

Adaptable Urbanism – Reappropriation of the Abandoned Military Camp "TAGARI" in Florina, Greece

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Abstract

In the present paper an effort will be made to examine strategies which can be used in tackling abandoned military sites, taking as an example the military camp "TAGARI" in Florina, Greece.

Taking into consideration the evolution of the urban space in Greece what can be assumed is that large quartering areas are integrated in the city's fabric. Consequently, the forsaken bases impose an extensive land with a peculiar character, due to their formal use [1].

Regarding to "TAGARI" camp, it is situated in a nodal point, disrupting the urban canvas, representing an impressive example of an enormous monofunctional enclave in the urban landscape. The coping strategy of the project is to integrate the former military site seamlessly into the complex urban fabric and create a new identity for the city. The idea is to engage the Department of Fine and Applied Arts by revitalizing the dilapidated infrastructure and activating the entire region as an open educational hub that interacts with the residents. The project doesn't offer a finished, static solution but approaches a design aspect which emerges from the reciprocally influencing factors that participate in the process which leads to an improvisational and adaptable urbanism. Finally, emphasis should be given in how the hierarchical structure of a military camp can be associated with the spontaneity of the proposed process.

Keywords:	Military camp, Urbanism, Reappropriation, Adaptable, Educational hub
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1. Introduction

This project highlights an indubitable trend that is now pervasive throughout architecture, namely the increasing focus of urban development on the re-use of existing sites. It also sets the question of abandoned camps which have to reinvent themselves, as their basic parameters have change. The military quarters offer the opportunity to compensate for the shortage of open space and simultaneously they could become a focal point of the surrounding areas. Furthermore, what are considered necessary are the respect and the preservation of the unstructured space and as a consequence the inclusion of existing buildings is required.

The forsaken military bases combine open space and building stock, thereafter they represent a canvas where new functional facilities can be derived. However, the existing infrastructures are an evidence of a past activity that had defined a part of the city life and they constitute a remarkable architectural reserve. Therefore, the abandoned shells form a separate chapter in the space management. Infrastructure with quartering destination and hierarchical structure of the military camp follows an architecture type which is subjected to the functional requirements and with a coping strategy they could integrate seamlessly into the complex urban fabric and create a new identity for the city.

Focusing on the evolution of the urban space in Greece what can be assumed is that large quartering areas are integrated in the city's fabric. Areas which at the time of their establishment were situated outside the city nowadays, following the urban extension and illegal building, they have become open spaces able to be re-used. Without doubt, the forsaken bases impose an extensive land with a peculiar character, due to their formal use, but their exploitation poses a major social and economical challenge [2] that is to be met with a long-term conversion strategy. On the other hand, these

camps constitute an important challenge whether the release from the current fragmentation in the urban fabric and their integration into local life would be achieved or not. Moreover, the current state of the Greek city (densely built) longs for a breath, an urban void, therefore the reuse of the existing building stock is an urgent need.

Taking into consideration the Greek policy of the urban planning and design concerning the forsaken military bases, what can be easily assumed is that many aspects are brought in the table but none institutional tool has been activated. However, the questioning that has not been explored is that the camps are not empty spaces but they constitute functional facilities, such as building complexes, embedded in a natural environment. Thus, this project tries to pull the trigger in this issue, redefining their operational function, even in parts, by depositing a documented proposal, which incorporates an integrated assessment of building infrastructure.

2. Methodology

The choosing study of the abandoned military camps in Greece is not an issue that receives a simple an unambiguous interpretation, on the contrary the range of the optical response is wide. In the framework of this work the approach will be made in order to achieve a smooth integration of these areas into the urban fabric and daily life, taking into consideration the former military camp TAGARI in Florina, Greece. Initially the first parameter is setting, in other words the issue of the abandoned military units remains a wide issue due to the large number of inactive sites worldwide and their hierarchical typology.

The proposal is based on the relativistic theory, which focuses on discovering patterns and relationships between specific variables in a given context. In this case the variables are setting by the city dwellers, the students and the authorities. The latter ones create the framework that organizes the utilization of the facilities.

According to literature sources what is shown that the urban planning is nowadays characterized from continuous modulation standards. Instead of an oriented design, the project raises the issue of procedure management. The intention tends in this place where the organizational structure and its application has been concentrated in the conventional design and set of processes and actions which approach an extensive derelict surface, such as military camps.

