

# International Landscape Design Competition

## Tirana Park of Faith

Tirana, Albania

## Design Report

## Warp and Weft

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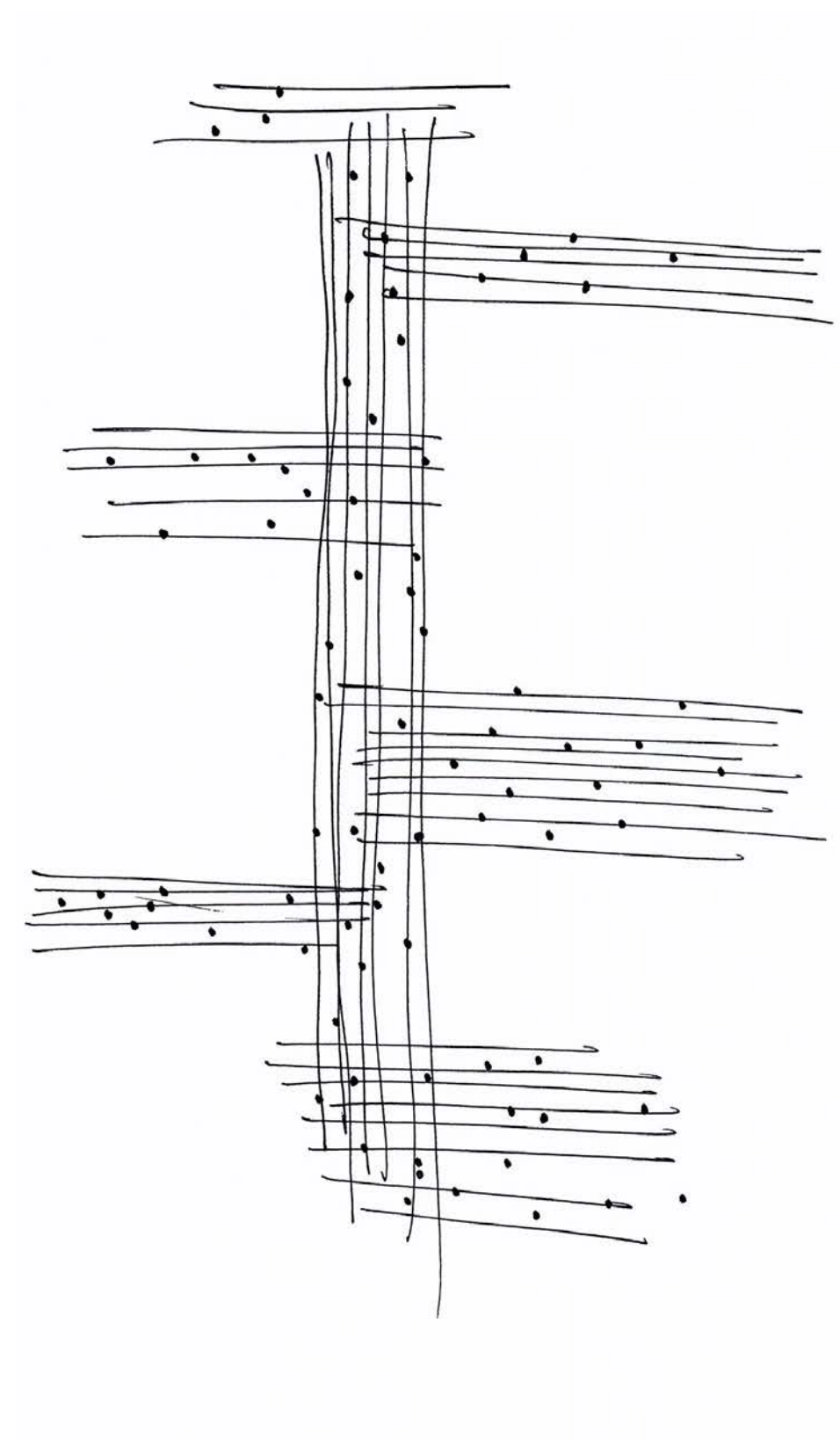
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## 1. Competition Urban site

The project area is in the center of the city of Tirana. The Boulevard is the urban axis, reference of the historical center of the city, which was developed and organized along the trace of the Decumanus and Cardo built according the plan of Armando Brasini '20s. Along and around the urban axle are placed the main historic buildings in Tirana, the public buildings more interesting and the main religious buildings. The project area includes public areas, footpaths and small gardens that stood on the Boulevard or that they are connected. Some green areas have a strong relationship with the significant architectural design of the same period and with the urban spaces characterized by other existing or future buildings fruit of the ongoing renovation of the city of Tirana.

### Reading of the competition site

The urban center of Tirana is characterized by a homogeneous tissue that finds its reference in the Boulevard, the tissue and its surroundings are on the design of a single plan. On this track the "architectural facts" built consistently, also volumetrically, had created an interesting set in which the architectural works, is readable for the quality of design and identity. This space reiterates a "slight monumentality" of the space and the building pattern, effect given from the withdrawals and misalignment of the buildings, in which the architectural emergencies are only the foreground of a fabric less important that represents the background.

### Void and Massive

The size of the Boulevard is a structural spine of urban historic center of the city, the alternation of massive and empty spaces designed as volumetric gardens give the whole picture of a "mediterranean monumentality" in which the masses do not play a primary role with respect to empty space, but have the same weight to define the real monumentality of the space.

Within this tissue is being made more recognizable replacements urban scale and height are characterized as "emergency" or "landmark" by establishing a comparison with historical and architectural facts instando a new relationship with the urban void of monumental dimension .

### Accretions

Over the edges, the margins of this recognizable constructions, the urban "background" tells the story of 100 years of urban history, social and political life of the country, also influenced by recent urban development and social changes of the last twenty years. The "normal" built space was hybridized, replaced and added with architectural accretions that make it very chaotic.

A kind of large canvas on which everyone wrote a piece of history, with edition and cancellations, rewrites.

### Order - disorder - Resilience

In this urban structure there are elements that have such evocative power, architectural quality, spacecraft, they were able to maintain a quality recognizable, despite the lack of an overall plan, that would organize the new and old interventions. Even the open space is the result of a complex relationship between space usage, and urban spaces of representation; between needs and identity.



