

ORIKUM or HOW TO BECOME A MAGNIFICENT SEASIDE RESORT

PRESENTATION



BEL ARCHITECTEN BVBA

IN COLLABORATION WITH

ENO MUHO & ENTON DERRAJ

18 NOVEMBER 2014

ORIKUM BEACH



ORIKUM CENTRE



SEA + MOUNTAINS



ALBANIA, THE LAND OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

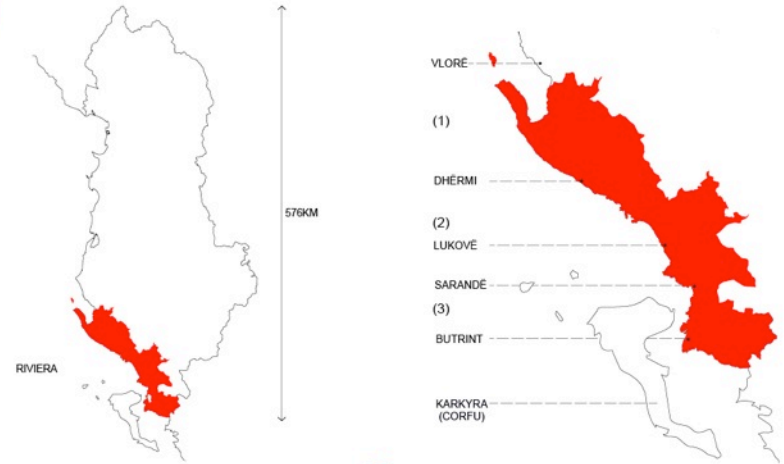
Albania is situated centrally on the Mediterranean coast, east of Italy, where the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea meet. It covers 28,748 square km and has 3,6 million inhabitants. It's about as large as Belgium, the country we come from, but it has three times fewer inhabitants. So it's fairly sparsely populated in comparison.



BELGIUM
30.528 km²

THE ALBANIAN COAST

Albania's coastline is 576 km long. The northern part is flat, easily accessible and developed. The south, the Albanian Riviera, however, is quite mountainous, difficult to reach, but extremely beautiful thanks to its abundant unspoiled nature.



THE ALBANIAN RIVIERA

The Albanian Riviera reaches from Vlorë in the north to Sarandë in the south near the Greek border. The SH8 coastal road links the villages in-between: Orikum, Dhermi, Himarë, Porto Palermo, Qeparo ...

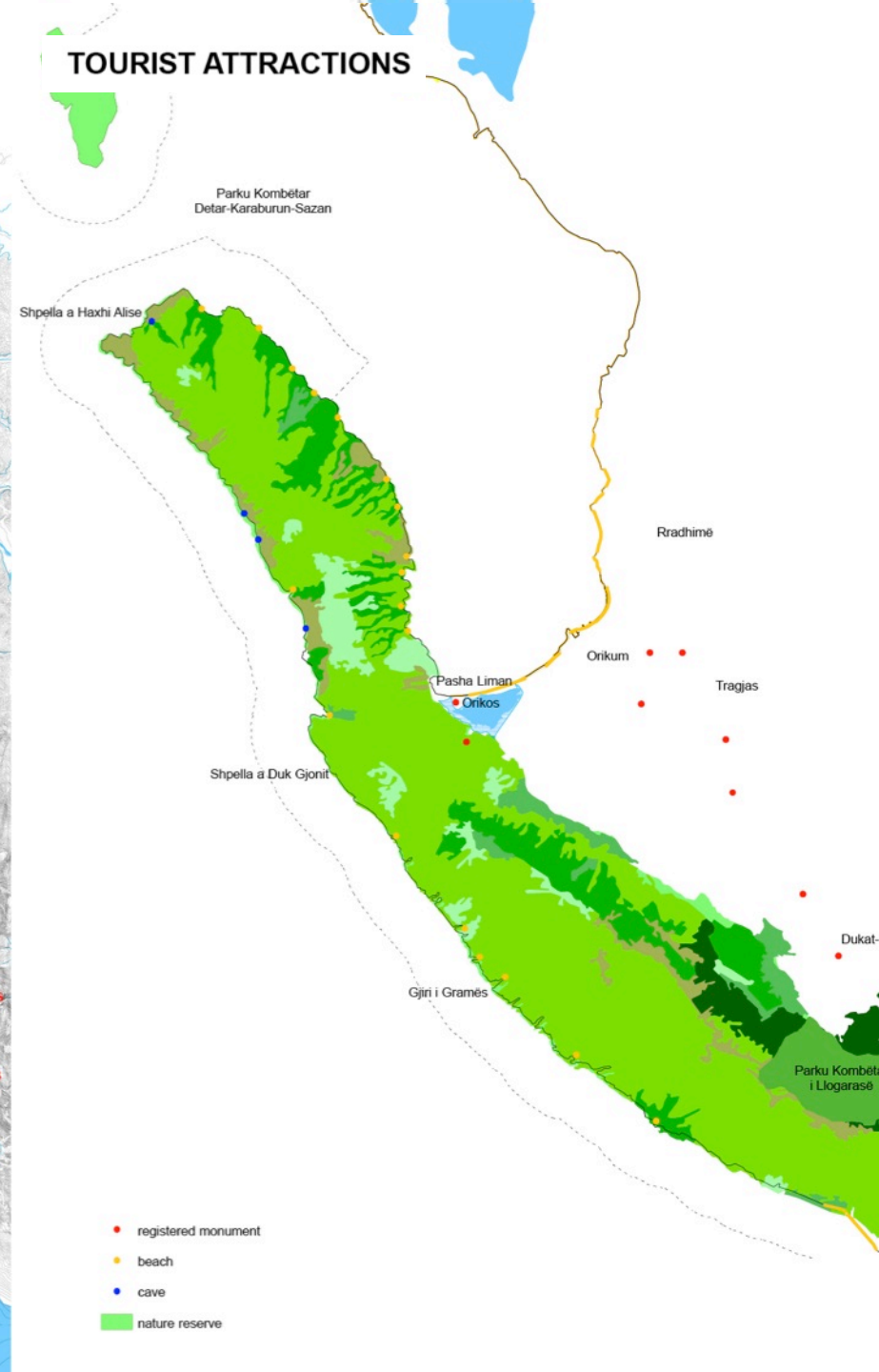
Geographywise the southern part contains three areas:

- (1) Vlorë to Dhermi: rugged and tough with its over 2000 m high sometimes snowy peaks close to the sea – lot 3;
- (2) Dhermi to Lukovë: green, idyllic and unspoiled – lot 2;
- (3) Lukovë to Butrint: the touristic part near Sarandë with its numerous bays and its view of Karkyra (Corfu) – lot 1.