This study is addressed in the necessary transformation of spatial planning and it is related to the terms "change" and "adaptive capacity". Currently, the project is a position that highlights the alternative attitude towards the urban planning, a programmatic action

which concerns the reappropriation of an inactive surface with a particular characteristic due to its prior use. Objective of this proposal is the preparation of the spatial design in such extent that it determines the future development intention.

The design modifies the restrictions by setting a new vocabulary in order to accede to the inactive surface in the city's day life. The reflection of the study refers to the city's links with the urban gaps that contain a considerable building stock to be exploited and it poses ways to harness through programmatic in real conditions. The purpose of this management is not to propose a final and static solution, instead is to establish the framework and the impulses in such a way that at anytime the involved parties can interact and they can produce a variety of solutions which are adapted to the available resources.

The advantage of this type of planning, in comparison to the integrated design, is that it has the possibility of transformation in response to the needed changes. What is important is to this issue is that sets the framework of a clear strategy in order to ensure the flexibility of the program.

At the same time, the space management is carried out through a procedural course of actions, without this being blinding. In other words, the procedure consist a tool that falls within the strategy. Nowadays, networking and the fast pace of development of the society requires adaptable areas, therefore the society needs a way to address that is based on the design and the management of the existing building stock.

3. Inactive camps in the Hellenic space

According to the inventory of the real estate of the Defense of Greece [2] approximately 1500 properties are owned and divided into the following categories:

1. Military camps
2. Traing fields
3. Military houses
4. Officer's club
5. Rehabilitation Health Center
6. Outposts in the frontier zone
7. Land within and outside the urban fabric
8. Legacies

The total area of the military properties stands at 251.536.177m². In comparison with the total area of the Hellenic space (132.000.000.000tm) what is indicated is that these properties hold the 0.19% of the Greek territory. Regarding the inactive camps in Greece

numerically run up to 114 and their surface reaches 14.000.000 m².

4. Spatial analysis

4.1. Location

The town of Florina lies in a mountain valley, which is crossed by a river from West to East. The longitude of the city is 21°23'59", the latitude is 40°46'58", and the altitude is 662 m. Florina belongs to the region of Northwest Greece, the population is 19,985 people (2011 census) and it expands in 150.6 km². It is located south of the international border of Greece with the Republic of Macedonia and Albania. Due to its position two (2) military camps were established in the town and four (4) more in the Municipality. Nowadays, the majority of the quartering areas are abandoned and only two camps operate normally (Figure 1).

As regards the life in city a part of the University of Western Macedonia and the Technological Institute of Western Macedonia are located in Florina including the Department of Fine and Applied Arts.



Figure 1. Location

Undoubtedly Florina is considered as the city of artists as it features dozen of painters, professionals and amateurs. It is characterized as the inspired city where the modern life alternates with the tranquility of romance and the gorgeous landscapes. It creates a contrasting picture that enchants and inspires those who live there and those who visit it.

The mentioned reasons were those which contributed to the establishment of the the Department of Fine and Applied Arts in August 2006 in Florina. However, the action was conducted without strategy, without proper facilities that could house over time the needs of the Department. Instead, the main facilities are located in school facilities and other functions such as laboratories are scatters across the country side in various regional communities (Figure 2).

4.2. "TAGARI" Military camp

"TAGARI" camp is one of the two quartering areas which are situated in the city of Florina and it expands in 0.17 km². At the time of its establishment in 1952, it was situated outside the city but nowadays, following the urban extension, it has been integrated in the urban landscape. In 1998, 46 years since its establishment, the camp was transferred, which means that this large tract of land has become available for new uses.