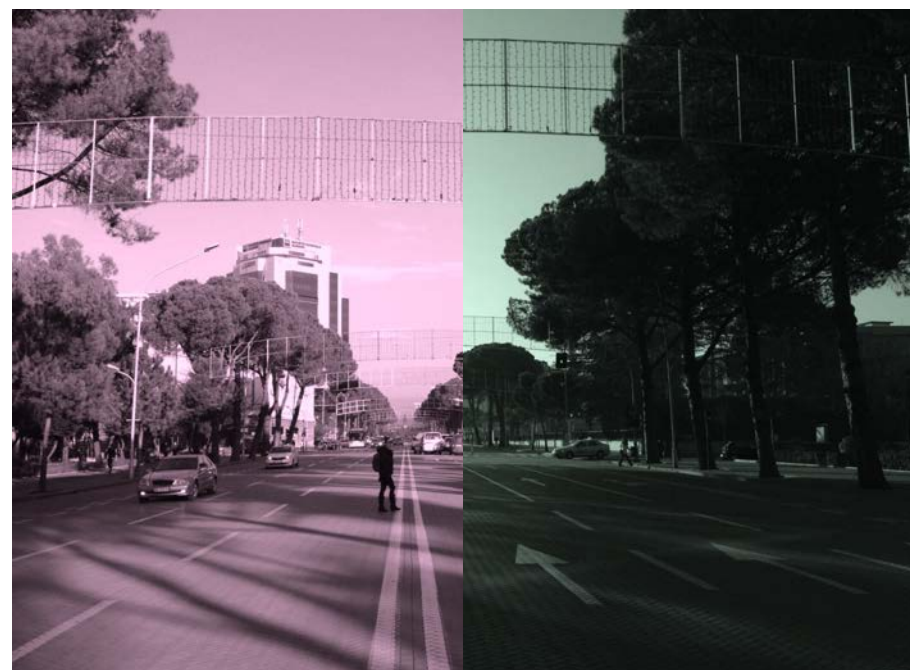


## Fortuity

The open spaces are planimetrically recognizable in a design that defines the edges, but inside are not drawn as if they belonged to a group, but only as parts connected with the rest of the urban space only to the street crossings. Inside the green spaces are organized as "neighborhood gardens" with an random organization where everyone finds its place without dialogue with the other parts. Also the types and the distribution of trees and the vegetational choices are only partly organized, while the shrub is absolutely random in type and in the distribution in space.

## 2 Design Approach and Design strategies.

The natural landscape, anthropized or urban is a **collective space**. If we look at the landscape design from this point of view there are many aspects in common with the architectural design which always has a significant role in telling the culture of a place, its evolution and continuity with the representation, physical and artistic, processing of ideas. The two disciplines, architecture and landscape design, are always in strong relationship and merged in the Urban Design. Any intervention in the public space is a small piece of this story. If we read this story with the stages of the timeline of history, in some chapters we will find episodes positive and negative, happy or sad, as in the life of every person. Being a collective representation of space, space itself, is used with shared rules but, normally, by individual activities. The approaches to the design and image forming of these spaces can be very different, rarely is the result of a collective action, normally is an individual or a group that interprets the collective needs and makes space



constructed properly. The image forming of this space can be according to different approaches and its representation techniques, its construction with articulated and more or less complex tools.

## Shot reverse shot

The landscape does not have a front and one behind in the mental images of those who cross it.

The crossing of the space brings with it images of the previous steps and at every moment those images are modified and back in front of us in a continuous **shot reverse shot**.

The crossing space is a continuous image overlays, the user between what was before and what will be, but the landscape contributes to unexpected shape of this situation being a dynamic shape.

The landscape brings together elements that are designed or processed with items not designed, unexpected points of view.

In the continuous variation between areas expected and unexpected spaces, it captures the next space and memory space.

Any action or approach that involves an elaboration of the space, first produces an image, which can be defined by contours more or less precise depending on the scale of intervention, the objectives of the project, strictly connected with the existing set of urban images.



## Design Strategies

### Continuity. A part as the whole.

The **continuity** of the landscape contains elements congruous and incongruous that have the same value. Both are part of the landscape and both constitute the memory of the same.

We can not think the public space, the landscape, without thinking three-dimensional space, which will be crossed by the user in constant visual and physical relationship with the space that has been through and is going to cross. But we can not also design the landscape without taking into account the fourth dimension: the time, entering in the project in many aspects. Designing a collective green space, it means to relate to living elements to the architecture of the buildings. Volumetric objects that change, changing the proportions, appearance, sometimes also by changing the relationship with the context, "objects" participating actively in the ecology of the planet.

In our proposal we thought to a single structure and flexible in which are found all the elements of the project that they are able to reconstruct the texture of a **recognizable text**.

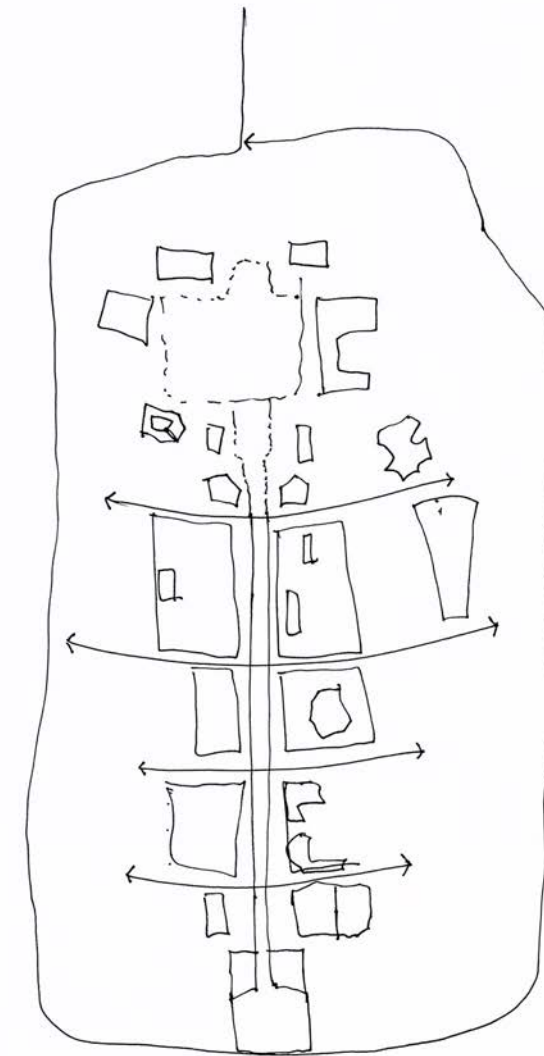
### Identity

The **identity** of the public space can not be built over the existing space while ignoring his memory and the physical parts of quality that we have received, but possibly starting a process where the archived space achieve a recognizable place where one's identity is represented as synthesis.

Space must then accept and not to exclude, to facilitate dialogue and at the same time be recognized, not set limits but allow different users to perceive the diversity of a structure that will accept either neutral but giving continuity.

### Flexibility- Feseability

The overall design arises as a flexible structure, **adaptable** to different designed landscape area being able to articulate with elements of furniture and vegetational types to different situations, accordingly to the character of the existing spaces.

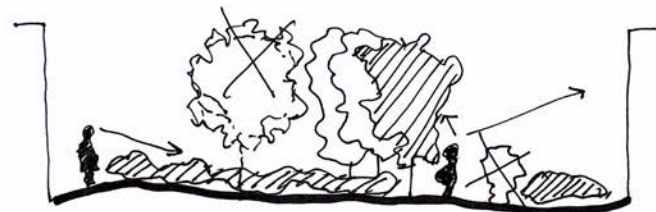
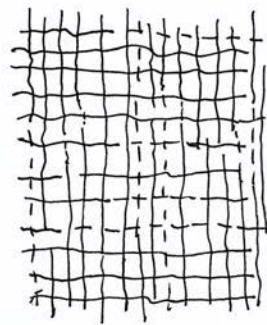




## Strategic Actions

The main actions of the project can be summarized as:

- Subtract the incongruous elements, both plant materials (isolated trees and shrubs not monumental blocks that give an effect of randomness to the space)
- Enhancement of plant elements that have monumental value
- Creation of a system that creates a continuity and the recognition of all design themes of the project (flooring, furniture, lighting, plant parts, drawing of plant forms)
- Addition of plant matter to spin that improve perception of the edges and the design margin that strengthens the relationship between urban solids and voids
- Build a dialogue between the various parties is that urban identity in which users can identify
- Propose a place for dialogue as a key place of the relationship between different religions and society
- Develop a mode of intervention that can be used also for the green spaces in the margin of the project areas.



