

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROCESS OF A PRIVATE EVENTS VENUE GARDEN IN IASI COUNTY, ROMANIA

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### Abstract

*Due to urban acceleration and current social and economic development, gardens have begun to receive increased attention from society. Just as therapeutic gardens can be designed for hospitals or green relaxation spaces for employees, gardens can also be designed for event locations. Private event venues have begun to pay more attention to green space around buildings to provide attendees with green areas to relax and socialize. More and more event locations are located on the city's outskirts, thus offering the opportunity to create perspectives with natural views. In the present work, it was desired to design a private garden for events with multiple purposes (civil weddings, christening parties, marriage parties, corporate parties, etc.), in the Iasi city, Romania, on the shores of Lake Ciric II. The design style adopted had sinuous forms and minimal intervention on the existing tree vegetation. The proposed vegetation was represented by deciduous trees that will provide decoration through shape and color and by shrubs grouped in compositions that will provide decoration in all seasons.*

**Key words:** *landscape design, private garden, multifunctional garden, design process, events venue.*

### INTRODUCTION

Landscape design is a multifaceted field that involves the artful composition of hardscape and softscape elements to create aesthetically pleasing and functional outdoor spaces.

According to Hansen (2010), problem-solving through horticultural science and spatial organization is at the core of *landscape design*. The goal is to create outdoor "rooms" that can be utilized for various purposes.

Beaulieu (2020) describes *landscape design* as an art that involves arranging the features of an area of land with both aesthetic and practical considerations in mind. Hardscape elements like pavers and softscape elements like plants are essential components often used to achieve the desired effect. This approach enables the designer to create visually stunning outdoor spaces that are functional.

Eckbo and Clifford (2019) note that *landscape design* is vital in enhancing the settings of buildings, public areas, recreational areas, and parks. It is a decorative art closely related to architecture, city planning, and horticulture. By incorporating various design principles and scientific knowledge, landscape designers can create outdoor spaces that are visually appealing

and serve practical purposes.

Overall, *landscape design* is a complex field that involves the integration of multiple disciplines to create outdoor spaces that are both aesthetically pleasing and functional. Through the use of hardscape and softscape elements, designers can create outdoor spaces that are both beautiful and practical, enhancing the overall setting of the built environment.

Rapid urbanization can lead to many problems, including air, water, and soil pollution, social and economic problems, and loss of green spaces (Zhang et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2021). One way to solve these problems is by creating green spaces through landscape design to meet the needs of urban amenities and quality of life (Mouratidis, 2021; Hangan et al., 2018; Grecu et al., 2018).

Nowadays, the different forms of urban green areas represent one of the essential elements of the built environment, directly affecting physical activity, health, and mortality (Dascalu et al., 2018; Grecu et al., 2018; Vujčić Trkulja and Tomićević, 2018). A form of urban green space is a forest near or in a city. These forests (called urban forests) provide citizens various economic, ecological, environmental, and social benefits (Lee and Kim, 2022; Gao, 2018).

Event companies give special attention to these urban forests because they offer many advantages: natural aesthetics for a ceremony and reception, breathtaking views, and ever-present vegetation in the wedding season gives the wedding a much more relaxed feel than a traditional ballroom.

The wedding celebration has many traditions and customs. In Romania, traditional weddings are a world in themselves: they start early in the morning and sometimes end the following day, passing through several essential stages and taking the family to different places. Modern weddings go for nature, relaxed ceremonies, and break out of traditional patterns. Garden ceremonies ideally suit couples with a great love for the outdoors and endless styling opportunities for a garden wedding (Boangiu, 2021; Yarushina, 2021).

Gardens at event venues can also be designed with multiple functions, just as therapeutic gardens can be created for hospitals or corporate green spaces can be designed for employee relations purposes (Campbell et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2018; Naderi and Shin, 2008).