TOPOGRAPHY



TOURIST ATTRACTIONS



MAIN CHALLENGE

The main challenge, the main task – let's quote the briefing – is:

“TO IMPROVE THE URBAN CONDITION AND THE USE OF THE TOURISTIC AREA ALONG THE STRIP, AS WELL AS THE CONNECTIONS THAT LINK THE COASTAL STRIP TO THE NEW AND THE OLD SETTLEMENTS NEARBY.”



“WE IMAGINE
ALBANIA
AS
1 COASTAL CITY”

“WE DREAM OF
ALBANIA
AS
1 NATURAL PARK”

ALBANIA – “THE WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK”.

The AKPT's vision:

“WE IMAGINE ALBANIA AS ONE COASTAL CITY.”

We have some reservations about this vision for we're afraid it involves serious risks. It creates the impression that urbanization is the main element of the Albanian identity. It suggests an urbanization expanding all the way from the interior to the coast to form one large urbanized whole.

Since the 80s the country has been evolving and developing rapidly, suffering from overbuilding as a consequence in a mostly unorganized and unstructured way. Towns keep expanding with great speed, overflowing into nature and messing up entire landscapes.



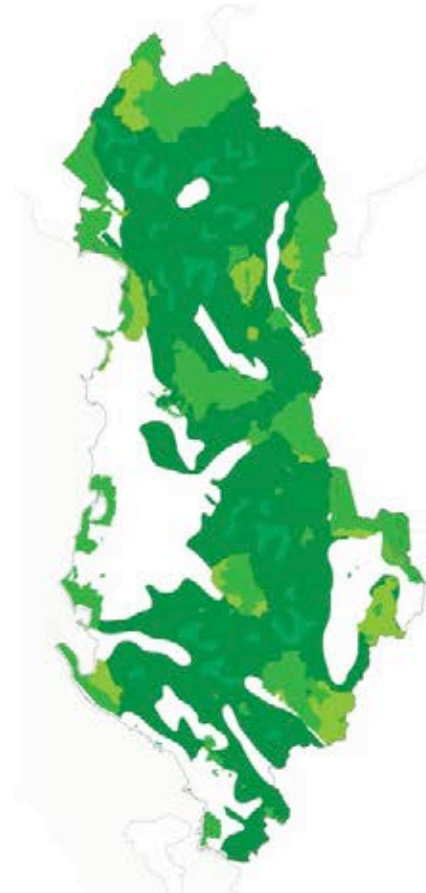
■ existing natural parks
■ extensions
■ mountains as natural parks

We would like to develop a complementary vision!

“WE DREAM OF ALBANIA AS ONE LARGE NATURAL PARK ON THE MEDITERRANEAN.”

It's the rugged mountains of the Balkans meeting the Mediterranean which created the Albanian identity. It's the contrast between the mountains and the sea which is unique. Mountains over 2000 m high, mountains sometimes snowy, mountains meeting an azure sea. It's this most expressive topography too however, which renders inaccessible a large part of the country. The Albanian nature is stunningly beautiful, abundant and pristine. How exceptional! And what a chance, what a challenge!

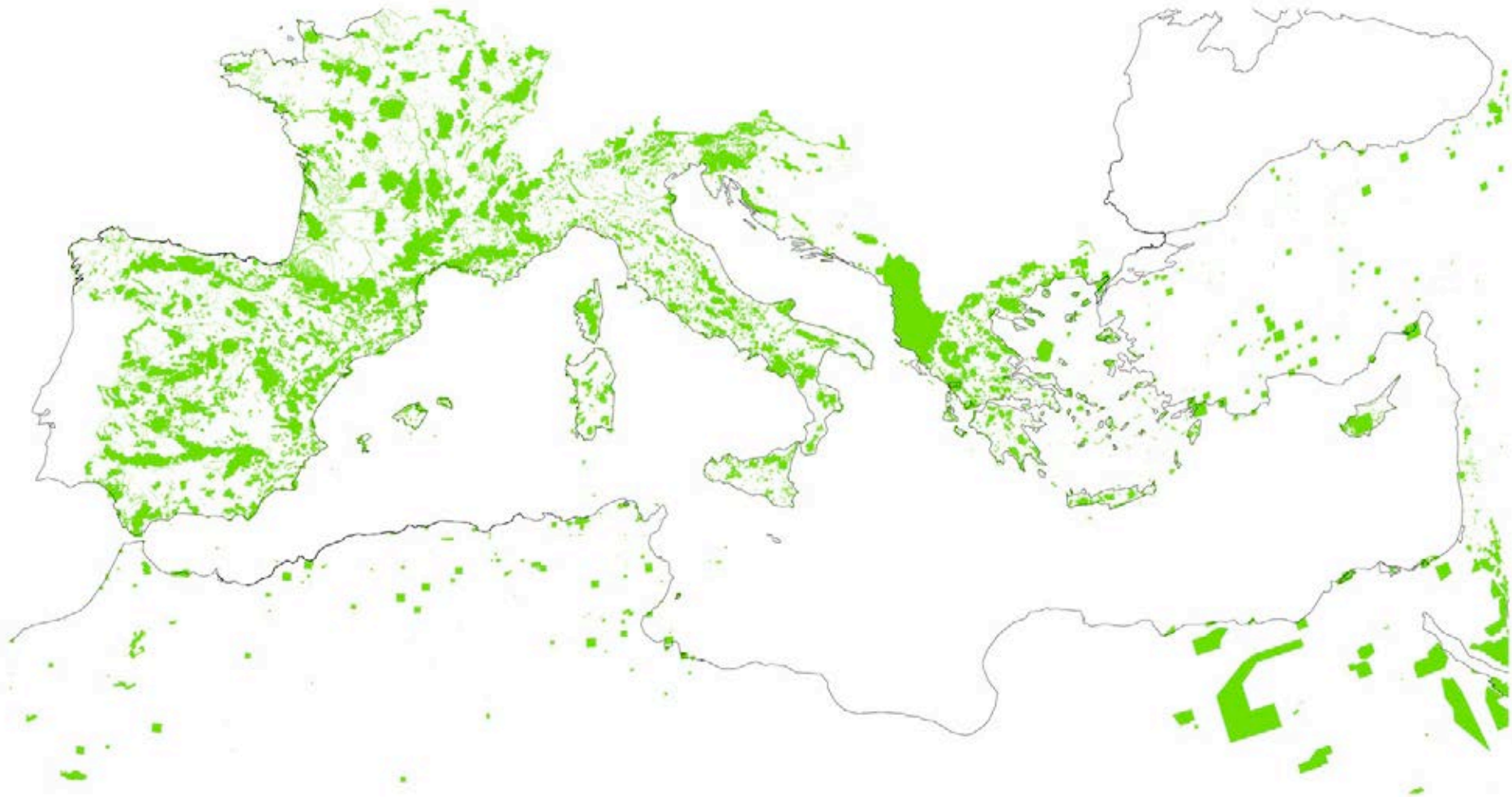
“ALBANIA” MEANS “THE LAND OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS”, AND IT DOES SO FOR VERY GOOD REASON!