## 3 Design Concept: Faith, religion and collective sharing.

The project, in addition to defining the strategies and actions, is based on the idea that to build a collective space where the **welcoming society**, including both religious and civil, can recognize themselves, we need to work on the structure, on the **warp and the weft**, of the space. At the same time consider the existing space as a text in which the missing parts, subtracted and added

to be interpreted, and perhaps add or structured when appears incomplete. **The text is written in the visual language of things.** The concept of 'text' is used in the sense specifically semiotic; [...]

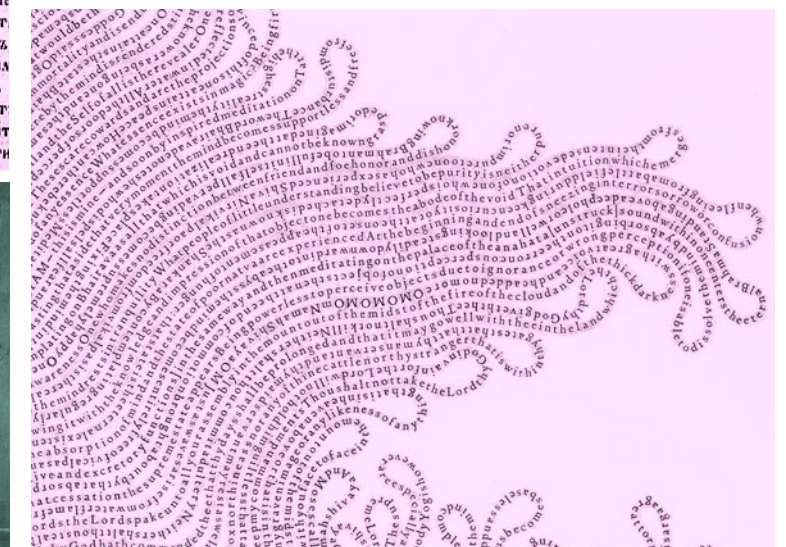
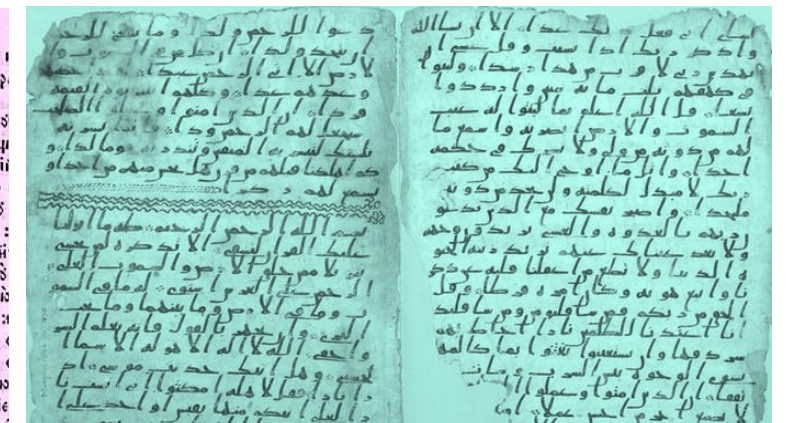
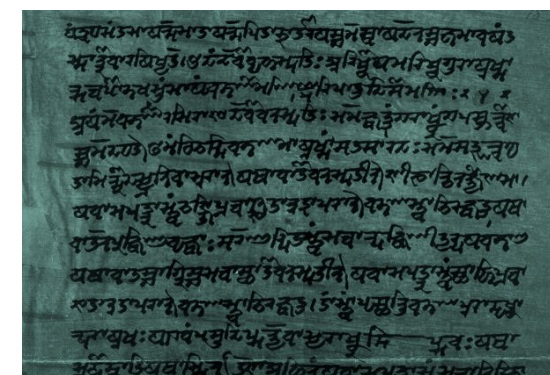
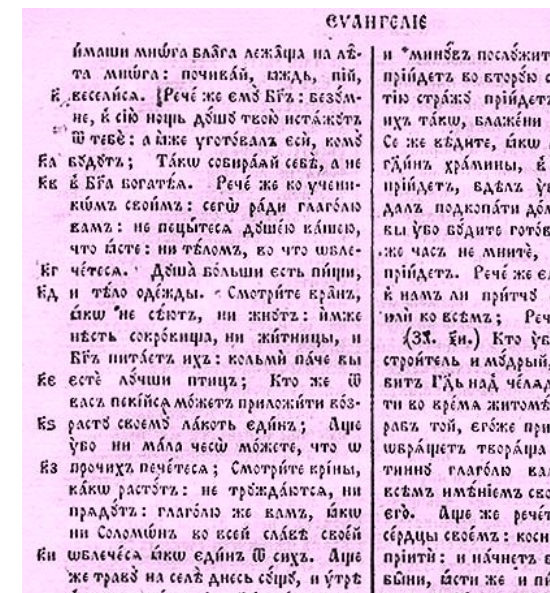
It is not applied only to messages in natural language, but also to any vehicle of global significance ('text'), it is a ritual, a work of fine art or a musical composition (Lotman : 2006, 114).

## The text as a common basis.

The **text** is also an important reference in the history of religions, with texts and words will acknowledge all religions and are found in many common traits and shared. Only knowledge and **dialogue** enables the reception of both, recognizing the differences but also recognize the basics in common.

The collective space is also a continuous space, in which the visual elements are important. We have defined some common symbolic elements that characterize all the space: the **water**, the **text**, the **word**.

The same **text "deleted"** wants to tell the absence of that which characterized the Albanian history.

