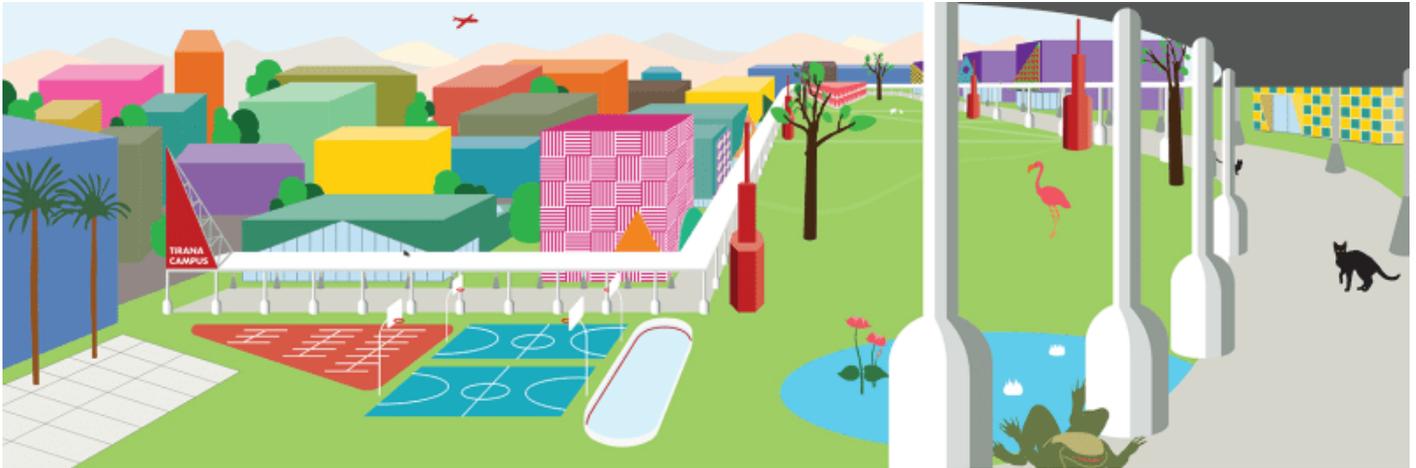


[DIVISARE \(/\)](#)[BAUKUH \(/AUTHORS/888905702-BAUKUH\)](#), [BODÀ \(/AUTHORS/2144629935-BODA\)](#)  
TIRANA CAMPUS

Constructing new student residences and rehabilitating the existing ones



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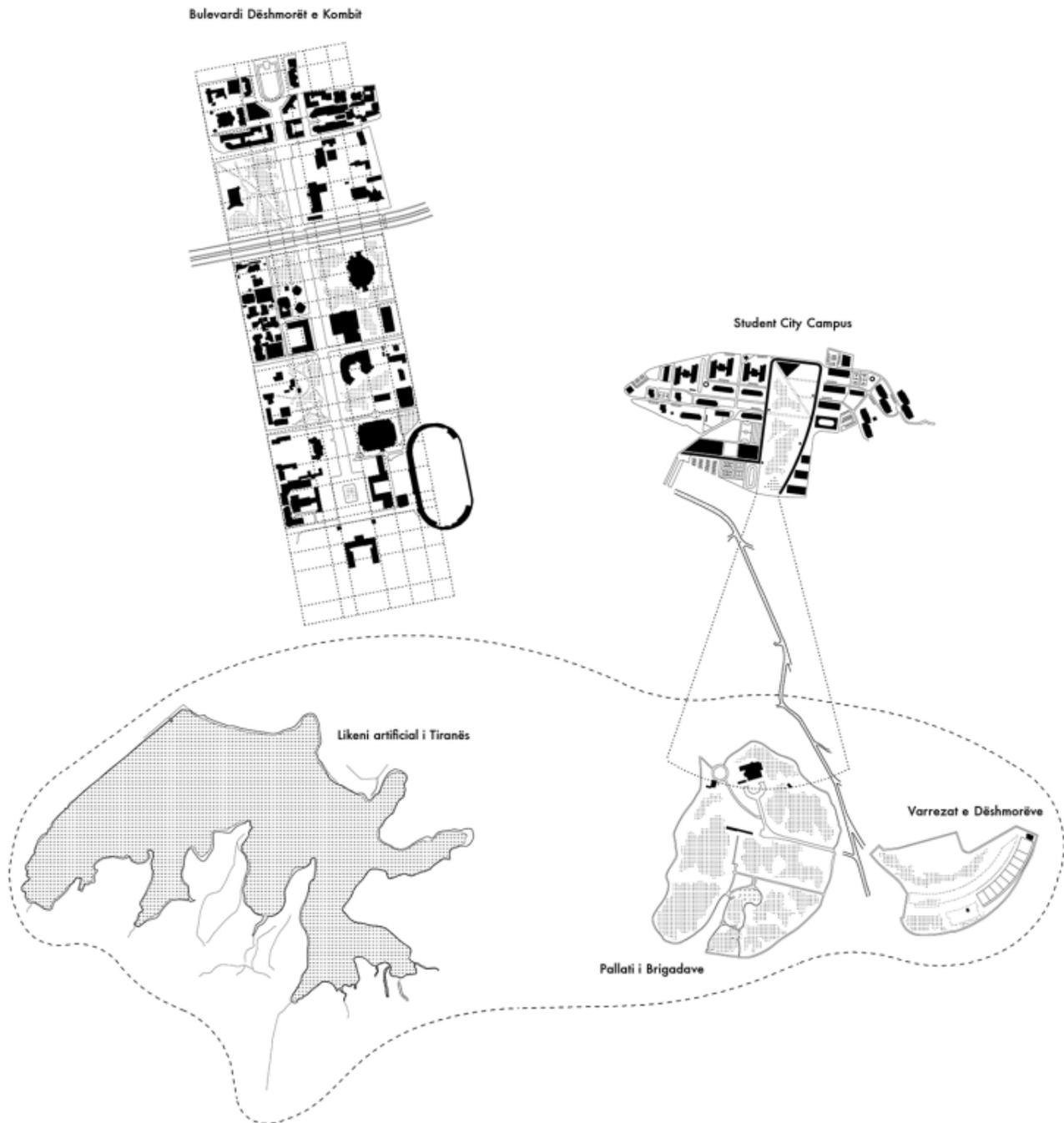
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### *Description, Design, Process*

