Net Point
Civic center virtual network, Sortavala, Russia

Summary and appraisal by the jury

The project presents a network of “real virtuality” centers in small towns across Russia including Sortavala (Cesvaine) near the border with Finland, in an effort to put them on the map. The connection “Points” are multipurpose buildings equipped with modern communication technology, providing the possibility of video-conferences, spreading music from a concert hall into the streets, holding meetings or lectures. It involves people in real communication by virtual interaction with its own citizens and with inhabitants of other towns. By participating in this network, small towns will raise awareness of their own values and reinforce the identity of their citizens.

Planet: Buildings of Net Point will be located in regions with different climates. Therefore in the project recommendations which will be the same for all Points are developed. These recommendations concern orientation of the building, use of solar and wind energy, use of wood as the main material, configuration of public and technical places, and also the main architectural accents of the building.

Prosperity: Development of the public centers is, first of all, a task of a town. Therefore public financing of construction is presumed. The main sponsor can become the large social network which would make the decision of a new stage of its development in real, instead of virtual space. The new stage planned to be taken both from the town budget, and from visitors who can pay for staying hourly or get the unlimited-stay card for a month (by analogy to Internet traffic payment). Use of eco-technologies will allow minimized expenses on work of buildings.

Sustainability concept

Progress: The Net Point project presents a network of public centers in small towns. The Points are multipurpose buildings of which creation is of “real virtuality” – a space in the building which by the use of video-conference can change itself: turning, for example, from a concert hall into town streets view or into a lecture hall. In this network of “real virtuality” the user is not only specific individual, but also the town community. As a profile the town presents to other towns its features and interests. It posts photos, holds online concerts and seminars which are prepared by inhabitants. Development of Internet technologies gives more opportunities for communication that will allow Net Point to tell more about itself in the future and to learn more about other towns, for example, by conducting one-to-one tours.

Further authors

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Project data

Contest Architecture, building civil engineering
Client Sortavala, a small Russian town
Background Research project

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Image 1: Place: the dominant architecture in small towns are panel houses up to 5 floors high. Their simple forms prompt use of constructivism stylistics in public center.

Image 2: Main material, configuration of public and technical places, and also the main architectural accents of the building.

Image 3: Connection between two towns by using of video conference.

Image 4: Cultural diversity of the people of Russia and communication instead of monotony and dissociation.

Image 5: Unheated part of the building.

Image 6: Real virtuality: a space inside the public center turns into street of another town.


Image 8: Interaction of eco-technologies.


Image 11: People: For inhabitants of the small towns the Internet means mostly just communication and entertainment. It harms town life because people become more and more separated and cease to appreciate real society in which they live. It leads to economic and social problems. Development of Net Points helps to involve people in real communication in the town by virtual interaction with other towns, by public meetings and leisure activities. As the project is created to show identity of each of the towns, in the future it will help to keep cultural diversity of the people of Russia.

Image 12: Social network which would make the decision of the new stage of its development in real.

Image 13: Payment from visitors.