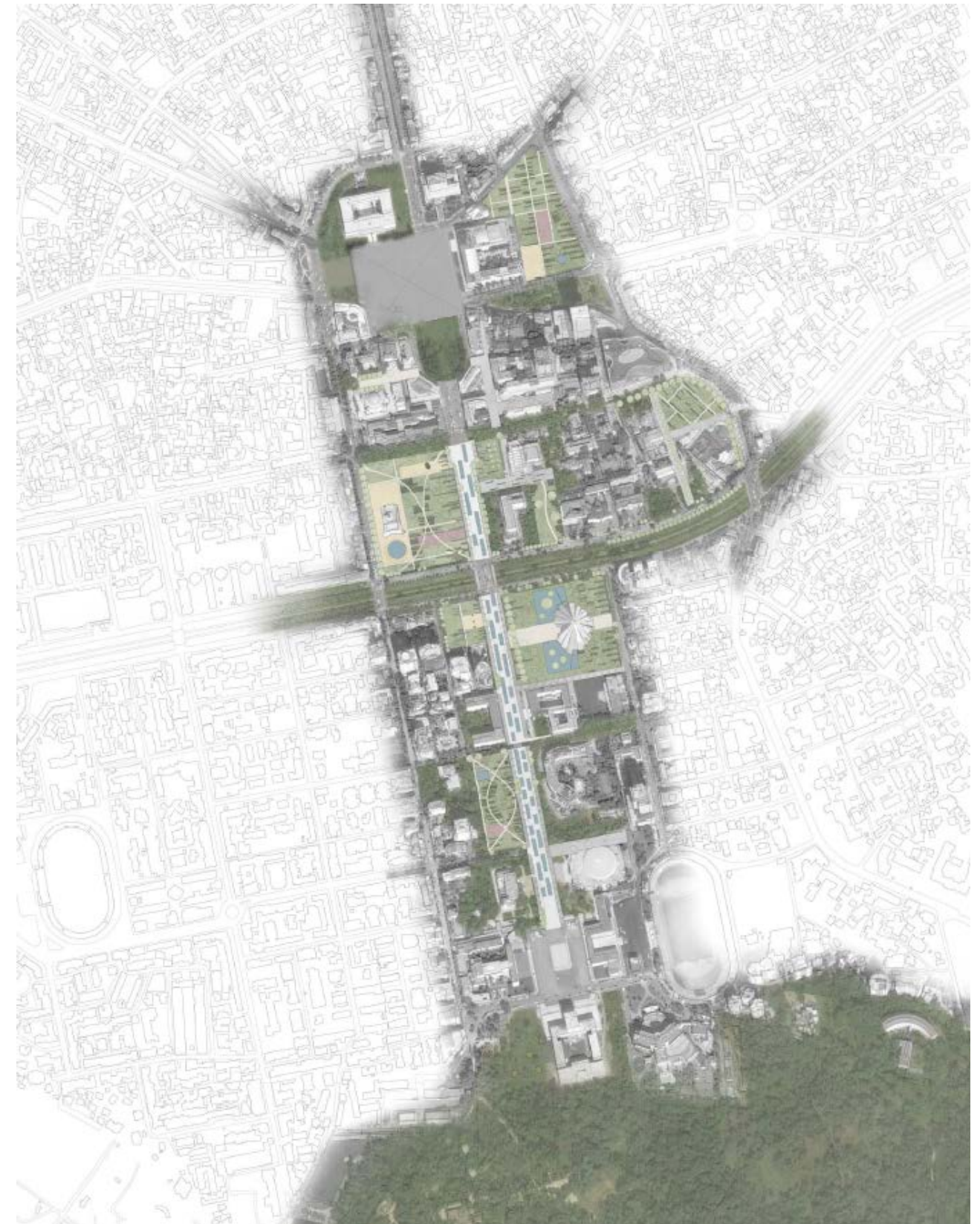




Text without words as a decorative element, as writing is used in decorative pieces to complete the continuity.



(Boetti)





#### 4 Public Realm e private transport.

The project changes the way that use the axe of the Boulevard. The proposal focuses on the **future of the pedestrian Boulevard** with a flexible geometry, in which the pattern of fountains may have an alternate operation in time allowing the accesses to the various existing buildings. This would generate the center of Tirana as a large public realm and pedestrian areas where vehicular traffic is usually allowed to service vehicles and to authorized. The hypothesis, in a configuration of possible scenarios, would have conditions of use very different from totally pedestrian access with service to totally vehicular turning on and off of the areas of the Boulevard to private transport. Among the various possible configurations, the total pedestrianization would create an extension of the existing gardens located on the edge creating a large public realm and the continuity of collective space and greater permeability between the areas on either side of Boulevard.



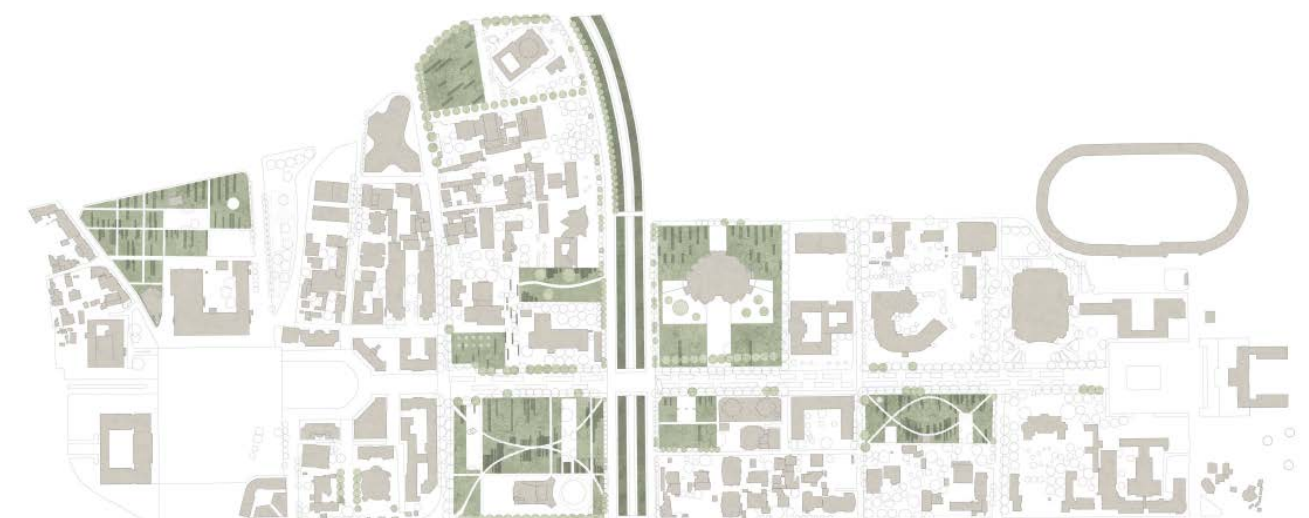
Different scenarios of use of the Boulevard per zones (from pedestrian to- public-private-service traffic)



waterscape



hardscape



green scape



## 5 Martyr's Boulevard.

The **Boulevard becomes a collective space** where the private transport are allowed but regulated by a series of **scenarios** of use for a prevailing pedestrian use. The central area will be characterized by the presence of fountains at floor level by building a new landscape in which the citizens, understood as city users, are the main protagonist.

The shape and positioning of the jets flush in the street pavement will allow the passage of public transport beside of the walkway.

The existing rows of Pinus Pinea will be retained with a protective element of the root system placed in the existing pavement.

