



HYBRID PARKS

Combining abilities, creating synergies, enhancing performances.

PAOLA CORRADINO WORKSHOP

17-18 APRIL 2013



Left to right:

Addolorata Garden Cemetery Paola, Lower Barracca Gardens Valletta, Verdala Castle and Buskett Gardens Rabat, Presidential Palace and San Anton Gardens Attard.

REPORT

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SCOPE

The scope of the Paola Atelier was to focus on the Environment as one of the pillars of discussion with a reference to Malta based projects. The Atelier also considered various sites and agents spurring adaptive re-use, best-practice management and systems of governance related to historical and newly developed parks. The Atelier was further supplemented by examples from HYBRID PARK partners and experts invited to participate to the 3-day atelier. (For a full Programme please refer to Annex 1)

DAY 1

The conference opened with study visits to the Floriana Gardens and Valletta Gardens. The on-site discussion included the origins and design of gardens with reference to restoration and conservation and the impact of weather and climate. The main areas visited were the Mall and the Botanical Gardens. In the latter garden a tour of the gardens was given by Professor Joseph Buhagiar. The debate focused on the development of the botanical gardens, species and the various functions as a University site in the realm of academia. The group then walked to the Hastings Garden and the Barracca Garden where Dr Malcolm Borg explained the evolution of the British Garden as a Public space during the Victorian period. The study group then analysed the various areas of the Grand Harbour and discussed on site the various regeneration projects. The discussion then focused on accessibility and mobility and the landscaping projects at the Cruise Liner Terminal.

DAY 2

The conference was inaugurated in the Excelsior Floriani Hall and was opened by Hon. Minister Dr Konrad Mizzi who referred to the challenge the Island and the world faces in the realm of water and the environment. Energy and Water Conservation are a challenge.' It is 'the challenge' in Europe, with the current economic scenario and the effects of climate changes which are hitting Europe and the world. My Ministry has taken these two major challenges in the electoral manifesto and have translated them into tangible milestones for the next five years.' He also referred to the challenge to develop Hybrid Parks, 'it is a very intelligent way at dealing with future aspirations and citizens' needs. INTEREG IV C like all research driven programmes is giving us an opportunity to test the goals, objectives and European Union directives of the future and calibrate these to our societies. Ultimately sustainable communities need good governance as do today's parks and tomorrow's hybrid parks. (For a full copy of the speech notes refer to Annex 2)

This speech was followed by the representative of the Paola Heritage Foundation Mr Charles Deguara (Vice-Chairman). Mr Charles Deguara highlighted the cooperation between the Council and the Foundation in the past years. The Hybrid Parks project fell within the Foundation's mission; it was 'an essential contribution to Paola's future plans.' The foundation 'sustained the Local Council in

the past few years in various projects and initiatives. In fact the Paola Heritage Foundation which is young and established in 2009 developed through the involvement of Paola citizens in the Urban Support Group and in the compilation of the REPAIR Action Plan launched in 2010.' He referred to the AT FORT project led by the Foundation and how the 'fortifications were not only a cultural asset in this case but a site to adaptively re-use wisely as green or open space. (For a full copy of the speech refer to Annex 3)

The Mayor thanked Mr Christian Greussen for organising the Atelier but also referred to the importance of the project in the context of the REPAIR Action Plan. The Mayor Perit Roderick Spiteri praised the work and Ateliers organised earlier and mentioned the projects in the pipeline. He referred to the Heritage Trail with parks and gardens as an integral part. 'The trail is from end to end around one kilometre; a walk which in the development of our plan should be in a semi-pedestrianised scheme (30%) and fully pedestrianized (70%).' He also referred to the application of lessons learnt and best practice in the regeneration of two parks. 'The two parks we prepared Design Briefs and Strategies in the past year as part of our assessment of local gardens and parks were Gaddafi Gardens and Wied Blandun Garden. In the former we are re-designing a system of Mediterranean Gardens inspired by Islamic and Moorish styled gardens with a section dedicated to local maquis communities and working in unison with Nature Trust. The other garden at Wied Blandun which is a 80s design and is the head of a valley is being conceived as an exercising area with trim trail and outdoor gym.' (For a full copy of the speech refer to Annex 4)

Mr Christian Greussen thanked the organisers and speakers. He made a brief introduction of the project and the objective of holding the Atelier in Malta. He also referred to the various steps being taken to develop these themes and the pillar on the Environment.

Session 1

The conference proceeded with a presentation by Mr Christian Greussen on the phasing of the Hybrid Parks project and the milestones leading to Environment and referring to the previous meetings.