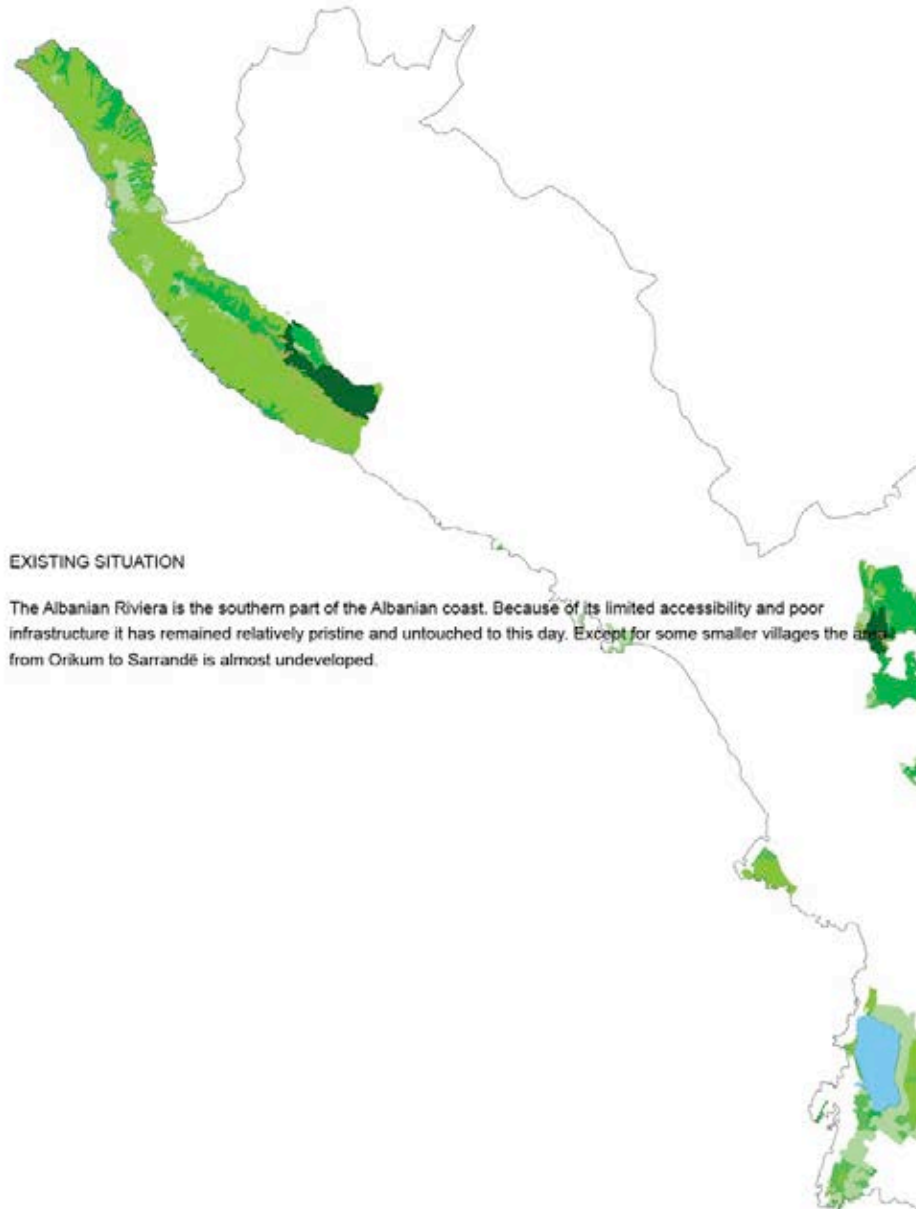
ALBANIA, THE LARGEST NATURAL PARK ON THE MEDITERRANEAN

We want to cherish and protect this unique Albania with its unique landscape. So we propose to put clear boundaries between its nature and its city areas, between open spaces and developable or urbanizable ones. And we want to connect the green spaces, the natural areas, the nature reserves still isolated so far with the other areas to form one big continuous green network. In that way we offer a vision in line with the ideas for the realization of the "Emerald Network". Albania as one big national park!

Here's the engine we propose for Albania's development: a gigantic green space which will be a unique attraction on the Mediterranean. For short: a tourist magnet!



THE RIVIERA NATIONAL PARK



EXISTING SITUATION

The Albanian Riviera is the southern part of the Albanian coast. Because of its limited accessibility and poor infrastructure it has remained relatively pristine and untouched to this day. Except for some smaller villages the area from Orikum to Sarrandë is almost undeveloped.