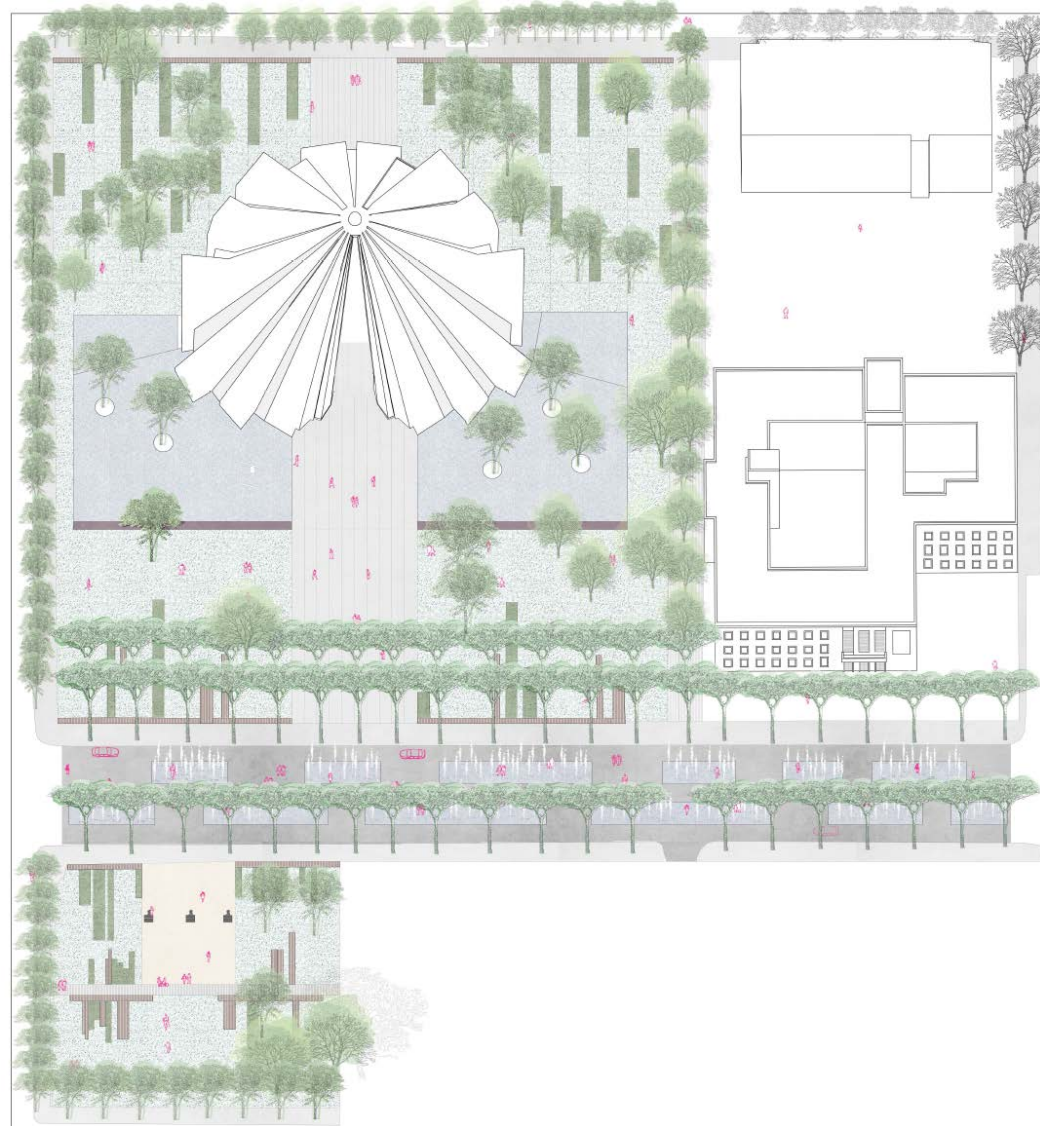


The garden of Independence



The garden of Arts and the Lana river





## 6 The House of the Dialogue.

The proposed use of the building of the Pyramid is a new symbolic **place of dialogue**, a house of dialogue in which people of different faiths can find a common place in which to recognize, a place of meditation.

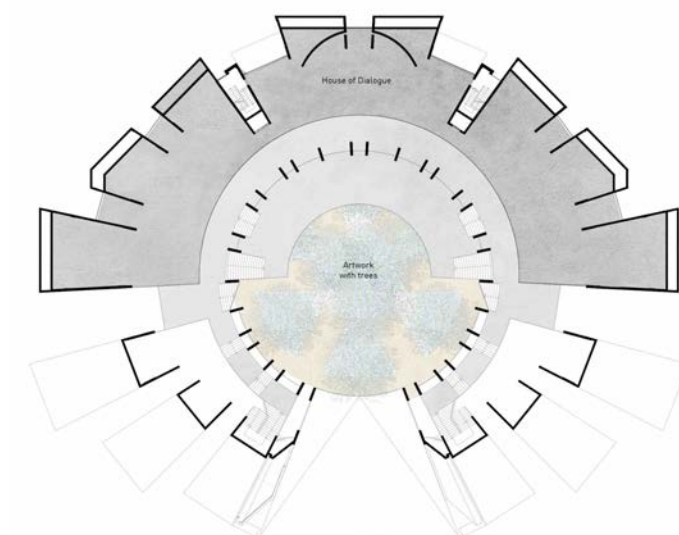
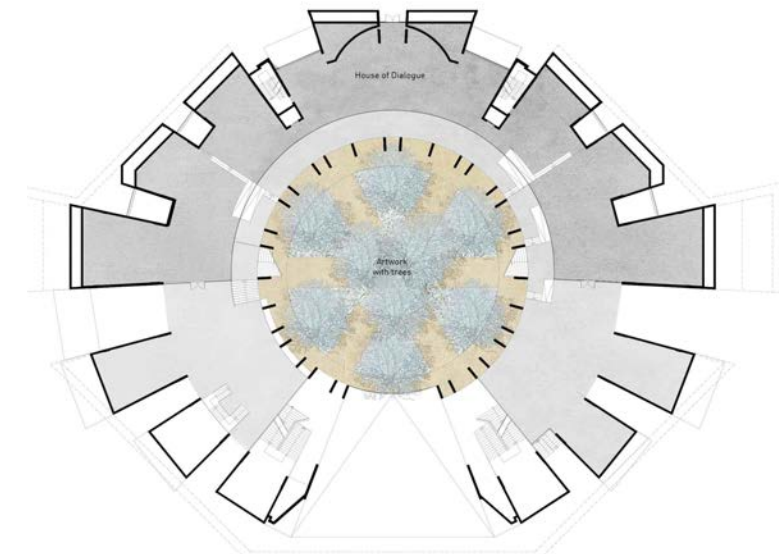
To share with the sloping roof windows will be removed, leaving the original structure as a **metaphoric structure** that turns from a closed architecture to an open place, as part of the landscape. At the center of the building it will be hosted an art installation with a natural theme that can accommodate visitors who will find a space of silence and greater intimacy.

The part of the building with vertical structures will host the enclosed spaces used by the artistic, religious, social, Associations that can freely will arrange these spaces as a place identifier of dialogue between people, understood as civic value.

The landscaping outside consists of two main areas: a green transition and connection to the Boulevard where are positioned arce shrubs and a new row of Pinus Alephensis to strengthen the relationship with the margin; and a water tank.

The raised water basin becomes the base of the pyramid along the surrounding of the sides with the sloping roof reaching to the edge of the interior space. The tank will not have water features and represents a break before entering the interior space. The existing bell is be conserved.

In the external vertical walls of the tank are placed the **texts** of the **Holy Books** chosen according to a project to define. The walls of the water basin leading to the entrance of the pyramid have **erased texts** in the memory of the historical Albania past of absence of the admitted religious words, leaving only a few words that become a form of resilience of the **religious faith** of the Albanian people.



## 7 The gardens.

The grounds are made with a common design in which the vegetation parts are alternated with equipped parts, benches with back, benches and passages, which are able to develop **relationship spaces** effective for different levels of user. Each garden has been identified in the project according to a own characteristic already present or in relation to the main architecture with which it relates more.

The characteristic of existing gardens is to give a confused feeling though hospitable, basically every garden is designed in its own right without a common criteria except to a few choice that dates back to the original plan.

The project proposal focuses on the shrubs level that is what more comes into strong **visual relationship with the users** and gives a great decorum.

The vegetation choices in the project were done following three criteria:

a) the **shape** and distribution:

- The insertion of trees to reinforce or complete the design of the margins;
- Grouping of shrubs existing in the overall design;
- Inclusion of new species.

b) **Hardiness zones** of Tirana

c) quote and presence of the plant essences in the **Holy Books**.

There are several mix of plants, shrubs and flowers, arranged by stripes that run and come together to create a dynamic image and always different but common in various areas.