The morning session followed with two presentations. One presentation considered the planning dimension. The presentation by MEPA official Mr Rene Attard traced the various mechanisms in planning to conserve gardens and their context. Various examples were mentioned from Palatial Villas and Gardens to parks. Mr Rene Attard traced the various typologies and the use of scheduling (listing) as a means to conserve gardens both public and private. (Presentation 1)

The next presentation on the programme was by Dr Malcolm Borg on the origins of gardens and their evolutionary process in the design and development. (Refer to Presentation 2) The

presentation highlighted the developments and focused on sustainability and rehabilitation of public areas. The presentation concluded with a discussion on viability and new landscaping and garden design options.

Session 2

The next presentation was given by Mr Mr Martin Galea a member of the Executive Committee of Din l-Art Helwa. The presenter gave an overview of the work of Din l-Art Helwa as a local Voluntary Organisation. Mr Martin Galea referred to the various types of sites which the organisations took in trust and is currently managing. Apart from the fortifications he also referred to the Msida Bastion Cemetery and how this was restored gradually with precious voluntary work. Finally the presentation focused of the Nature Park, resolving conflict on the ground and creating activities to conserve the site. (Refer to Presentation 4)

The Session continued with a trip and on-site study visit to the Garden of Serenity at Santa Lucia then to Buskett and Mdina. At the Garden of Serenity Mr Fredrick Cutajar the Mayor explained the development of the Chinese Garden. Ms Caroline Silvio the Executive Secretary of the Council was also present. The Mayor explained the plans for future redevelopment and regeneration of the garden. The group had a guided tour of Rabat and Mdina and later visited the Garden - Ditch and Howard Gardens as a characteristic public garden and a newly developed and designed space.

DAY 3

Session 3

The session was hosted by The President at the President's Palace and Kitchen Garden. The opening presentation was given at the President's Palace with a historical tour and followed by a visit to the private gardens of the palace. A discussion followed on the development of the palace and grounds. The visit also included an on-site study of the new kitchen garden opened to the public and the facilities.

Session 4

The afternoon session included various contributions by the partners. The session included a presentation on Mikolow with the Silesian Botanical Garden and the investment of EU funding on the new development centre of education and the park. The presentation focused on the possibilities of adaptively re-using the buildings for different venues. (Refer to Presentation 5) Another presentation also on the Silesian Botanical Gardens was by Pawel Kojs. His presentation looked into Hybrid Parks as adaptive systems to the changing environments. Mr Kojs gave an overview of a possible network of gardens in Poland encompassing all typologies and using the network to address Aichi biodiversity targets through 5 strategic goals. (Refer to Presentations 6)

A presentation from Pori Finland With continuing urbanization focused on the importance to protect both biodiversity and cultural heritage as well as to ensure blue and green spaces for city dwellers. (Refer to Presentation 7) The presentation referred to the problems of park zones in the current framework and offered possible solutions through the Finnish Urban Park Concept. The presentation went further to explore the Pori Urban National Park project. The next presentation was an example from Finland and the University of Turku with a focus on the conversion of the Vuosaari landfill into a park. (Refer to Presentation 8) According to the Jan Tvrdy and Ms Johanna Aaltonen this was an example of best practice of "Integrated Planning Approach" following (a) Restorative design, (b) Ecological design, (c) Regenerative development and (d) Conventional design. The final presentation gave a short but very succinct overview of how the Landschafts Verband Rhenland do it with examples of various garden typologies and innovative landscaping proposals. (Presentation 9)

The next presentation was on-site. The group visited the San Anton Public Gardens and later visited the nursery maintained by the Environmental Landscape Consortium. The tour included a view of the propagation area, the nursery and the officials gave an overview of the landscape projects in hand and explained how the consortium with government projects and public areas essentially converting to hardier plant types and indigenous plants.

ATELIER – POINTERS

The examples of maintained, rehabilitated and new parks that were covered in the Malta-Paola Atelier and those examples proposed by the partners considered the adaptive re-use of brownfield sites as parks on one part. The other examples considered environmental sustainability and conservation of gardens as a key to the conservation of biodiversity or learning centres. Other examples considered conservation and integrated planning using gardens and parks for the better management of urban space as recreational space.

Key examples included;

Malta, Botanical Gardens Floriana: Learning Centre/ Biodiversity

Malta, The Mall, Hastings and Barracca Gardens: Historical Gardens as urban recreational space.

Malta, The Garden of Serenity: Green Belt , Garden Town.

Malta, Mdina Ditch Landscaping: Historical space as recreational space.