PROPOSAL

We see the Riviera as one large national park: "the Riviera National Park".

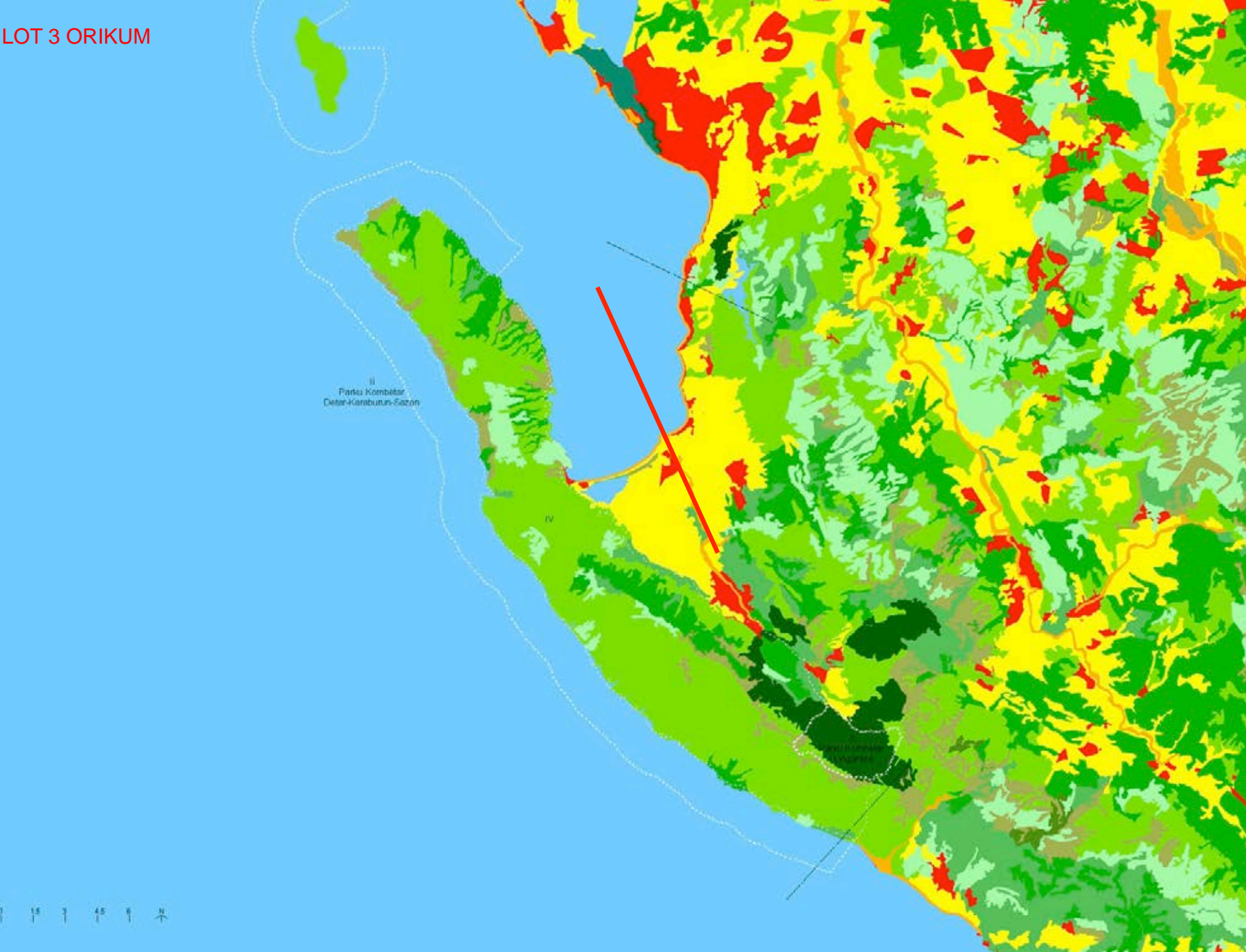
1. We therefore propose a maximum expansion and linking together of the various natural areas still separated now. This could be done by:

- defining as nature reserves those natural areas not yet defined as such;
- defining the great mountain ranges as nature reserves and integrating them into the green network. This is only logical as these great mountain ranges are at the origin of the Albanian identity;
- integrating agricultural areas into the green network of nature reserves at strategic spots. This can be done by:
 - yielding abandoned farmland to nature;
 - defining green corridors within existing agricultural areas;
 - introducing a different way of farming in certain agricultural areas. Smaller-scale organic farming for example generates more biodiversity.
- even by creating additional "nature" for the green network.

2. We propose from now on to consider towns and villages as well defined islands in this green network. Construction outside them should no longer be allowed. The implantation of tourist developments should be well argued and integrated into the network. Implantation in relation to the towns and villages will be preferable. Implantation outside them will only be permitted at specific and well argued locations.

3. We suggest to create a framework for the construction of infrastructure such as new roads and railways. Defining the Albanian Riviera as a large nature reserve will help develop a vision on how to integrate these elements into the landscape. For example: will there be a road at ground level or will there be a tunnel, or a bridge, to maintain nature's continuity?

LOT 3 ORIKUM



ORIKUM LAND USE, EXISTING SITUATION

The transition from the urbanized coast past Vlorë to untouched nature is clearly visible in the bay of Orikum. The river is clearly a boundary. That's where a nearly undeveloped coastline starts. We propose the river as a border between culture (buildings) and nature (no buildings).

We propose to develop an urban plan for the bay of Orikum, using the basic principles elaborated above:

1. Natural areas such as the lagoon will be restored to their former glory. They will be expanded right up to the limits of villages and towns as we want to maximize the contrast between nature and built-up areas to create exciting spaces.
2. Clear boundaries, evident edges will be defined for the existing urban tissue and for the areas to be developed in the future. We want to create a clear structure to halt the rampant chaotic development spillage all over the bay.
3. The infrastructure will be considered as a network between nature and built-up areas. Public spaces such as squares and parks, even public buildings, will be nodes connecting nature and culture!



