



Figure 6. Concrete slide and the children pool.



1. Introduction.

HOW to restore Skra so that it becomes relevant today while respecting its original purpose of the site yet adjusting its form so it becomes more accessible?

The proposal will investigate factors such as the potential users that can be introduced to the site as the area is surrounded by different institutions, schools, workplaces and residential areas. This could give clues on how to develop the site further to involve more actors hence more functions so it could be accessible to more people. It could also affect the responsibility of managing and maintaining the area if it was shared among more actors, preferably the ones surrounding the area. The design will physically relate to its historical background but reformed so that it reflects how we sport today. It will also be influenced by my view of Warsaw as a whole; the history of Warsaw is clearly visible in the footprint of the city structure in the larger scale. However, as time passes by, such does life in the human scale too; smaller interventions are seen within the larger structures from the past in the city. This is the philosophy that will be implemented in the design; a smaller scale in a larger structure will be introduced without taking away its original purpose or design. It will highlight the times of the past by connecting the new structure to the old while mixing in the contemporary design and use. Finally, the design aims to open the closed area and creating important connections to its surrounding.

WHY

Managing a sports facility in modern times is quite difficult as these facilities are rarely in use to its full capacity compared to the cost of maintaining them. However, the city of Warsaw has an interest in developing the area into a proper and modern sports facility focusing on Track and Field. From a functional point of view, the space is too vast for one function. That's not to say that it shouldn't be a space in which this function should exist. As a former athlete of track and field, I always observed the vast space that wasn't in use when the seasons for training was changing. I found it interesting how people who wasn't members of the sport club avoided using the space that wasn't in use for other forms of sports or leisure.

Additionally, this particular place is a crumb of the past thus having a historical- and architec-
tonic significance. The area is of importance to the inhabitants surrounding Skra and would
like to see it opened to the public. The sport club currently managing the site has the same
will and ambitions as the public while not knowing how the outcome should result in. While
the amount of functions today is not corresponding to the purpose of the site historically,
this could be an opportunity for the entire city. The area is of importance to the inhabitants
surrounding Skra and would like to see it opened to the public. The sport club currently
managing the site has the same will and ambitions as the public while not knowing how the
outcome should result in. While the amount of functions today is not corresponding to the
purpose of the site historically, this could be an opportunity for the entire city.

BOUNDRIES OF THE PROJECT

The proposal focuses on the surrounding space outside of the arena and refers only to it by
involving the facades and entrances into the design. The proposal does not suggest a resto-
ration of the arena but is however seen as part of the future development of the site.

METHODS *that have been in use are the following:*

1. **Inventory** of the site and its context to understand the issues and potential from a user-perspective. This means how the site functions today from a functional as well as a spatial point of view, who is using the space and how it is connected to Pole Mokotowskie as well as the surrounding city.
2. **Qualitative interview** with a trainer from the sports club Skra who is using the site for Track and Field and rugby. This interview was made to understand their use of the site as well as the problems and potentials including functions, users and maintenance in relation to the size of the plot.

Interviews has also been done with the district architect of Ochota. This is to understand the issue of the site today and the future through the point of view of the district as well as through his professional viewing point as he has experienced similar projects previously in his career. To understand the development of Warsaw from a holistic point of view as well as to understand the historical significance of the site, I interviewed an architect, critic and historian of architecture.

3. **Theoretical research** that will be presented in the research will focus on the political- and architectural ideology of the period after the WWII to understand the period of time in which the area was built. Comprehensive plans of Mokotów will be presented to give an insight to the current situation and future plans of the site from the point of view of the county as well as the needs of the inhabitants. Finally, articles explaining the importance of public open spaces with focus of sports, greenery and the idea of common space will be discussed. This is to give an awareness to how the site should develop so that it becomes an asset to the people working and using the space in addition to invite the spontaneous user from the surrounding counties and hopefully the entire city.

Warsaw and sports today,

After the political turn in 1989 in Poland, the situation of sports and recreation lost the state patronage; spaces for sports have been functioning poorly during the last decades of the twentieth century due to the circumstances of the free market economy. Warsaw is currently a city under a considerable pressure for change. A stark political system change and an enormous economic spurt have given prominence to private initiatives, leaving behind several public spaces and relevant buildings or at the will of speculative developers. Historical facilities for sports, being one of these public spaces, are having problems of funding, restoration and maintenance, leaving them neglected, though there is a need of them functioning in the city.¹

However, this is not so unique for Poland when looking at the issue from an international point of view, rather a phenomenon that can be seen across the world. Olympic games represent their nations where such game results in a unique opportunity to be seen in a global context. Financing large infrastructures for events that occur few times at periods are challenging, specifically regarding the reuse and maintenance of such infrastructures when the event is over. Often these facilities are seen in the city periphery and lacking an easy connection to the inhabitants in the city. (X. Lin, 2013, p. 11)

Areas for sports, built after the second world war that are deteriorating are phenomenon that is often seen across Warsaw.

¹ *Platek, Gregorz. Polish architect, critic and historian of architecture. Meeting. 2017-02-02*



Figure 7. Cycling track "Orzeł" - Praga, Warsaw

Figure 8. Ski jump - Mokotów, Warsaw



1. Introduction.



Figure 9. Legia Pools - Mokotów, Warsaw



Figure 10. Gwardii Stadium and pool - Mokotów, Warsaw

The culture of sports and the design of such facilities has also changed compared to the era of Soviet Union. During that time, sports was practiced in a mass, collectively and almost obligatory whereas its more individual, free and spontaneous today. (Cook, 1957) Different forms of sports are going in several directions. One is the grassroots- bottom up constellation where people meet and use spaces like school yards or public parks. There is the traditional way in which one joins an association or club. And finally, there are the commercial gyms that are private and expensive. The perception of a club membership in which the club administers and fences an entire facility, leads to an economical exclusion as it could result in only people who can afford a membership that use the space. Physical barriers such as fencing strengthens the mental boarder further.

There is however a dialog happening in Warsaw regarding the need of multifunctional public spaces, specifically regarding sports; facilities that invites a larger group of people where functions would rotate depending on use. The idea is that it could lead to more interaction between people no matter age, gender or professionalism. By rotating and mixing functions as well as to introducing new functions to the already established, could make the static idea about sports and park more fluid and intertwined, without losing the original purpose of the established structure.²

Finally, there is a general lack of funding of maintenance and development of green spaces is also an issue in Warsaw. The guidelines and principles regarding legal regulation are very general thus resulting in weak legal support if a green space would be developed. (Szulc-zewska, 2002) However, public open spaces are significant factor that contributes to quality of life, especially green space, as it becomes a community asset that could ensure the health of citizens. It is essential to have well designed green spaces within reach of the population, encouraging a prominent level of walking and active use. The use of public open spaces depends on its design and an essential aspect of the usage is accessibility; the importance of physical and mental distances. (Mitchell 2012, s. 133)

2 *Platek, Gregorz. Polish architect, critic and historian of architecture. Meeting. 2017-02-02*

Historical background,

The destruction of Warsaw during the second world war led to an unprecedented scale; over the course of five years of war more than 70% of the residential buildings in the city were demolished. In January 1945, the first inhabitants to return to the ruins of Warsaw immediately began clearing the rubble. Within a month, the office of the reconstruction of the city had been commenced in recording all the damage sustained. In June of the same year, the Council of Ministers took a decision to rebuild the city. There were however several concepts as to how to go about when planning the post-war rebuilding and the urban development of the capital, two of which were strong contenders. The first concept was that the ruined city should be reconstructed as faithfully as possible. The second, supported by influential people in government circles, proposed new developments in place of the devastated buildings, and the complete demolition of any remaining traces of the pre-war city. The concept of reconstruction had to give way visions of redevelopment. Nevertheless, certain valuable examples of historical architecture were selected for preservation or reconstruction, among them the Royal Route and the Old town. The first projects to be undertaken reached back to pre-war styles of architecture: Modernism, Functionalism, Monumentalism and Neo-Historicism – a reaction to the destruction caused by the war. However, as it was an injection of the ideology of socialist realism, the influence on the fabric of the new city was present. Socialist Realism, which was the mandatory style in almost all the socialist run states in the period 1948-1955, defined strict principles governing

both spatial planning and architecture. Per theoretical teachings formulated by Vladimir Lenin in 1905, the aim of art was "participation in events, mirroring of changes and recording of the new reality". With simple, understandable signs, the collective consciousness of the people was meant to be influenced. Art, became the ideological tool of a totalitarian regime. As it had appropriated literature, painting and sculpture, the ideology of socialist realism began to make its mark on architecture. Soviet theories regarding the role of architecture in furthering the ideology of socialism won the approval of the leadership of the Polish Communist Party, that took power following the February elections in 1948. (Dydek, 2015, p. 38-41)

Much as it effected architecture, it also placed a mark on the culture of sports; sports were seen as to be free, collective and almost obligatory. The average worker was offered facilities of the sport of his/her choice through his union, the parent body of the particular sports club to which, according to his/her profession, he/her may belong. The idea was that good athletes live well, eat well and are not too much exposed to political pressures. Sports were incorporated into the daily lives of Soviets to make them well-rounded individuals and more productive workers. (Cook, 1957)

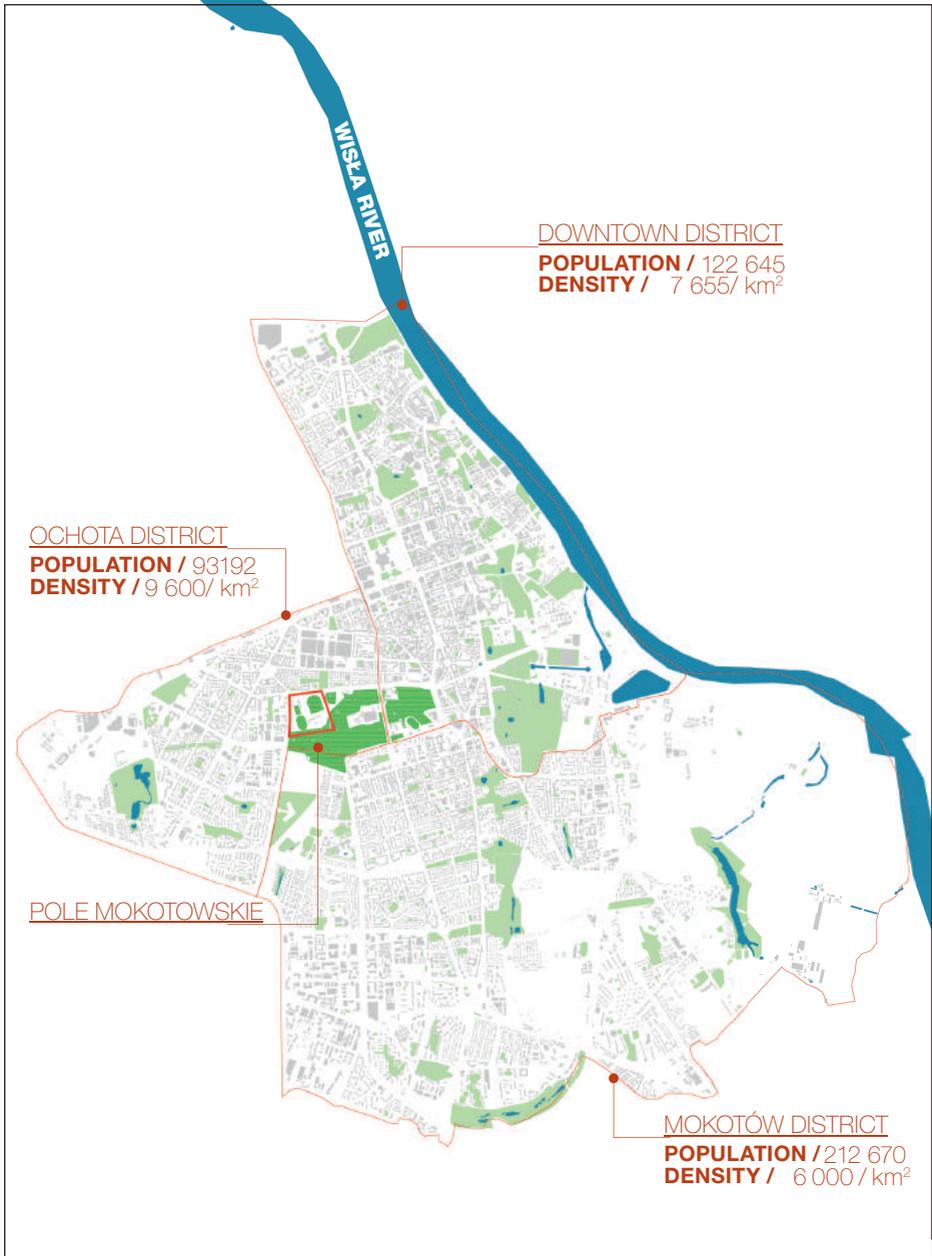


Figure 11. Pole Mokotowskie.

2. the context of the site

POLE MOKOTOWSKIE

Figure 12. Pole Mokotowskie in relation to the three districts.







Historical background,

Pole Mokotowskie is a historic park situated between the three dense districts Ochota, Mokotow and Down Town and has a size of 67 ha. The park has a long history of shifting functions and purposes until the formation of the park we see today.

During the 1818, the area was originally a space for military purposes with an extended site of 200 hectares. It was a space for the society of horse racing and livestock exhibition in the 1841. Between the 1910-1939, the site functioned as an airport with changing features; during the German occupation, the site was developed by the occupiers which later changed to being a military aviation after Poland regained its independence in 1919. A year later, it repurposed to Mokotowskie Airport with regular flights to Bucharest, Athens, Beirut and Helsinki. As the airport, moved to another location, plans for the remaining site was under discussion. One was to expand the district of science into the area but these plans never came to realisation. 1945, 167 finish houses was placed in the corner between Aleja Niepodleglosci and Wawelska, as a gift from the Soviet Union. These cottage houses were later removed, leaving only two behind. After the war, the site served as a base for the reconstruction of the capital and later the park. The design team that was responsible for the reconstruction of the park was led by Stanisław Bolek at the Green Building Office of the Communal Building Projects. Stadium Skra (1955), Central Statistical Office, GUS (1964) was first established and later the park in the 1970s.

Pole Mokotowskie was designed as a recreation centre which was supposed to enclose existing and planned facilities; the National Library, GUS, Skra, University of Technology south-east of the park and gardens where planned nearby the proposed student housings. This system is based on creating a distinctive round design surrounding various programs by applying hill landscape, as well as working with contrasts between large grassy surfaces and groups of massifs and trees of varying densities. The contrast is also noticeable in the design, between the strict geometrical forms as well as the freer organic shapes. The original composition of the larger trees was very accidental as the planting was carried out without any plan, thus resulting in 11 200 trees. According to the classification stages of gardening, the park is in the stage of mature form (range 25-27 years) which applies diversity in planting and the ecological systems found in the park.

Fragments from the past can be seen until today; open spaces for leisure can be found from the past of military and aviation. Buildings such as the National Library and GUS refers to the representation plans and the allotment gardens, fruit trees and the geodetic division are relics from the housing time. The sport facilities and the university campuses display that it is a space of science. (MAU, 2016, p. 8-9)

2. The context of the site.



Figure 13. Pole Mokotowskie over time.



Pole Mokotowskie as it is today

The green wedge

Pole Mokotowskie is today a park often used by the entire inhabitants of Warsaw due to its location in the city. It's a gathering point for different forms of users, using the space in different seasons and for different reasons. It is a space where one can see people doing Tai-Chi, football or frisbee quit spontaneously. It is a space for calmness as well where one can see large masses of people having picnics, or sitting quietly alone next to a fountain and enjoying the sun or perhaps someone walking their dogs. It is also a space in which different events like concerts take place or where campuses exhibit their education. It is a public space that encourages different forms of use.³

Figure 14. The calm space around the pound.



3 *Platek, Gregorz. Polish architect, critic and historian of architecture. Meeting. 2017-02-02*

Figure 15. Hang-out in Majówka Warszawska, in Skra, Pole Mokotowskie.



