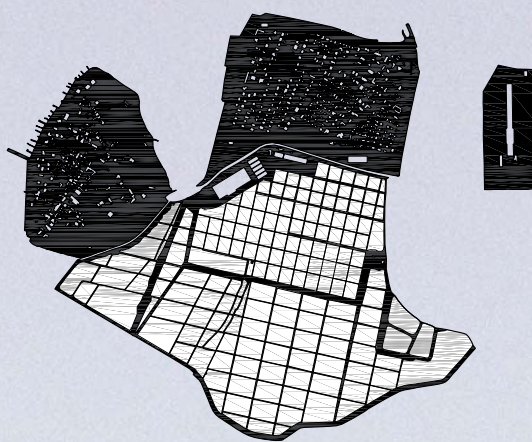


soft buffers

four places

at first, there was a feeling of familiarity. the communities that we saw were okay - they didn't need much help. we felt the instinct to bring them closer and envelop them, so they could become what they are: comfortable places.

four entities exist together, each with its own character, linked with both old and new dependencies. there's the old town of nin, an island, productively coexisting with the saltworks for centuries. next to it, an ordinary settlement of ždrijac with some ordinary coastal troubles. a bit away from everything else, there's the brickyard, a lonely monument to a past life. we saw these places and their connections as something to observe, reinforce, modify.



the systems exist within their frames - some existing, some proposed - which emphasize the identity of a place.

the island of nin and the saltworks already possess that kind of particularity; they've been building it for a very long time. nin, with its protective walls and compact nature, projects an image of a place. same can be said of the saltworks: an ancient grid is reassuring.

the brick factory, an artefact of past productivity, lost its purpose as a place that sustains the community. in spite of being an important toponym, it seems like it became a lonesome building, and we felt like it needed a new chance. the new landscape softly surrounds the building, making it feel a part of something again: the wetland is a system that serves the residents, and it gives the brickyard an opportunity to become a vital part of that process.

ždrijac, as a typical coastal suburb, struggles with representation and identity. because of that, it was crucial to see how it can be validated in its existing state. we were interested in seeing the values of the place and exploring their potential. the neighborhood finds itself inside a constructed forest, protected but free. inside, densification occurs, in an attempt to re-establish closeness in ždrijac.

the two ordered pairs establish new cycles and landscapes, but ultimately perpetuate everyday life in nin.

dense togetherness

ždrijac is good enough. by walking through it, by looking at the houses and the roads and the yards, we see spaces that are nice and filled with ordinary life. that is something to preserve.

instead of searching for a new typology, we're looking at the existing structures and the way they're coexisting. seeing the cozy spatial relations of ždrijac made us want to mimic them.

narrow, unstructured roads, framed with plants or fences that people chose because they like them, seem like the perfect size for the built environment that they serve - bringing houses closer to each other.

the sprawl that happens in ždrijac is a semi-controlled one, defined by a soft frame and a simple rule that can be interpreted in many ways. we want to encourage a nice kind of density, the kind where you feel at home in your neighborhood. in order for that to happen, a border is crucial: by enclosing areas of construction, we're preserving unbuilt space while eliminating the carelessness of building anywhere. the existing roads spread out, making room for more small houses.

some areas of ždrijac are left empty, but not in the capacity of a square or some 'official' public space, simply as a breather.

the houses that are already here serve as a basis for setting up the building parameter. what we liked a lot was the ever-present outdoor space: a terrace, a balcony, a loggia, even a gazebo. these are the buffer zones between the conditioned indoors and the (sometimes) hostile outdoors. by boosting such spaces, we're trying to eliminate the need for excessive energy consumption indoors. these elements are cooling devices.

another crucial element is the appearance of the auxiliary building. these small sheds vary in size, and are used in many ways.

we wanted to establish a correlation between these two house elements, and make them almost inevitable. without them, a house is lonely and anonymous: nowhere to expand, nowhere to shrink, no space to occupy.

the most important rule:

a house must have an open space of any kind: if an auxiliary building appears, it can be only as big as the open space, but not bigger. a house can consist of the open space and auxiliary space alone.

the constructed forest gently envelops and supports the neighborhood. it is an air conditioning device, an image of a shelter, a colonnade to walk by, a container for public facilities (such as the saltworks museum, parking, playgrounds or sports courts), or simply a soft border.

the forest is also a way to deal with climate change since trees serve as natural carbon storage. the proposed tree canopy surrounding ždrijac plays a vital role in keeping the neighborhood cool, as well as in protecting it from harsh winds.

the territory is easily filled with activities and services during periods of maximum crowdedness; during the hibernation months, it is a space that lets itself be reclaimed by the leftover residents in whichever ways it suits them.

familiar landscape

the area of the brickyard - already a landmark - becomes a constructed wetland, a purifying agent for the thickly populated ždrijac. the proposed waste management strategy doesn't aim to build a structure of any kind, but instead to establish a territory. this way, it can preserve unbuilt space, while simultaneously creating a new landscape that fits with the existing terrain. the vegetated wetland is, also, a significant climate change buffer, as it's one of the most effective carbon sinks.

the size of the wetland is determined by the maximum number of habitants in ždrijac at the peak of the tourist season (approx. 3 m² per resident). the wetland adapts to the found environment, becoming more than a device. in the areas of minimal intrusions, it becomes the familiar grid with a clear purpose; in 'wilder' places, with trees, paths, and other obstacles, it acts more like a natural landscape.

the constructed wetland sets up a new tradition of dealing with human waste - turning it into potential for creating a new biome. the wastewater treatment produces a byproduct of sludge. it needs to be collected and dried, after which it is mostly used as a fertilizer. this cycle is reminiscent of the brickyard's previous purpose: harvesting raw material from its surroundings, processing it, and giving back to the community.