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CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

"Architects don't invent anything; they transform reality."

Alvaro Siza Vieira

03 | Background

The concept chapter sets out to formulate a conceptual scenario that will inform the response to the problem stated. The chapter will consider the conceptual approach developed from the architectural argument and informants as described and presented in the previous chapter. It will take into account the contribution article (refer to Appendix A) and structured argument to formulate a framework to inform the conceptual scenario and ultimately the design. The implementation of the conceptual scenario will be explained diagrammatically in terms of how the project will go about implementing the conceptual scenario to create an architecture that conserves.

03_2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is approached by setting out the problem and objectives as stated in chapter 1. It considers the argument approach structure as a basis for the conceptual framework. The consideration of the two realms, nature and urban, in relationship within the in-between, is continued from the argument to structure the framework.

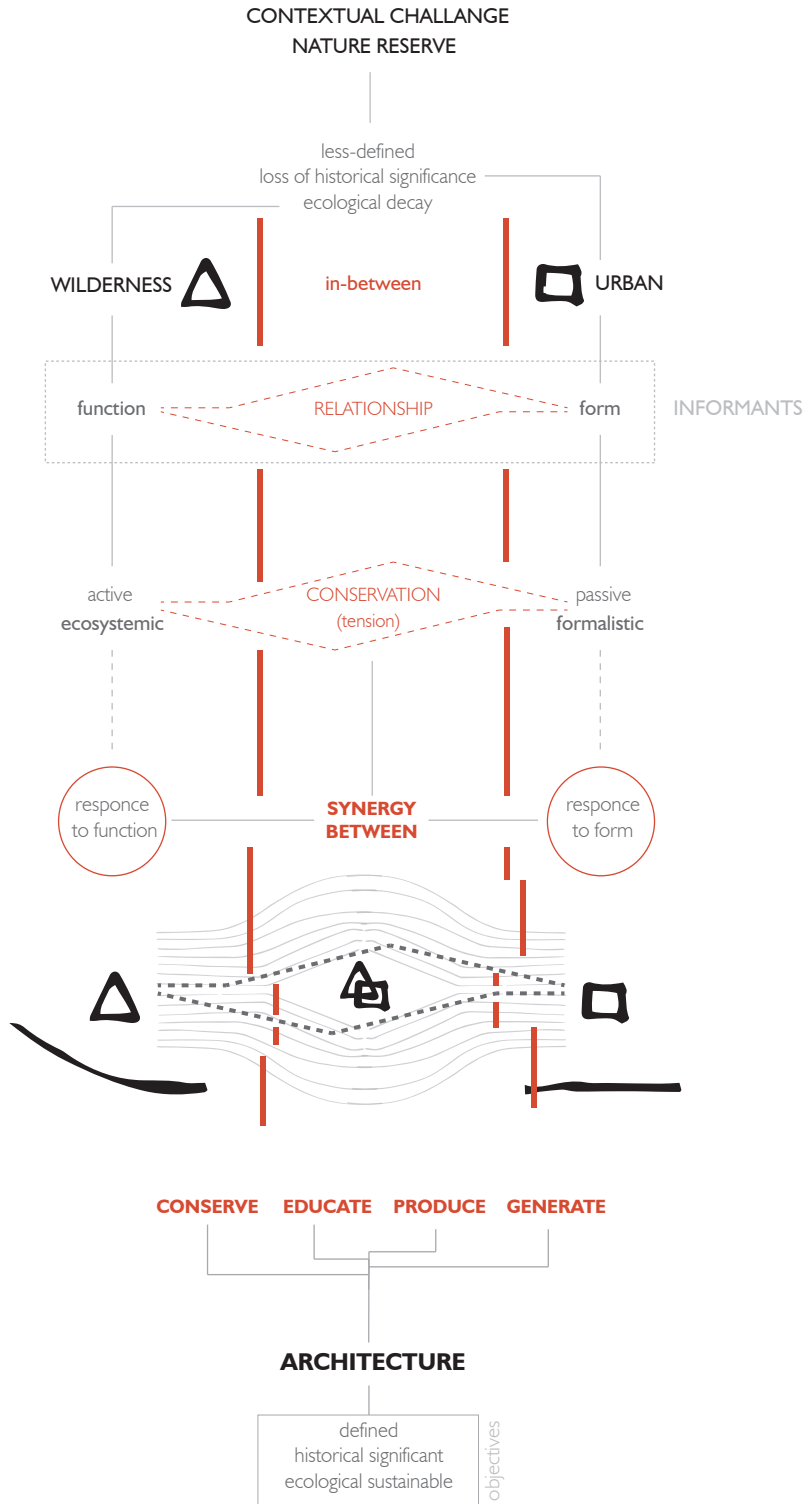
The argument approach structure categorizes three main problems, i.e. loss of historical significance, less-defined nature of the landscape and ecological decay as the main challenges faced by the WNR. To address these three challenges the argument assigned theoretical approaches to address these challenges. These approaches structured the form and function of the project and are based on the in-between relationship that exists between these two elements of architecture. The conceptual framework recognizes these two elements and the tension that exists between them as the first step towards formulating a conceptual approach. It investigates the similarities in terms of objectives that form and function set out to achieve the response. This investigation resulted in a strong objective consideration of protection without disturbing the connected relationship that exists between nature and urban. It also illustrated how the functional and formal informants presented an opportunity to con-

tinue the historical layers of the site in a new form. The formal consideration wants to protect and educate while the functional consideration wants to harvest and produce. A tension is born. According to Pluto Panoussis (2017), all art and architecture are constructed on a tension between elements and without these tensions art (or architecture) can't be created. He explains this with an example of two lines and where they cross. As soon as the two lines cross a highlighted point is presented. At this point, an interest is sparked and the art is born. Tension creates interest, that formulates art.