The Student City is a complex built over more than 50 years, including almost 30 major buildings, with a surface of around 250,000 sqm. Transforming the Student City does not just imply the development of a design, but requires the definition of a method to look at this ensemble (an attitude towards description) and a strategy to organize the ensuing process. This means that the crucial operation is to observe: to constantly check the balance in between the Student City and the city around it, to recognize their mutual adjustments, to detect changes in the urban processes as soon as they appear.

For this reason, more than a simple design, we propose a commitment to observation, a style of description and a strategy of action. We believe it is crucial to recognize all available assets, to define all possible protagonists of the transformation, to activate all energies and to imagine a possible discourse that could bring all these different subjects together. The urban challenge is also a geographical, economical and rhetorical one.



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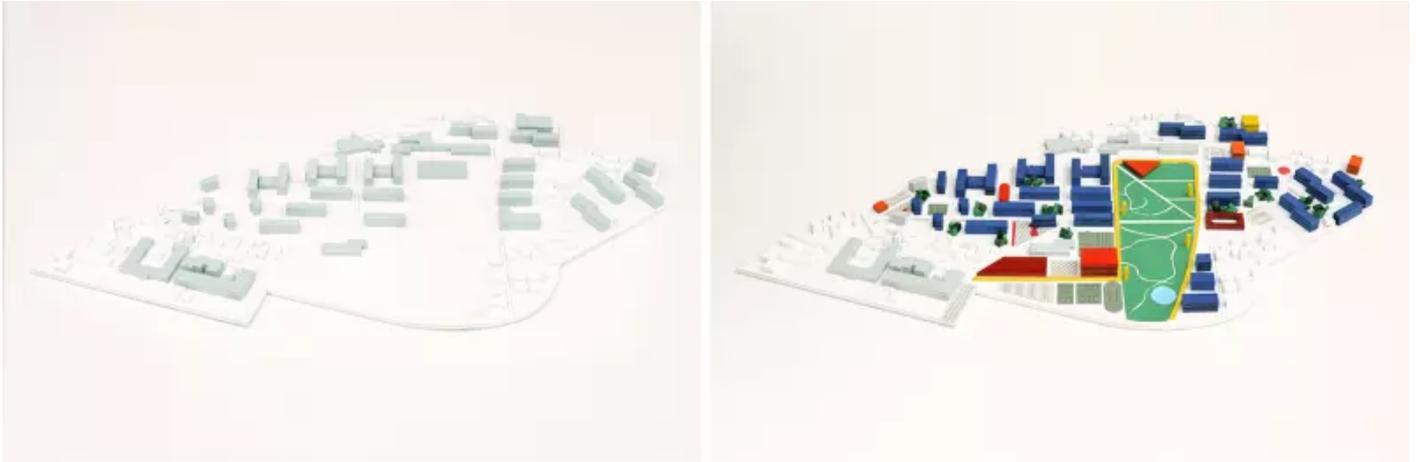
### *Universities in Tirana*

The Student City needs to be considered in relation to the overall educational offer of Tirana.

Since the 90s, a number of private universities started to be active in the city, entirely changing the dynamics of the higher education in Albania. The Student City is no more the only place where university students live; the public university is no more the only place where students can receive higher education. This means that the Student City must relate to a plurality of universities and to a plurality of privately owned residential clusters scattered through the city. While it is difficult to imagine that the Student City could host students enrolled in private universities, it is important to adapt the new configuration of the complex to a plurality of possible users (students, Erasmus students, fellows, visiting professors, lecturers from other universities) and to a multitude of paces in the use of the different facilities. Also the Student City should become more attractive and more open to populations different from university students. In order to do this, the Student City should diversify its program, become more complex and host a larger range of possible activities.

The problem of the Student City cannot be understood just thinking of the Student City, but needs to be

developed thinking of what the Student City can do for the entire City of Tirana. In fact, with a potential population of around 10,000 students, the Student City will have a mass of students roughly similar to the entire student population of Yale (or half of the student population of Cambridge or Oxford). This impressive concentration of innovative energy located right next to the centre of the city needs to become an explicit engine of the urban life of Tirana.