2. The context of the site.

The park is part of an ecological corridor that allows continuity of species to move around between the green spaces in the area such as the park Wielkopolska, the Soviet military cemetery, the allotment gardens, the water filter of Warsaw and the Alfonso, Grotowskiego square. The organism that can be seen are for example the pasqueflowers and ivy, originating from allotment gardens adjacent to the park. It is also an area for series of animals like; insects, amphibians (green toads and newts), birds and mammals (moles, squirrels, field mice, forest mice, voles). (MAU, 2016, p. 11-13)

The importance of Pole Mokotowskie has also to do with its relevance as one of the green wedges that allows the wind to flow through the city. This is one of the most important factors that influences the city climate as it ventilates the urban fabric. (Osinska-Skotak & Zawalich 2016, p. 345-348)



Figure 16. The air ventilation system in relation to Pole Mokomokotowskie.

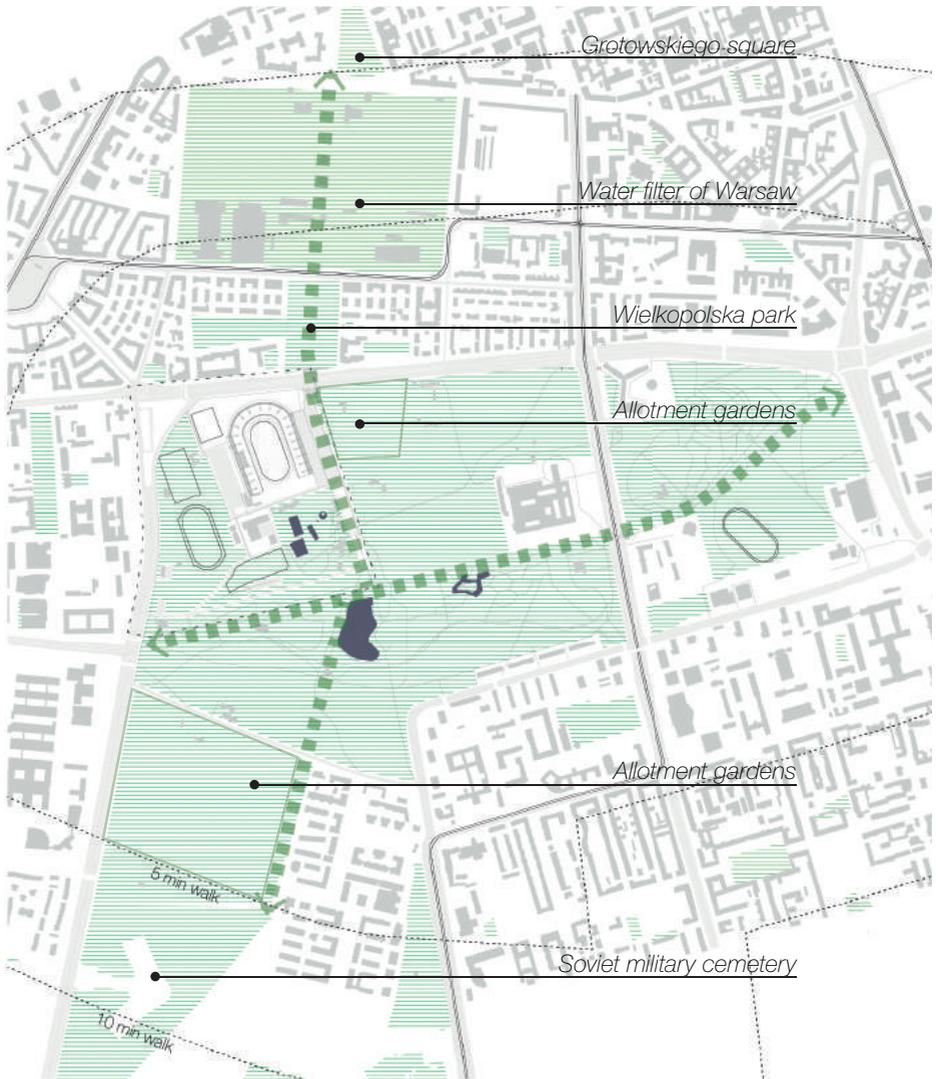


Figure 17. Diagram illustrating the green networks.

Pole Mokotowskie as it is today, The surrounding functions

Pole Mokotowskie is surrounded by a system of streets and multi-functional tissues by the city, situated between the three dense districts Ochota, Mokotow and Down Town (see page 27). It represent a collection of separate spaces, inseparably linked with each other and with the city in terms of functionality, communications and greenery. What is interesting in this case are the 99 different forms of institutions and education situated within a 10 minutes' walk from the park. Many of them are directly adjacent to the area while other become barrier as effects from the current facilities, which can be seen on the buildings marked with the red color on the map to the right. The placement of these functions displays that it is in fact a space for science.

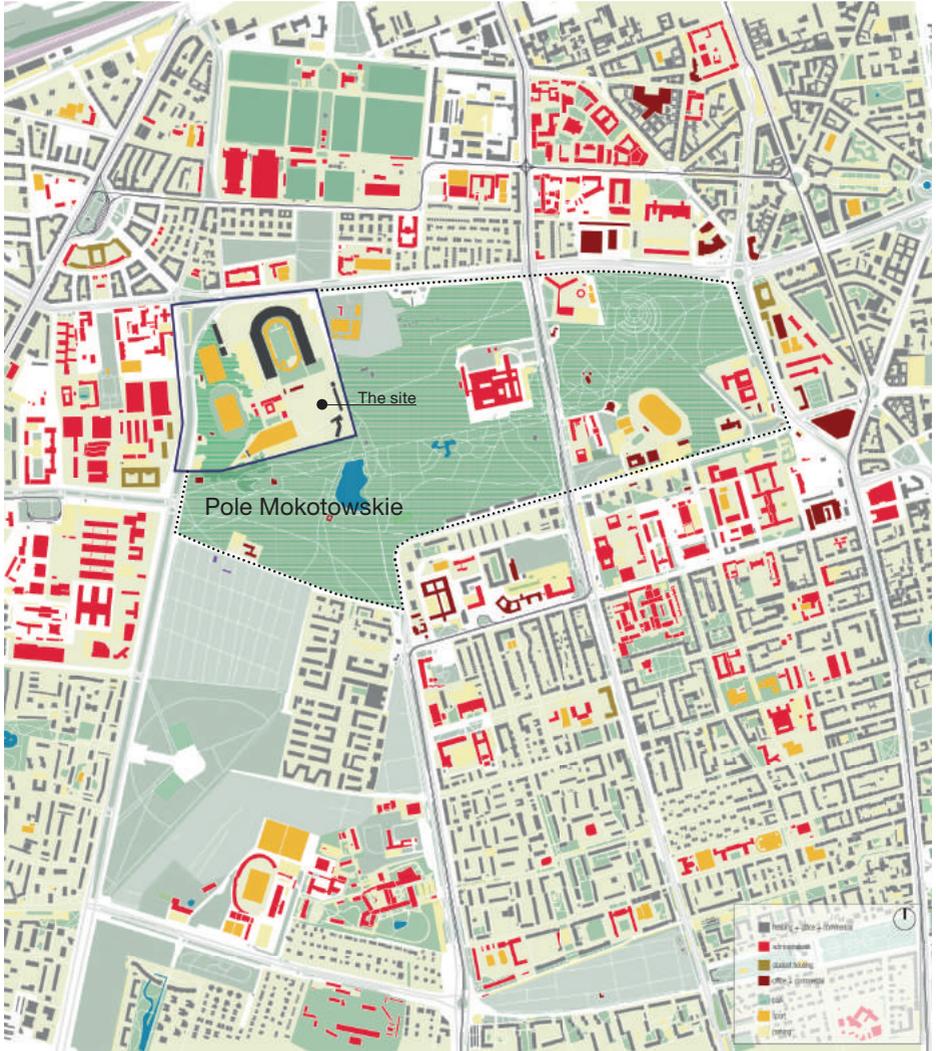


Figure 18. Diagram illustrating the functions.

2. The context of the site.

Institutions and other forms of education placed within a 10min walking radius

- 1 The National Library
- 2 Warsaw University of Medicin
- 3 Ministry of the Environment
- 4 Primary school
- 5 Secondary school
- 6 Kindergarten
- 7 Supreme Audit Office
- 8 Embassy of Israel
- 9 Central Statistical Office
- 10 Institute of Heat Engineering - Warsaw University of Technology
- 11 The Faculty of Electronics and Information Technology - Warsaw University of Technology
- 12 Department of Administration and Social Sciences - Warsaw University of Technology
- 13 Faculty of Civil Engineering - Warsaw University of Technology
- 14 Gymnasium
- 15 High school
- 16 Kindergarten
- 17 Faculty of Chemical engineering - Warsaw University of Technology
- 18 Head office of Agricultural Social Insurance
- 19 Patent office
- 20 Ministry of the Interior and Administration
- 21 Technical High School
- 22 Polish Geological Institute
- 23 General staff of the polish armed forces
- 24 School of economics
- 25 The National Prosecutors office
- 26 Primary School
- 27 Main Library of Medicin - Medical University of Warsaw
- 28 Medical University of Warsaw
- 29 Institute of Fundamental Technological Research - Polish Academy of Sciences
- 30 Pediatric Hospital - Medical University of Warsaw
- 31 Medical Center - Medical University of Warsaw
- 32 Central Clinical Hospital - Medical University of Warsaw
- 33 Institute of Experimental and Clinical Medicine - Medical University of Warsaw
- 34 Biocybernetics Institute and Biomedical Engineering - Medical University of Warsaw
International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology - Medical University of Warsaw
- 35 Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics - Medical University of Warsaw
Interdisciplinary Centre for Mathematical and Computational Modelling
Center for Postgraduate Education of Nurses - Medical University of Warsaw
- 36 Geological Museum Stanislaw J. Thugutt
Department of Geology - Warsaw University of Technology
- 37 Sports and Recreation Centre - Warsaw University of Technology
- 38 New Technology Centre - Warsaw University of Technology
- 39 Polish Children's Fund
- 40 Department of Physics - Warsaw University of Technology
- 41 Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Mechanics - University of Warsaw
- 42 Institute of Experimental Biology of the Polish Academy of Sciences - Nencki

- 43 Faculty of Biology - Warsaw University of Technology
- 44 General command of the Armed Forces
- 45 Oncology Centre - Institute Maria Skłodowska-Curie
- 46 Department of Chemistry - Warsaw University of Technology
- 47 Ochota Medical Centre
- 48 Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing
- 49 Department of Construction Installation, Hydrotechniki and Environmental Engineering
University of Warsaw
- 50 Faculty of Physics - Warsaw University of Technology
- 51 Faculty of Power and Aeronautical Engineering - Warsaw University of Technology
- 52 Department of Chemistry - Warsaw University of Technology
- 53 Specialist Medical Clinic for Employees within the Army
Independent Public Health Care Centre
- 54 Center for Sports Medicine
- 55 Andrzej Strug Museum - Branch of the Museum of Literature
- 56 Ochota Theatre
- 57 Meridian International Elementary School
- 58 High School Stanisława Staszica
- 59 National Shrine and Parish of St. Andrew Bobola
- 60 Pontifical Faculty of Theology, Section St. Andrew Bobola
- 61 Water filtration station
- 62 Faculty of Architecture - Warsaw University of Technology
- 63 Mokotów Prison
- 64 Provincial Inspectorate of the Prison Service
District Office Mokotów
- 65 Social Ecological Institute
- 66 Ochota Theatre
- 67 Polish Foundation for Children with hearing disability
- 68 Culture Centre Ochota
- 69 Institute of Technology and Life Sciences - Warsaw University of Technology
- 70 Church of St. James the Apostle
- 71 Primary school
- 72 District office Ochota
- 73 Social Secondary School - Bednarska
- 74 High School - XXI H. Koliątaja
- 75 The National Digital Archives
- 76 Center for Therapeutic Rehabilitation and Occupational Medicine
- 77 Sports and Rehabilitation Center - Medical University of Warsaw
- 78 Institute of Fundamental Technological Research - National Contact Point for EU Research Programmes
- 79 Department of Civil Affairs - Ministry of Interior
- 80 Faculty of Electrical Engineering - Warsaw University of Technology
- 81 Faculty of Mathematics and Information Science - Warsaw University of Technology
- 82 Department of Transportation - Warsaw University of Technology
- 83 Faculty of Chemical Technology, Department of Chemistry - Warsaw University of Technology
- 84 Holy Redeemer Church
- 85 Embassy of Denmark
Institute of Biotechnology and Antibiotics
- 86 Primary School

2. The context of the site.

- 07 Hospital Medivita
- 08 Warsaw City Council, Office of Geodesy and Cadastre
- 09 Higher School of Ecology and Management
- 09 Warsaw School of Economics, Building M
- 01 The Church of St. Stephen
- 02 High School T. Chalubińskiego
- 05 Cinema Iluzjon
- 04 Faculty of Automotive and Construction Machinery - Warsaw University of Technology
- 09 Library of Warsaw University of Technology
- 04 Faculty of Mechatronics - Warsaw University of Technology
- 07 Faculty of Management - Warsaw University of Technology
- 09 Middle School
- 09 Kindergarten for children with visual impairments

Pole Mokotowskie as it is today, The surrounding traffic and pedestrian movement

The park is surrounded by large traffic nodes that span up to the amount of 10 lane roads. Crossings that are often seen around these streets are bridges with elevators, tunnels or larger forms of crossings on the ground level.



Figure 19. Diagram illustrating the car-oriented streets in relation to the park and the site.



Figure 20. Crossing the street of Wawelska...



Figure 21. Through a crossing bridge, looking over the site.

2. The context of the site.

The effects of the heavy trafficked streets surrounding the site, results in a pedestrian movement that travels from south-east to north-west where the crossings seen on the end of these sides of the park are placed on the ground floor. However, it too shows where people find it more pleasant to walk or bike , which is through the ponds, the gardens and later towards the city center. Perhaps as it is more enjoyable to walk through a green, quite space than through heavy trafficked streets



Figure 22. Diagram showing the concentration of movement in relation to the most pedestrian friendly crossings.

Figure 23. Spot 1. Spots within the movement - the ponds.



Figure 24. Spot 2. Spots within the movement - the playgrounds.



Future plans, Masterplan / Workshop Pole Mokotowskie 2016.

Conclusions from the masterplan, made by the county together with the citizens of Mokotów in 2016, was to develop and enhance the green structure in Pole Mokotowskie, specifically the area marked as silent on the diagram to the right. The masterplan proposes smaller recreational interventions that focuses on calmer forms of leisure that does not disturb the calmness and wildlife in the park. Larger interventions are focused on developing the biological diversity regarding the green structure, defining the entrances to the park and creating more and clear pedestrian streets.

