

DESIGN COMPETITION

REVITALIZING SPLAIUL UNIRII IN THE MĂRĂȘEȘTI - TIMPURI NOI - MIHAI BRAVU AREA

JURY REPORT

DATE: AUGUST 21-23, 2020

PLACE: "ION MINCU" UNIVERSITY OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM

1. JURY

Full members:

Arh. arch. Jette Cathrin Hopp
Landscape arch. Victor Dijkshoorn
Arch. Marius Cătălin Moga
Landscape arch. Elisabeta Dobrescu
Arch. Mihai Vărzan

Alternate members:

Arch. Alexandru Axinte

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE JURY

For objective reasons, arch. Cristina Enache, alternate member of the Jury, could not attend the Jury sessions. All the other Jury members were present during the jury sessions. The members voted unanimously for Ms. Arch. Jette Cathrin Hopp as President of the Jury.

The following persons were present next to the jury, as:

- Professional advisor arch. Raluca Vișinescu,
- President of the Technical Committee, arch. Mirona Crăciun.
- Jury Secretary, arch. Ilinca Pop.

There were **12** projects submitted in the competition. One project exceeded the deadline and was rejected by the Reception secretariat.

In the Technical Committee procedure entered **11** projects.

The president of the Technical Committee presented to the jury the Technical committee Report, which contained the check of the formal conditions from the brief and the competition rules. The Technical Committee notified the jury that the project with the competition number **59** does not present the Financial Proposal and recommended it for disqualification according to the Competition Rules. The jury unanimously decided to disqualify the project number **59**.

Thus **10** projects were accepted in the Jury sessions.

3. AWARD CRITERIA

The maximum score is 100 points.

A. MEETING THE FUNCTIONAL-URBANISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL NEEDS - 50%

of the final evaluation (maximum 50 points)

The compliance with the minimum requirements required by the competition brief is evaluated on a scale from 1 to 50.

It is calculated by the arithmetic mean of the points awarded by the jury for the following aspects:

A1. Meeting the functional criteria in relation to the city - maximum 20 points

Functional-urbanistic logic and argumentation of the general concept for the *study area*.

The following will be taken into account:

- connection with the city - maximum 10 points
- The proposed interventions and functions - maximum 10 points

A2. Meeting the functional criteria in the detailing of the solution - maximum 10 points

The functional-urbanistic logic and the argumentation of the concept for the *area of detail*.

The following will be taken into account:

- the proposed spatial solutions - maximum 5 points
- detailed solutions - maximum 5 points

A3. Acknowledgement of the competitor's ability to implement the proposed project through the quality and the clarity of the ideas exposed in the proposal - maximum 5 points

A4. Ecological criterion - maximum 5 points

The diversity of the proposed green spaces and their ability to provide a biotope for various species of plants, insects and birds.

A5. A6 Financial criterion - maximum 10 points

Fitting in the maximum cost estimate indicated in the competition documentation. - Maximum 5 points

The rationality and sustainability of the functional spatial solution in relation to the estimated price. – maximum 5 points

Calculation algorithm for point A

$$A = A1 + A2 + A3 + A4 + A5 + A6 = 20 + 10 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 5 = \text{maximum 50 points}$$

B. ADDED ARCHITECTURAL-ARTISTIC VALUE OF THE PROPOSED INTERVENTION

– 50% of the final evaluation (maximum 50 points)

The architectural-artistic value of the proposed solution is evaluated on a scale from 1 to 50.

It is calculated by the arithmetic mean of the points awarded by the jury for the following aspects:

B1. The character of the area and the general atmosphere of the intervention maximum 20 points

The overall quality of the intervention, the proposed ambiance, the specific design solutions that highlight the particularities of the Splaiul Unirii will be highlighted. Solutions that avoid over-design and intervene with discretion will be appreciated to highlight existing strengths.

B2. Architectural criterion – maximum 10 points

The integration of the project, the way it is related to the neighboring built fund and the way in which the existing constructive resolutions are emphasized will be pointed out.