LINK NATURE OVER VALLEY

(1) THE LAGOON – flora and fauna

The lagoon has been drained nearly completely at present. We propose to restore it to its original condition. As much as possible the dammed-in lagoon would be given back its original size and it would again stretch as far as Orikum.

The lagoon is an important element in the network of nature reserves. It has a very rich and diverse flora and fauna and it's important for birds and marine life. To give nature a chance again we suggest establishing more connections between the lagoon and the sea and thereby helping it regain its original qualities as a wet area where saltwater and fresh water mix.

Mussels and samphire, local delicacies, could be grown in the lagoon. The mussels would be brought to the market daily during the season.

Small boats might offer guided tours or cross the lagoon to the Orikos archaeological site. Departure from the pier near the covered market!

A number of walking and biking trails would start in Orikum and lead through or around the lagoon. The existing roads would be incorporated in the network but bridges would punctuate them.

To let the sea have free reign again the present-day road to Pasha Limanit and the Orikos archaeological site might either be replaced partially by a viaduct or led around the lagoon.

(2) DUKAT FUSHË – BIO-FARMING

Most of the valley southwest of Orikum is agricultural country. Some parts are still cultivated, other lots are no longer used. Some small farms are situated around a ring-shaped access road. The fields are large. Their structure is a remnant of an agricultural collective from the period of the Hoxha regime. We propose to consider the agricultural area as an extension of the nature reserves around it. That's why we suggest switching from large-scale agriculture to small-scale organic farming. A smaller-scale and healthier pesticide-free agriculture would ensure more biodiversity. With the exception of buildings specifically at the service of agriculture and agro tourism no additional buildings would be permitted.

Healthy local products would be traded in the market hall and prepared in the kitchens of local restaurants.

(3) THE BEACH – tourist FUN and tides

The pebble beach would be divided into two different parts:

- the part east of the river. It would become a lively and welcoming place full of infrastructure for tourists: little piers, swimming pools, bars, possibly a casino with a disco;
- the part west of the green area. It would be a rugged and wild place, left at the mercy of the sea. At low tide one would be able to walk to Pasha Limanit or the Orikos archaeological site by the beach. At high tide or during stormy weather the sea would wash over the old road.

(4) TRAGJAS – the hills

The park on the beach would sweep along the river with its extremities stretching into the hills and the old village of Tragjas. The park would connect Orikum-on-the-beach, Orikum's centre and Tragjas. The park's trees would form a grid and its density and intensity would decrease gradually leaving Orikum. The whole would be integrated respecting the structure of the fields around it and the existing topography. A walking and biking trail would start at the sea and run along the river to Tragjas.

ENCLAVES = BORDERS

(1) ORIKUM CENTRE – THE TRIANGLE

Let's define Orikum centre's built-up area and its future boundaries.

Orikum's core is a triangle with its sides shaped by three different natural elements:

- a. The fields of Dukat Fushë on the south side;
- b. The Dukatit river on the east side;
- c. The Pasha Limanit lagoon on the west side.

Inside this triangle there is still room for expansion and densification.

Orikum's two main streets, Bulevardi Principesha Rugjine and the SH8 road, form a T-junction and doing so structure this core. We propose to transform them into fully-fledged boulevards with trees and wide sidewalks on both sides, leading up to corners where space will be reserved for three special large-scale buildings to fix and tighten Orikum's urban tissue. The buildings we propose will be mixed public-private infrastructures making the most of their exceptional locations.

(2) Orikum BEACH – THE WING

Given the fact that the region has so much potential and tourist assets galore, it seems logical to provide space for new tourist developments. We would like to get this on the right track. Meanwhile we think it's too bad that Orikum's centre is still situated more than one km away from the beach today, too far to achieve a high-quality development of tourism.

(3) PASHA LIMANIT – JULIUS CAESAR'S harbour

The Orikos archaeological site and the adjacent Pasha Limanit military harbour are actually one whole. Together with the underwater remains of Julius Caesar's former harbour it might be turned into a large open air museum dedicated to naval warfare. One more tourist magnet!

If so, public ferries and boats shuttling to Vlorë and Sazan could visit the harbour. A small area might remain reserved for the military but it would be necessary to remove the fence around the military site to grant permanent accessibility to the Orikos archaeological site.

Some former military barracks might be turned into guesthouses. Pasha Limanit would become one of the starting points for trekkers keen on exploring the Karaburun mountains.

ORIKUM, WHERE NATURE MEETS CULTURE

Land Use: Proposal.

(1) THE KARABURUNIT PENINSULA – hiker heaven

With plenty of interesting sites such as its caves and its marvellous beaches the Karaburunit Peninsula would be the centre of Albania's largest national park. One could easily stay and have fun there for several days.

So at specific sites like the Gramma bay or near the lighthouse ancient ruins would be turned into guesthouses and campsites. They would always be situated close to the sea and provided with their own pier so visitors and goods could always be brought and fetched and waste collected. A Vlorë – Orikum-on-the-beach – Pasha Limanit – Himare ferry might be arranged.

To improve the nature reserve's accessibility the existing trails would be repaired and upgraded to permit multi-day hikes and the local trail network would be linked to the great European long-distance trail network traversing the continent.

And finally, if new trees are planted to replace the forests burned in recent decades to create pastures for sheep over time a glorious Llogara National Park will once again reach as far as the sea!