There is also a will to eliminate mass gatherings on the eastern side, due to the scale of devastation caused after each event in the presence of two sports stadiums adjacent to the park, as well as the large amount of music clubs on the outskirts of the park. Many interviewees found the management of park events and commercial advertisement to be displaced during family picnics. The residents emphasized the potential of opening and activating the north-east part side for entertainment and sport purposes. Many interviewees also indicated that the area on the north-east side would perhaps be a good location for mass gatherings such as concerts and sports events. There was however a will of the site to be an extended part of Pole Mokotowskie when it comes to the aspect of it being green and used for leisure. (MAU, 2016, p. 21-34)

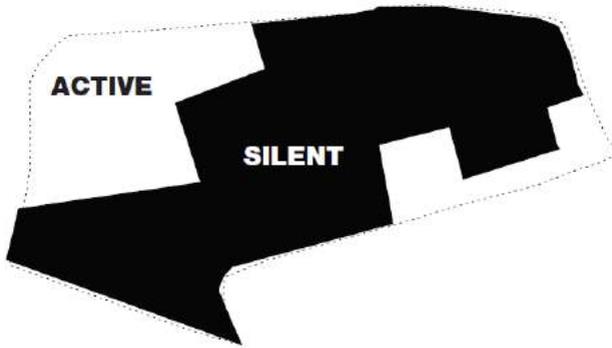


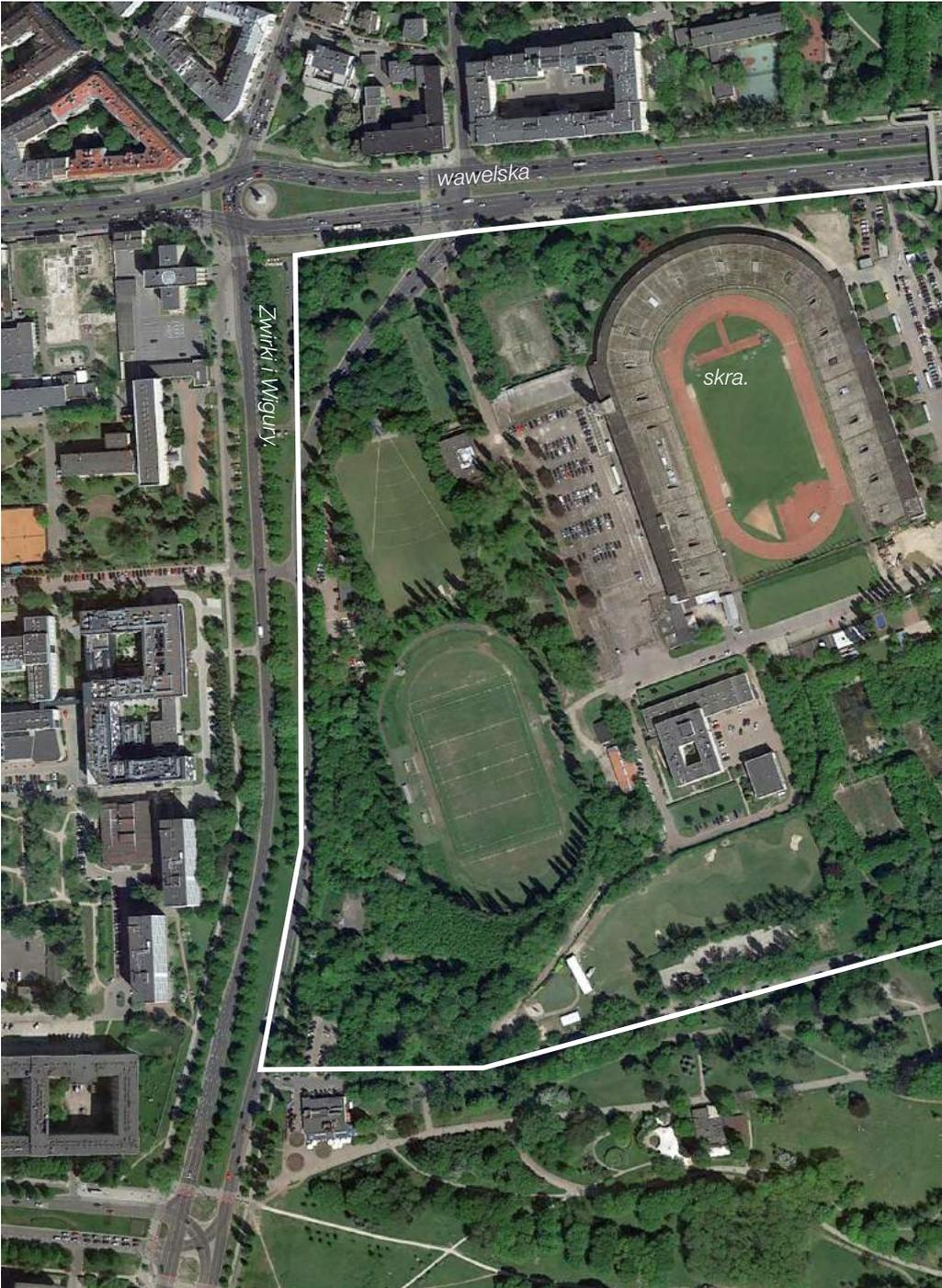
Figure 25. Diagram illustrating the arrangement of activity spread across Pole Mokotowskie.

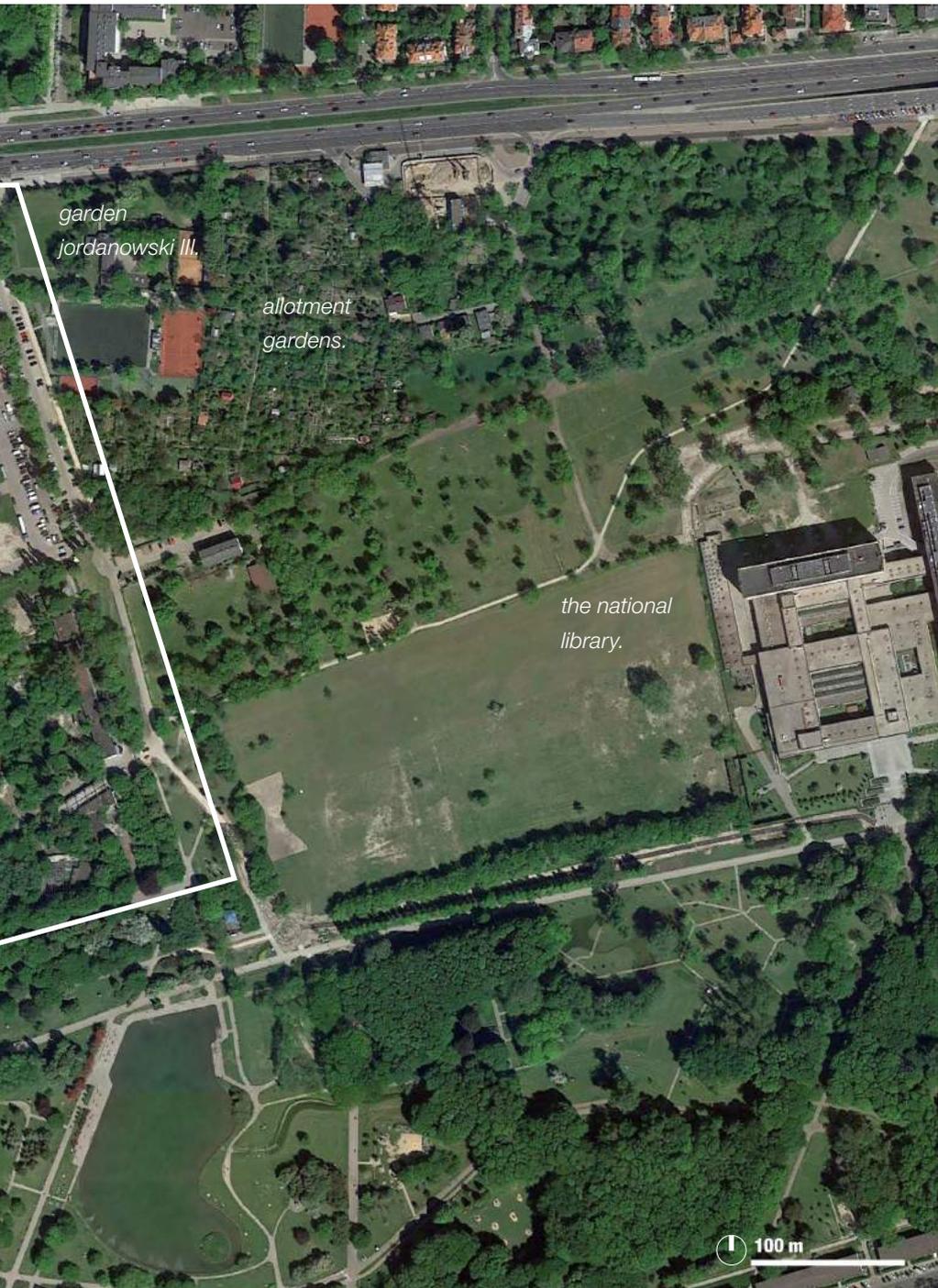


Figure 26. The first days during the opening of the swimming pools in Skra.

3. the site

SKRA





*garden
jordanowski III.*

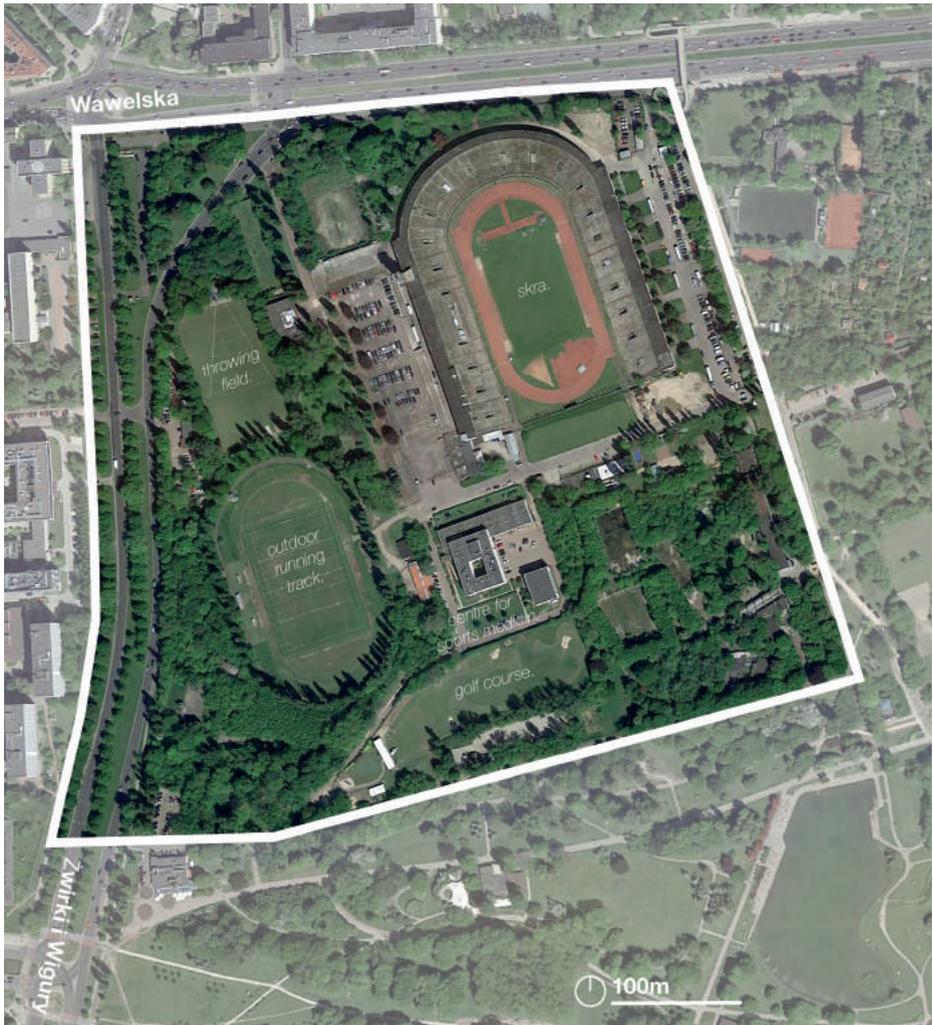
*allotment
gardens.*

*the national
library.*

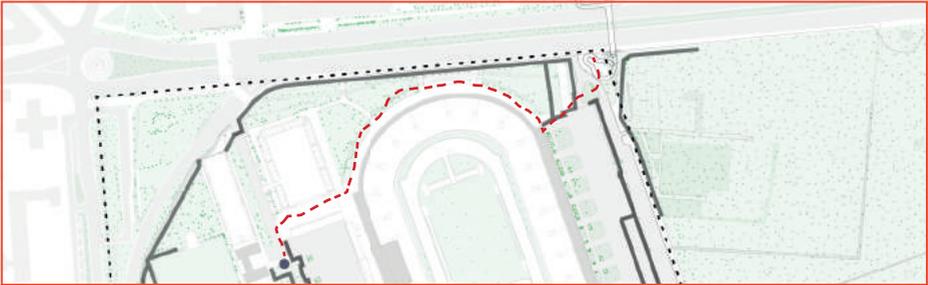
100 m

A walk in the park, SKRA

For a spontaneous visitor, Skra is truly an interesting and confusing place. Much like an old ruin hidden behind the overgrown shrubs, the large trees and fences, it seemed lost in time. Little did I know that it was in fact a place frequently visited by athletes and patients.

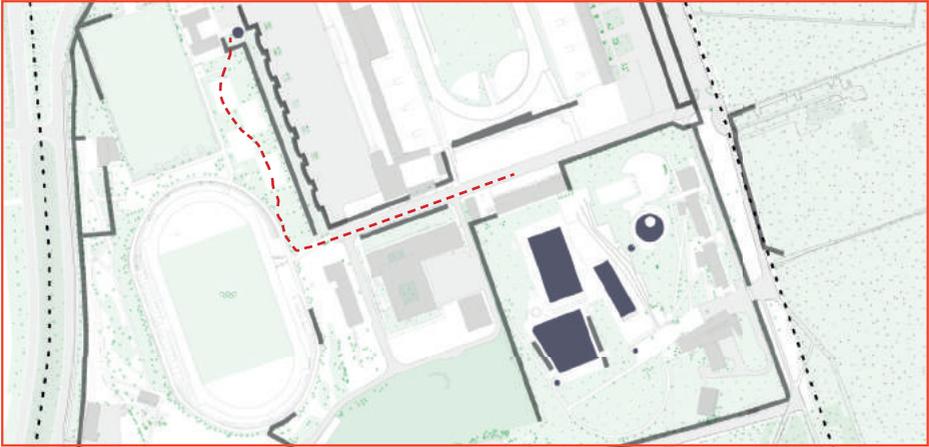


3. The site - SKRA



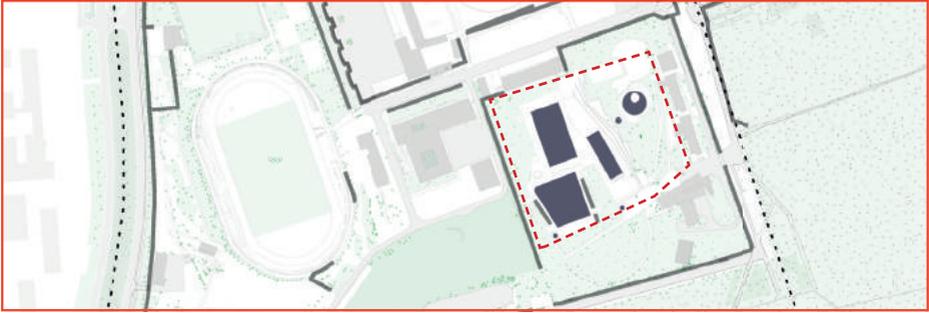


3. The site - SKRA





3. The site - SKRA





3. The site - SKRA





Functions, used frequently, informally or not at all

Functions that are frequently in use are the following:

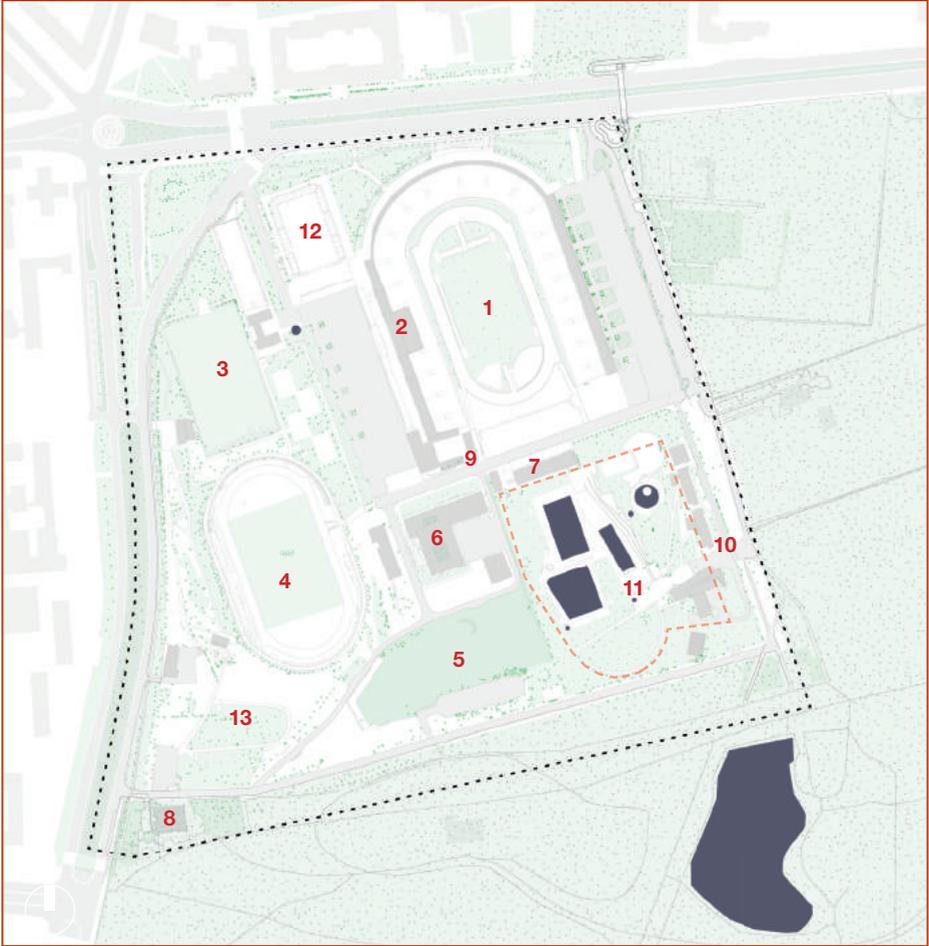
1. Running track Training purposes
2. The arena Office space for employees
 Multipurpose room
 Gym
3. Throwing field
4. Rygby field
5. Golf course
6. Centre for Sports Medicine
7. Club Iskra
8. Jeffs restaurant
9. Car-repairing station
10. Pub Lolek

Functions that are informally in use are:

11. The marked area involving the café and cloakrooms along with the outdoor swimming-pools are not functioning as they were intended, rather used as informal settlements and for informal parties.