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### *Geography*

The Student City lies on the mild hills forming the background of the Tirana metropolitan region. By observing the Student City from a geographical point of view it is possible to rediscover the forgotten assets and to activate the hidden potentials of the context. In fact, the Student City is part of the larger system of hills, rivers, small valleys and lakes that characterizes the entire Durana metropolitan region. This mild landscape dotted with parks and lakes has a recursive organization, with minor elements repeating the configuration of larger figures. The Student City sits just next to the Parku i Madh and to the Tirana artificial lake. The Student City includes a large sloping ground, open towards the Parku i Madh. This part of the complex is its main resource. The potential openness of this sloping ground oriented towards the south needs to be protected and turned into the centre of the new Student City. This ample field in fact provides the Student City with the much-needed openness, it offers to the entire complex the crucial scale to appear as an explicitly public space and to establish an evident relation to the Parku i Madh and, through that, with the entire geography of the region. The Student City finds its position inside Tirana by clarifying its position in its geography: by choosing to become a green satellite of the Parku i Madh and so exposing a possible green constellation of open spaces immediately south of the rigid monumental system developing around the boulevard Dëshmorët e Kombit.



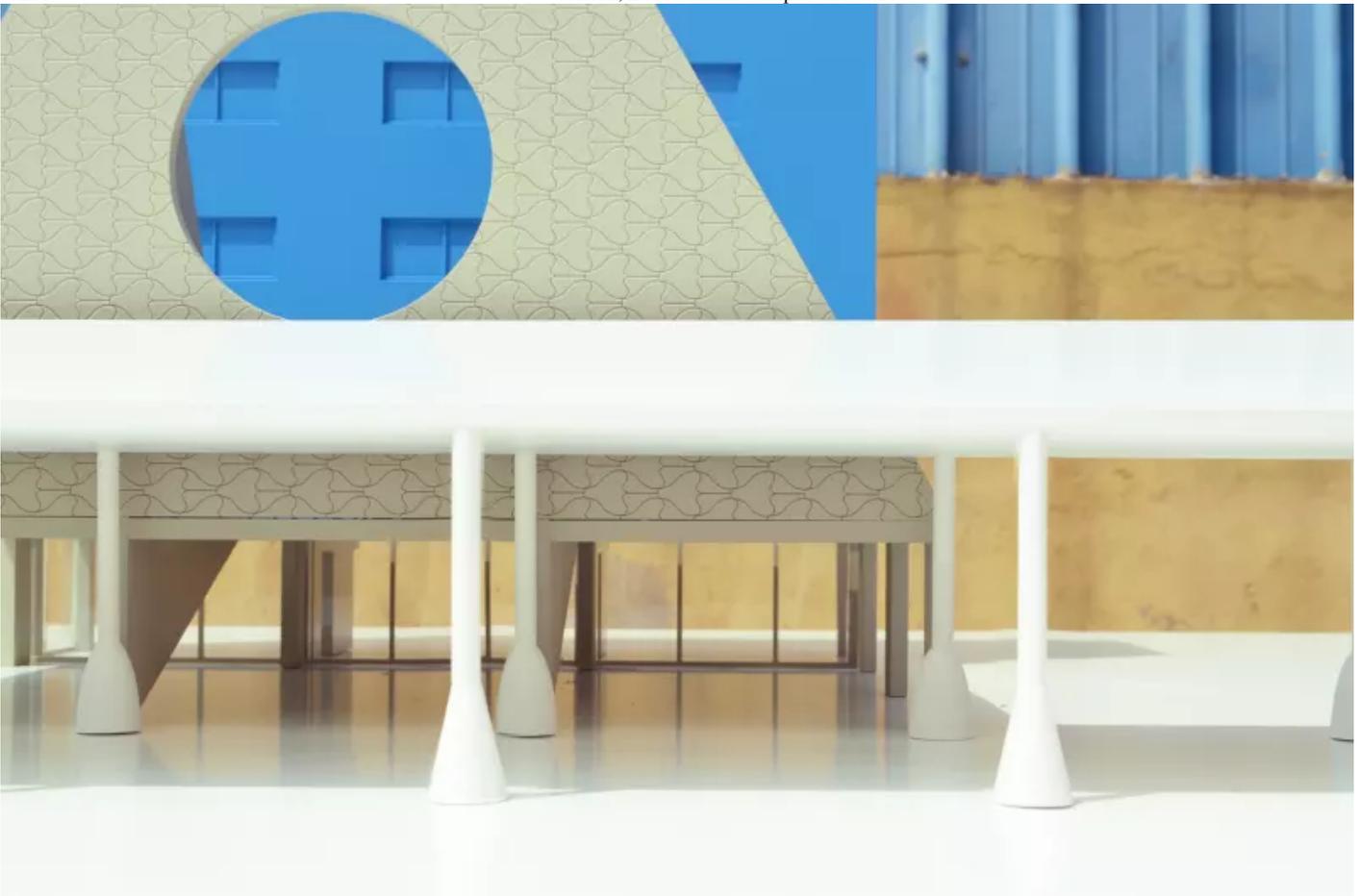
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### *Panorama*

The large, empty, sloping ground opens towards the south and establishes a direct visual connection to the Parku i Madh. The openness of this area means that a larger panorama appears in the middle of the city. The pressure of the city is suspended for a while and the geography of the region becomes once again evident. This asset related to the scale of this urban void needs to be protected: new buildings should not compromise this quality of the area. The central part of the Student City should stay a void – a green core open towards the south in order to establish a relation with the park and with the hills behind it.



