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A sustainable future shaped like a bowl

Future urban life relies on the appreciation of existing qualities, cyclic conditions, movement patterns and mobilised diversity. In Årstafältet a park with a bowl shape illustrates the ambition to convert linear thinking into a circular logic is proposed.

Today, Årstafältet is awaiting a new identity. The surrounding infrastructure has been repositioned and sociological and cultural conditions have redefined the needs for this open space with its variable qualities. Its key location in the belt of suburbs just south of the Stockholm city centre calls for architectural solutions, which merge existing qualities with an energizing and sustainable development scheme.

The project is based on an accessible agenda of sustainability and a mediated understanding of cyclic conditions, communicated at a large scale by the vast bowl that encircles a variety of zones that respond to the mutual needs of man and nature. The design process is driven by a vision of Årstafältet as a healing epicentre of the area. Therefore, the proposal includes zones for property development that would contribute to social integration, as well as an expansion of public transportation. A new light railway and a web of cycling and walking paths would reinforce the flow between the housing areas, while facilitating access to the park. Also, further development of railway traffic for transportation to and from the wholesale trade zone that dominates the southwest side of Årstafältet is pro-

posed in order to reduce heavy traffic. This local development of cycling routes and rail traffic will have positive effects at a regional level. For example, there is a great need to make cycling a safe alternative for journeys between the immediate suburbs and central Stockholm.

With few trees, a creek and the historical remains of a route across the park, the character of the field inspires the landscape design. The conditions of the vital and important birdlife of Årstafältet are improved with the introduction of wetlands as part of a water purification cycle. The wetland at the centre of the park connects the grey water treatment fields with a stretch of ponds of purified water, which become the main focus of the visitors' park experience. The shoreline has different characteristics on each side – a wooden pier along one side, and a cultivated lakeside along the other – for playing, sunbathing, strolling and meeting at for example the urban farm café, the ornithology centre and the playground. Other wildlife is taken into consideration in the eco-duct that allows access from the surrounding areas via a "green bridge". Among the distinguishing design features in the park, the "solar forest" presents a glimmering view to be

experienced almost as land art, equally inciting from a distance as from the park perspective.

The existing garden plots that effectively form a sheltering borderline towards the heavy traffic on the northeast side are expanded to an urban farming zone with an array of cultivation plots and a small-scale open-air market for local produce. The sustainable agenda permeates this proposal on all levels, as illustrated by the bowl that circumscribes the field as a reference to the organic and human lifecycle. The edges of the bowl also serve as the architectural backbone for localisation of recycling and reuse facilities, among other activities. Where the edge line rises, a grassy slope is formed on the inside of the bowl, while space is carved out to form studios and halls, easily accessible from the park sides. A recycling central, a second hand market and workshops for reparation, reuse and craft production, are located on the bowl's edge facing the existing recycling plant in Östberga.

The Årstafältet project allows and promotes the co-existence of the old and the new, enrolled in a carefully laid out web of communication and connection paths, and an open-ended collaborative plan for a sustainable future.

Nya Årstafältet Competition, Stockholm, Sweden

Architects: LOLA architecture & landscape (Sweden) in collaboration with architects

Habiter Autrement: SKA (France/Switzerland) and engineers from Transsolar (Germany)

and Structor Mark (Sweden).



Top: View from the centre of the park, displaying the main concept of fields and wetlands, with its rich wildlife of birds, clean water and biodiversity.

Bottom left: The park project is based on an understanding of cyclic conditions, communicated by the vast bowl shape that encircles a variety of zones and activities.

Right: Årstafältet is a key source of biodiversity. The conditions of the wildlife of Årstafältet are improved by the introduction of wetlands as part of a water purification cycle.

Bottom right: View from southeast, where reuse and recycling facilities are grouped with related activities, like the artist village, vintage market, bio power plant and energy storage.

Photos: LOLA, LOLA / HA:SKA

