

DESIGNING HEALTHSCAPES FOR THE DUDINCE SPA RESORT IN SLOVAKIA

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Abstract

The Dudince Spa Resort is situated in southern Slovakia, close to the Hungarian border. It is famous for its Roman Spa, which consists of natural travertine formations set in a hilly terrain. An important recreational asset of the resort is the forest park Búroš and various site furniture for outdoor recreation, leisure, sport, and recovery. The first written report on the healing mineral water dates to 1777. The Czechoslovak State Spa Resort was founded in 1953 and Dudince was declared a spa town in 1983. In 2003, the Dudince Spa Resort was established, and it has been continuously investing in developing the overall area of the spa park, its visual and functional quality. In 2023, the Institute of Landscape Architecture was commissioned to develop a landscape architectural study of the 'Area of Health' located at the southern periphery of the resort. Through research by design, we have developed two possible scenarios. One works with the vision of a 'Garden of Emotions' and the other one develops the idea of a 'Garden of Senses' for spa clients, visitors, and inhabitants of Dudince. The paper presents the outcomes of the study and evaluates both scenarios with different design approaches, while discussing further steps and visions for the 'Area of Health'.

Keywords: design teaching, green infrastructure, landscape architecture, research by design, research-led teaching

Introduction

Spa resorts, like hospital areas, provide important open spaces for recreation and recovery (Halajová et al., 2019) and are specific components of green infrastructure systems (Tóth, 2022a), both in urban (Fornal-Pienak and Bihuňová, 2016; Bihuňová et al., 2021) and rural landscape settings (Čibík et al., 2020; Tóth, 2022b). These areas usually have a high species diversity, and the woody vegetation composition includes a wide range of non-traditional tree species (Bakay, 2015; Hus et al., 2021; Bechera et al., 2022). The Spa Resort Dudince has commissioned the Institute of Landscape Architecture at the Slovak University of Agriculture to develop design ideas for the so-called Area of Health, which is part of the spa resort, located at its southern periphery. The assignment was elaborated in 2023 within the Special Green Space Design Studio.

Material and methods

The Dudince Spa Resort is situated in southern Slovakia, close to the Hungarian border. It is famous for its Roman Spa, which consists of natural travertine formations set in a hilly terrain. An important recreational asset of the resort is the forest park Búroš and variable site furniture for outdoor recreation, leisure, sport, and recovery. The first written report on the healing mineral water dates to 1777. The Czechoslovak State Spa Resort was founded in 1953 and Dudince was declared a spa town in 1983. In 2003, the Dudince Spa Resort was established, and it has been continuously investing in developing the overall area of the spa park, its visual and functional quality. In 2023, the Institute of Landscape Architecture was commissioned to develop a landscape architectural study of the 'Area of Health' located at the southern periphery of the resort. Students worked in two main creative phases (analysis and design). The first design phase started with field works and mapping and continued with the analysis of wider spatial relations, historical development, landscape context, functional and spatial characteristics, built structures and technical infrastructure. The design process was conducted by two student groups, each of three persons, supervised by two teachers. The main methodological approach applied was research by design, while developing two possible scenarios. The process was communicated with representatives of the spa resorts and final outcomes were presented at a meeting.

Results

The design studio has generated two possible scenarios for the Area of Health of the Dudince Spa Resort. One works with the vision of a 'Garden of Emotions', see figures 1-3, and the other one develops the idea of a 'Garden of Senses' for spa clients, visitors, and inhabitants of Dudince, see figures 4-5.