The conceptual framework (fig 86) recognizes the tension between the functional and formal informants developed from the challenges faced. This occurs where they meet in the in-between of nature and urban. This area of tension is where the WNR presents the opportunity to create architecture and formulate a relationship that will benefit both realms of nature and urban in forms of conservation, i.e. nature in the conservation of its ecology and urban in the conservation of the heritage and history.

At the meeting point, these two responses interact to form a synergy. The synergy creates an architecture that conserves both realms' interests, while also educating, producing and generating to the benefit of both the natural and urban environment. This synergy in the in-between sets the scene as a conceptual idea, one where the in-between becomes a divider that benefits both nature and urban by using resources from both.

Fig_86 (Right): Conceptual framework diagram (Author 2017).



03_3 Design Concept

Introduction

From the conceptual framework, the idea that a synergy in the in-between, between nature and urban, can achieve the objectives of definition and conservation, the concept investigated architectural elements that relate best to protection and definition. Architectural elements considered were the roof, floor, and wall. The roof provides protection between space and sky. This protection layer is placed above the user and holds a relationship that is vertical. This relationship is distant from the horizontal relationship between nature and urban that is present on site and gives less definition to the in-between space. The floor resulted in the same vertical relationship as the roof but related more to nature and urban as the user was grounded in nature even though divided from it by the floor. The third element, the wall presented the best representation of division and protection while holding a relationship with urban and nature. The wall as an element to define space and protect nature from urban and urban form nature showed the most potential. This idea was taken further to define the wall as divider that uses and produces from both realms; a wall that holds a relationship to both nature and urban without placing one above the other.

The wall as conceptual idea can be used further to connect the two realms in the in-between. Either with openings and divisions or with visual elements such as windows. This opportunity made the conceptual idea stronger in the objective to respond to the challenge in defining while protecting and in becoming the new conservator between nature and urban without dividing the two realms completely. The idea that the wall can be the partition between nature and urban that produces and benefits both were considered. The concept can be stated as the prolific, to produce many offspring, partition, to divide, structured in the in-between to conserve nature and urban significances.

To implement this concept a conceptual scenario was developed to structure the idea in terms of the argument and objectives of the conceptual challenge.

Conceptual Scenario

Urban protected areas are under threat from ecological and historical decay due to little to no awareness of the significance of these sites. The fence as partition between wilderness and urban have forced these two contextual environments into separate ways, creating an in-between space. The separation is currently causing a lack of interaction resulting in the protected area not gaining sustainable economic resources to keep the site from deteriorating. The project conceptually sets out to form a prolific partition between urban and wilderness that conserves the natural in economic resources (program) and preserves the historical in adaptation of historical layers (form). Addressing the challenges by synergizing the two contextual informants and their relationships into a single facility that protects the ecological while preserving the essence of the historical. The architecture becomes the new partition as contextual conservator situated in the in-between.

Fig_87 (Right): Conceptual poster (Author 2017).

THE PROLIFIC PARTITION

conserve educate produce generate



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03_3 Concept Implementation

Conceptual implementation considers the conceptual scenario and sets out a basis to implement this scenario onto the site and formulate a response to the hypothesis. The implementation consists of a four-phased linear process that creates the synergy within the prolific partition to conserve nature and urban.

The first phase of the implementation process considers the current and is categorized as investigation into the current state of the site (fig 88). It relates to the initial investigation done at the site as explained in the contribution article (see Appendix A) and with the informants. It was found that urban and nature are divided and only a single-entry point is present. The two realms are functioning as two parts and little interaction is present. The partition was evident and no synergy could be achieved with the current situation on site. This phase of the project is explained with the investigation and problem statement. It also formulated the research questions and objectives of the project.

The second phase, division, addresses the need for an interaction point between the two realms to synergize. It is defined by the word possibilities. It sets out to divide the two realms further than was found in phase one by defining space between them. It places objects into the landscape that spark an interest between the two realms and propose possible intervention point within the divide. This phase in the project is presented by the preliminary design stages that are derived from the conceptual scenario. It is a conceptual consideration and only the development showcases these possibilities. The design at this stage is not meant to be built but only considers multiple responses to the conceptual scenario and the possibilities for responses that exist.

The third phase considers the trigger element to start the synergy between nature and urban. At this stage, the context has been developed into a space that has two elements on either side of the in-between space. The trigger element is placed

into the in-between space and the process of synergy is activated. This stage has defined spaces and the form and architectural language are present. It also presents the function and relationships between them. This is the stage where a synthesis of all the investigations and possibilities are tested against one another. It continues into the working of the systems and how the architecture will present itself within the context. At the end of this phase, the architectural design as the response to the argument is finished and starting its life cycle as conservation facility.