B3. Architectural-landscape criterion– maximum 20 points

Competitors should point out the way of relating to the existing plant fund and the way in which the specific positioning of the site analysed from an ecological point of view is capitalized in the project. The concepts of planting and exploitation must also be pointed out.

Calculation algorithm for point B

$B = B1 + B2 + B3 = \text{maximum } 50 \text{ points}$

Calculation algorithm for final evaluation (maximum 100 points)

$A + B = 50 + 50 = \text{maximum } 100$

4. JURY SESSION – WORKING METHODOLOGY

The jury established the following working method:

The working sessions of the Jury were preceded by a visit to the competition site and a presentation of the Brief by the Professional Advisor of the competition, architect Raluca Vișinescu. The particularities of the site were pointed out in relation to the requirements of the Brief. It was agreed that the selection of projects should be done through several rounds of project analysis.

Round I

The Jury individually analyzed the projects, in a first round, based on the award criteria. The projects' appreciations were then collectively discussed. An intermediary ranking was made, and as a result, the last four projects were eliminated from the second round of project analysis.

The projects selected after the first round to go further were: **50, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58.**

Round II

The Jury continued by analyzing the qualities of each project that successfully passed the first round.

In the second round of evaluation, the Jury reviewed the six remaining projects, based on the award criteria. The general vision of the projects, as well as the way in which the details of the project were approached, were both discussed by the jury members. Following this shared analysis, three projects were eliminated in this round.

The projects selected for Round III were: **53, 54 and 58.**

Round III

The first three projects were thoroughly analyzed in order to establish the final ranking and decide the winner of the competition. For this endeavor, the award criteria as well as the requirements stated in the competition Brief, were both taken into consideration. The main aim was to determine which of the projects has the highest potential for implementation.

Round IV – Prize awarding

The jury decided:

The **Ist prize**, consisting in the design contract with an estimated value of 180.000 RON no VAT included, was awarded to **project number 58.**

The **IInd prize**, in the amount of 33.613,44 RON, was awarded to **project number 54.**

The **IIIrd prize**, in the amount of 18.907,56 RON, was awarded to **project number 53.**

5. STATEMENT OF THE JURY

This is the first collaboration between the Bucharest Sector 3 City Hall, the Bucharest Branch of the Romanian Order of Architects and the Romanian Order of Architects. Together they decided to organize an international design competition for public spaces in Bucharest. The subject of the competition is the Rehabilitation and revitalization of Splaiul Unirii in Mărășești – Timpuri Noi – Mihai Bravu area.

We wish to express our appreciation for the excellent collaboration between the Romanian Order of Architects and the Bucharest Municipality, we really have trust that this will be a guarantee of obtaining high quality solutions. We hope this will be a fantastic start of future design competitions in the field of urbanism, architecture and landscape architecture.

The composition of the jury, consisting of architects and landscape architects belonging to different generations, nationalities, specialties and schools of thought, has generated a complex and integrated approach to the judging process.

Competition goal

The main objective of the competition is to select the best concept for the design of Splaiul Unirii in the area between the Marasesti Bridge and the Mihai Bravu Bridge, in order to create a vibrant public space that is designed for the growing number of users and provides an attractive context for high-quality urban development of the area.

For all members of the jury it was important to understand the contextual point of departure for the competition, as the dominant direction of the last half-century in the urban planning of Bucharest, imposing large-scale interventions on the city that has led to public perception that only large-scale projects are able to repair the unpleasant aspects or the non-functional situations of Bucharest. On the contrary, the aim of this competition was to address a major challenge facing the city through small-scale interventions, which nevertheless manage to restore the organicity of the connections in the local urban context.

In this respect, the competitors were encouraged to reflect on the natural-anthropoc relationship that the current form of the river generates, through solutions that balance both elements of history, including recent history, as well as innovative technical solutions from the ecological management perspective of water or introducing the theme of biodiversity and considering the river as a possible ecological corridor.

The design proposal must address two levels: the specific site of the close intervention (detail area) and at the same time function as a pilot project that demonstrates the potential of the larger implementation (study area).