(1)

Two more large open spaces exist in Orikum's core. We propose new development plans to give them more meaning for the community:

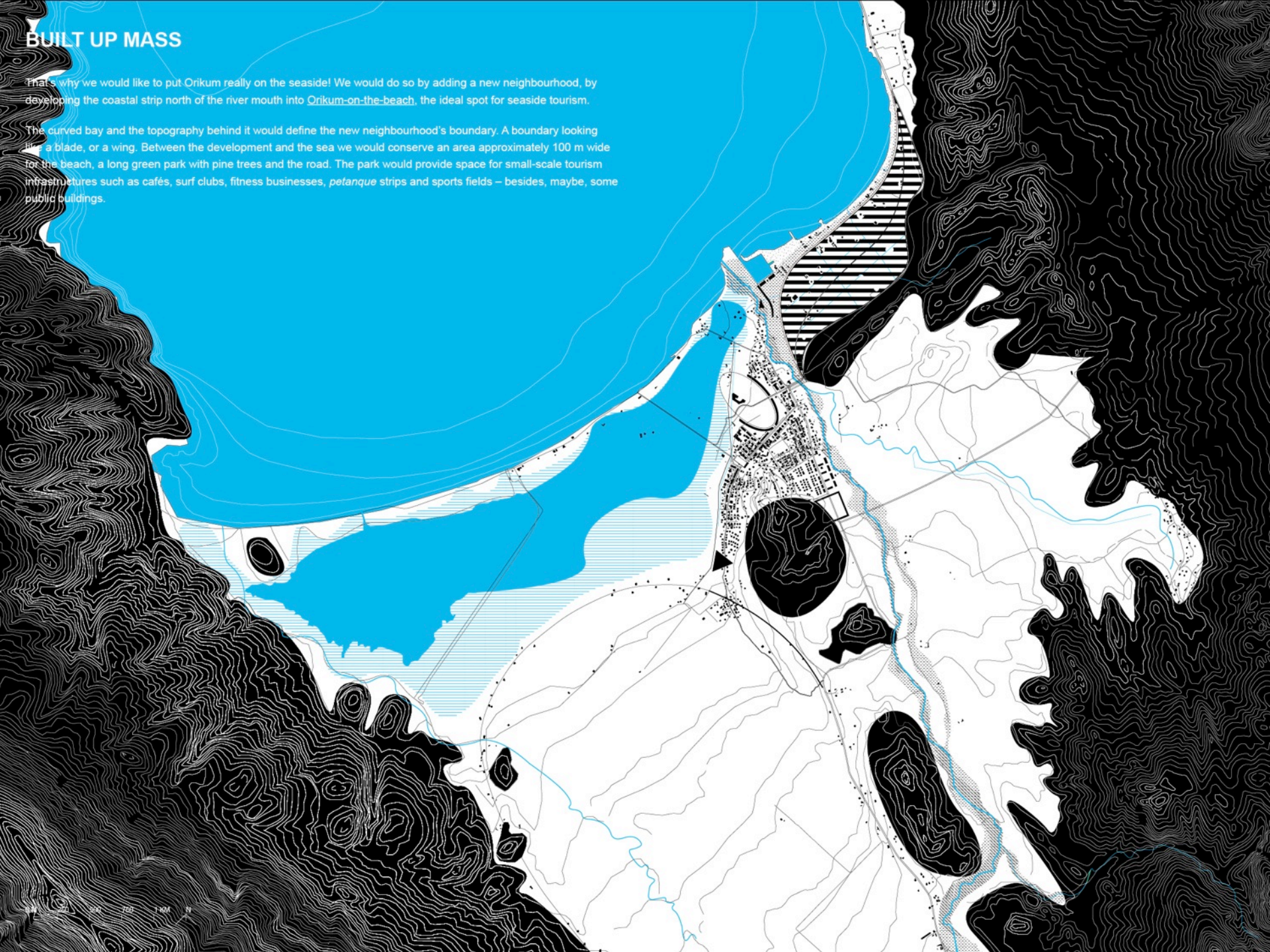
(2) THE TERRACES on the hill in the south. They would become a citrus and olive orchard traversed by walking trails.

(3) THE BRIDGE taking the old coastal road to Vlorë on the east side of the intersection between the two main streets. We would like to turn it into a link between the river, the SH8 road, Orikum's centre and the Orikum beach. We would develop it as a bridge plaza, as a formal meeting and events square.

BUILT UP MASS

That's why we would like to put Orikum really on the seaside! We would do so by adding a new neighbourhood, by developing the coastal strip north of the river mouth into Orikum-on-the-beach, the ideal spot for seaside tourism.

The curved bay and the topography behind it would define the new neighbourhood's boundary. A boundary looking like a blade, or a wing. Between the development and the sea we would conserve an area approximately 100 m wide for the beach, a long green park with pine trees and the road. The park would provide space for small-scale tourism infrastructures such as cafés, surf clubs, fitness businesses, *petanque* strips and sports fields – besides, maybe, some public buildings.



ISOMETRIC VIEW

The whole would be structured according to the following principles:

- STRIPS. Built-up strips and open ones alternating consistently to allow sufficient public space and greenery;
- * - LOW DENSITY. One or two levels with higher densities at the ends;
- DIVERSITY. Each strip would have its own typology to attract its own typical tourists, users and residents. There would be villas, multi-family houses, small guesthouses, and some apartment buildings or high-rises on the corners of the square. Commercial businesses like shops might be included;
- A GRID oriented east-west and rotated 45° with respect to the coast. In that way all streets, even the side streets, would face the sea and the new neighbourhood would maximize its relationship with the beach and the sea.