This paper presented a case study of the landscape design process of a private garden for events with multiple purposes (civil weddings, christening parties, marriage parties, corporate parties, etc.), in Iasi city, Romania, on the shores of Lake Ciric II.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The targeted site has an area of 4516 m<sup>2</sup> and is located in Iasi city, Romania, on the shore of Lake Ciric II, with coordinates 47°11'05.0"N 27°36'03.1"E (Figure 1).

The Ciric Park Forest is located in the northeastern part of the city at a distance of 6 km from the city center. Covering an area of 252 hectares, the Ciric forest, whose planting began in 1936 and was completed in 1963, consists of native and exotic trees and includes tourist cabins, cottages, restaurants, access roads on both sides of the lakes, and a camp for children. Being a popular leisure place for the inhabitants of Iasi, this area was rehabilitated in 2011-2014 in order to increase its attractiveness. The surrounding forest offers a perfect setting for activities such as paintball, tree climbing (adventure park), or wall climbing. The range of restaurants and the number of people

spending summer weekends here has grown (Humelnicu, 2022; Nicoara et al., 2009).



Figure 1. Project site location (Google Maps, 2023)

The climate in the Iasi County area has a pronounced temperate-continental character, integrating organically with the natural conditions of Moldavia. The range of temperatures ranges from the absolute maximum (40°C) in July to the absolute minimum (-30°C) in January. The multiannual average temperature for the Iasi area is 10.6°C, minimum of 8.1°C in January maximum of 28.4°C in July. The average annual precipitation in the Iasi agricultural ecosystem is 529 mm (Spatareanu et al., 2018).

The list of plants (Table 1) was carefully chosen according to their ecological requirements (light, water, soil), the way they are combined, the decorative elements (habit, shape, color of leaves, flowers, and fruit), and the possibility of decorating over a more extended period because a garden must have a decorative effect all year round.

As this type of garden is aimed at the private sector, other aspects such as the concept and theme of the location, the type of customers, and the types of events to be held in the location will be taken into account.

The design process of the landscape project was based on the following steps: inventory and survey of the site and its immediate surroundings; analysis and evaluation; concept and design; control, revision, and approval; final design project (Dinç and Gül, 2022; Design Commission for Wales, 2016; Turner, 2014; Booth and Hiss, 2011; Filor, 1994). All design principles were considered (Booth and Hiss, 2011; Hansen, 2010).

The design programs used in the project were AutoCAD 2D for sketching and technical plans,

SketchUp for 3D modeling, Lumion for rendering, and Photoshop for image post-processing.

Table 1. List of proposed trees and shrubs

	Species name	QTY
Trees	<i>Prunus cerasifera</i> 'Nigra'	4
	<i>Rhus typhina</i> 'Dissecta'	5
	<i>Salix matsudana</i> 'Tortuosa'	6
Shrubs	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i> 'Atropurpurea'	34
	<i>Buddleja davidii</i> 'Purple Prince'	8
	<i>Buddleja davidii</i> 'White Ball'	6
	<i>Chamaecyparis pisifera</i> 'Baby Blue'	10
	<i>Cornus alba</i> 'Argenteomarginata'	41
	<i>Cotinus coggygria</i> 'Royal Purple'	16
	<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>	32
	<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i> 'Ardens'	7
	<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i> 'Russian Violet'	5
	<i>Juniperus communis</i> 'Arnold'	34
	<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i> 'Glauca'	41
	<i>Juniperus sabina</i> 'Tamariscifolia'	19
	<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i> 'Blue Arrow'	32
	<i>Juniperus squamata</i> 'Blue Compact'	15
	<i>Penisetum alopecuroides</i> 'Little Honey'	34
	<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i> 'Russian Sage'	49
	<i>Picea pungens</i> 'Glauca Globosa'	6
<i>Pinus mugo</i> 'Mops'	63	
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> - hedge	147	
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i> 'Kathrine Havemeyer'	14	
<i>Tamarix ramosissima</i> 'Rubra'	13	
<i>Viburnum opulus</i> 'Roseum'	18	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Inventory and survey of the site and its immediate surroundings