Functions that are not in use are:

12. Tennis court
13. The surrounding greenery



Functions, users and maintenance

A spatial configuration from the time, was to assert a certain function to a certain site, avoiding the blend of mixed programming. The reason as to why the area is falling apart is because of the treatment of the facilities during the last 20-30 years. After 1989, spaces and or facilities given by the city to different owners started to treat the space as a piece of real-estate to rent out with minimum investment, not performing or reforming its original function but something to simply profit from. For some, Skra is for example known for the open market in the late 90ies, where one could find electronics, clothes and other informally imported things from the west. This is an example of re-use without fulfilling its original purpose. The extra programming such as the cafeteria or the office spaces is only supposed to serve the club members – to not invite other people with other needs.⁴

However, as the strict programming of the site is very much present, it is still used as a space for sports, some more frequently than other. It is generally used by around 200 athletes from the sport club Skra. Functions frequently used by this group are the outdoor running track, the indoor multipurpose hall as well as the gym and finally the throwing field. Other users are patients visiting the Centre for Medicine. During the summer, these functions mentioned above are a home for many sports events due to the lack of arenas with the surface tartan in Warsaw. Skra whom is currently renting and managing the entire site from the city of Warsaw is however facing some financial problems; renting out facilities, storage spaces and parking lots for companies is a fact however not the solvation as it does not cover the cost for the management or salaries to employees. There have been attempts to improve the economic situation however hasty arrangement with entrepreneurs have only resulted in temporary settlement of outstanding wages and taxes. As a result, the stadium lapsed due to lack of funding for the ongoing maintenance, reparation and restoration.

4

Platek, Gregorz. Polish architect, critic and historian of architecture. Meeting. 2017-02-02

According to the club, renting the main stadium and the two fields would be enough as it is these main plots that are in use by the club in which training and competition takes place. There is a will to open the area towards Pole Mokotowskie and the entire city but how and when is not yet clear.⁵

According to the city architect of Ochota, the future is very much unclear from their point of view as well. There is ambition however to strictly upgrade the site for athletes – reserving it entirely for Track and Field as it could serve larger megaevents such as the Olympic Games in the future.⁶ The sports club and the district architect both agrees that the city should fund and manage the current and future development.⁶

5 *Marcin. Coach at the sports club Skra. Meeting. 2017- 01- 24*

6 *Marcin. District architect of Ochota. Meeting. 2017- 01- 29*

Historical background, SKRA

The arena was originally once a football pitch before WWII. However, due to the destruction, hills of debris from the entire district of Ochota occupying parts of the pitch, measured up to four meters which influenced the design concept. The first draft of the project resulted in a restoration of the previous pitch surrounded by a terrace of rubble with the height of three meters. However, as the stadium was placed near the street Wawelska, the artery linking the establishment to the town, the architects could not follow the trend of hollowing the arena into the surrounding as the slope would cover the street (see figure ..). The retaining wall was approved despite the use of reinforced concrete and the “cosmopolitan concept” it stood for.

This decision influenced the programming of the arena, especially the utility program as it became the retaining wall surrounding the pitch to its previous form. (Wirszylko, 1957, p 22-25) A training and leisure center was introduced which divided the area into different parts (see figure):

- a. *Stadium for football, athletics for 30 000 spectators and a tennis court (hockey during the winter) à 3000 spectators.*
- b. *Athletic field;
Training are for athletics, football, tennis*
- c. *Four swimming pools à 3000 people, including two pools for children and two pools for sporting purposes à 1500 people.*
- d. *Sports hall with an audience á 2000 spectators*
- e. *Outdoor space for training*
- f. *Smaller arena*
- g. *Playground*

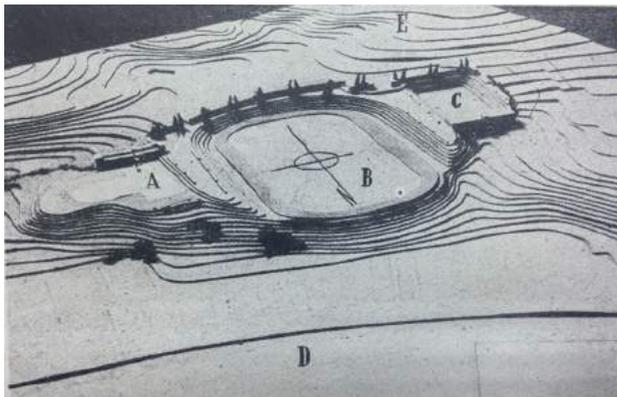
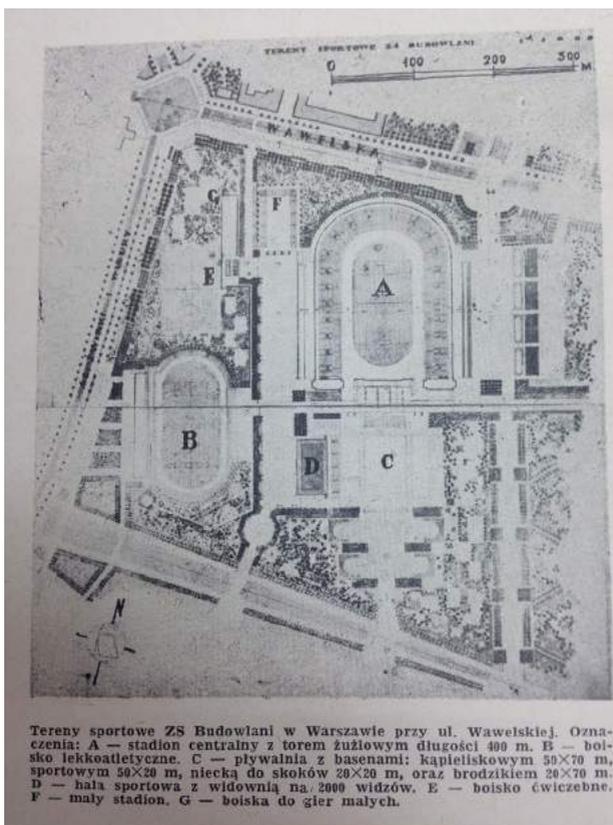


Figure 38. Model illustrating the trend of spatial design regarding arenas.

Figure 39. Conceptual design of the site.



Historical background, the penguins

Stadium Skra, the three buildings south of the stadium along with the swimming pools and their surroundings was designed by the architect group called the Penguins. Typicality of their design and of this generation of architects in Warsaw trained in the late thirties and or forties, was to use modernist logic when it comes to construction and function while relating to history. It was about exposing the “raw” materials while creating an effect of chiaroscuro to generate a monumentality and gravity to the architecture, doing so, escaping from the pure functionalism.⁷ The first projects after the destruction of Warsaw reached back to pre-war styles such as: Modernism, Functionalism, Monumentalism and Neo-Historicism due to the reaction to the destruction. However, as social realism was a mandatory style in almost all the socialist run states in the period 1948-1955, an injection of ideology might have been present. (Dydek, 2015, p. 38-41)

7

Platek, Gregorz. Polish architect, critic and historian of architecture. Meeting. 2017-02-02



Learning outcome, Helsingborg

Idrottsoasen, Helsingborg is a meeting point for play, sports and movement no matter age, gender or professionalism. It is placed behind Idrottenshus on the area of Olympia and has a size of 5000sqm. Visibly seen on the map to the right, smaller forms of functions are placed in between Idrottens hus and the two soccer fields. What is interesting is the how these functions are breaking down the scale and creating places in which people can pass, stay or play. It's a space for various kinds of sports activities and there is no need to be part of an athlete-association as it is always open to the public. Sports that can be found are street basket, indoor band, futsal, parkour, beach volleyball, boulder football, paddle tennis, boules and bouldering, outdoor playground and ping pong. There is also a dance station, where you can connect your own smartphone to the speaker system and dance. The lighting is motion sensitive and illuminates when you enter a path. (Helsingborg, 2018)



Figure 41. View, idrottsoasen.

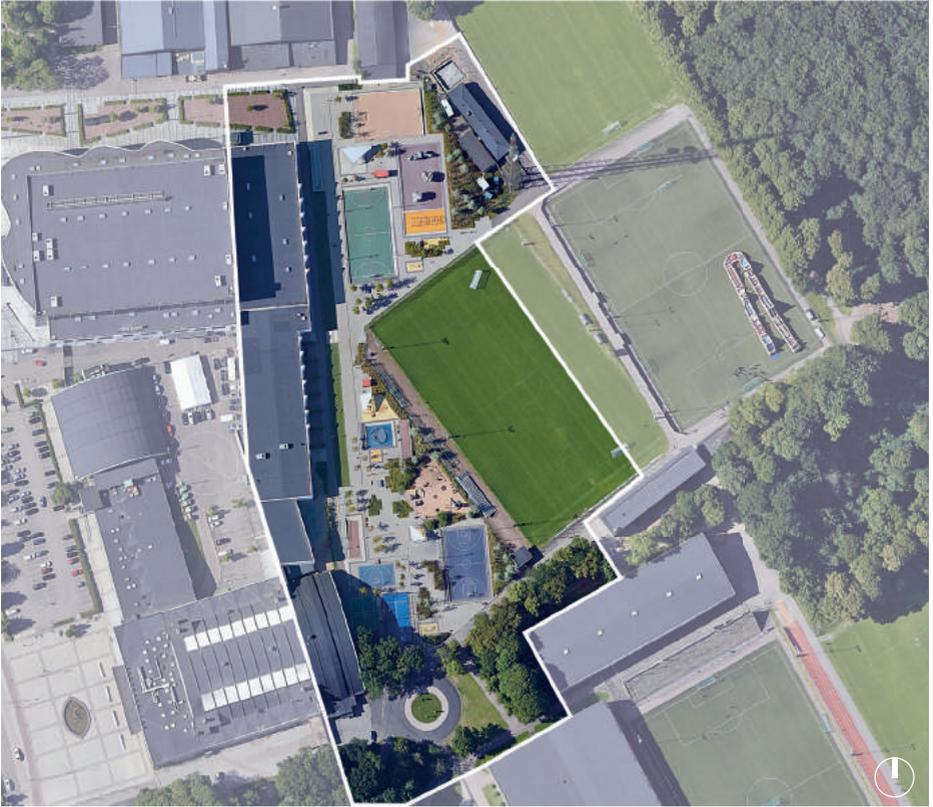


Figure 42. Plan, idrottsöasen.

Conclusion,

The site of Skra is of historical- and architectural significance as the built structure is characterized by a modernistic logic regarding function, form and materials which should be taken into consideration into the design. The raw materials and the simple play with details are visible traces from the Penguins (see figure ... and ...). There are also traces indicating that the spaces were divided into sequences of different scales and functions (see figure ...). From a large space intended for larger mass of people into smaller ones defined by greenery that created smaller rooms for leisure and play or paths. (see figure).

The design is today characterized by large scale structures while the orientation within such structures are perceived as difficult. Paths for pedestrians and bicyclists are undermaintained, therefore not clearly defined. The overgrown greenery along with fences surrounding these paths or functions contributes to a feeling of trespassing as well as curiosity of what lies behind these forms of borders. The area is invisible and inaccessible to the spontaneous user due to the barriers created by the large traffic and fences surrounding the site thus poorly connected to the surrounding park and the city.

The area is however of importance to the inhabitants and would like to see it opened to the public. Additionally, the sport club currently managing the area has the same ambition as the public while not knowing how the outcome should result in. According to the club, renting the main stadium and the two fields would be enough as it is these main plots that are in use by the club in which training and competition takes place. There is there for a will to open the facility for different users and repurpose the structures so that it could meet the needs of today. Managing a sports facility in modern times is quite difficult as these facilities are rarely in use to its full capacity compared to the cost of maintaining them. Despite this condition, the city of Warsaw still has an interest of developing the area into a proper and modern sports facility focusing on Track and Field. From a functional point of view, the space is too vast for one function. That's not to say that it shouldn't be a space in which this function should exist, it should however leave space for other forms of use. As the area is surrounded by different institutions, forms of education, residential areas and workplaces, a solution could be to invite the assembly mentioned above to share the responsibility of the site together with the municipality and

the club. This would enable an appropriation of the site and create a communal space for sports and leisure that would influence the functions and design.

From a larger spatial point of view, the site is part of a larger network of greenery, one of them being Pole Mokotowskie which should be enhanced and well connected in the project. The overgrown greenery in the area could work as an enhancement of biodiversity and create yet another spot for wildlife to stay or move across. However, the greenery should be encouraged to walk into, therefor a balance between what should be wild and ordered is necessary.

The learning outcome of the area is that there is a will to create a space that corresponds with the needs of today. The proposal will therefor investigate factors such as the potential users that can be introduced to the site as the area is surrounded by different institutions, schools, workplaces and residential areas. This could give clues on how to develop the site further to involve more actors hence more functions so it could be accessible to more people. It could also affect the responsibility of managing and maintaining the area if it was shared among more actors, preferably the ones surrounding the area. The design will physically relate to its historical background but reformed so that it reflects how we sport today. It will also be influenced by my personal view of Warsaw as a whole; the history of Warsaw is clearly visible in the footprint of the city structure in the larger scale. However, as time passes by, so too does life in the human scale; smaller interventions are seen within the larger structures from the past in the city. This is the philosophy that will be implemented in the design; a smaller scale in a larger structure will be introduced without taking away its original purpose or design. It will highlight the times of the past by connecting the new structure to the old while mixing in the contemporary design and use. Finally, the design aims to open the closed area and create important connections to its surrounding.

4. masterplan

5. Masterplan.

Strategies,

The masterplan is based on factors such the idea of sports in a contemporary way, accessibility to the site and the historical background of the area. Strategies are presented to reach the vision of a space in which new and smaller footprints of a contemporary use are placed within an historical structure while being connected and accessible to its surrounding context.