The jury's assignment is to ensure the quality of design in responsibility towards society and our environment and to sharpen public awareness of high-quality design thereby setting forward-thinking standards in architectural and urban development.

1. Site

The two kilometers of Dâmbovița river that are included in the competition are in between two major urban landmarks. One is a popular commercial riverfront filled with restaurants and terraces (Mărășești bridge). At the other end is a natural treasure, Delta Văcărești. This segment of the river is a connector between these two, narrow but with a potential to develop into a green corridor. Transversal connections are scarce and this could be better improved by placing strategic pedestrian bridges.

2. The scale of interventions

The city scale is an opportunity to link the area of the river to the urban structure, to better connect the neighborhoods and points of interest. The river should not be a limit anymore on one hand, and it also has to be an attractive place that draws attention to it. The detail scale is about how we perceive the river, as you get closer to it, and what opportunities are here to enhance the direct relation with the river banks.

3. The users

Due to its lengths, the people will use this segment for recreation and sport, but it can also be a place to explore by foot, walking along the river. Fishermen are a constant presence here and the sound of the river cascades is an opportunity to stay and relax by the water.

4. Phases of implementation

The narrow area can be developed in two phases. First phase, simpler and smaller in scale, could be a trigger for the second phase, larger and with more functional content and urban connections.

5. Ecological landscape

Transforming the city and the way we live in it can be achieved through the relations that the inhabitants have with the ecological space and the presence of the water. Along this green-blue corridor, spaces carrying a high ecological and landscape potential can be identified, while this competition can 'reclaim' and support diverse activities by the water, taken as a catalyst of urban life.

The provocation is even greater as the space on the riverbank which can support classical plantations (on the ground) is very small, thus the winning proposal needs to simplify the planting system, completing the landscape design in a unified and innovative way.

The proposals should bring innovation in the landscape design, detail the solution for species selection and come up with sustainable proposals through the compositions of species and the vegetal layout of different areas (riverbank, river edge, street).

To clearly relate the statement of the jury with the analysis of the projects, this report structures the critical evaluation on a summary and recommendations for each competition proposal.

6. FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Project no. 58 – First Prize

Jury Feedback

The proposal bases its intervention on a comprehensive analysis of the urban fabric of Bucharest, in order to develop a contextual logic derived from the larger city context, the macro level, and to apply the findings to the micro level of the competition area. The Dambovită river is far from its potential as a generator for urban activities. The proposal offers two focused interventions to resolve the lack of urban qualities. To maximize the number of pedestrian connections across the river and to transform the concrete river banks into a vivid ecosystem, a vertical garden.

The bridges are placed in strategic positions and dimensioned to foster social interaction as public outdoor scenes for spontaneous in situ events. The colorful garden is solved by hanging planters in order to utilize the dynamic water level. Together the two interventions are offering a free canvas for interaction, rather than presenting an intentional proposal for the usage of space.

In this sense, the jury acknowledges the clarity of the presented concept, particularly to its recognition of the key contextual deviancies that have to be solved as a condition for the successful transformation of the site into an inviting, generous place. The character of the presented interventions is at the same time both minimal and bold, and distinguishes itself from the other competition entries, which rely on a multitude of interventions and outdoor furnishing and thus loose in conceptual significance.

One of the reasons for architectural competitions is to ensure the quality of design in responsibility towards society and our environment and to raise public awareness of high-quality design, thereby setting future-oriented standards in architectural and urban development.

In this sense, the jury acknowledges the clarity of the presented concept, particularly to its recognition of the key contextual deviancies that have to be solved as a condition for the successful transformation of the site into an inviting, generous place. The character of the presented interventions is at the same time both minimal and bold, and distinguishes itself from the other competition entries, which rely on a multitude of interventions and outdoor furnishing and thus loose in conceptual significance.

The proposal focuses on urban relations and connects the quarter to the river by creating a new strong identity and high-quality environment. It captures the opportunities of the area – offered by the Dambovită river - by staging a lively waterfront with a beautiful scenography for the people of Bucharest to re-discover their relation to the river.