In light of the intended purpose of the landscape design, which is to serve as a venue for various social events such as civil weddings, christening parties, wedding parties, and corporate events, the landscape architect established a set of objectives. These objectives include the development of an impressive main entrance, the creation of a thematic lounge area with dining facilities, the establishment of two areas specifically designed for civil weddings, the utilization of the gazebo and lighting poles from the previous location, the formation of plant compositions, and the establishment of lawn areas.

The site's vegetation comprises mature willow, black locust, beech, linden trees, dogwood hedges, and a limited number of rose and common yew bushes. A comprehensive inventory and survey were conducted to comprehend the site's limitations better, and the site's problem areas were identified. Figure 2 illustrates the site's relatively problematic areas considered during the design process.

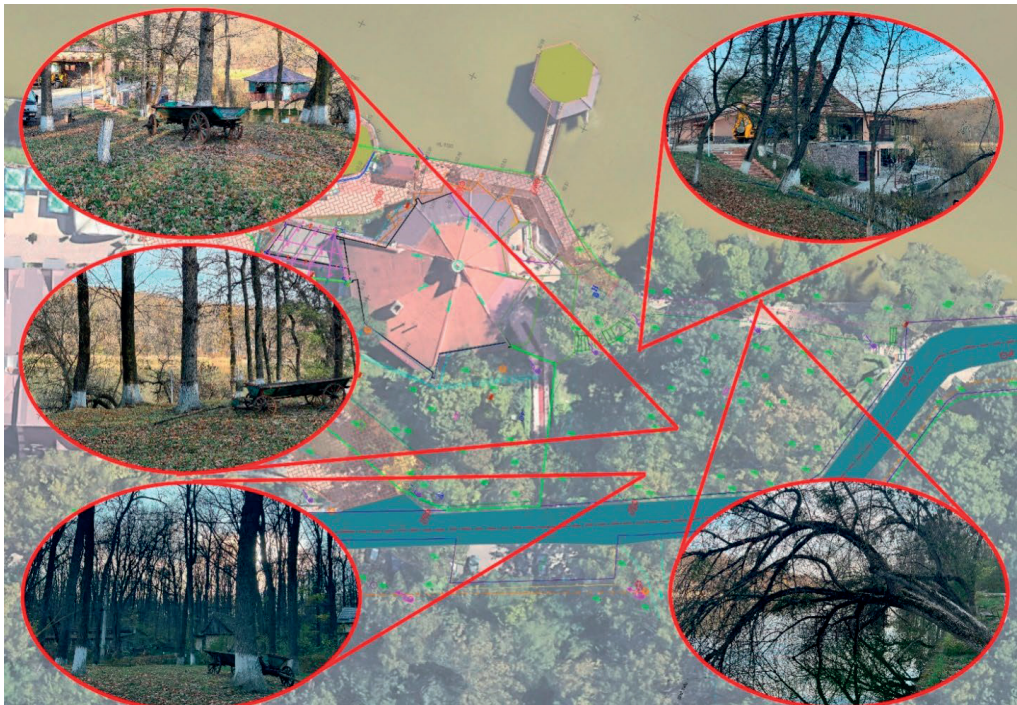


Figure 2. Inventory and survey of the site



An inventory of 66 trees has been conducted, revealing that the majority are mature and healthy with good growth patterns, providing ample shaded areas throughout the site. Nonetheless, a few older trees are at risk of collapsing due to rot or possess unsightly appearances. As a result, it has been determined that these problematic trees will need to be removed and replaced with either the same or a decorative species of tree, where feasible. This will mitigate safety concerns and maintain the site's aesthetic appeal.