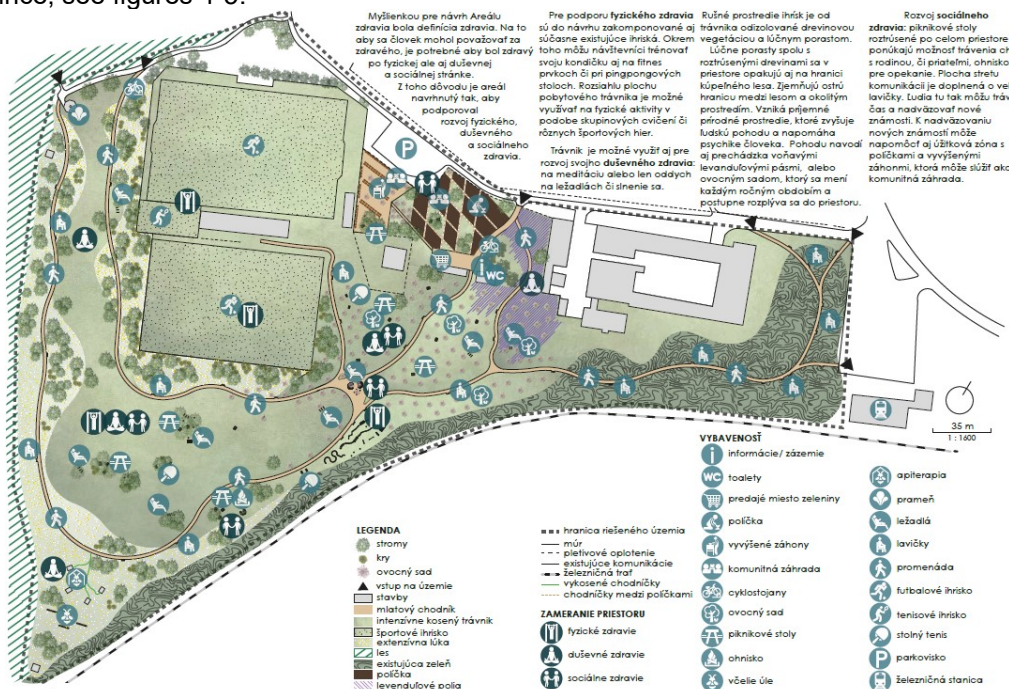


Fig. 1: The Garden of Emotions (authors: N.Bábiková, D.Keller, and S.Rozkoš, supervisors: A.Tóth and M.Bihuňová, 2023).

The Garden of Emotions design concept dedicates the Area of Health to physical, mental, and social health. The design includes a comprehensive path system. The grasslands are designed to be selectively managed as intensive lawns and extensive flower meadows. The project incorporates existing trees and shrubs and green spaces are enhanced by lavender fields, a community garden, a public orchard, a pollinator meadow with apitherapy and many new opportunities for sports and recreation, see figures 2 and 3.



Fig. 2: A flower meadow with small structures for apitherapy and equipment for bees and pollinators (authors: N.Bábiková, D.Keller, and S.Rozkoš, supervisors: A.Tóth and M.Bihuňová, 2023)



Fig. 3: Geometric lavender fields and a community garden (left) and equipment for sports and games (right) enhance the cultural ecosystem provision by the Area of Health (authors: N.Bábiková, D.Keller, and S.Rozkoš, supervisors: A.Tóth and M.Bihuňová, 2023).

The Garden of Senses has a path system consisting of a geometric shaped concrete walkway in combination with an organically shaped pathway for enjoying the garden. Along the main geometric shaped pathway, there are different attractions catching the attention of visitors and users and addressing their five senses through a diverse vegetation and artistic elements that are focussed in several thematic zones throughout the garden, see figures 4-5.



Fig. 4: The Garden of Senses (authors: P.Halová, K.Remenárová, and K.Žuffová, supervisors: A.Tóth and M.Bihuňová, 2023).



Fig. 5: Different impressions of the thematic zones dedicated to senses (authors: P.Halová, K.Remenárová, and K.Žuffová, supervisors: A.Tóth and M.Bihuňová, 2023).

Discussion

All authors integrated principles and elements of green infrastructure as suggested by Tóth (2022a). The implemented design solutions can also raise awareness of the visitors on the environment and nature-based solutions (Tóth et al., 2018) and provide spaces for improving physical and mental health (Halajová et al., 2019). Design studio as a method of project-based

and research-led teaching has proved to be an effective way to address current challenges of open spaces through design teaching and learning (Čakovská et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Solutions generated within the design studio include a set of analyses and design ideas for the Area of Health in the Dudince Spa Resort. The outcomes of the design studio are currently being used as a basis and starting point for a long-term process of a comprehensive redesign, that has already started through an intensive exchange between the municipality and the management of the spa resort.

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Souhrn

Lázeňský resort Dudince se nachází na jižním Slovensku, nedaleko maďarských hranic. Je známé svými římskými lázněmi, které tvoří přírodní travertinové útvary zasazené do kopcovitého terénu. Významným rekreačním přínosem lázní je lesopark Búroš a různý mobiliář pro venkovní rekreaci, odpočinek, sport a zotavení. První písemná zpráva o léčivé minerální vodě pochází z roku 1777. Československé státní lázně byly založeny v roce 1953 a v roce 1983 byly Dudince vyhlášeny lázeňským městem. V roce 2003 vznikl Lázeňský resort Dudince, který průběžně investuje do rozvoje celkové rozlohy lázeňského parku, jeho vizuální a funkční kvality. V roce 2023 bylo Ústavu krajinářské architektury zadáno vypracování krajinářsko-architektonické studie "Areálu zdraví", který se nachází na jižním okraji lázní. Prostřednictvím

průzkumu podle návrhu jsme vypracovali dva možné scénáře. Jeden pracuje s vizí "Zahrady emocí" a druhý rozvíjí myšlenku "Zahrady smyslů" pro klienty lázní, návštěvníky a obyvatele Dudinců. Článek představuje výsledky studie a hodnotí oba scénáře s různými přístupy k návrhu a zároveň diskutuje další kroky a vize pro "Oblast zdraví".

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