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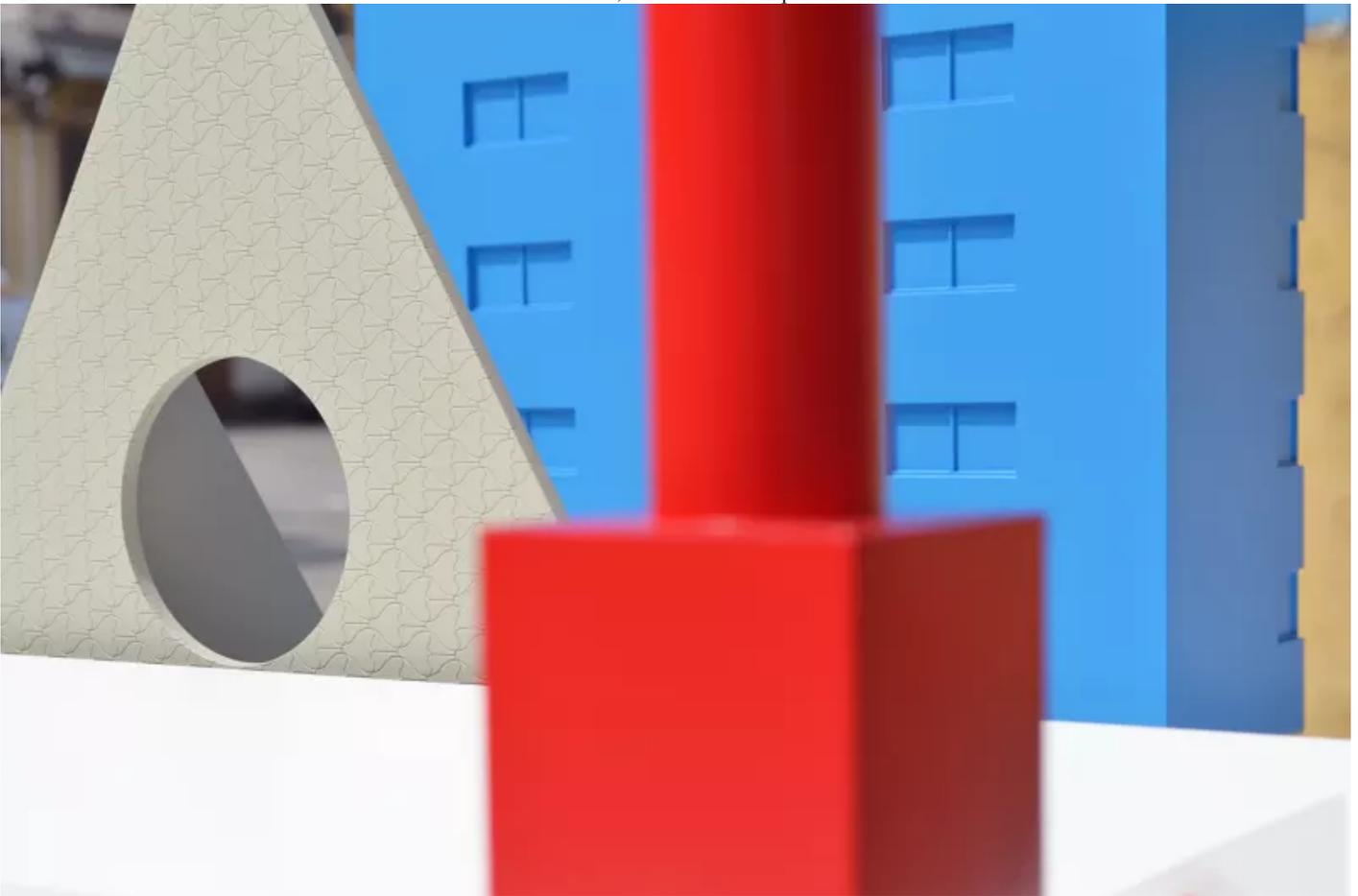
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### *City*

The Student City is a very recognizable fragment inside Tirana.

Inside the city few elements can be compared to the Student City: only the boulevard Dëshmorët e Kombit and the monuments disposed along it, the university hospital and the military academy, the embassies, the large urban voids of the former military airport and of the train station, the custom and the former Kombinati textile industry play a role somehow similar to that of the Student City. And while the majority of these parts are scattered through the city without generating clear figures and with limited potential to establish relations with other urban figures, the Student City can be grouped with the Parku i Madh, with the Place of Brigades and the Cemetery of the Martyrs and with the Tirana and Farka lake to produce a clear figure, with a shared relation to nature and a distinctive urban tone. This ensemble emerges as a possible complementary urban constellation, capable to balance the monumental system aggregated along the boulevard Dëshmorët e Kombit. While the clarity of the urban sequence along the axes designed by Brasini was never lost through all the transformations of the city, the (lighter and more fragile) constellation including the park and the Student City needs to be redefined and re-established. This operation is not only fundamental for the design of the Student City, but for the equilibrium of the Parku i Madh and of the entire city. The development of the southern green core as an urban figure alternative and complimentary to the Brasini axes is one of the greatest urban challenges of Tirana in the next years. The transformation of the Student City is a crucial episode in the production of this new urban figure. The internal organization of the Student City needs to contribute to the emergence of this figure.