### Analysis and evaluation

According to the purpose and objectives of the development, the functional diagram in Figure 3 was proposed.

a. Areas for civil weddings will be created on the existing pontoon and plateau within the site (Figure 3a).

b. The themed lounge area will be created close to the building to facilitate access for attendees and employees (Figure 3b).

c. Social areas will be created on the lakeshore to take advantage of the natural scenery on the opposite shore. Another social space will be built next to the primary access (Figure 3c).

d. The primary access will be created perpendicular to the building entrance. It will be provided with two alveoli at the property and building entrances (Figure 3d).

e. Lawn areas will be proposed in the regions intended to be frequented to provide an aesthetically pleasing and manicured appearance (Figure 3e).

f. The storage and employee access area will be screened.

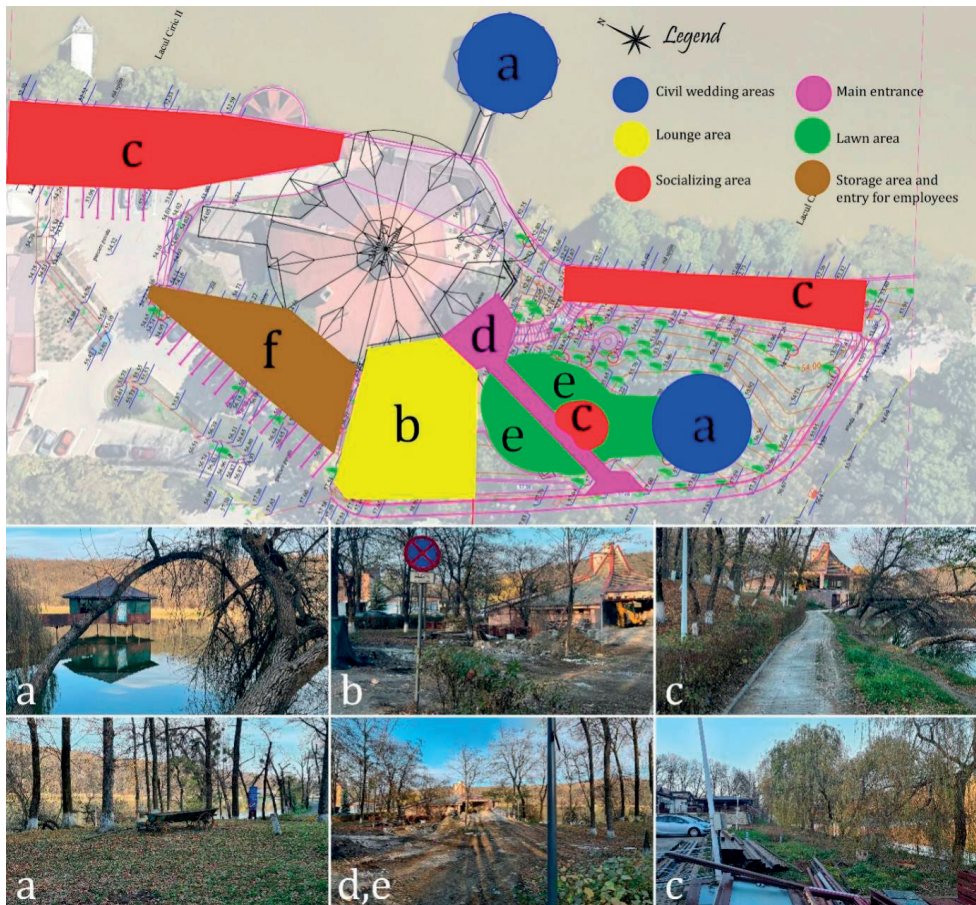


Figure 3. Documentation of the existing situation and proposed functional diagram

The new design concept of these buildings foresees sinuous shapes that recreate the contours of lotus flowers. An architectural firm will rehabilitate and revitalize the building and the pontoon. Two ballrooms are planned in the main building. On the ground floor, there will be the main ballroom with a capacity of 300 people, and on the basement, there will be a hall with half the capacity of the previous ballroom.