Regarding the building infrastructure twenty-three (23) buildings exist, one (1) chapel and two (2) football



Figure 2. Photographic survey

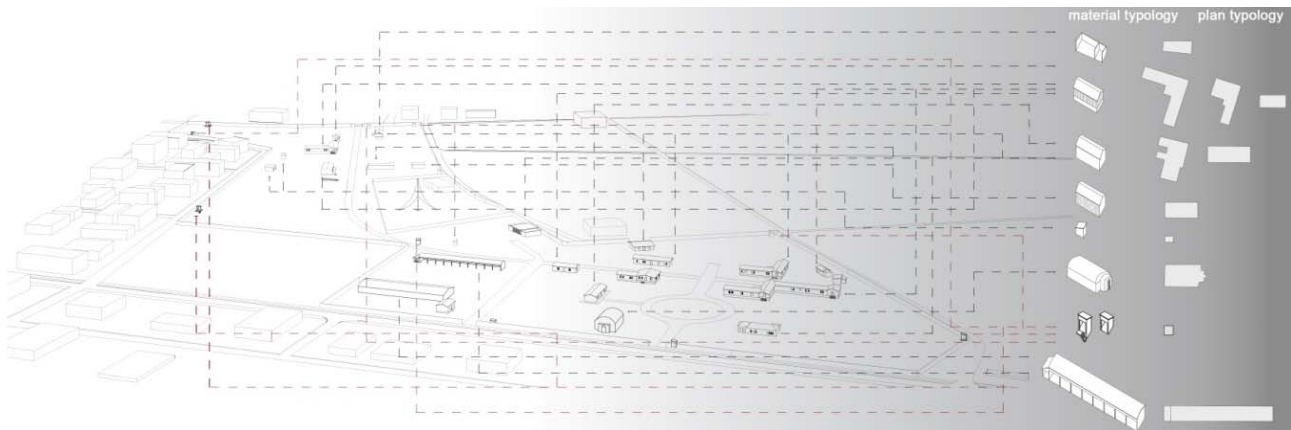


Figure 3. Building typology

courts. Most of the infrastructure is deprived of decorated facades and elaborately decorated interior, their age reached maximum fifty (50) years; however, they still form a unity with special qualities which are important for the memory and the form of the built environment, posing validity in the request of rehabilitation (Figure 3).

Furthermore, another feature of the military camps is typology both in architectural characteristics and spatial setting, which could be obviously considered as an integral part of the complexes. Taking into consideration the architectural characteristics, they follow the plant operation, administration buildings, warehouses, dormitories are some of the sheltered military installations, which in our case define a variety in architectural style. It has been already mentioned that the architecture of military buildings isn't defined by extensive refinement. Indeed, the strict geometry and diffuse austerity pace the basic framework of the building volumes. They don't depart from the volume's symmetrical principle and the configuration of the individual façade is based on central axis. However, in both sectors individual differences lead to interesting forms, which cumulatively attribute remarkable forms. It starts from the floor plan, where the sovereignty of the rectangular is detected, but in cases the rectangular is pointily modified and new shapes derive, such as T shapes, Γ shapes.

As it concerns the spatial settings, they are based in the homogeneity of the individual units and in the manifold. Those two parameters are derived, likewise, from functional classification. In case of "TAGARI" at the main entrance (east side) are assembled the administration buildings, the chapel and the dormitories, while in the west side lie subordinate facilities, such as warehouses, courts etc.

According to the mentioned principles, which were just outlined, it is considered that the preservation can be

implemented with significant degrees of freedom. In other words, the rehabilitation of the building infrastructure is certainly necessary and could be achieved with modern small-scaled intervention and purely utilitarian character.

5. Project analysis

"TAGARI" camp is situated in a nodal point and it disrupts the urban canvas meaning that this large tract of land has become available for new uses. It represents an impressive example of an enormous monofunctional enclave in the urban landscape. The coping strategy of the project is to integrate the former military site seamlessly into the complex urban fabric and create a new identity for the city. The idea is to engage the Department of Fine and Applied Arts by revitalizing the dilapidated infrastructure and activating the entire region as an open educational hub that interacts with the residents. The project doesn't offer a finished, static solution but approaches a design aspect which emerges from the reciprocally influencing factors that participate in the process which leads to an improvisational and adaptable urbanism. Finally, emphasis should be given in how the hierarchical structure of a military camp can be associated with the spontaneity of the proposed process.

5.1. The program

The key of the project is the drawing up of a comprehensive and inclusive program, and spatial solutions that would provide accessibility. It brings the street and public life into the camp, attracts interest from all age groups and social classes, without discrimination. The idea is to strengthen and promote creation, innovation and participation (Figure 4).