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### *Figure (lack of)*

The accumulation of dormitories that produced the Student City did not generate an urban figure, something that could be associated to the life of its own inhabitants and become an element in the construction of the collective memory of the entire city. As of today, the Student City lacks a centre, lacks urbanity, lacks a relation to the city around it. The goal of our proposal is to turn this accumulation of buildings into an urban figure – to turn the Student City into a campus – by defining its centre, by imagining its urban life, and by clarifying its relation to the outside. This means recognizing a latent figure, more than imposing a new one: discover an empty field and turn it into the core, into the lawn of the campus.



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### *Space*

A major asset of the Student City is space. The area to the south is in fact largely empty. This abundance of space is incredibly precious in the contemporary city and should not be underevaluated and wasted. Void is especially precious in a city as dense as Tirana, where all available voids have been frantically colonized in the 90s, leaving the city without major parks (with the exception of the Parku i Madh) and without anything but a very fragmented type of public space (with the exception of the spaces along the boulevard Dëshmorët e Kombit). In the current Student City it is possible to discover a possibility of space (a possibility of a plurality of scales, and so a possibility of landscape). This possibility, this implicit generosity of space, suggests the possibility of a plural program and a multitude of users.



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### *Program*

The current program of the Student City is extremely simple: housing for students and a few uninspiring facilities (canteens, laundries) immediately associated to the basic needs of students. In order to transform the Student City it is crucial to introduce a new program into it. Only with the insertion of a new program (of different type and size) it will be possible to turn the Student City into a real urban field.

We propose to introduce three types of program:

- learning and researching centres associated to University life such as faculties, libraries, media centres: these facilities will operate during the day, assuring the liveliness of the area during working hours and will help turning the Student City into a campus;
- public facilities such as canteens, cinemas and private business such as hotels: beyond contributing to the economical feasibility of the operation, these facilities will operate day and night and will bring visitors from the rest of the city to the Student City;
- small scale private business, such as shops, gyms, cafes, restaurant: these facilities will complement the previous ones, providing the necessary small scale counterpart to the main attractors. These facilities will also contribute to the liveliness of the area and guarantee the safety of the environment. Beyond this “everyday” injection of new program a new “exceptional” program will take place in the lawn (profiting from its exceptional size inside the city): special events (concerts, shows, parties) will take place in the lawn.

**NEW BUILDINGS**

**DORMITORY**

**HOTELS**

**MULTI-FUNCTIONAL BUILDING**

**CANTEEN**

**FACULTY**

---

**EXISTING BUILDINGS RENOVATION**

**BUILDING TYPE 1**

PRESENT SITUATION

PROJECT

COMPARISON	existing	new
beds number	106	102
room surface	15-20 sqm	20 sqm
toilets number	24	51
showers number	12	51
elevator	no	yes
emergency stairs	no	yes

**BUILDING TYPE 2**

PRESENT SITUATION

PROJECT

COMPARISON	existing	new
beds number	154	114
room surface	15-20 sqm	20 sqm
toilets number	24	54
showers number	12	54
elevator	no	yes
emergency stairs	no	yes

**BUILDING TYPE 3**

PRESENT SITUATION

PROJECT

COMPARISON	existing	new
beds number	204	304
room surface	12-16 sqm	15/30 sqm
toilets number	40	102
showers number	12	102
elevator	no	yes
emergency stairs	no	yes

**BUILDING TYPE 4**

PRESENT SITUATION

PROJECT

COMPARISON	existing	new
beds number	204	152
room surface	18 sqm	21/47 sqm
toilets number	32	76
showers number	12	76
elevator	no	yes
emergency stairs	no	yes

**BUILDING TYPE 5**

PRESENT SITUATION

PROJECT

COMPARISON	existing	new
beds number	395	260
room surface	20-22 sqm	22 sqm
toilets number	40	130
showers number	24	130
elevator	no	yes
emergency stairs	no	yes