In addition to distinct architectural-spatial qualities, the project generates added social value and thus creates places of encounter that promote the development of collective and individual sensitivity for each other and for our environment in a forward-looking way. By creating a new identity of the river the project thus also fulfils the claim of being a pilot

project for the further development and can in its robustness easily be transferred to other sections of the river.

Recommendations:

The jury highly recommends to realize the project in the full format presented.

However, its success can also be reached by implementing the project in stages, these still have to be defined.

The Jury also draws attention that a more thorough study is mandatory for the selection of the species recommended for the vegetal composition of the embankment.

In the further architectural development the focus should be on refining the detailing of the different elements such as the bridges and planters, also to research on more sustainable materials for the planters, to specify the conceptual strength of the proposal also on the detail level. Moreover to allow for public access to the vertical garden (for example placement of strategic access points and seating terraces).

Project no. 54 – Second Prize

Jury feedback

The proposal shows a thorough understanding of the assignment. The proposed interventions and long-term vision are underpinned by detailed understanding and elaboration of the broader context. You have identified and contextualized the existing and possible new crossings, acknowledging the importance of enhancing the social cohesion between the different neighborhoods. Furthermore, the possibility of expanding the platform structure into constructing bridges, thus enhancing the connection between the two areas, is highly appreciated. However, the development of the platform into a bridge has not been detailed in the proposal.

The jury acknowledges the clarity of the strategic approach, presenting a logical sequence: The first phase focuses on improving the accessibility of the riverbank and adding elements (balconies) to facilitate the short stay. The jury appreciates the idea of restructuring the main road, creating a stronger connection between the Timpuri Noi Park and the river bank. On the other hand, the jury doubts if this reconstruction is feasible within the short-term phase, as it would have a considerable impact on the existing infrastructure. The second phase of the strategic approach is about connecting the different areas (construction of bridges).

To sum it up, the plan focuses on a wider area of the city, linking the city along the riverside. The solutions are convincing and academically underpinned.

Regarding the biodiversity, the proposal shows a wide range of species of plants based on a detailed and to the point analysis of the area. On the one hand, this will attract a high variety of insects and birds, and on the other hand, it will enhance the citizens' quality of life.

Recommendations:

The jury appreciates the fact that the plan relates the two parts of the city on both sides of the river but recommends paying more attention to including the other riverbank in doing so. Furthermore, the jury thinks it is of added value that the public is truly connected to the river and therefore advises to place the platforms closer to the water. Thirdly, it's not clear how the promenade will be connected to the public road, as the impact of the latter is quite big. Also, we are missing a clear vision or plan views both on the exploitation of the green areas and on the current 'grey/concrete' character of the riverbanks, as this is still present in the approach. We strongly advise to come up with a design solution to soften (greening) these riverbanks.

Lastly, the jury thinks the plan requires an adapted financial budget. To fit in the plan within the budget we advise to simplify some of the balconies (for example: by attaching them on the same heights as the walkways its safes already a lot of budget because there are no slopes needed)

Project 53 – Third Prize

Jury feedback

A "How to do it project" that is very practical and has a hands-on approach on the way you can reclaim the river through floating connectors. These temporary bridges serve also as a space for other activities and sustain a direct usage of the surface of the water for all sorts of leisure and cultural activities.

The manner of the graphical presentation is original and follows a manual of implementation presented always from the point of view of the constructor and further on presented from the experience of its users, highlighting the idea that the project is meant to respond to the demands and requirements of them. The project shows attention to technical details that are important for better accessibility and usage. Through its modularity it can also respond well in time to new adjustments through negotiation and the risk of having a fixed, frozen shape of intervention that can be accepted or not by the inhabitants is avoided. This form of dialogue is an invitation to different scales of social interaction that acts as a catalyst for the actual appropriation of the interventions here. To conclude, this project acts as an urban hack that opens a lot of opportunities regarding the constant negotiation of the public common spaces in the city.