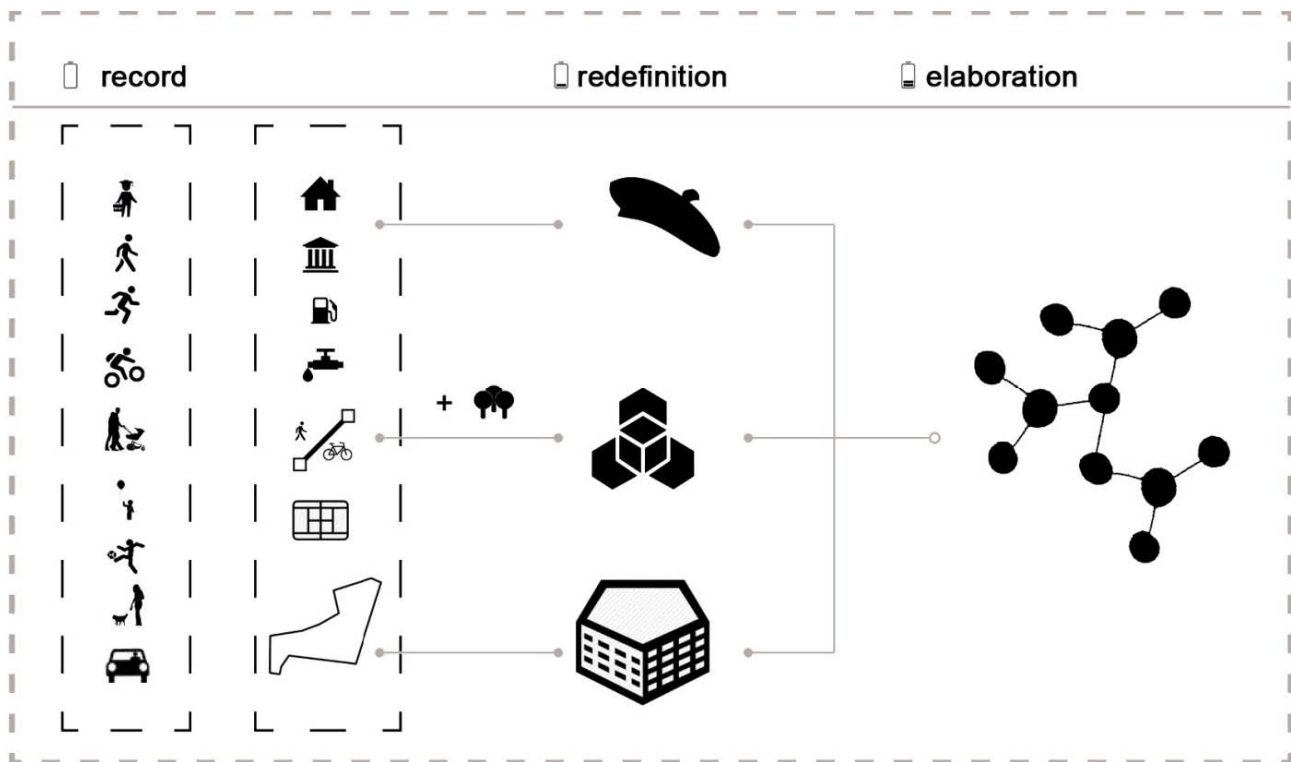


Figure 4. Procedure diagram

Moreover, the initiative issue is to integrate the quartering area to the city and to embrace all the current users of the area. As it was mentioned above, the camp is situated in a nodal point of the city and as a consequence many activities are placed nearby in km radius. Those activities include facilities and users, such as residences, university campus, sports courts and pedestrian area.

The main idea is to provide in many different target groups (elderly, young people, kids) a range of activities, including the existing ones, by vesting influencing factors. The latter participate in the process and they will lead to an improvisational and adaptable urbanism.

In the first place the project is intended to foster conviviality as an infallible formula for cultural production by providing the suitable infrastructure for the Department of Fine and Applied Arts. The students and the associated are considered as open-minded, creative and innovative. They have the instinct for new discoveries and constantly they are searching for opportunities to distinguish. Thus, they are called to open the gate and explore the seclusive area.