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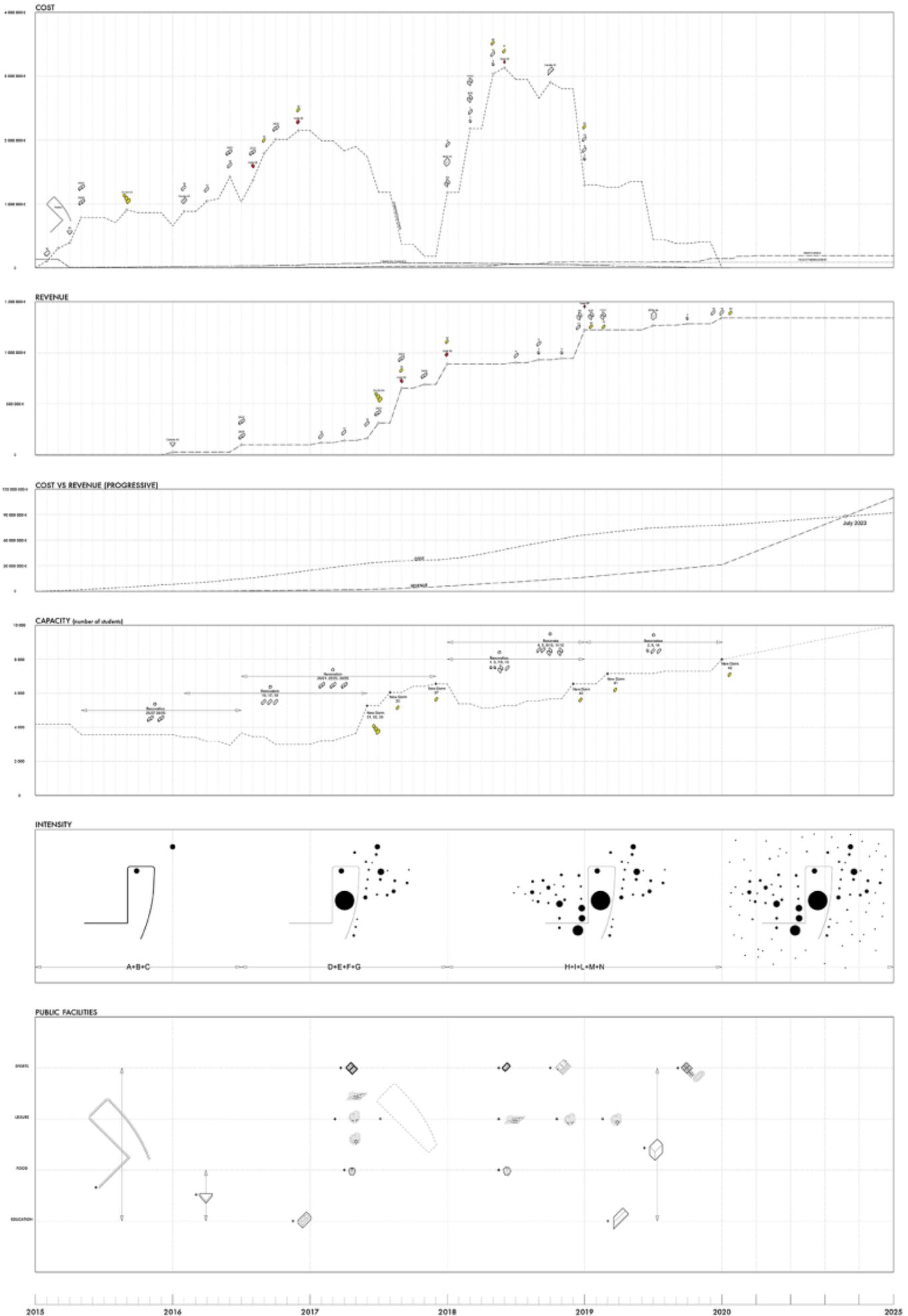
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### Campus

We propose to understand the Student City as a campus.

By campus, we mean a classic model of aggregation of university facilities with different pavilions grouped around a central lawn. The campus implies both a precise identity for the buildings included into it and a balanced relation with the city surrounding it. The campus becomes a precisely identified element of Tirana's urban landscape: it precisely corresponds to an image known to all inhabitants of the city. The campus becomes a place in the mental map of every Tirana citizen. It becomes a place where to go in occasion of special events.



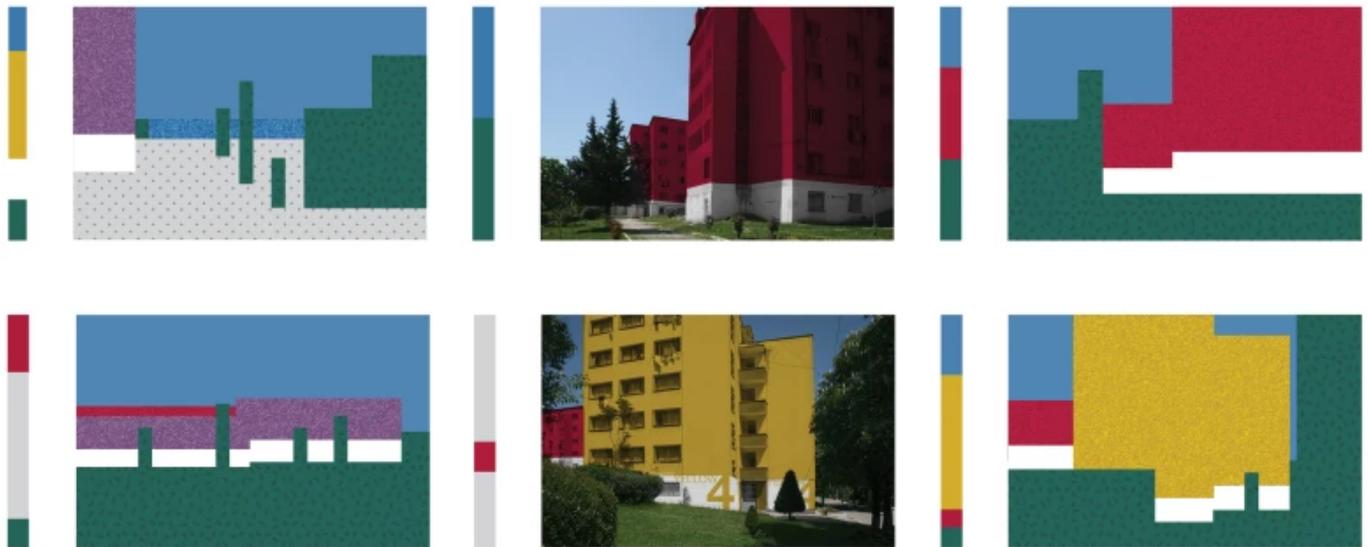
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<https://divisare.com/projects/291059-baukuh-boda-tirana-campus>