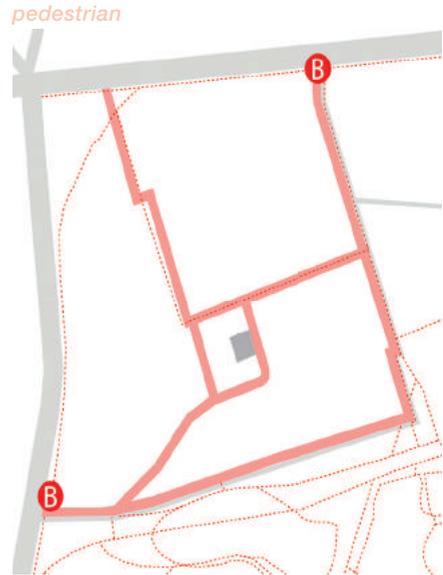
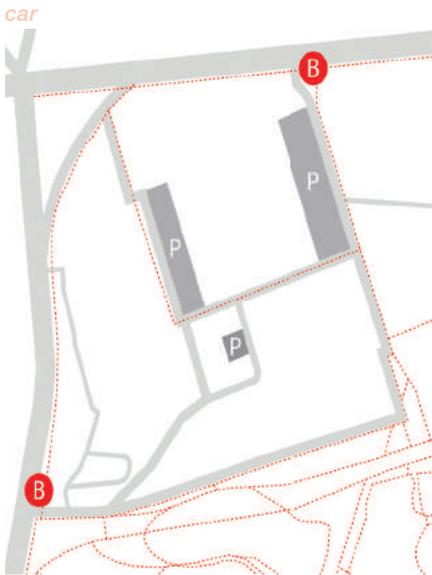


5. Masterplan.

Strategies,

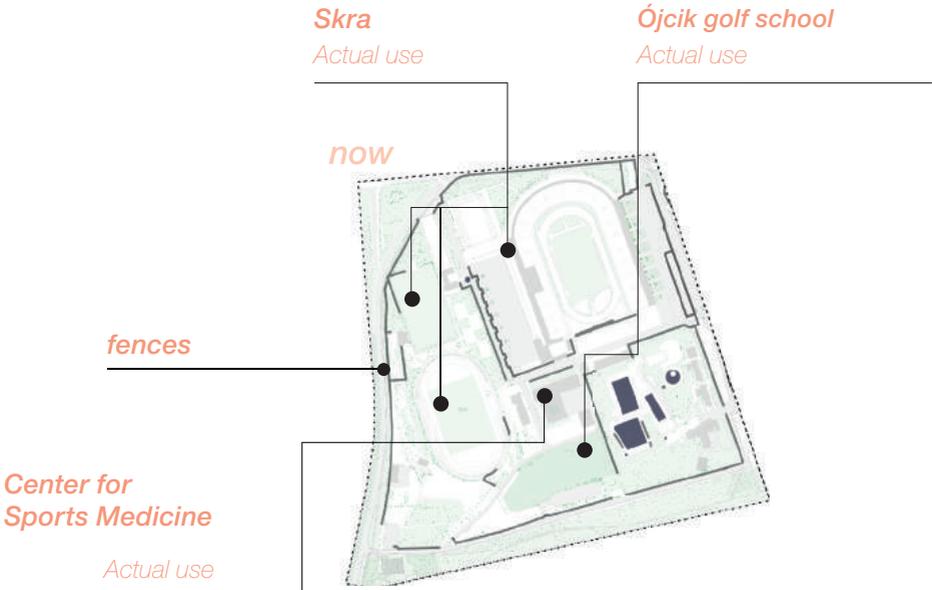
1. Reverse priority

Traffic barriers must be bridged so that the area can be reachable. Means of sustainable transportation should be made available - thus making it easy to walk, take the bike or use public transit.



Strategies, 2. open it up and appropriate

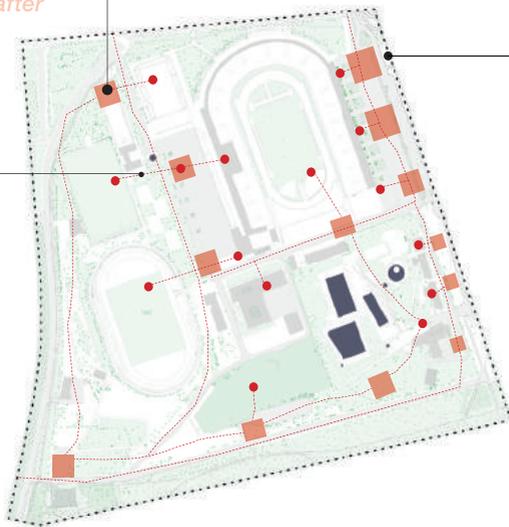
The city of Warsaw should restrain from fencing the area to make it available for spontaneous users. The historical features on the site should be made available as the site has capacity of serving more users than the ones for track and field and rugby. In order to respect the purpose of the site while increasing users, more sports associations and diversified features are required. This could thus help the maintenance of the area.



Connection
Old and new

after

Clusters
New functions



**21 ha =
More users**
*From neighboring
residential
areas,
workplaces,
schools and
institutions*

Strategies, 3. defined greenery

Through densification of greenery, the site could be stitched back to the entire park. The overgrown greenery in the area could work as an enhancement of biodiversity and create yet another spot for wildlife to stay or move across. The greenery should be encouraged to walk into, therefore a balance between what should be wild and ordered is necessary.

now



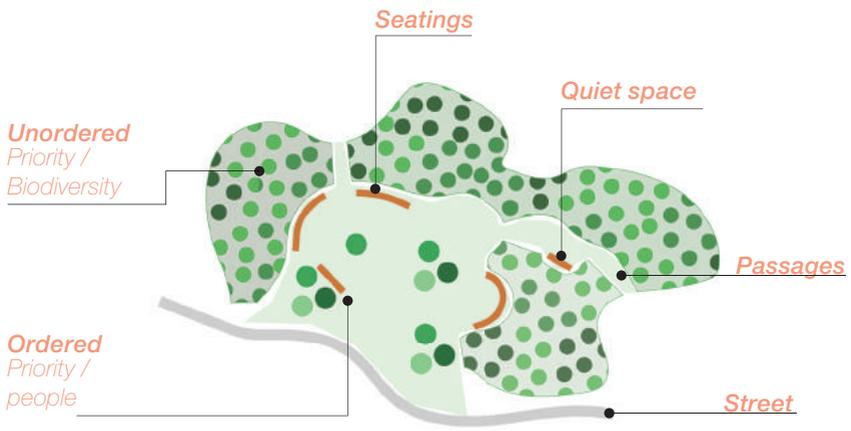
The green structure and the paths connected to it is today is inaccessible due to it being undermaintained. The fences along these paths strengthens the idea of the space being unapproachable.

after

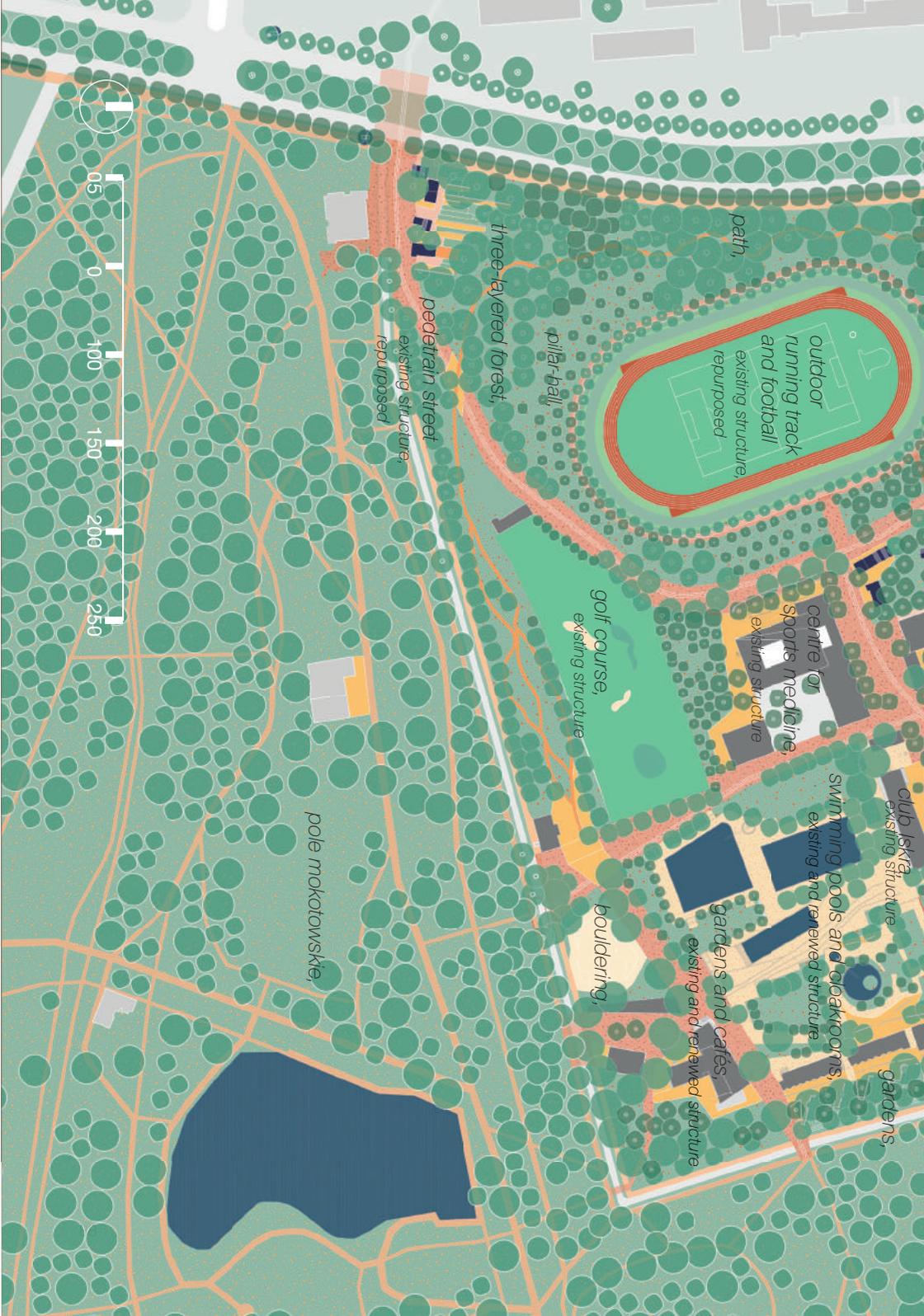


The greenery needs defined portals where a balance between what should be overgrown and ordered should be managed.

5. Masterplan.



The overgrown greenery is a place in which biodiversity is prioritized. However, there should be spots within these places that are lightened, connected to a passage or a street where one can sit and relax.



path,

outdoor
running track
and football
existing structure,
repurposed

centre for
sports medicine,
existing structure

club Iskra,
existing structure

swimming pools and cloakrooms,
existing and renewed structure

gardens

gardens and cafés,
existing and renewed structure

bouldering,

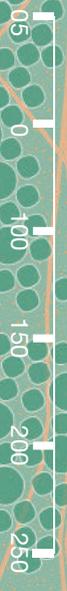
golf course,
existing structure

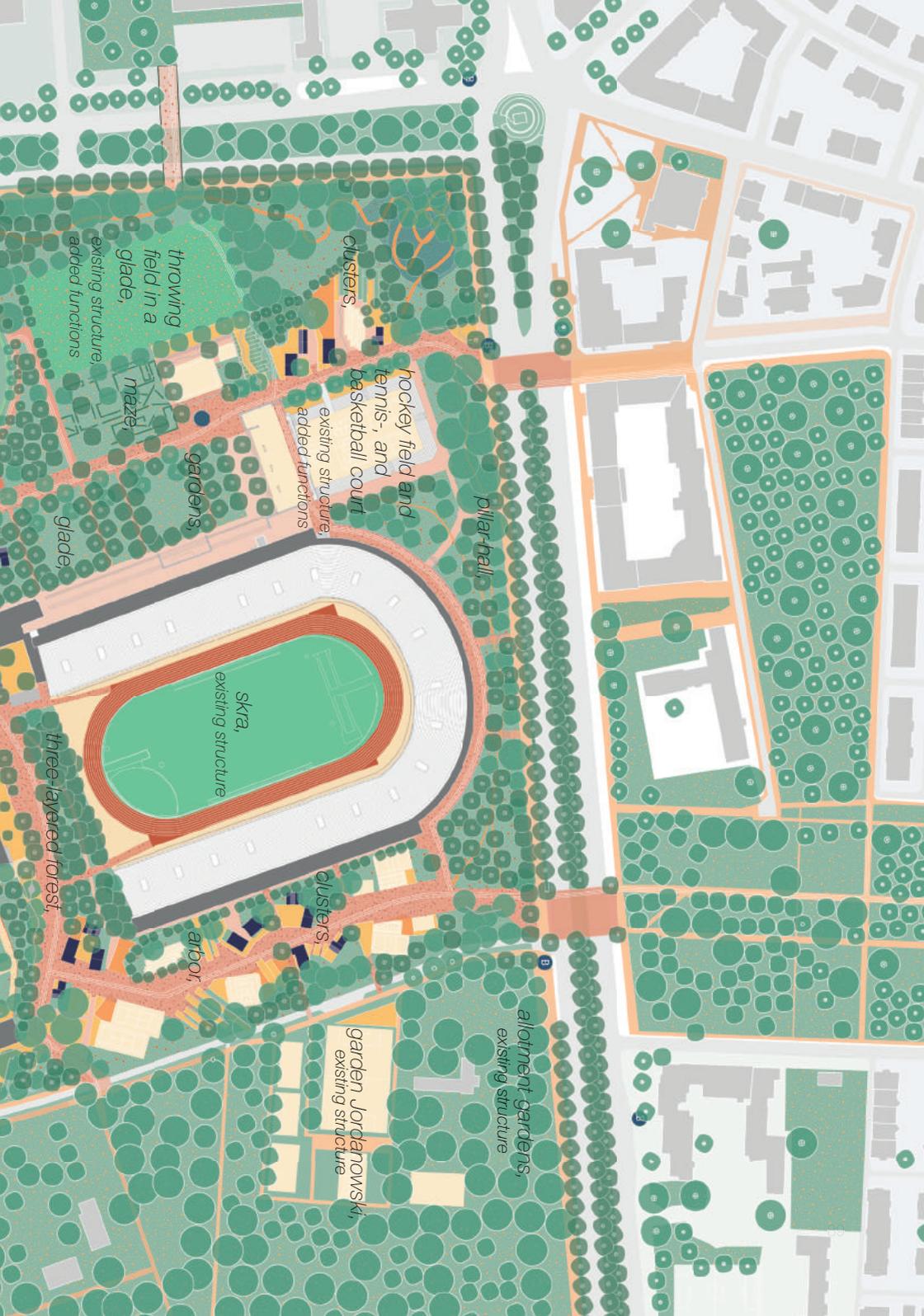
pillar-hall

three-layered forest,

pedestrian street
existing structure,
repurposed

pole mokotowskié,





throwing field in a glade, existing structure, added functions

maze

gardens, glade

clusters, existing structure, added functions
hockey field and tennis-, and basketball court

pillar-hall

skra, existing structure

three-layered forest

arbor

clusters, existing structure, added functions

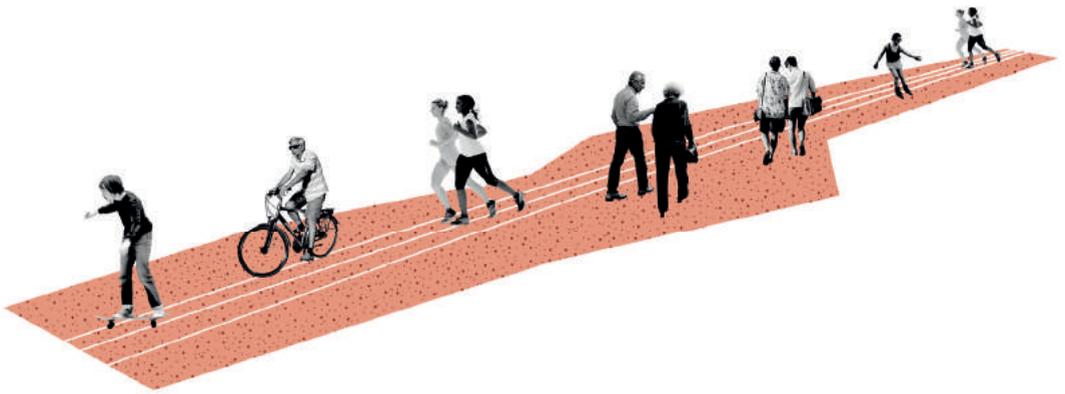
allotment gardens, existing structure

garden Jordanowski, existing structure

5. Masterplan.

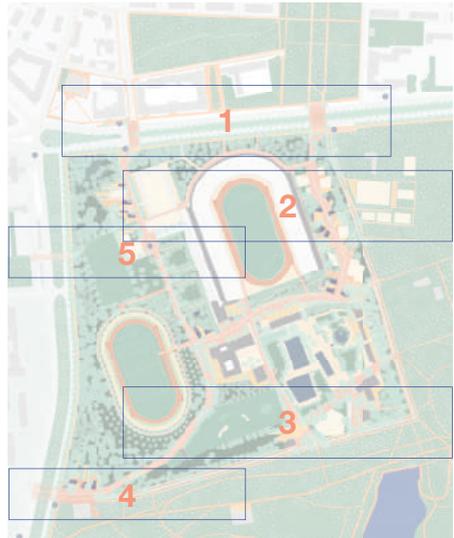
Toolbox,

This chapter presents each tool with its spatial solution in relation to its strategy to achieve the main vision.