The mix of plant species identified are structured to provide a basis on which to place other plant essences according to a common rule:

mix 1: Pennisetum Setaceum + Gaura Lindheimeri

mix 2: Rosa Canina + Lavandula angustifolia

mix 3: Spartium Juniceum + Retama Raetam

mix 4: Miscanthus Sinensis + Cistus Albanicus + Cistus Creticus + Mirtus Communis

mix 6: Perovskia + Verbena Bonariensis

mix 7 | bench: Pennisetum setaceum + Allium Aflutuense + Salvia Pratensis + Achillea Millefolium + Perovskia + Verbena Bonariensis + Miscanthus Sinensis "Gracillum" + Gaura

mix 8 | Lana river: Cornus mas + cornus Florida + Spartium Junceum + Retama Raetam + Arundo Donax + Typha Latifolia + Juncus Subnodulosus + Carex Buekii + Iris Pseudacorus + Lilium Martagon + Nerium Oleander

mix 9 | Aromatic garden: Lavandula agustifolia + Verbena Bonariensis + Mytus Communis + Rosa canina + Salvia officinalis + Allium Aflatuense + Anethum Graveolens + Papaver Rhoeas



Selection of plants





Trees:

Ceratonia Siliqua

Cercis Siliquastrum

Olea Europea

Phoenix Canariensis

Phoenix Dactylifera

Pinus Halepensis

Platanus Orientalis

Quercus Ilex

Salix Alba



The single green spaces accommodate the following mix:

**Garden of Memory:** mix7 + mix 5 + Platanus Orientalis

**Garden of Independence:** mix1 + mix 4 + mix 7 + mix 3 + mix 2 + Cercis Siliquastrum

**Garden of Arts and Lana River:** Phoenix Dactylifera + Phoenix Canariensis + Ceratonia siliqua +

mix 4 | Lana river: Cornus mas + cornus Florida + Spartium Junceum + Retama Raetam + Arundo

Donax + Typha Latifolia + Juncus Subnodulosus + Carex Buekii + Iris Pseudacorus + Lilium

Martagon + Nerium Oleander + Salix Alba

**Garden of Aromatic and medicinal plants:** mix 9

**Garden of the House of Dialogue:** mix 7+ mix 1 + mix 3 + Pinus Halepensis

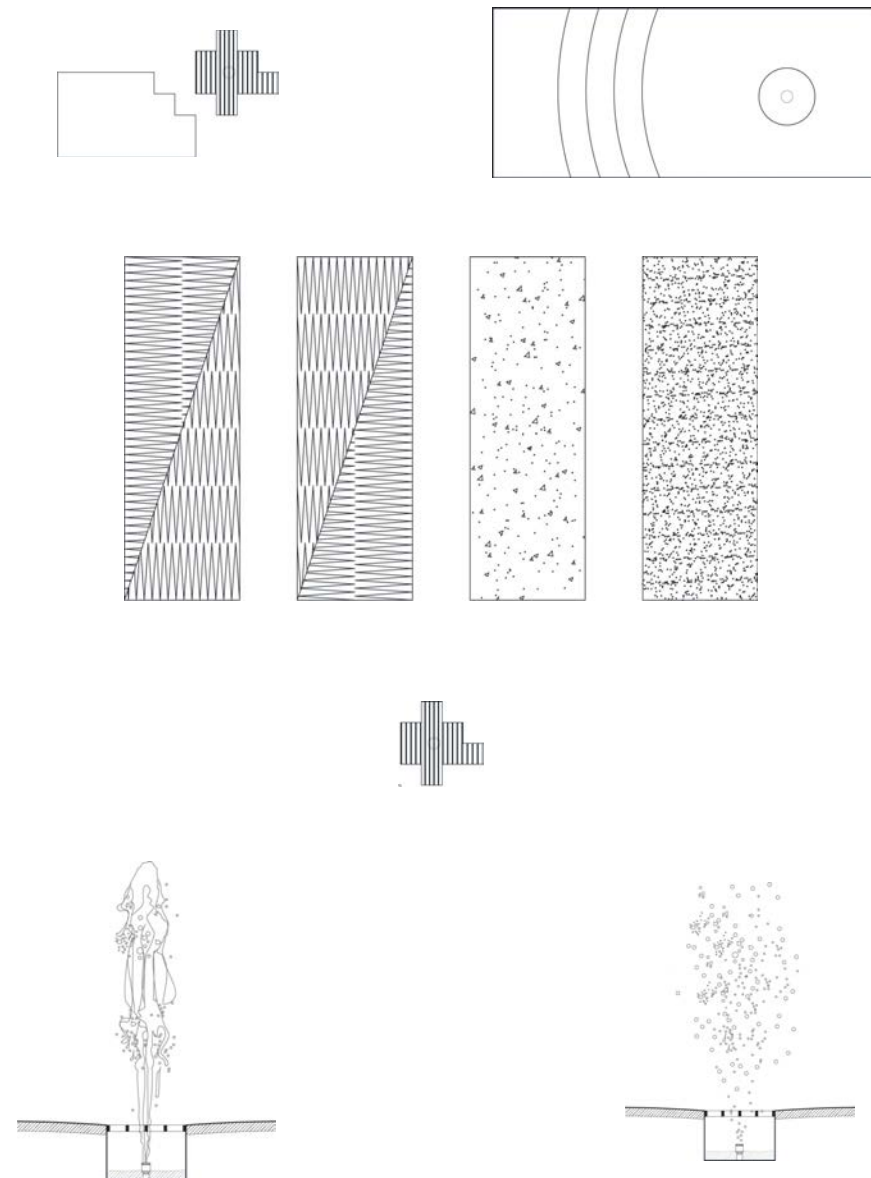
The pathways within the gardens are built on geometries related to the connections with the outside or as a path that enhances the reading of the green space designed.

## 8. Physical objects landscape.

### Flooring

The project includes different floorings according to the areas and **type of use**. Within the gardens there is a compact floor type Levocell that while having the compactness of the concrete is permeable to water. The paving of the pedestrian existing external gardens are previewed with large Active concrete slabs “photocatalytic concrete” (which absorbs atmospheric polluting) with a graphic decoration that repeats the concept of text without the words. Within the gardens are planned playgrounds or open areas made of a natural material such as calcestre (compacted gravel).

The existing sidewalks of the Boulevard in porphyry blocks are retained and will be integrated with a modular elements with decorative inserts of the same shape used in the project of Skanderbeg Square. The paving of the Boulevard is planned in stone with integrated metal inserts and grids recovery water of the fountains.