The high focus on the capabilities of the floating interventions is not found in other aspects of the proposal. The ecological and landscape capabilities of the project don't reach the same level of detailing and the green strategy remains generic and placed more in a possible future.

The negotiation that this project is proposing in time is a process that needs a lot of attention and involvement. Nothing is shown on how this will be sustained, who will be

responsible for this and who will operate the future adjustments. Can this be administered by the local public administration?

The use of plastic and aluminum are regarded as being not sustainable from an ecological point of view.

Recommendations:

Jury recommended the further research of the ecological and landscape aspects of the proposal.

Regarding the materials, further research here can bring materials more sustainable to be used. Further research is needed on what plastic materials are used and how they can be recycled better and how they can be treated in order not to decompose in the river and what is the lifespan of their use. The aluminium can be replaced also with more organic materials such as wood.

The process of maintenance is also important here and needs a deeper dive.

The project in its form now is too large but a smaller part of it, a pilot project, can be easily put in place together with different NGOs, civic initiatives or citizens that work with the public space. Civic approaches can bring more content in the negotiation of the public space and bring added value to the way the river is used and what are the best adjusted ways of reclaiming the river on a longer term.

7. FINAL RANKING

PROJ. NO.	POINTS	JURY ASSESSMENT
58	94p	1st PRIZE
54	87p	2nd PRIZE
53	71p	3rd PRIZE
57	61p	The Jury appreciated the fact that the project offers different perceptions and a different consciousness of the river. The participative approach proposed for the second phase of the project is another aspect that makes this project stand out. The project shows that with a bold minimal design intervention the landscape can be considerably improved. However, the relation with the city and with the water is somehow neglected, as well as the concrete slope bordering the water, while the ecological aspects of the project received little attention.

50	59p	<p>The proposed project encourages the development of the adjacent spaces of the riverbanks, with few interventions, that can generate activities which can reconnect the people with the water and the green spaces generating better living conditions.</p> <p>The interventions are thoroughly analyzed and structured in sharp strategies, with progressive and logical approaches.</p>
56	58p	<p>The Jury appreciated the clarity of the solution and the coherent atmosphere proposed. However, while the solution is easy to implement, it doesn't get past a generic approach that doesn't manage to surprise.</p>
55	56p	<p>This project proposes the most direct connection with the water, placing the user on the same level with it. However, the two phases separation of the intervention, probably due to the budget, would leave the first phase somewhat incomplete. The greening solutions are not convincing and less compatible with the urban character of the intervention.</p>
51	43p	<p>The jury appreciated the sensible architectural approach and attention to details. The proposed interventions have certain scenographic qualities, introspective atmosphere with a minimum of effort and with historical reference. By focusing only on a few punctual interventions, the project leaves under-detailed the segments in between the interventions. The jury considered that the project has a disproportionate object-centered approach, while lacking a vegetation strategy for the river course, little access to the water, while remaining disconnected from the nearby neighborhood. The ecological aspects of transforming the river at length are not addressed, as well as creating public spaces of social interaction. Although poetic and atmospheric, the project fails to answer the main requests of the brief of transforming the river into an ecological and accessible space for the citizens.</p>
52	42p	<p>The jury appreciated the pragmatic approach and vegetal proposal that might work at the urban scale. Also, there is a focus on biodiversity. However, the proposed solution is rather a management plan, lacking much character and atmospheric qualities. The connections with the nearby context are missing. Moreover, some of the technical details, like the pillars placed into the canal, might be difficult to realize, as mentioned in the brief too. The landscape proposal lacks in unity, carrying an overall generic approach.</p>

60	34p	The proposal stands as a big scale intervention, which the jury considered as unrealistic in the local context, in relation with brief's indications and exceeding the available budget. The approach shows a lack of sensitivity and a diagrammatic approach. The project lacks a phased approach for the intervention areas and study area proposed by the brief. Moreover, the solution for activating the river is unjustified and massive and, occupying the surface of the water on long segments.
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This Jury Report was completed in three copies in Bucharest, on the 23.08.2020.

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