**Concept and design**

Previous research on the effectiveness of specific design elements in creating a relaxing and visually attractive outdoor space informed the design of the private events venue garden. A study by Deng et al., 2020 found that certain landscape types, elements, and components in urban parks can promote physiological and psychological restoration. These include the use of natural elements such as trees and water, as well as the incorporation of design elements such as winding paths and curved shapes. The study also found that the presence of various functional areas within the park, such as areas for relaxation and physical activity, can contribute to a positive overall experience for

visitors. By incorporating these elements into the design of the private events venue garden, the aim is to create a space that promotes restoration and relaxation for attendees.



Figure 4. Main entrance preliminary sketch

Based on the proposed functional diagram and owners' requirements, the first idea of the main entrance was sketched “freehanded” using Photoshop (Figure 4). The main entrance is highlighted by placing a red carpet and highlighting the route to the building with arches. These arches will also provide light during the night. A winding trail to the other proposed areas is also sketched.



Figure 5. Preliminary concept and design - plan view (original)

The initial concept for the layout involved incorporating the sinuous contours of the building into the green space design, resulting in a cohesive and harmonious arrangement (Figure 5).

Figure 6 provides visual representations of all the preliminary design renderings. An area for civil weddings has been created on the existing plateau area. This area is proposed



to be leveled to accommodate the gazebo from the previous location. This leveling also facilitates individual seating areas to allow attendees to view the civil ceremony.



Figure 6. Preliminary design renderings

The proposed lounge area consists of two sub-areas. The lounge sub-area close to the building benefits from an outdoor bar. Considering the modern style of restructuring of the building, this lounge area is composed of thematic modules following the four elements of nature: ground, air, water, and fire. The ground-level LED strips in specific colors highlight these elements. The lounge sub-area close to the property boundary is formed into two platforms. A smaller, round-shaped platform serves as a podium space for small wedding parties or as a stage for outdoor parties. The purpose of the second platform is to provide space for tables or as a dance floor.

Three main areas of socialization have been proposed, even if the whole site can be considered a social space.

The first area is located immediately next to the primary access. This area uses the lighting poles from the previous location with a modern-futuristic look. A swing with the same design accompanies these poles. The purpose of this area is to provide a fairy-tale setting for taking photographs.

The second area is located on the lakeshore. Here three alveoli are created to allow the placement of high bar tables. Curly willows (*Salix matsudana* 'Tortuosa') that provide decoration with their branches and architectural shape replace the old willows.

The design of the primary access was developed based on the initial sketch. The shape of the light arches was modified to reproduce the forms of lotus flower petals, the predominant shape in the new building design.

Along the entire length of the central alley, on the left side, a relatively large portion of the lawn has been proposed in the shape of an arc. Perimeter to this shape, five specimens of staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina* 'Dissecta') have been placed on the round side. These species will provide decoration throughout the year through their architectural form, the autumn leaves, and the red flowers that will remain on the branches during winter. The physical characteristics of the land, such as its location, size, surface area, shape, topography, plot, access to utilities, soil features, and local climate, were considered during the systematic planning of the plant arrangement on the site. This was an essential factor in ensuring the

appropriate selection of plants and their suitability to the site's environmental conditions (Pascu et al., 2022). Depending on the light available in the different areas of the garden, the plant compositions will be made according to this criterion.

The garden design will include specific shade-tolerant plant species in areas with more shade. Some examples of shade species that will be used in such areas are Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii* 'Atropurpurea'), summer lilac (*Buddleja davidii* 'Purple Prince'), Sawara cypress (*Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Baby Blue'), and smoke tree (*Cotinus coggygia* 'Royal Purple'). Other suitable plants for shaded areas include hostas, ferns, astilbes, and heucheras. These plants were chosen based on their ability to thrive in areas with limited direct sunlight and can enhance the aesthetic appeal of the shaded regions in a garden.