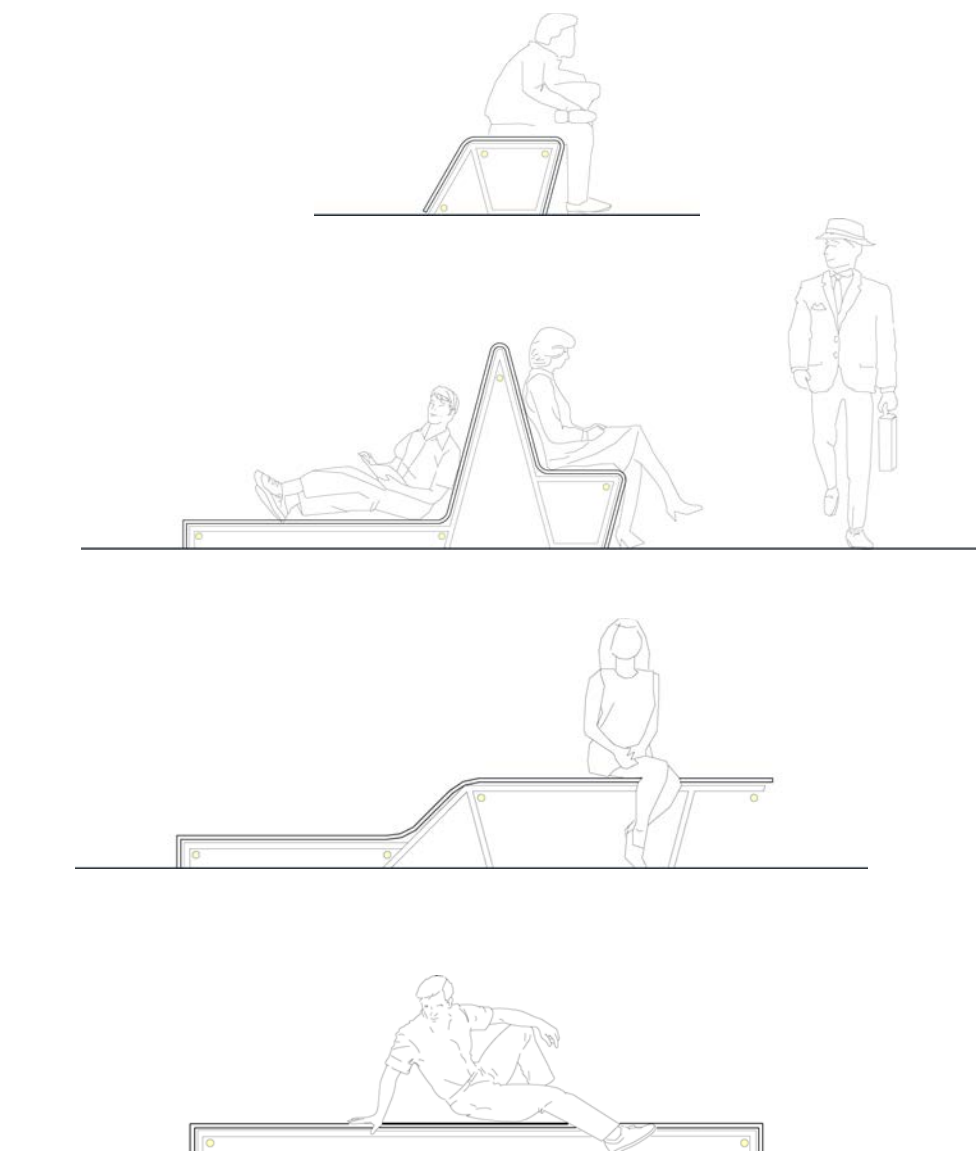


### Furnishings

The system of the furniture is modular and is made of two types: a session monolithic concrete with marble gravel for garden areas and the other in wooden strips for the edges of the gardens.

The furniture system with strips of wood is a **modular system** combinable with different options and in which the elements configured and suggest different **patterns of use**. The interruption of the modules for the accesses to the gardens are in correspondence of the paths or as free access points is made with a platform of the same material and the same prefabricated system.

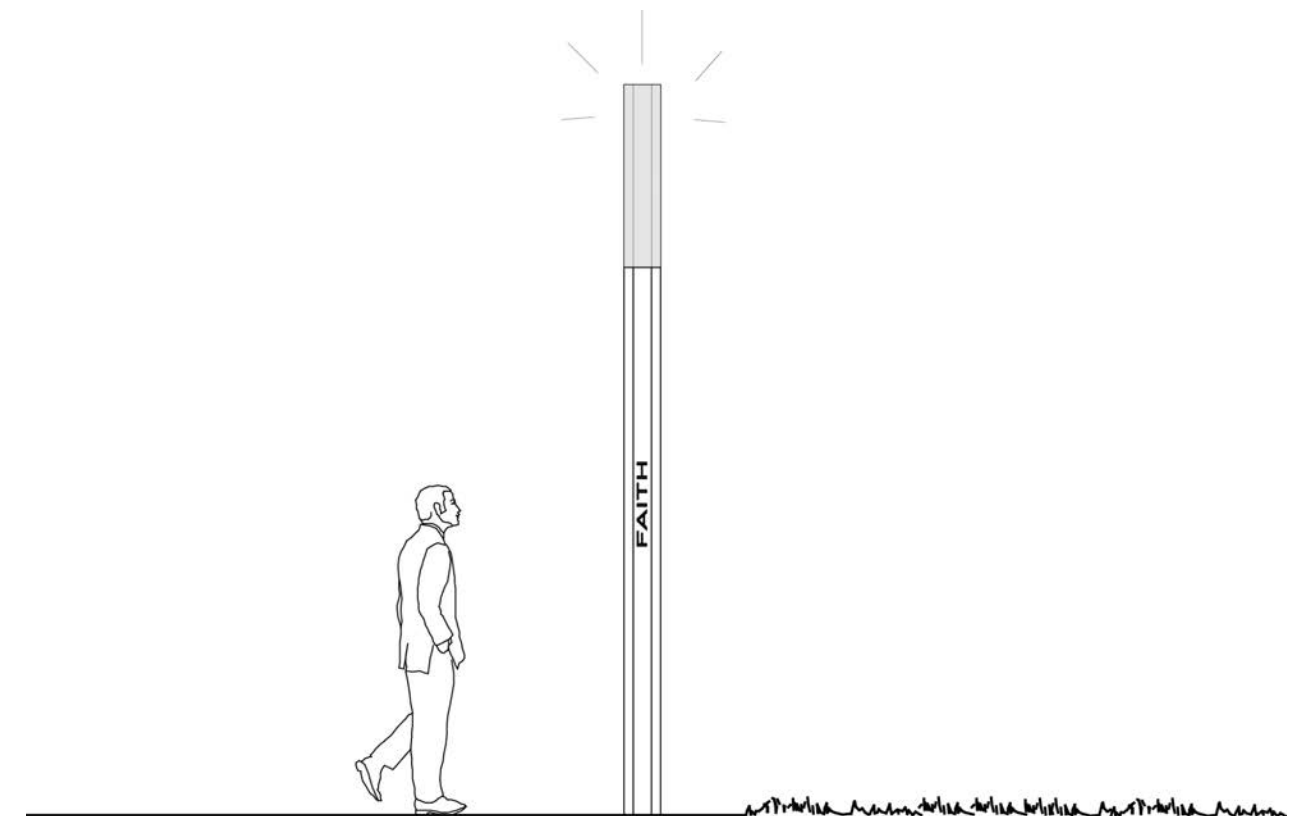
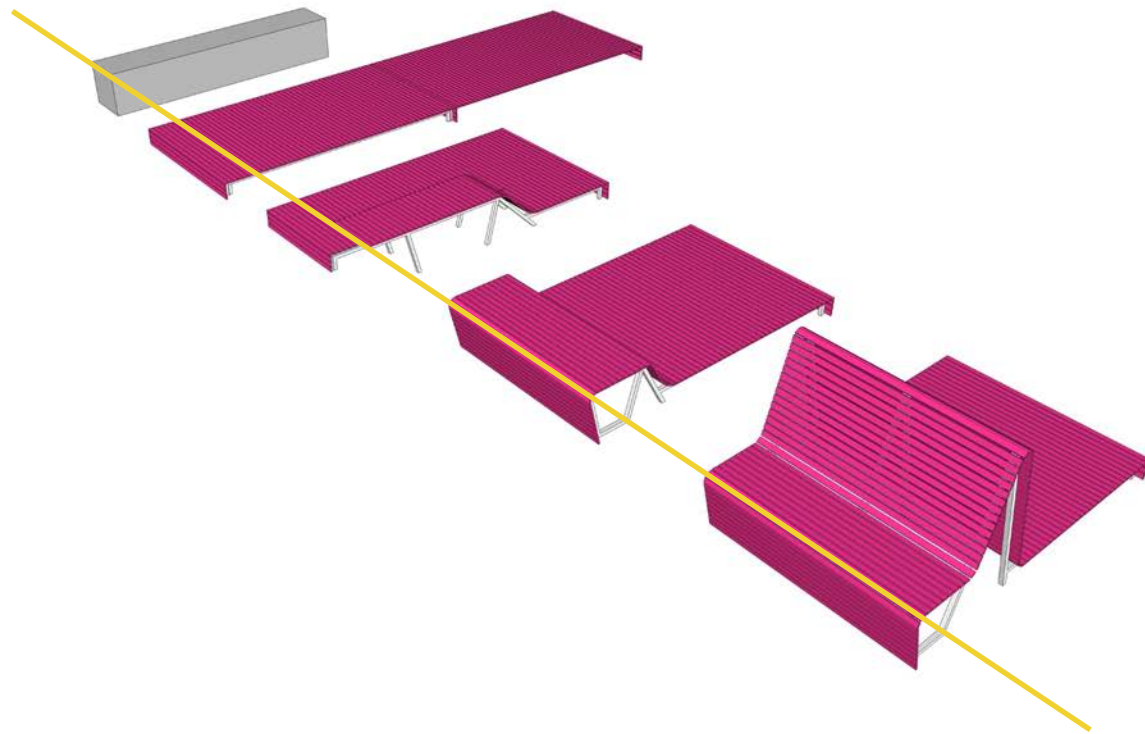
The system of modular furniture in wood strips will be mainly in the edge of the gardens to the Boulevard. The system features an internal LED light that will configure the system as a continuous bright object that will characterize mainly the Boulevard.

