

ECOWEEK 2011: 40.22.ARCHITECTS WORKSHOP

Ideas can change the world and ideas about architecture and cities play their part in creating our future environment. Rapid development of cities and high density in their centres (due to various building regulations, which allow full exploitation of building sites) has led to scarce available open public spaces. Moreover, the dialectic relationship between housing blocks and their direct environment has been lost, while inactive and disconnected fragments of open spaces have been formed. At a time during which a burst of interest for the environment and the quality of life is observed, the architect is asked to activate the potential of these fragments, by giving them back to society, proposing different experiences of collective life.

This workshop will focus on the reclamation of typical urban blocks and their reorganization in a unified urban quarter, with an emphasis on their organic relationship and integration with the city context.

The selected site (which will act as a pilot study for similar cases) includes abandoned backyards in between housing blocks and their adjacent streets. Today, these degraded 'junk-yards' have lost their initial identity and operate as isolated concrete vessels of ambiguous use.

The workshop responds to a continuous plea for a more intensified and sustainable use of our city, pointing the way towards a multi-sensory architecture which facilitates integration and sparks a sense of belonging among its residents. Through transformation strategies, a new vitality may be generated for such complexes, suggesting extremely symbolic cores of everyday life and flexible open neighbourhoods.

Proposed site in the centre of Thessaloniki