The chosen plants mainly provide decoration through leaves and habit, especially shrubs and subshrubs. To mask certain areas or provide privacy from the street, taller shrub species have

been proposed, species that will also offer decoration through flowers to liven up the whole design, such as summer lilac (*Buddleja davidii* 'Purple Prince' and 'White Ball'), smoke tree (*Cotinus coggygia* 'Royal Purple'), lilac (*Syringa vulgaris* 'Kathrine Havemeyer'), salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima* 'Rubra') and European cranberry bush (*Viburnum opulus* 'Roseum').

In addition to the listed shrubs, other plants that are suitable for sunny areas include perennial flowers such as orange coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm'), purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus') and woodland sage (*Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna').

### Control, revision, and approval

The control, revision, and approval process, including landscape design, is essential to any design project. As Nijhuis and de Vries (2019) noted, this process is critical for ensuring that the design meets the needs and expectations of the beneficiaries involved.



Figure 7. Final design project - plan view

In the case of the garden design project, the feedback received highlights the importance of revisiting the preliminary design to ensure that it aligns with the beneficiaries' expectations. The desired changes, such as adding more vegetation, reducing terrace shapes, and

eliminating themed alveoli, indicate the beneficiaries' preferences for a more natural and simplistic design.

Moreover, the desire for an additional access point to the upper terrace of the lounge area emphasizes the importance of considering the

user's needs and accessibility in the design process. Nijhuis and de Vries (2019) emphasize the importance of user-centered design, where the users' needs and preferences are considered throughout the design process.

In summary, the feedback received during the control, revision, and approval stage highlights the importance of revisiting the preliminary design to ensure it meets the beneficiaries' needs and preferences. Incorporating user-centered design principles and considering accessibility can improve the overall design's functionality and user experience.

### Final design project

The design of the lounge area underwent significant modifications following feedback from beneficiaries. The necessary improvements implemented were removing thematic elements and introducing a semicircular terrace for dining purposes (Figure 7). The preservation of existing healthy trees was prioritized in the design, with recommended pruning techniques aimed at rejuvenating tree crowns and eliminating dry branches. Replacing sick trees or those at risk of collapse with decorative trees was undertaken where necessary.

Despite the rigorous evaluation phases that preceded the design modifications, some elements only became apparent during implementation. These included soil impurities, significant level differences, large tree roots, and vegetation injury. As such, the design underwent further minor changes during the performance, with on-site assistance from the landscape engineer responsible for the project deemed necessary.

Given the dynamic nature of the design process and the need for careful oversight during implementation, the landscape engineer in charge of the project will be available to provide on-site service at critical implementation moments. An automatic irrigation system will also be installed throughout the landscape to ensure optimal plant health and growth.

### CONCLUSIONS

Designing a private events venue garden involves various factors, including the purpose of the events, location, existing vegetation, and

style. The entire design process should be carefully planned, with each step being essential and treated with great care and seriousness.

To achieve a beautiful and functional garden, the design should consider a sinuous style that follows the building's new design and blends harmoniously into the area's natural landscape. The existing vegetation should also be considered, and minimal intervention should be made. Where trees need to be removed, they should be replaced with trees of the same species or decorative trees.

The plant compositions in the garden should mainly consist of decorative species with leaves, while taller shrub species can provide decoration through flowers. The selection of plant species should be based on various criteria, such as suitability to the local climate, water requirements, and maintenance needs.

Research on similar projects has identified essential factors such as the use of native plants, the incorporation of water features, and the creation of multi-functional spaces. These factors should be incorporated into the design to achieve a beautiful and functional garden.

Overall, the design process of a private events venue garden requires a balance between functionality and aesthetics while considering the users' needs and preferences. Designers should also incorporate principles of sustainable design to create a garden that enhances the overall experience for event attendees.

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