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Str. Eksadaktylou 5, 546 35 Thessaloniki, Greece
Tel./Fax: +30,2310.248272 • e-mail: grafima@grafima.com.gr
www.grafima.com.gr

Sustainable landscape design; key ideas for effective implementation

A. Nikologianni^{1*}; K. Moore¹ and P. Larkham²

¹School of Architecture and Design; ADM; Birmingham City University; B4 7BD; Birmingham; UK

²School of Engineering and the Built Environment; CEBE; Birmingham City University;
B4 7BD; Birmingham; UK

* Corresponding author: E-mail: anastasia.nikologianni@mail.bcu.ac.uk; Tel +44 7557386272

Abstract

This paper forms part of a wider research looking at pioneer landscape strategies across Europe; examining the extent to which low carbon; sustainability and spatial quality can be delivered effectively on urban and strategic scale; and covers examples from the 'Landscape Observatory' (Spain); the 'Room for the River' and 'New Dutch Waterline' (Netherlands); and the 'HS2/HS2LV' project (UK).

The Netherlands and the UK case studies; presented at this paper; illustrate effective ways where the concepts of sustainability and spatial quality are integrated in the design framework and the impact this has on the way we view the landscape and the region. Both focusing on successful implementation of low carbon design and planning; they reveal key ideas and processes to achieve sustainable development. The Netherlands case study consisted by two large scale landscape projects; the Room for the River and the New Dutch Waterline; demonstrates how the idea of landscape; low carbon and design quality can shape the effective implementation of urban and regional landscape schemes. The Room for the River is a landscape adaptation programme addressing a high-risk climate issue such as flooding; while the Dutch Waterline aims to preserve the existing landscape and historical infrastructure in a sustainable way. The HS2/HS2LV; UK's major infrastructure project; played a significant role at looking how effective visuals can convey a sustainable vision; the impact this might have had for the cities and the way design ideas and possibilities change in strategic landscape schemes.

The paper concludes with key lessons learned by the examined landscape projects. They relate to communication; timing; integration of management and design vision. The case studies have shown that effective implementation requires good communication and an in-depth understanding of how the concepts of sustainability and spatial quality are expressed. Policies; and legislation as part of the administration phase of urban and regional landscape schemes are also considered significant for landscape based developments.

Keywords: sustainability; low carbon; climate adaptation; landscape design; spatial quality