Preserving natural and historic heritage by developing public space

Mercado Embarcadero Xochimilco (Pier Market Xochimilco)

LOCATION

Xochimilco is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Santa María Nativitas Zacapa, a former traditional town of Xochimilco, is now part of the larger metropolis area of Mexico City. This settlement is associated with one of the two remaining lakes in the basin of Mexico, a system which originally comprised five distinct lakes surrounding the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan (1502 to 1521).

SELECTING A STUDY AREA

Santa María Nativitas Zacapa

The town's natural environment and cultural heritage are both at risk due to pollution, informal settlements and urban expansion. This is one of the last areas where remnants of the lake with a direct connection to the city are to be found. Xochimilco is also one of the city precincts with the lowest social welfare index, so an intervention is urgently needed to preserve the natural and cultural resources and increase social and economic wellbeing.

The “trajinera” is the aquatic transport used in Xochimilco for public, private, tourist and urban services. The market has a relation with its natural environment by using wetlands to clean grey waters and permitting passive ventilation with open space.

The project rescues an area catalogued in UNESCO’s World Heritage List, while improving market and pier conditions and increasing public green areas, the town’s market value will rise. This aligns with Mexico City’s support for public space and landscape seem to unify as the project blends naturally with its immediate environment, descending with the land towards the water.

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DESIGN STRATEGIES

Densifying urbanized land

The project rescues and improves numerous urbanized parcels of agricultural land to urban areas. This would make it possible to reserve land to grow an edible forest and build workshops to teach new generations how to grow produce using traditional cultivation techniques.

Using topography to unify the pattern of streets and canals

Linking cityscape and waterscape. The Master Plan focuses on recovering Xochimilco’s traditional chinampa cultivation systems aided by state-of-the-art technology, which is necessary to constituting a replicable strategy for similar conditions in the numerous situations where the city and the lake are in contact, a likely situation due to uncontrolled urban sprawl.

Achieving environmental efficiency

The project takes advantage of the city’s most important green space and waterfront to develop several linear buildings which link the urban area to the canals. Architecture and landscape seem to unify as the project blends naturally with its immediate environment, descending with the land towards the water.

Increasing the area’s market value

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