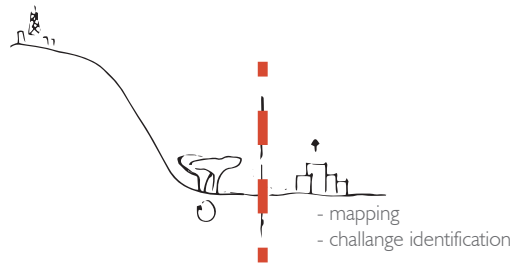
The fourth and last phase is defined as the synergy phase and as the conservator stage. This is when the architectural design has been completed and the response to the argument has become functional. The result in terms of the argument is tested and the architecture shows its findings in terms of functionality. An indication of success is present at the start of this phase and the project can be concluded even though the result is a continuous process. The synergy between nature and urban to conserve both is the ultimate objective of this phase and ties into the objective of the project. The conclusion will be based on an anticipated result that will be formulated at the end of the trigger phase. This conclusion will be the start of the synergy phase and the architectural response, within its lifetime if ever built, will finally conclude the project in term of synergy.

Fig_88 (Right): Conceptual implementation process diagram (Author 2017).

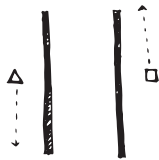


- INVESTIGATION
- single entry
 - divided
 - detached
 - functioning as two

current

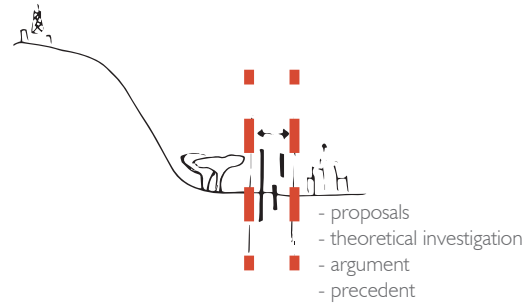


- mapping
- challenge identification

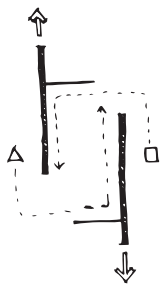


- POSSIBILITIES
- open divide
 - spark interest
 - in-between relationship
 - proposals

division

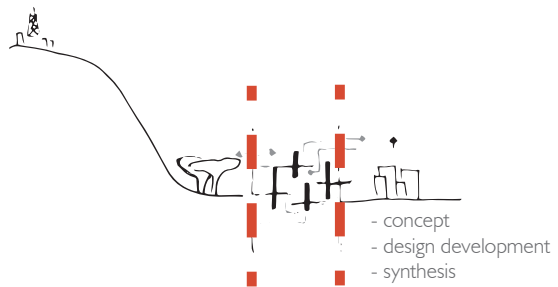


- proposals
- theoretical investigation
- argument
- precedent

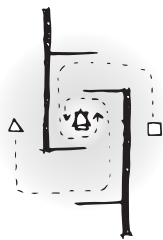


- IMPLEMENTATION
- improve nature
 - build form
 - continue interest
 - start facilities

trigger

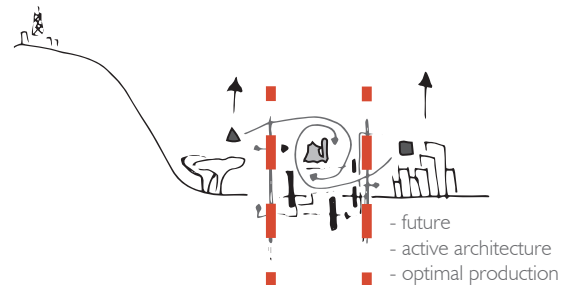


- concept
- design development
- synthesis



- CONSERVATOR
- user interaction
 - sustain interest
 - operational facilities
 - synergy

synthesis



- future
- active architecture
- optimal production

03_4 Alternative Conceptual Influence

The creation of form is based on the phased approach of the conceptual implementation. It considers the four phases of the conceptual implementation and develops a process to inform the response to the argument where the concept or informants lack. The idea is to generate a conceptual filler for the gaps left by the concept or the formal/functional informants when the design is developed. This consideration makes sure the whole design is developed from the conceptual considerations where concept or informants lack.

The gap is filled by utilizing the four phases as starting points to formulate a formal response. The first phase of current considers the current natural and urban context. It investigates influences from these two realms that can be utilized for informing the design. These elements are identified within the context. The second stage takes these elements and analyses them to understand the relationship to the conceptual scenario and how they can be interpreted to inform the architectural response. The element is then captured and structured into a possible informant that can be utilized. This informant must hold a connection to the objectives of the argument and if possible, relate to the objectives of the conceptual scenario. The informant is then subjected to an essence reduction process in the final phase and only this essence as an informant is used where the gap is present. This phase ensures that the informants and conceptual scenario keep the upper hand in formal response.

Fig_89 (Right): Additional conceptual framework diagram (Author 2017).