Reverse priority, Connect and enhance the existing streetscape

For the traffic barriers to be bridged, existing paths for pedestrians must be prioritized and given more space. Since the existing bus stops are placed within 400m radius, the proposal suggests that the streets for cars transforms to serve the pedestrians. These streets must also be well connected to the surrounding context; Pole Mokotowskie and the city. Crossings are there for enlarged, placed on the ground floor, defined with a different material and placed between an alley of trees.





1. Enlarged crossings over Wawelska street, illustrating the different pavement, the row of trees in connection to bus stops.



2. The main street connected to two existing structures, the arena to the left and the garden Jordanowski III to the right.



3. The main street connected the street scape from Pole Mokotowskie.



4. Enlarged crossing over Zwirki i Wigury, illustrating the different pavement, the row of trees in



5. Enlarged crossing over Zwirki i Wigury, illustrating the connection to from the site to the garden of the institution - General Command of the Armed Forces.

5. Masterplan.

The active street

The purpose of the active street is to be able to transport a large amount of people through the park with stops along the way that suggests either a calm or energetic activity. The second purpose is to create a defined streetscape that connects the existing structure on the site as well to the rest of Pole Mokotowskie and the city.



Movement



It is a space in which different levels of movement is encouraged, creating an energetic flow through the park.

Pause

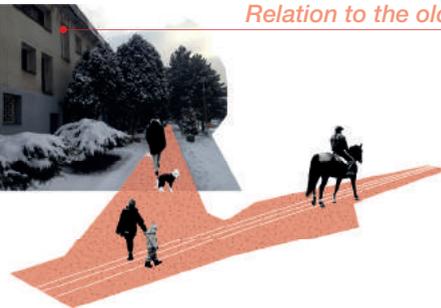


Pause



It is important that there are places that are adjacent to the active streets in which one can rest.

Relation to the old



It has to relate to what is all ready there.

Relation to a cluster

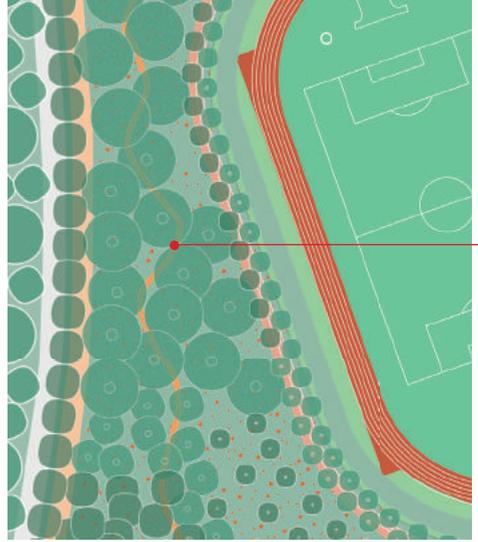


It can be connected to new functions.

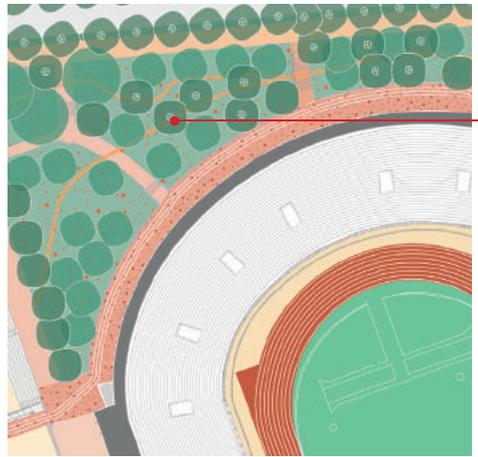
5. Masterplan.

The calmer path

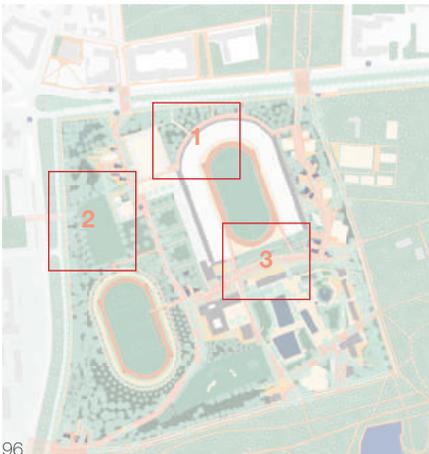
The purpose of the calmer street is to be able to give an opportunity to take a step back from the noise and movement and walk through a smaller street that is calmer and surrounded by greenery. They are either separated completely with paths that connects to the activities with high tempo, or placed parallelly to it, either on one side or both side of the path. However as it is separated with a buffer of greenery, it slows down the pace. The landscape is either intense in its form which depends on the characteristics of the plants or the topography which separates the two paces naturally.



1



2



3

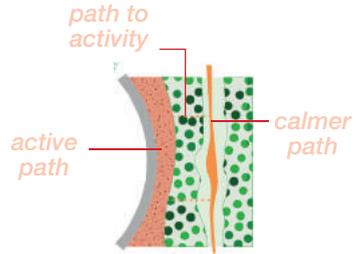


Lower tempo

It is a space in which a lower tempo is encouraged, somewhat placed on the side from the higher tempo of activities and streets. It's a space in which greenery is prioritized.

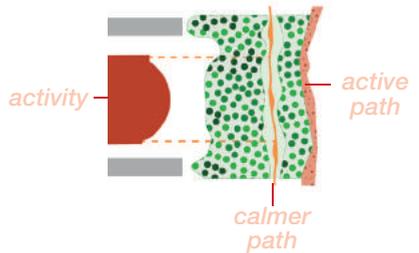
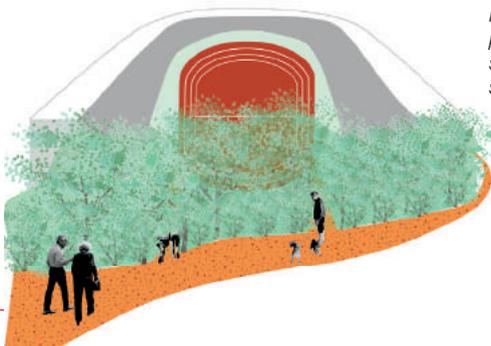
Calmer path placed parallelly next to the active street on one side.

This street is somewhat calm as one can see the high tempo from a distance since the street is placed parallelly, yet walk slowly.



Calmer path placed parallelly, next to an active street and an activity.

The street is somewhat calm as it is placed between an activity and an active street. However, there is a green and dense structure positioned as a calm barrier on both sides of the street, creating a space in which one can take a step away from the high movement.



Open it up and appropriate, Clusters

Clusters are packages that are supposed to make it easy for spontaneous users to inhabit the space. They are broken down in scale and connected to an active path and an existing structure to relate to the historical background of the area. However, as the site was designed in such manner that functions were only supposed to serve the members of one club, necessary facilities such as toilets, showers, diner rooms and a multipurpose room together with a toolbox are introduced. This is to invite more associations to the site. The toolbox is of high importance as it is in this place where all the sports equipment for the different types of sports that are part of the cluster is placed and it should always be opened for people to use under the guidance of a sport association.

The clusters differ depending on their placements in relation to the active path, creating different forms of characters.

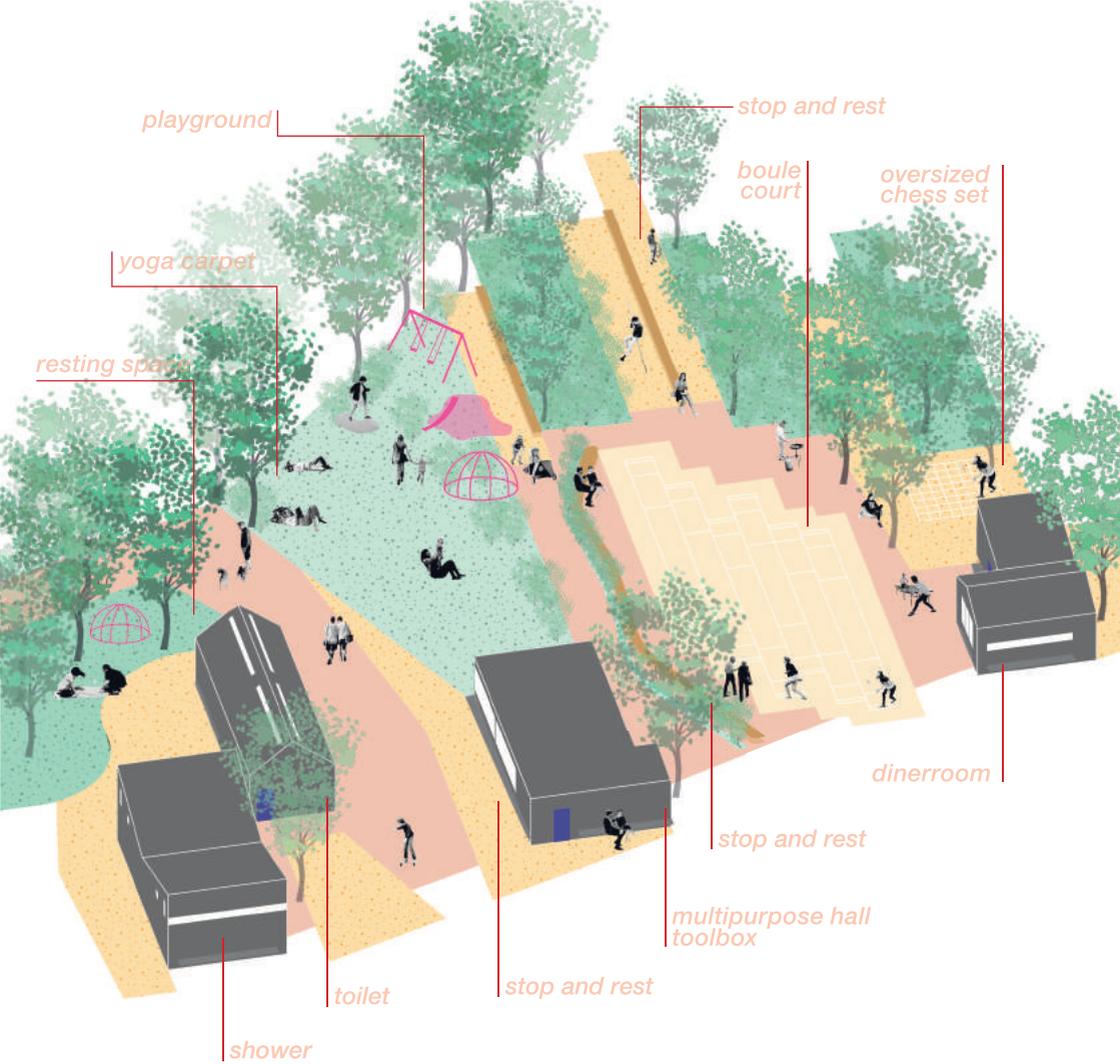


Illustration showing one form of a cluster, the semi-calmer form as it is adjacent to the path and close connected to a tennis court.

5. Masterplan.



Active cluster

The active cluster is a space in which all the activities are placed on two sides of the active path, creating a faster tempo. It's a space in which one is absorbed into different options of use. Examples of sports that can be found in such clusters can be observed on the illustration to the right.



Stop and rest

seatings / shelter / catch
/ a breath / take a step
away from the noise and
observe

Arbor

Shower

- Space to sit
- Space for bike-parking

Toilet

- Space to sit
- Space for
bike-parking

Active path

Diner room

- Space to sit
- Space for bike-parking

Sport

Tennis



Multipurpose hall / toolbox

- Space to sit
- Space for bike-parking
- Borrow/rent equipment
- Indoor activities

Sport

Basketball

Playground

Green structure

Glade

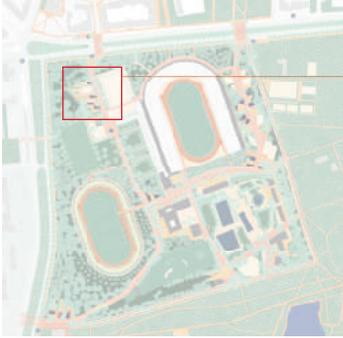
Space to warm up

- Outdoor gym for adults
- Space to stretch

rest and stop

seatings / shelter
/ eating / observe

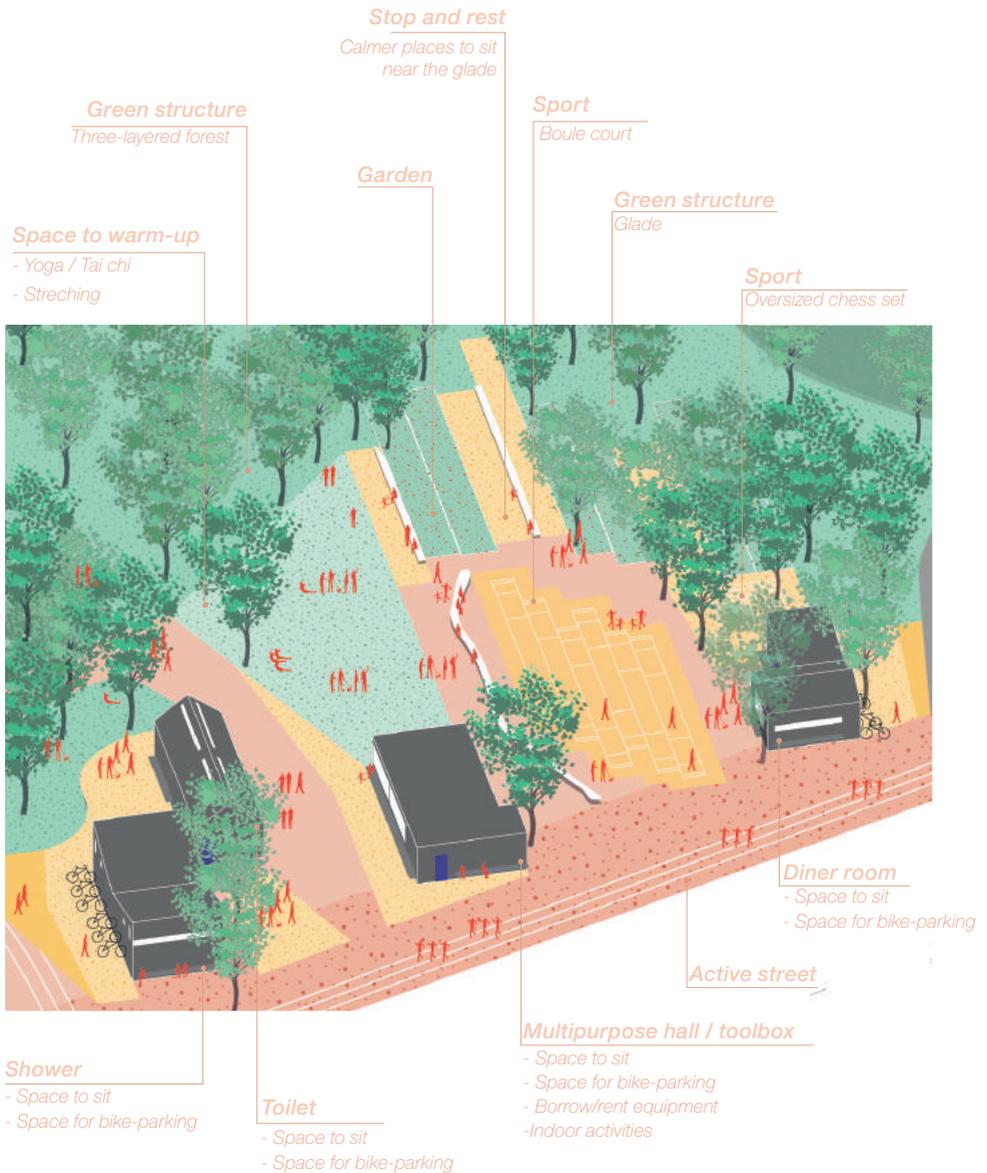
5. Masterplan.



Semi-active cluster

The semi-active cluster is a space in which all the activities are placed next to the active path and an existing structure, creating a calmer option. It is a space in which one can take a step away from the active path to experience a more peaceful option of use as the tempo lowers the more one walk to the left of the active path. Examples of sports that can be found in such clusters can be observed on the illustration to the right.