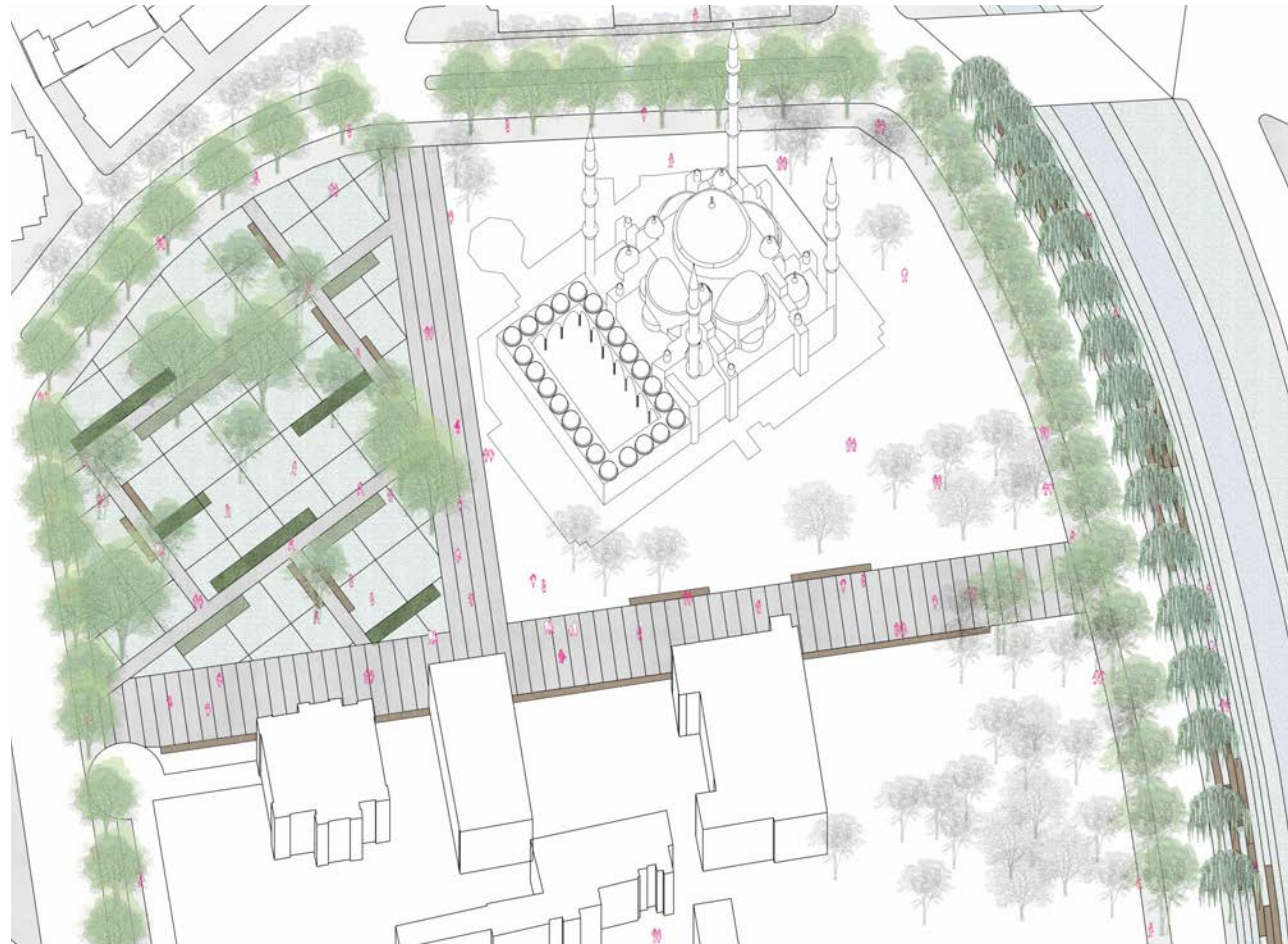




## Lighting

Lighting of the gardens is also assigned a value more than its function. **Bright objects** that will give adequate light level in the gardens of the vertical elements that will be engraved with a meaningful word taken from **Holy Books**. The timely appearance of the lighting elements is used to "spread" the **word** in the urban context and the gardens and to remind to urban users, through a series of words, the meaning of coexistence and harmony.





The Garden of Aromatic plants

## 9. Action Plan.

It is conceivable work phases where the gardens and its margins can be made for single steps up to the completion of the works on the Boulevard. A hypothesis might be:

Step 1: Gardens; also divided into 5 sub phases

Step 2: Works of lighting, fountains and furnishings.

Step 3: Home dialogue construction.

Step 4: Construction of fountains and paving of the Boulevard.

Step 5: integration of decorative paving of the sidewalks of the Boulevard.

## 10 Cost estimation.

The estimated cost of the works is based on the average cost for the parametric estimation of green spaces and pedestrian areas with similar materials and plant essences.

The amount allocated for the works relating to the areas identified in the project (solid lines of the map competition brief) is approximately of 76,000 m2 and 25,000 m2 of Boulevard:

- Green areas and pathways: 224 mil LEK
- Pavings: 70 mil LEK
- Fountains: 75 mil LEK
- Boulevard, paving and fountains, furnishing. lightings: 350 mil LEK



The garden of Memory