### Three levels

The campus is subdivided in three different levels: the core, or the lawn, the university dormitories and faculties and the connective tissue bordering the city. These three zones have different degrees of intensity and identity: the lawn collects all public life in the campus, the dormitories and faculties provide the critical mass that populates the lawn, the in-between zone mediates with the city and offer a place to a large array of minor activities that are necessary for the campus and the city to operate next to each other.



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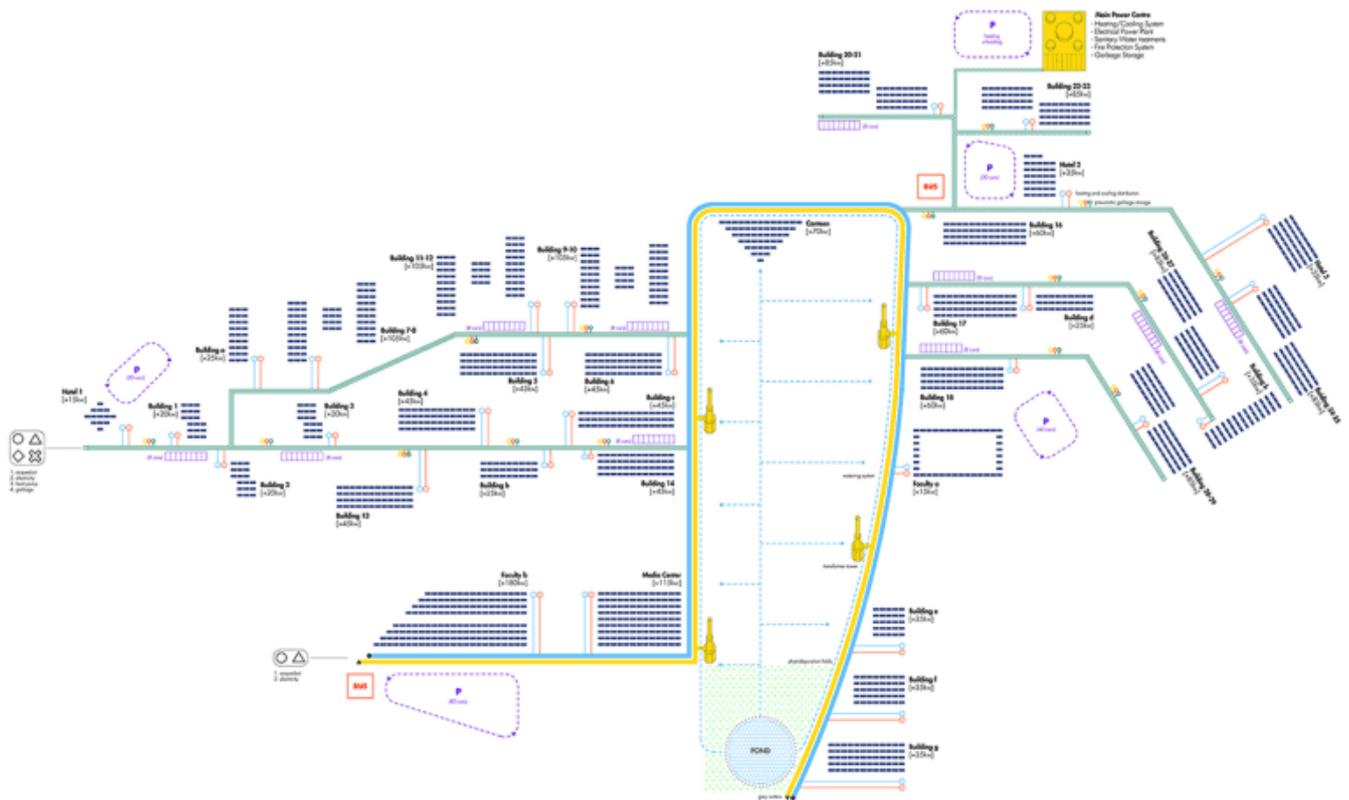
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### Figure

A classic lawn is that at the centre of Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia. What is particularly striking about this project, beyond the generosity of the open space, the capacity to define a common ground that could immediately visualize the possible life of a Republic of Farmers, is the simplicity and the pragmatism of the scheme. The low, wooden, white portico bordering the lawn on its two long sides is not particularly regular; the classic ornament is relatively clumsy and the porches of the different pavilions emerging in front of the lower porch are all different. The orders of the different pavilions do not match with one another and yet this imprecision is here entirely irrelevant. The clarity of the urban scheme here coincides with the complete tolerance for the different episodes inside of it. The perfect understanding of the geographical and urban condition makes architecture relatively irrelevant. The various parts can take whatever form they need – they can even be relatively ugly – and yet (or maybe exactly because of that) the lawn provides an extraordinary idea of freedom.