Malta, Corradino Lines as multi-functional space and park.

Malta, President's Kitchen Garden: Recreational, centre for learning.

Malta, Msida Bastion Cemetery: Recreation and Cultural Heritage.

Malta, Din l-Art Helwa Parks: Recreation, Conservation of biodiversity, centre of learning.

Poland, Mikolow: Silesian botanical park as learning centre.

Poland: Network of Gardens as a tool to biodiversity targets.

Finland, Pori: urban parks as a tool for urban landscape conservation and green space.

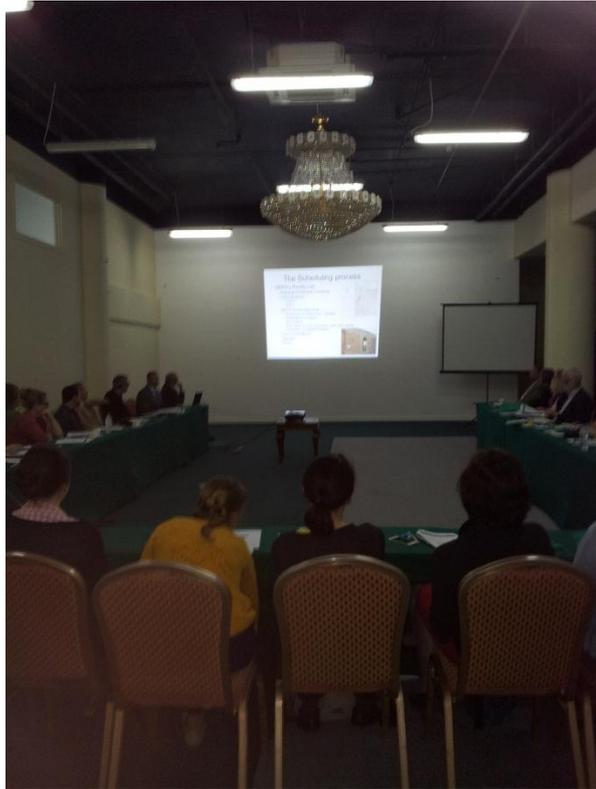
Finland, Vuosaari landfill: as a converted space to green recreational space.

Germany, Munich: oasis of recreation and cultural heritage.

- The best-practice examples, the regeneration experience of parks and gardens promoted integrated planning as the most viable option: Examples of scheduling and listing from the Malta Environment and Planning Authority, the Vuosaari landfill experience, the Pori urban parks and the Silesian botanical park experience.
- As in the case of the botanical gardens mentioned above in the key examples it was clear that the conservation of biodiversity through gardens catalysed centres of learning and recreation.
- With reference to sustainability other options were proposed i.e. Garden networks as a tool to biodiversity targets i.e. Silesian Botanical Network proposal.
- The examples also showed a very important component which is design as a clue to the interpretation and conservation of green urban space.
- The examples shown were not necessarily supported by heavy capital investment. Those which were supported by heavy capital investment were extensive. From the local example i.e. Din L-Art Helwa Voluntary Organisation showed how it was possible to manage park through strategies which run on low budgets.



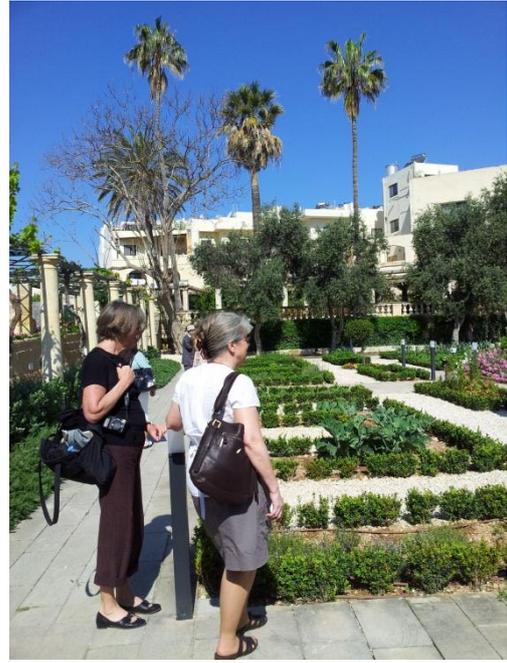
Atelier Tour: Botanical Gardens Floriana



Atelier Session 1: Paola – Excelsoir



Atelier Session 2: Paola – Garden of Serenity Santa Lucija



Atelier Session 3: Paola – President’s Private Garden and Kitchen Garden



Atelier Session 4: Paola – Environment Landscape Consortium Nurseries