5. Masterplan.



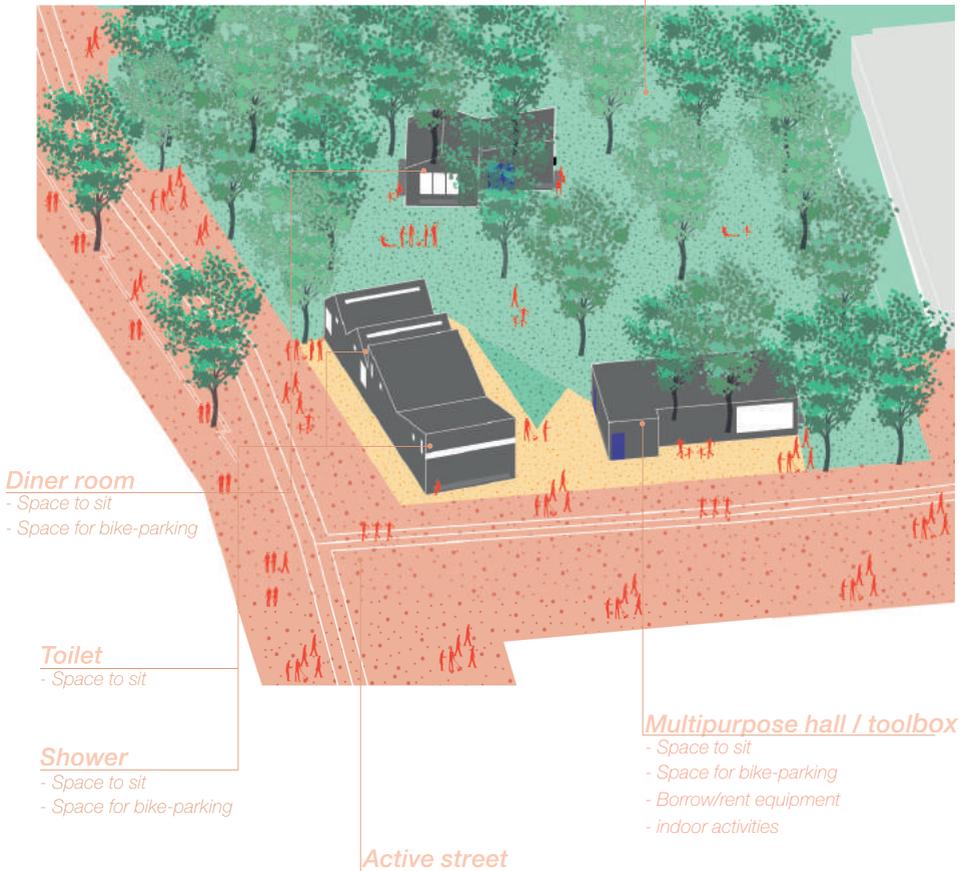
Calm cluster

The calm cluster is a space in which all the activities are placed with some distance from the active path. The pavilions such as the shower, toilet and the multipurpose hall are placed with the back facing the path and the entrances to the park so that it can still be of use to people who pass by, but in a calmer way. The diner room is placed a bit further into the greenery where one can sit and eat calmly under the trees.



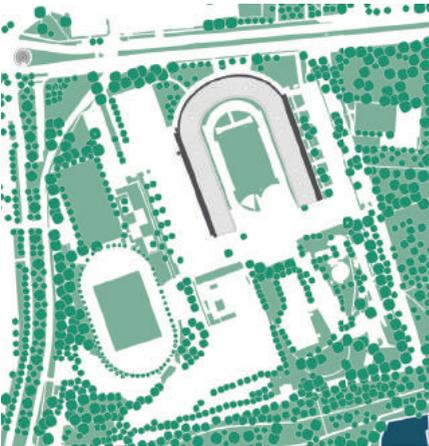
Green structure

Glade

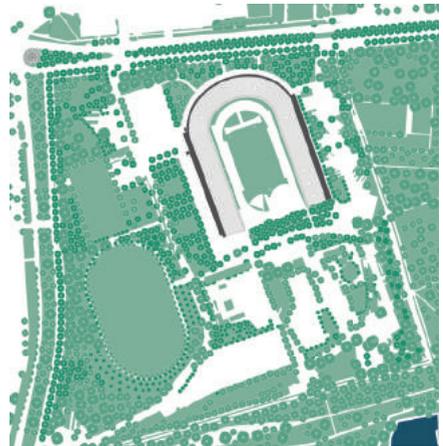


Defined greenery, Densification of green structure

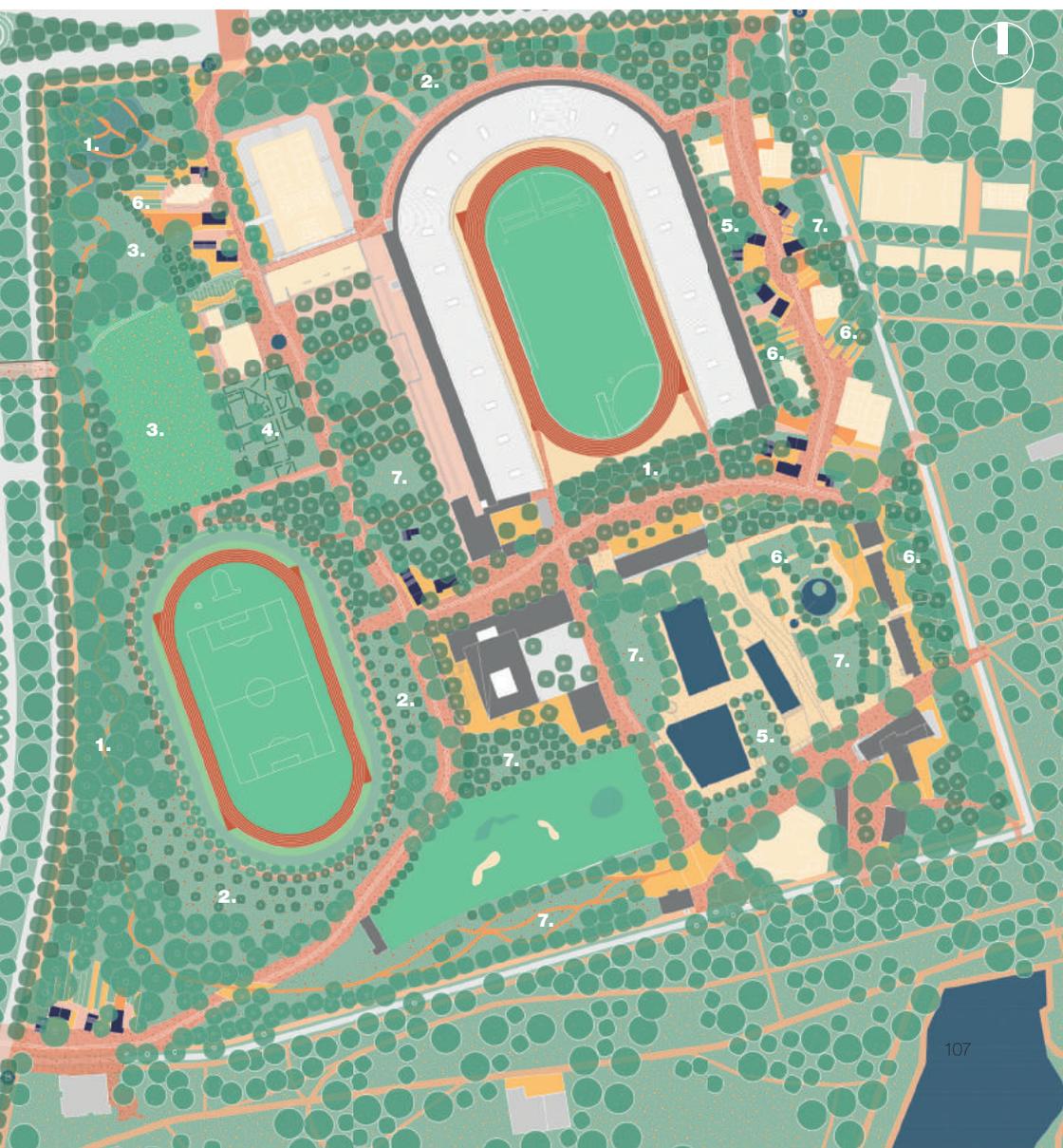
The proposal suggests 7 forms of green typologies that can be observed on the following pages that is used as a form of densification of greenery. These topologies describe a function that follows a form. Sometimes the greenery suggests a calmer use, other times it encourages play.



today



after



1. Three-layered forest



A quite passage through a three layered forest, placed on the west side of the site as well as on places where a quite option is needed, the greenery in front of the arena.

2. Pillar hall



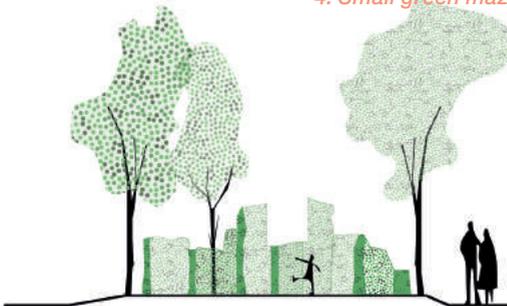
A passage through a pillar hall forest, in which one can see the activities that occur through the trunks, therefore connected to it, yet not as one is walking through a calmer space.

3. Large glade within a forest.



A glade within a forest is a space in which one can relax, sport or pass by.

4. Small green maze

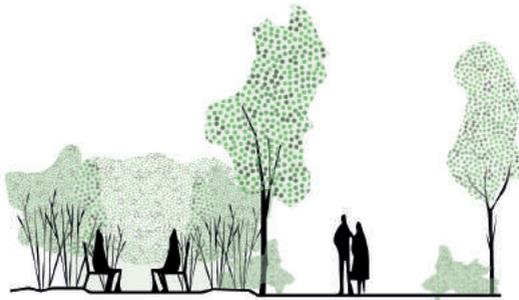


The green maze is a space in which one is encouraged to play and stray.

5. Arbor



The arbors placed around the sited differ in sizes and can encourage different forms of use. The smaller ones suggest a space in which one can take a step away from the activities and movement occurring. As they are small, it is an intimate space.

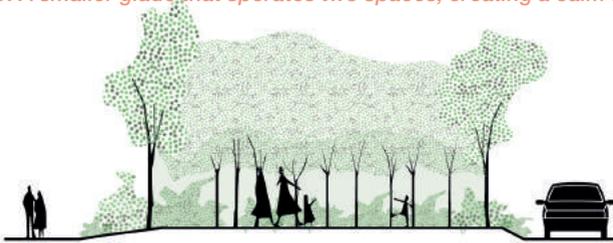


6. Planting and seating in contact with a path



Larger plantings are placed next to something that can be of active use or as a calmer gradient towards the forest. As the seating are placed adjacent to it, one is suggested to take a step back and observe.

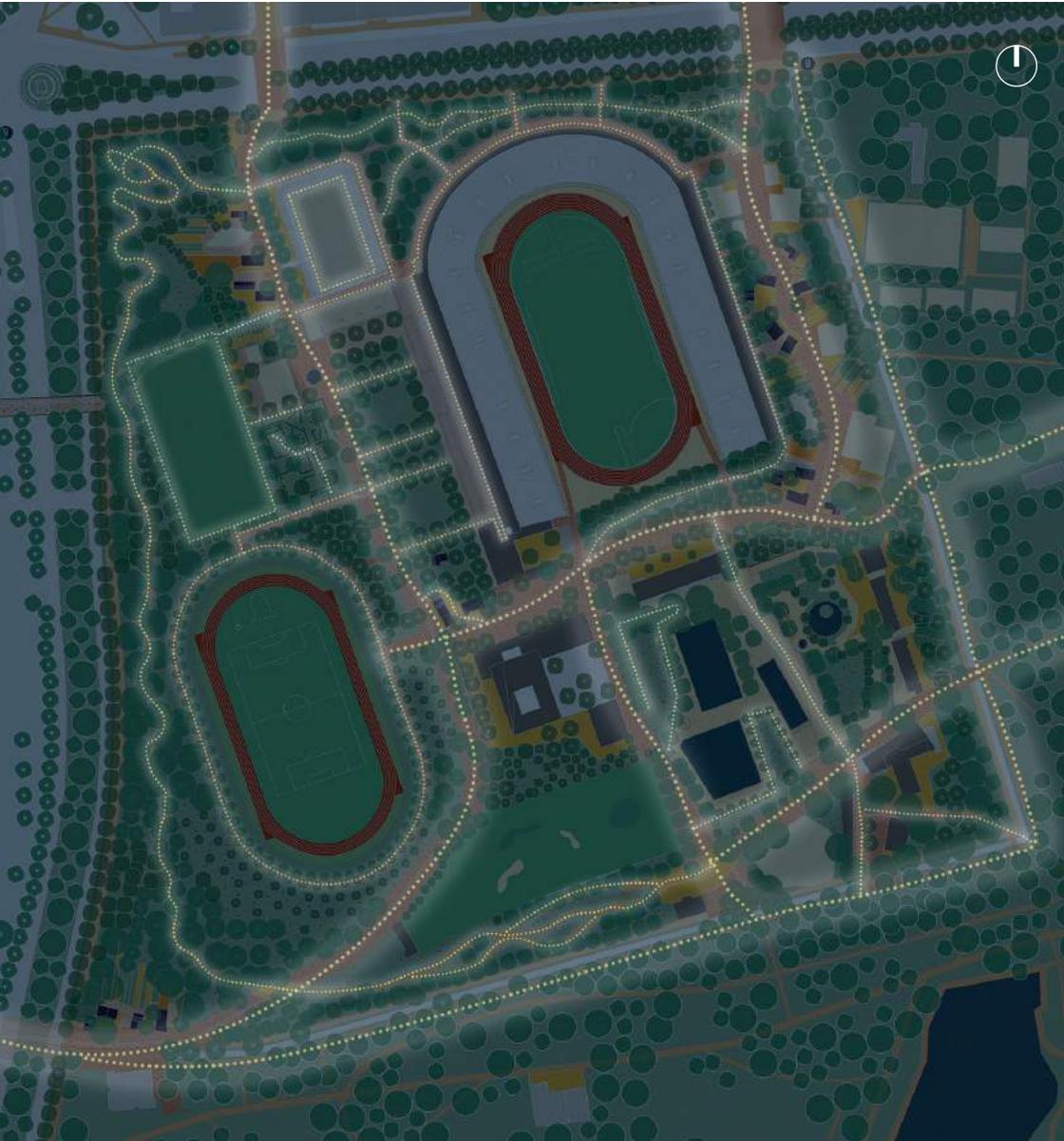
7. A smaller glade, that separates two spaces, creating a calm spot



A glade placed between two forms of active spaces, creating a calmer form of use. The picture above illustrates the glade as it is situated between an active path and a street for cars.

5. Masterplan.

Illumination within the site during the evening.



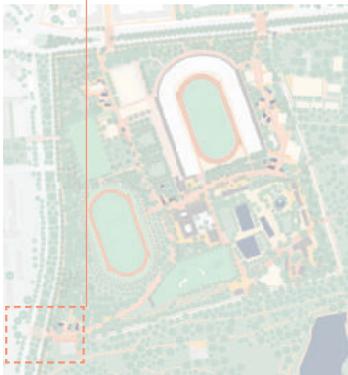
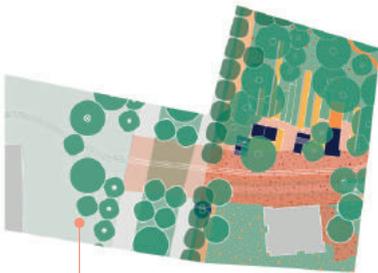
Management,

The proposal suggests that more associations or group of people can lease a spot within a cluster to manage. The group presented in the illustration to the right are the yoga and boule association. These can then be shared among the members of the association and the spontaneous user. The toolbox is suggested in which one can place all the equipment for sport that should be opened for people to use. The small gardens could be cultivated along with the schools surrounding the site, in this case, classes from kindergarten and elementary schools.



An example of how a cluster can be managed among different associations.

Stages of development,



1. Create an entrance

The first step of the development should be to create an entrance to the site. It should be placed in relation to the most pedestrian-trafficked area on Pole Mokotowskie, next to the bus stops and schools.