Because of this tolerant clarity, University of Virginia also emerges inside of Charlottesville as a precisely defined part, and yet not as an isolated part. It is an element in the plural construction of the city: offered to the citizens and combined to the other urban fragments with incredible humbleness and generosity.



[\(/projects/291059/images/5157597/zoom\)](https://projects/291059/images/5157597/zoom)

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### *Porch*

In order to define the campus, we propose to operate by means of a single element, that will define the lawn and provide an immediate, tangible body to the transformation process that will progressively invest all the existing dormitories.

The Student City certainly needs infrastructural improvements on many levels. Just to mention the main needs: water, electricity and energy supply should be improved in the next years. And yet, while recognizing the fundamental relevance of this infrastructure, we believe that the first interventions – the ones that could trigger the entire transformation process by showing a tangible example of transformation – should also be visible: they should take the form of architecture. For this reason the necessary infrastructure is contained into the porch, that operates as a duct conveying all necessary services to the different dormitories.

The simplicity and the evidence of the porch will immediately expose the transformation of the Student City into a campus. In this respect, the Student City will learn from Tirana, from the positive relation that was established in the early 2000s among artistic interventions, urban transformations and overall infrastructural upgrade.

### *Grey + Green*

The new series of public spaces of the campus needs to find a precise collocation inside of the articulated collection of urban assets of Tirana. The public spaces we propose have different roles (urban, commercial, busy, quiet) and different tones (formal, informal, relaxed) corresponding to the different needs of a contemporary city. These features are summarized into the lawn, where different natures will coexist, manifesting in different moments of the day or in different seasons of the year. The lawn is multiple but not hyper-specified; it maintains a certain generous indeterminacy that allows for multiple (also unexpected) appropriation. In the lawn it is possible to relax and to study, to create small groups and to be alone and study under a tree. In the lawn it is possible play informally and to organize big concerts. The immediately recognizable figure of the lawn puts, and from the beginning, the campus inside the collection of public spaces of the city. Somehow the figure has always been there.

We suggest to build a very simple white concrete porch, with a span of 6 m and a height of 3,5 m. the porch encircles the lawn and carries inside of its roof all infrastructure (electricity, heating, internet) necessary to the dormitories and to the new facilities. The porch defines the space of the lawn and at the same time, like a Roman aqueduct, brings infrastructure to all buildings. The porch provides a visible border to the main public space and defines the frame for all following transformations of the campus. The porch is the first element of the transformation of the Student City into a campus.

### *Landscape*

The attention to the present condition of the Student City, the commitment to keep as much as possible of the existing buildings implies an attention to the different episodes of micro-urbanity that we can detect through the Student City. Parallel to the large gesture opening up the lawn, a series of careful modifications take care of the smaller open spaces.

The terrain among the existing dormitories moves gently, producing a nuanced topography that can be used as the starting point for a multitude of urban conditions. Indeed the repetitive organization of the dormitories has to deal with the articulation of the original geography, so producing a variety of different conditions that generate various small-scale public spaces. These spaces – now mainly forgotten – can be re-activated and contribute to the production of a multi-layered landscape, including different places and open to multiple uses. Each little public space is re-activated. All dormitories next to the porch are connected to it by a new loggia directly linked to the restored ground floor. Each dormitory is announced onto the lawn by a pediment directly connected to the porch. Trees and benches are distributed in the open space to produce small, intimate clusters that complement the scale of the lawn.

### *User-friendly campus*

Physical and immaterial, graphic design and digital technologies are combined to provide a global experience of the campus. Here the perception involves urban and local scales. At urban level the definition of a consistent setting allows the recognition of a uniform episode, at local level signage and colours helps the orientation within the complex.

The dormitories have a latent value: they are simple volumes that can be easily be re-signified by painting them in new colours. Once eliminated the uneven decorations, the dormitories can be transformed into a colourful composition of abstract shapes. The colour code will follow an extremely simple fashion: all public, ground level parts will be white, all upper levels will be in bright colours. Whiteness will uniform all public elements, colours will uniformly cover all upper levels. The local orientation system will clarify the second perception level: all the buildings concentrated around the porch will be decorated with the campus distinctive colour (purple), while the other buildings will produce coloured clusters along their respective internal distribution axes. So Rruga A. Broci's yellow houses and Rruga P. Budi's red and blue houses will be easily identified. The dormitories will also be identified by the large painted word shtëpi (home).

The re-painting of the buildings will be inexpensive and easy to implement. Moreover, the re-painting will relate back to a tradition of re-painting rooted in Tirana's recent history. Our proposal actively learns from Tirana.

The signage system helps orientation: at the urban scale a large billboard over of the main entrance announces the campus to the visitors coming from Rruga e Elbasanit; at local scale a signage system marks the student zone and allows orientation with the support of digital technologies (the Tirana-campus-app).

### *Activities*

We propose the reorganization of the forces already at play in the Student City in order to generate the campus. The campus will become a space of intense, spontaneous and planned cultural activities, stimulating the connection with the city and the dialogue with the educational system. The students will play the principal role as the initiators of a cultural process that in the future will involve all the city and then, crossing the boundaries of Tirana, will be a call for international artistic and cultural institutions. Events will play a crucial role to bring