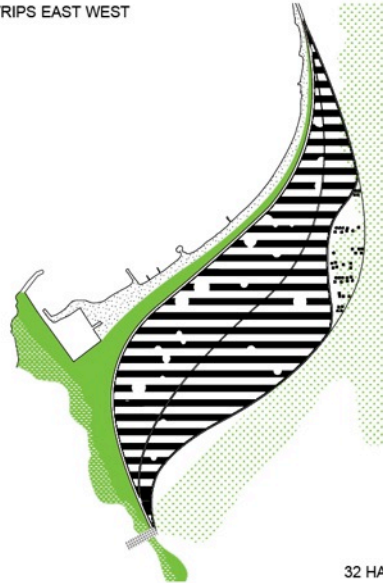


RESEARCH EXAMPLES OF THE WING

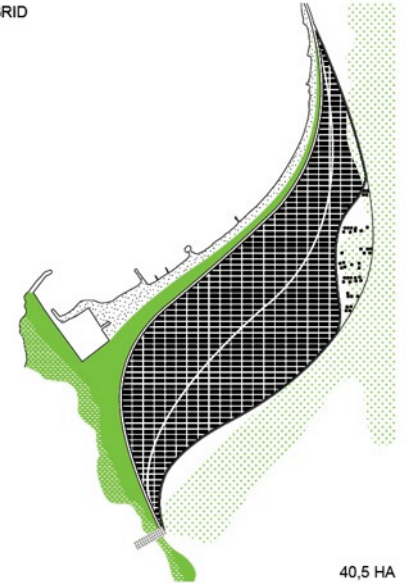
EXISTING PARCELS



STRIPS EAST WEST



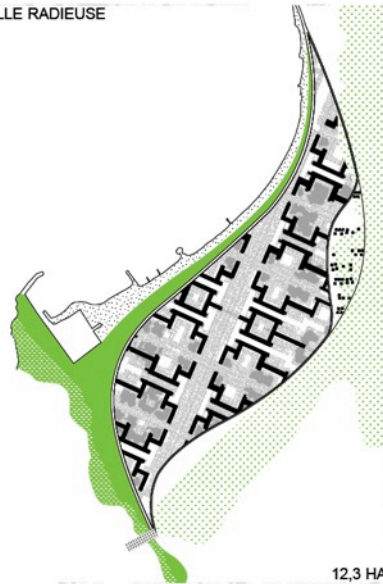
GRID



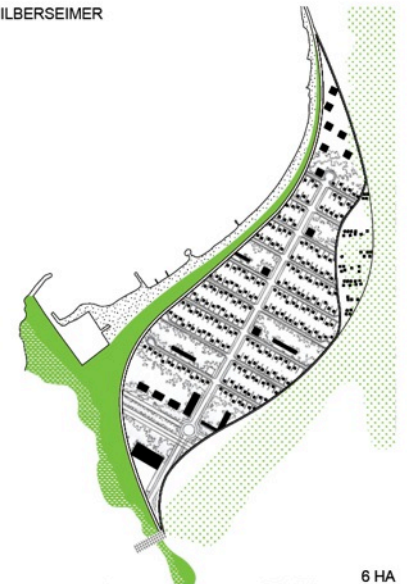
MASSPLAN VLORE



VILLE RADIEUSE



HILBERSEIMER





A GATEHOUSE

positioned where the city "stops" nowadays. In the future Oriku will be accessed via the new Vlorë bypass however and traffic will enter the city here. We propose to shift and connect the end of the Vlorë bypass to the city. We suggest a building in the shape of a gate at this location, positioned in the middle of a plaza and flanked by a gas station, a bus station, a supermarket, a roadside restaurant and ample parking opportunity, all of them features focused on serving the region around Oriku. Private housing overlooking the pretty valley would surround the plaza.

VLORE BYPASS

VLORE BYPASS

SH 8

SH 8

0 M 25 50 75 100 N

BIENVENU A ORIKUM!