2. Flow

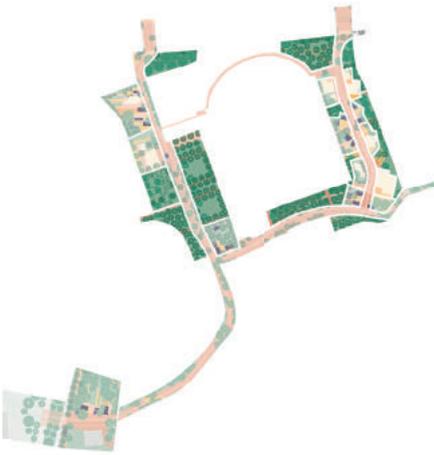
When an entrance is established, a pedestrian-friendly path can be developed throughout the site.



3. Clusters

When visitors are starting to use the streets, clusters can slowly develop along them.

5. Masterplan.

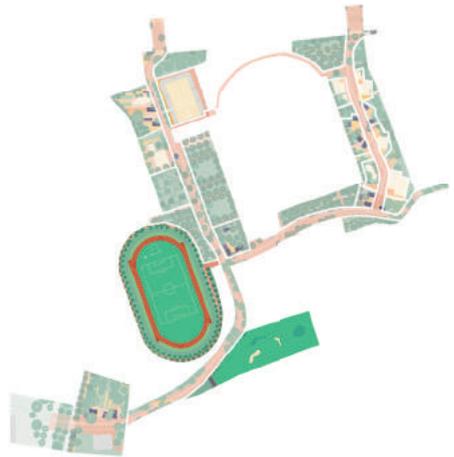


4. Planting of smaller greenery adjacent to clusters

When the clusters are attracting visitors, its surrounding space can start to develop.

5. Renovate existing functions that are in use

As the clusters are in use as well as the spaces surrounding them, existing structures can be renovated and become well-integrated to the new infrastructure.





6. Renovate the surrounding greenery

As the spaces of use are increasing throughout the site, larger green spaces can be developed.

7. Renovate the blue square

The renovation of the blue square should take place when visitors are well acquainted with the area.



5. Masterplan.

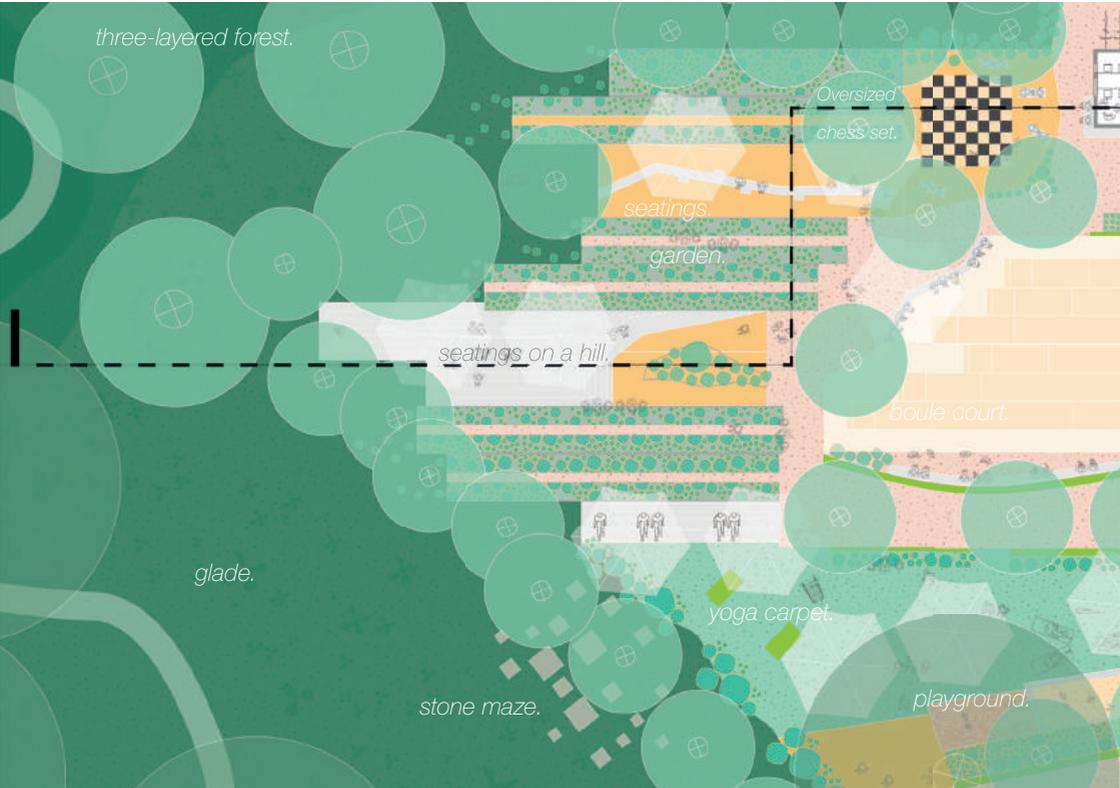


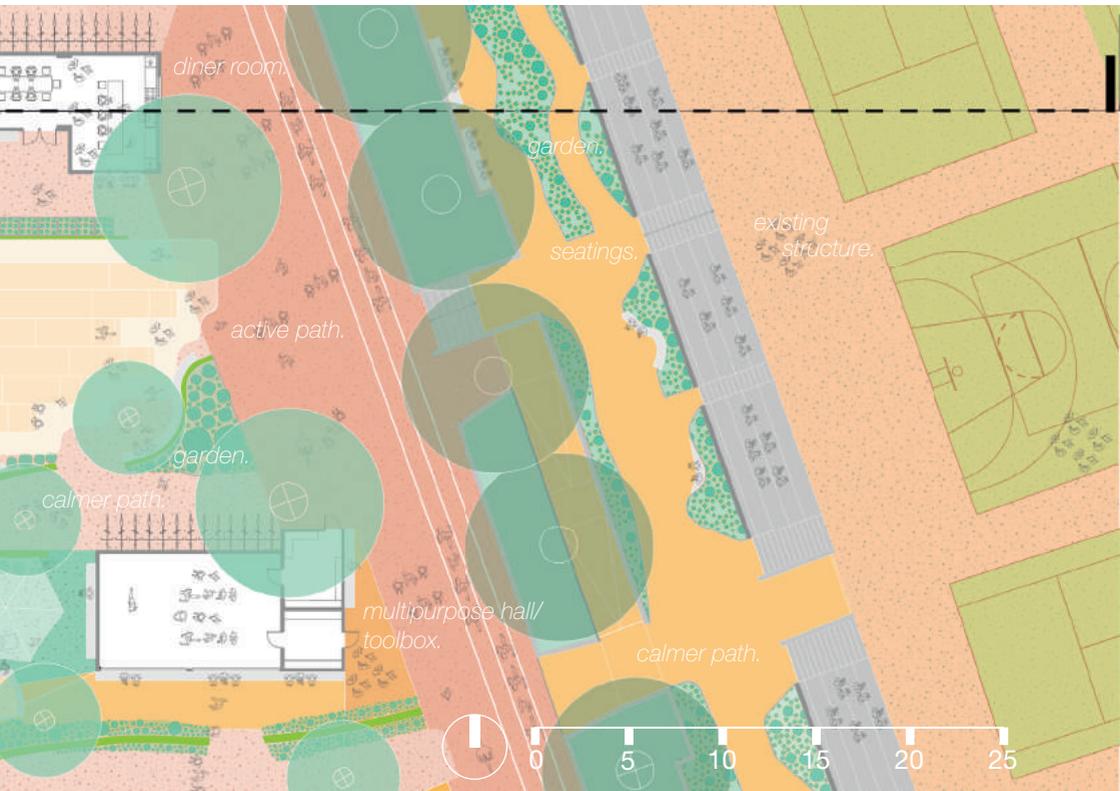
8. Restore the arena

When the entire site is well integrated into Pole Mokotowskie as well as the entire city, in other words when the entire site is of use, the restoration of the arena can take place if needed.

Zoom in

Semi-active cluster





Plan illustrating activities on a semi-active cluster.

5. Masterplan.



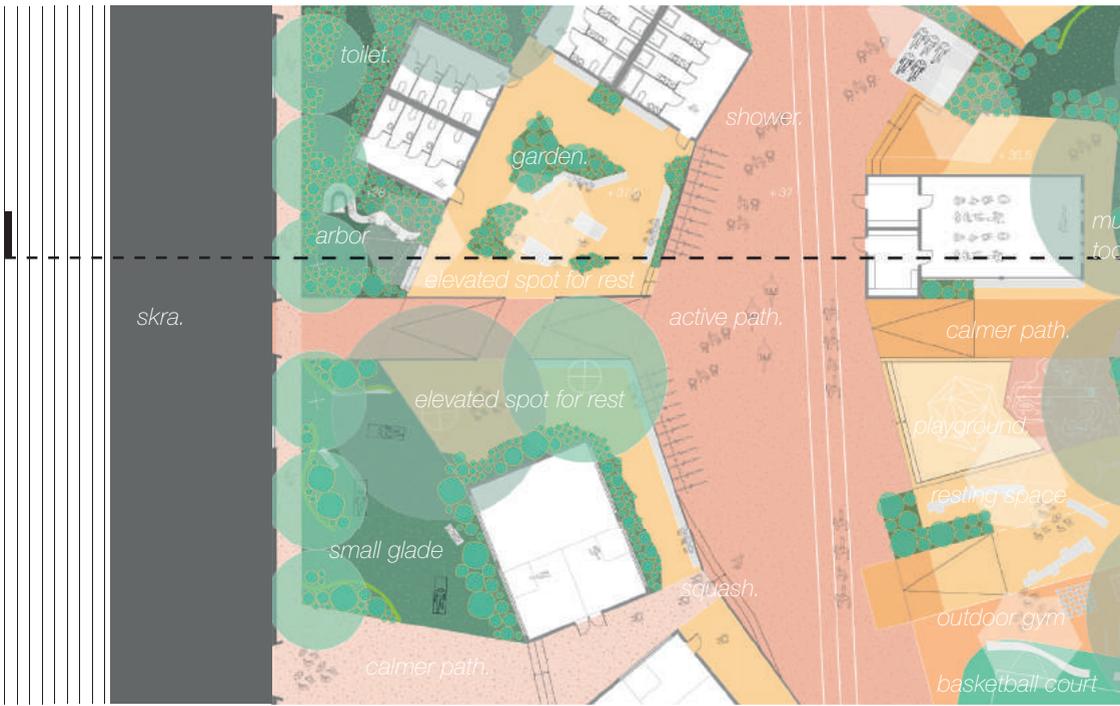


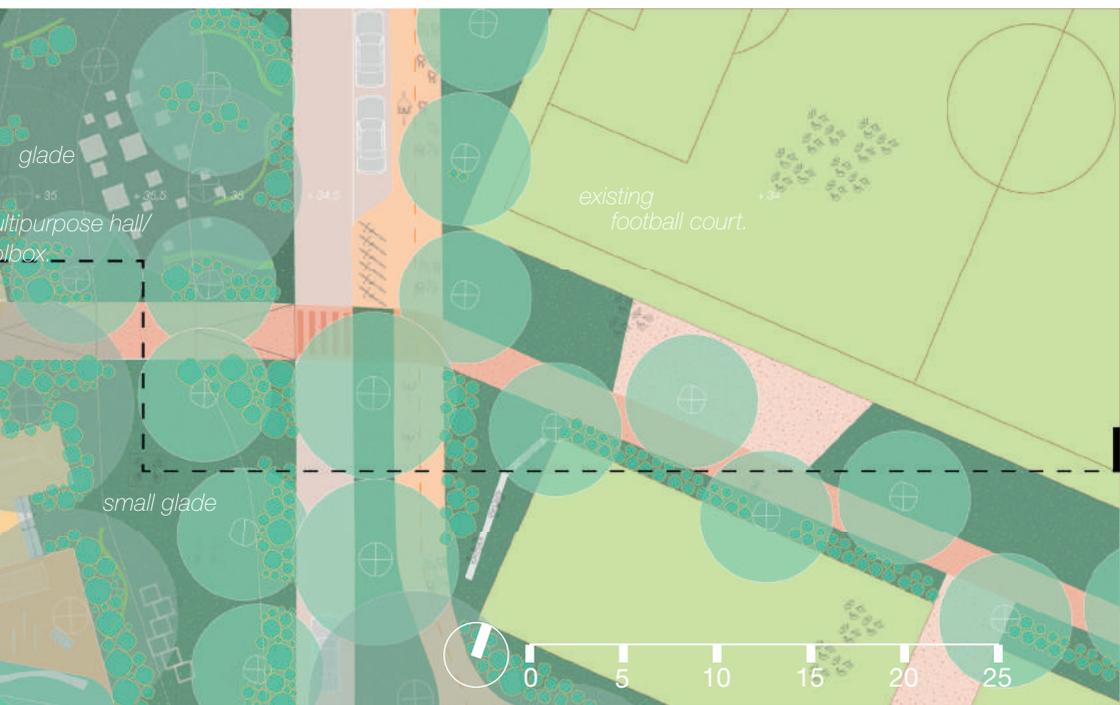
Section illustrating a semi-active cluster.





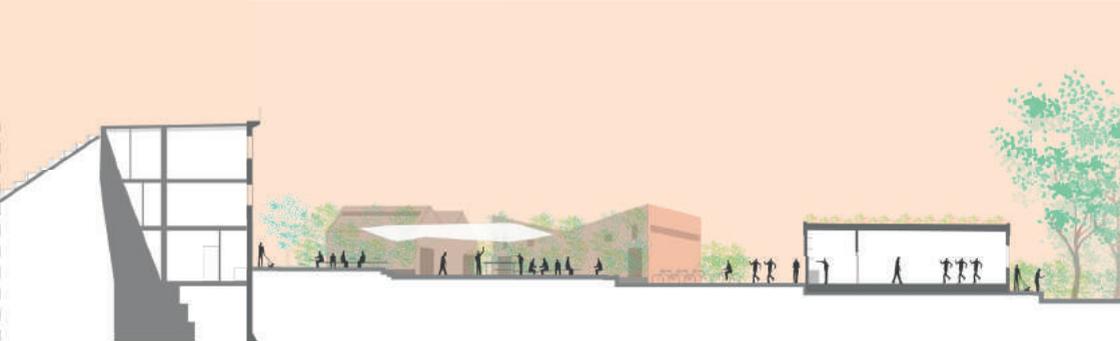
Active cluster





Plan illustrating activities on an active cluster.

5. Masterplan.





Section illustrating activities on an active cluster.





5. reflections

5. Reflections.

The thesis experiments with the thought of breaking down a large and inaccessible structure called Skra in Warsaw, so that it can be used by a larger amount of people. It experiments with how such infrastructure for sporting purposes could be differently used and designed.

The learning outcome of this thesis is that it is truly a hard topic as these projects often are expensive and most likely politically influenced as they are developed from a top-down approach. However, these are also the types of infrastructure that have difficulties in finding ways to sustain financially while being properly maintained after. Yet, they are being built for events that occur during few periods a time. As this thesis takes as a starting point from a site that is already built and where there is a need for it to be opened and used, a utopian experiment emerged to discuss a complex issue.

It investigates a space that corresponds with the needs of today, which is a multipurposed space for both professional and spontaneous use. The proposal investigates and experiments with factors such as the potential users and organizations that can be introduced to the site as it is surrounded by institutions, schools, workplaces and residential areas. It discusses how to develop the site further while involving more actors hence more functions so it could be accessible to more people. It experiments with an alternative way of shared responsibility of managing and maintaining the area among many organizations.

The design tries to physically relate to its historical background by the placement of new functions in relation to the old. It reflects my personal experience of Warsaw. The history of Warsaw is clearly visible in the footprint of the city structure in the larger scale. However, as time passes by, so too does life in the human scale; smaller interventions are seen within the larger structures from the past in the city. This is the philosophy that is implemented in the design; a smaller scale in a larger structure that is introduced without taking away its original purpose or design. It aims to highlight the times of the past by connecting the new structure to the old while mixing in the contemporary design and use. Finally, the design aims to open the closed area and create important connections to its surrounding. This thesis does not suggest a fast development, rather one that develops organically over time in dialog with the city.

Finally, this thesis is simply a reflection of my experiences and thoughts that have occurred along the way of my studies and work; how to build socially?

It would have been exciting to see how a similar project would progress in dialog with the city and its users. It would also be interesting to see what strategies and tools would be in use both at the starting point and during the process of development. It would also be interesting to see how these different sports organizations and users would coexist and appropriate within one spot and how that would function on a detailed level.

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