Subsequently, the concept is to conflate the Department of Fine and Applied Arts into military infrastructure which has as a consequence the revitalization of dilapidated infrastructure and activating the entire region. The coping strategy of the project is to refine the monofunctional enclave in an open hub that interacts

not only with the students but involves also the residents.

A balance between the necessary rules and standards and the greatest possible freedom for future uses in the design is the prevailing goal of project. It is designed for citizens from citizens; it encourages the involved parties to contribute their ideas to the planning process. "TAGARI" camp becomes a place to interact, to intervene, to lean and to communicate (Figure 5).

5.2. Design principles

As it was mentioned above, the integration will be held in stages and according the city's needs. Thus, as a start-up for the inclusion of the former military site into the urban fabric, fundamental principles and proposals are posing. In other words, primordial conditions are setting in order to activate the enclave and shape the form of the influential factors, which consequently will lead to the improvisational and adaptable urbanism.

The coping strategy of the underlying theory is to draw a parallel between the university and the military life. This parallelism relies on Michel Paul Foucault's theory, heterotopia. Michel Foucault introduced the tentative term heterotopia to point to various institutions and places that interrupt the apparent continuity and normality of ordinary everyday space [3]. The heterotopia refers to a set of really existing inversions

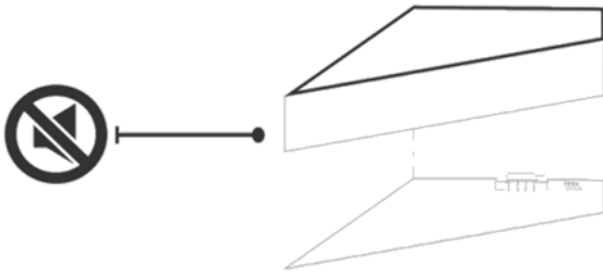


Figure 8. Quietism

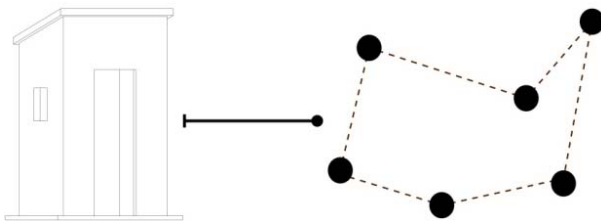


Figure 9. Patrol sentry boxes

and the formation of the barrack. It is addressed to a reporting stage. Moreover, the ritual impose the troops disciplined alignment and hierarchical formation. The debrief constitutes a competitive communication model in which the existence of the audience is crucial who is divided from the public display of its members [5]. In the proposal the term is using to define the exhibition room, where all the students are in public display and through their work pull the trigger in many issues and divide the crowd. Furthermore, the disciplined alignment and hierarchical formation are forming a spatial pattern which can be transformed according to the needs (Figure 7).

(3) Quietism

By definition in military vocabulary means the last trumpet which is translated as the end of each noise challenge (even discussions) and imposing strict nocturnal silence (Figure 8). The reference to the term and the relationship with the existing study is the retention of the term and its conversion of the spatial conditions. In other words, the region needs a quiet place, isolated from the daily hubbub, an inspiring and concentrative area. This area marks the disruption of heterotopic action as it contributes an isolated spot where exist optical contact but any kind of function is stopped.

(4) Patrol sentry boxes

In the perimeter of the camp, in nodal point sentry boxes are established and their purpose it to protect the



Figure 10. Ephemeral uses

camp from invaders. Therefore, a specific route is followed by the soldiers in order to watch over the area and check the guards in the sentry boxes. The patrol is an integral part of life of soldiers. At this point, the project proposes the reversion of the terms from protection sites in projection areas of activities which take place in the former camp. Since the typology of sentry boxes is in this way, the partial transformation and proliferation is indicated according to the needs alongside the designated walk.

5.3. Framework

The concept propagates a balance between the necessary rules and standards and the greatest possible freedom for future uses in the design of their environment. At the same time, it supports the reuse of the cam as an urban tool. This urban tool has double role, first of all it contributes to the creation of a new kind of knowledge production while on the other hand displays a series of incentives which encourage the group members to express their ideas during the planning process. What should be noted is that the present study does not offer a finished, static solution but approaches instead describes a process of growth and change which drives to chart new perspectives (Figure 10).