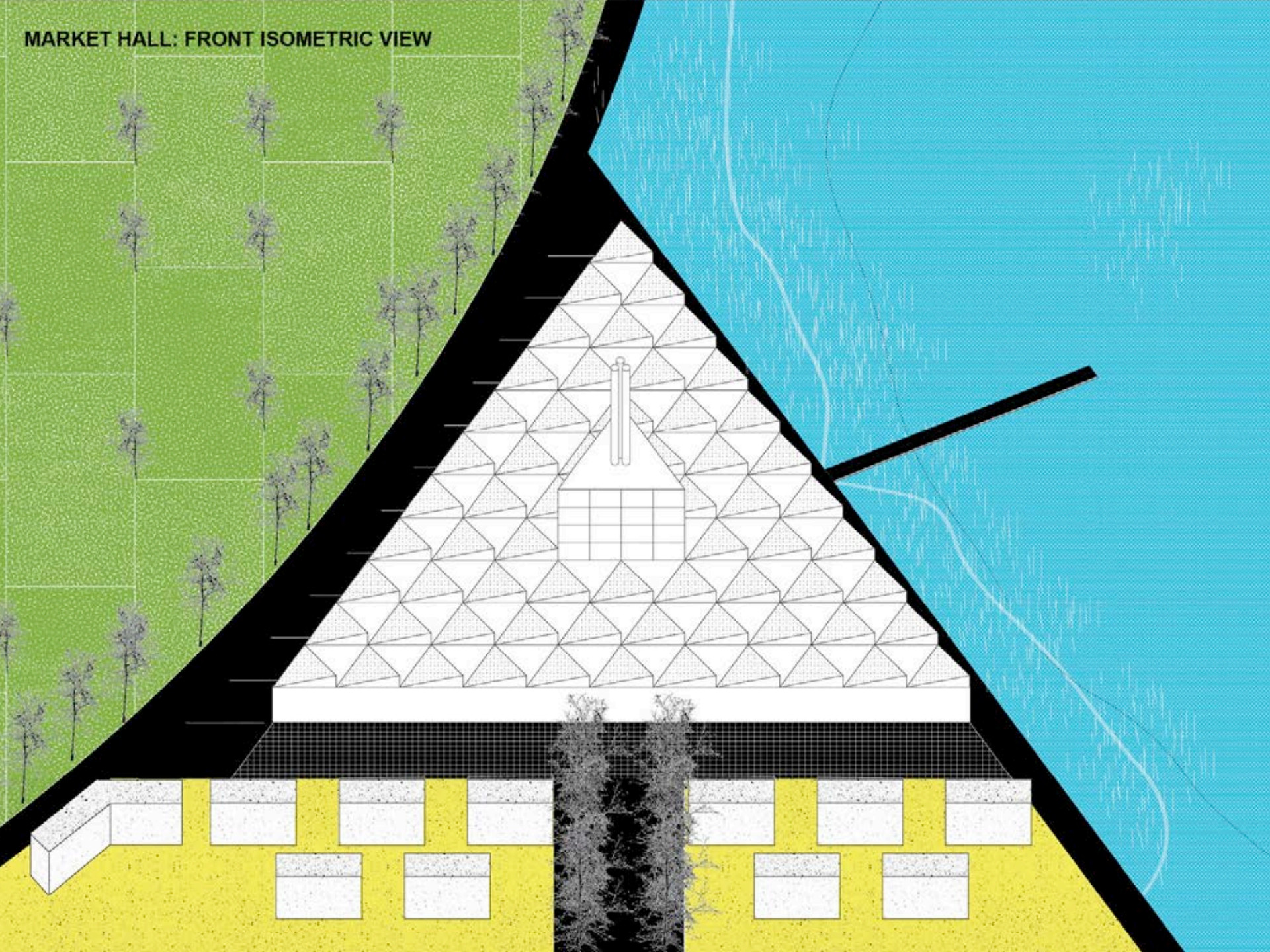


MARKET HALL

A MARKET HALL at the intersection of the lagoon, the city and fields of organic agriculture. Basically the hall would be shaped like a canopy allowing farmers and fishermen to sell their crops and their catch to residents and tourists underneath. In its optimum version it would be a building with several "sides". A "fields side" space for dealing with the harvest (auctioning, processing, packing and turning the organic waste into electricity by means of a biomass plant) A "city side" with restaurants offering local specialties. A "lagoon side" with rooms to process the fish and mussel harvest and a tourist information point selling tickets for cruises on the lagoon and trips to the Orikos archaeological site. And finally even a "roof side" with photovoltaic panels producing electricity.

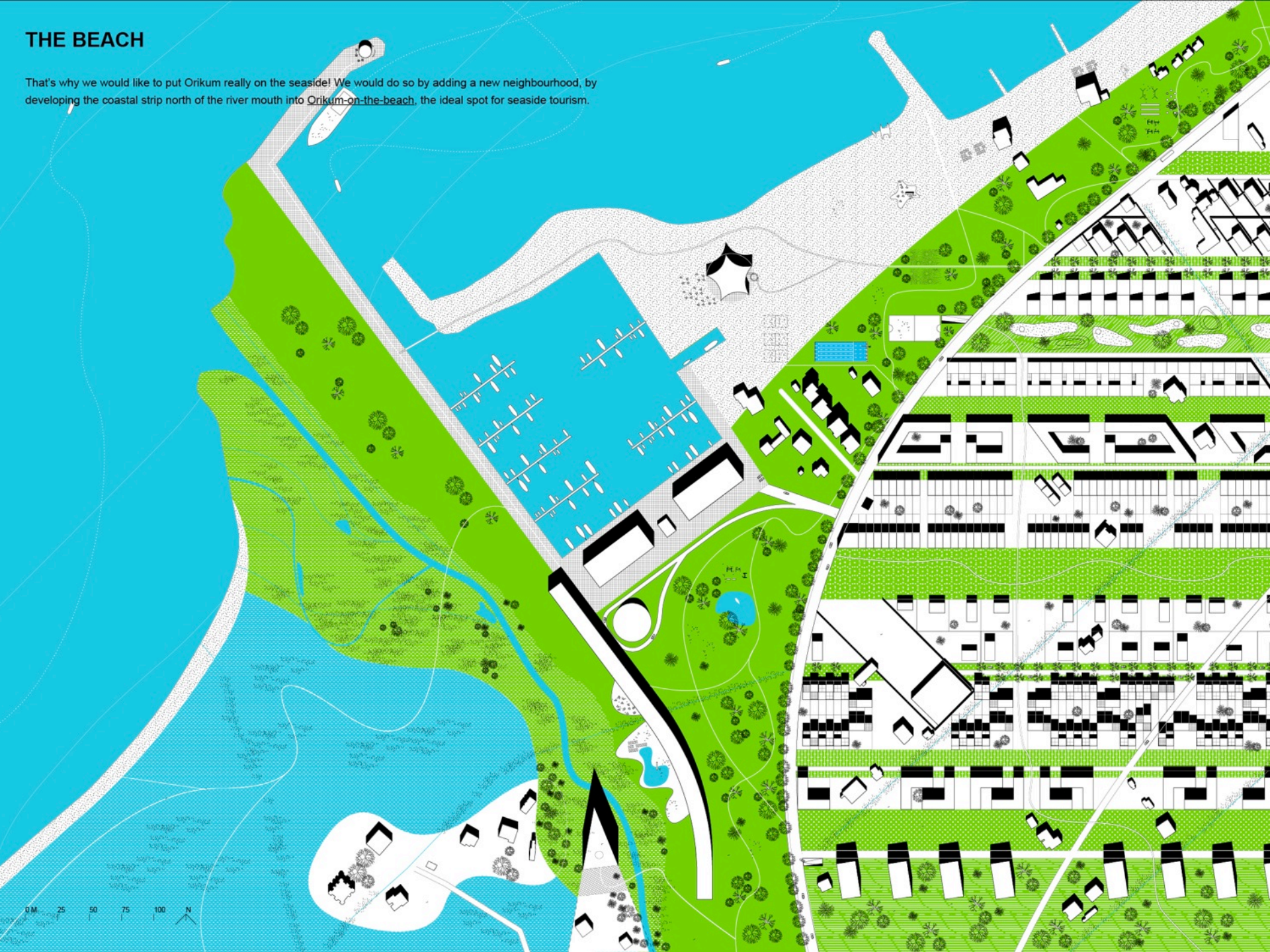


MARKET HALL: FRONT ISOMETRIC VIEW



THE BEACH

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RIVERSIDE VIEW

AN OBSERVATION TOWER on the triangle's northernmost corner closest to the sea. The existing main street would be extended until here as a promenade along the river. The observation tower would be great fun with its ice cream parlour, its climbing wall and a panoramic restaurant at the top offering *moules-frites* with samphire!



STRIPS

Built-up strips and open ones alternating consistently to allow sufficient public space and Greene.

Between the development and the sea we would conserve an area approximately 100 m wide for the beach, a long green park with pine trees and the road. The park would provide space for small-scale tourism infrastructures such as cafés, surf clubs, fitness businesses, *petanque* strips and sports fields – besides, maybe, some public buildings.



EMBRACING THE EXISTING

The EGG-SHAPED LAWN in the core's western part, it could embrace a park and playground, part of it situated in the city and part of it in the lagoon. A housing complex would cradle and define it.



PANORAMA

The BRIDGE taking the old coastal road to Vlorë on the east side of the intersection between the two main streets. We would like to turn it into a link between the river, the SH8 road, Orikum's centre and the Orikum beach. We would develop it as a bridge plaza, as a formal meeting-and-events square