The described process is proposed to take place over time by combining ephemeral, tactical and ongoing strategies. Initially, the implementation phase starts from the elimination of the fence and the evaluation of the building stock. While, at the second level, what is

essential is the design of new road axes in order to achieve smoother connection to the urban fabric as well as the expansion of cycle path in the study area.

The beginning of the reappropriation is conducted from the semi-outdoor spaces which adjoin to the eastern boundary of the plot. What is noteworthy is the apparent structural grid of these infrastructures which area paralleled with the syntax of the army, while the goal is to become the reference point for the city. At this point the inauguration of the region is placed by conducting artistic events under the auspices of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts. This action aims in activities which will motivate the visitors while improving the public perception of the area. In the second level the flea market – bazaar is transferred. This transaction may result in the involvement of the residents and the integration of banal action in the region.

Thereafter, an impetus is given for the sentry boxes' exploitation and the expansion of the pedestrian network. The purpose lies into the promotion of the students' work and the simultaneous development to Leisure Park and promenade.

Subsequently, part of the building stock is granted in order to integrate the department. The building stock requires rehabilitation and in the case of a university building the necessary interventions – additions area made. The project aims to revitalize the area and enrich it with daily activities and continuous movement. Simultaneously, the intention orients in the activation of

premises with direct effect to the reappropriation of the region and its integration into the spatial planning of the city (Figure 11 and 12).

The third stage lies in creating two zones which pertain to recreation and expansion of the proposed activities and they reflect the borrowed military terms. More specifically, on the one hand in the center of the buildings an open square is proposed where leisure activities are sited and they are addressed mainly to the capacity of Reveille, recommending the starting area. It is about to become the central point from where there are connections to all building and activities. While, on the other hand, the diametrically opposite aspect of the term Reveille is implemented, namely it is quietism. Since the region needs a quiet isolated place, from the daily hubbub, an inspiring and concentrative area. This area marks the disruption of heterotopic action as it contributes an isolated spot where exist optical contact but any kind of function is stopped (Figure 13).

Afterwards, in the context of building usage the transportation of the municipal library is suggested and the establishment of the new wing of the university library, with special reference to the city's artists.

At the same time and according to the appropriate rhythm the building infrastructure are used following the inquired restoration changes in order to include all the need of the building program of the Faculty. Indicatively, these needs include management offices, staff offices and dormitories.

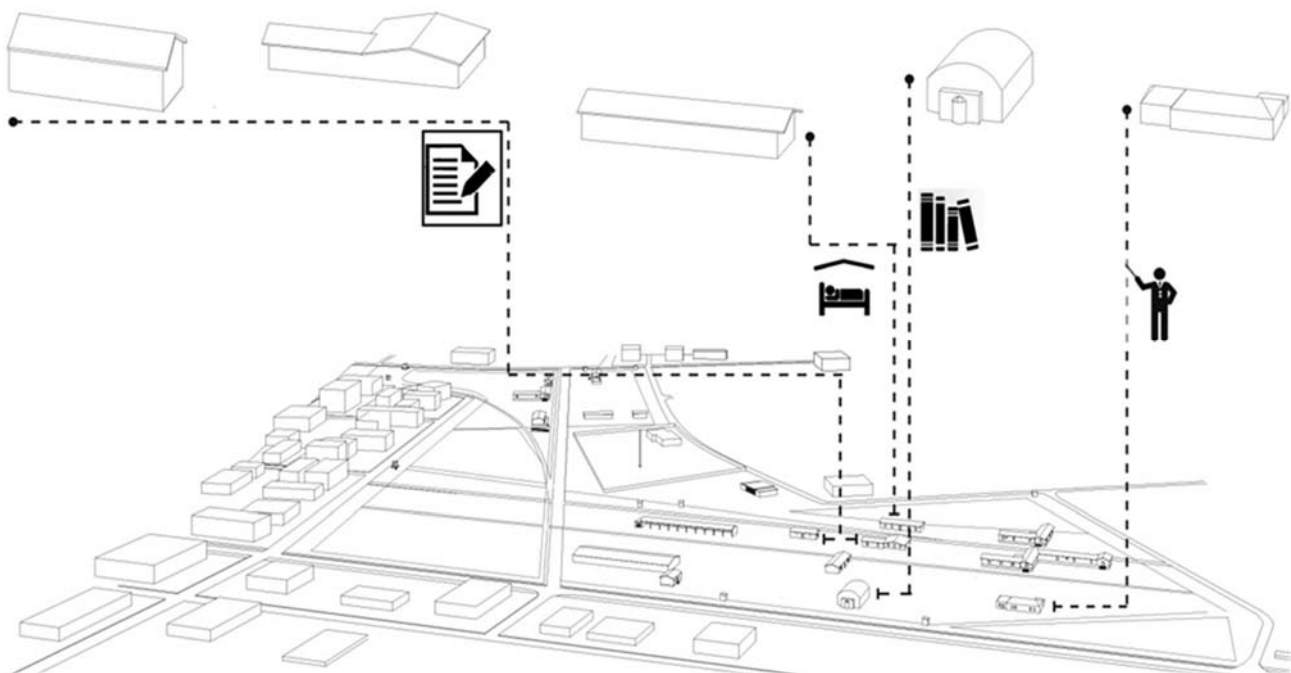


Figure 11. Building program

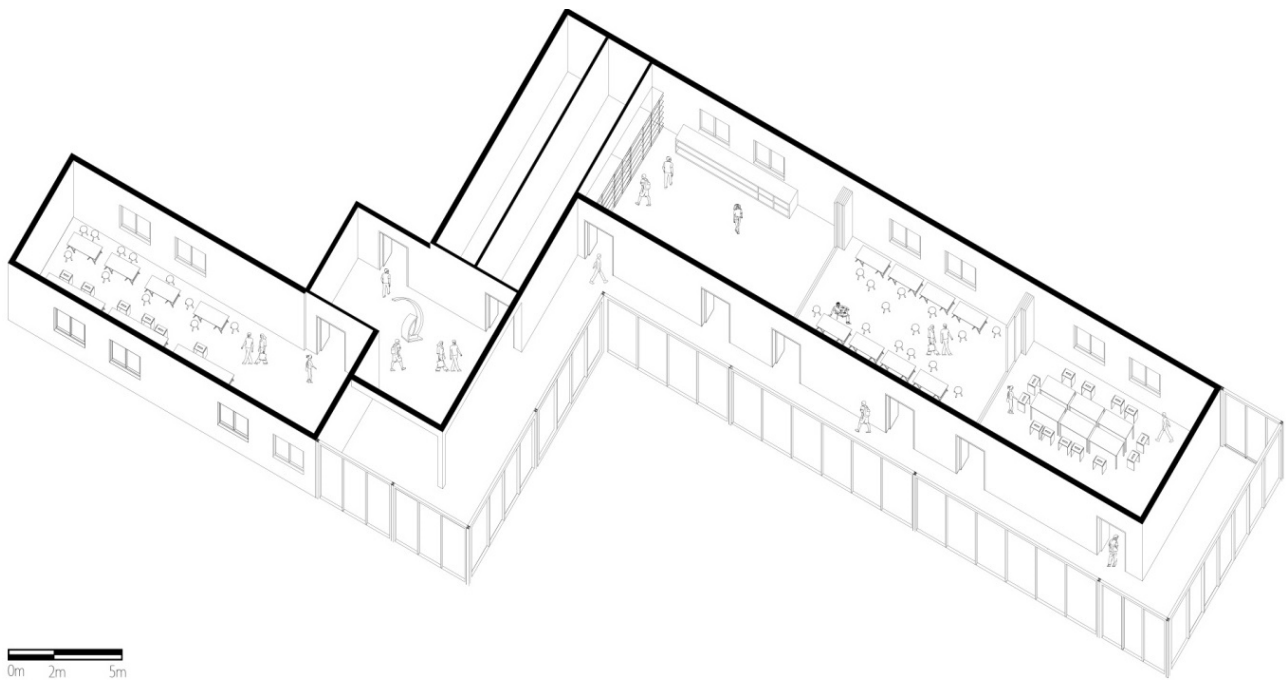


Figure 12. Department of Fine and Applied Arts



Figure 13. Quierism square

6. Conclusion

Nowadays abandoned quartering areas still constitute marginalized enclaves with peculiar character within the urban fabric and they don't interact with the surrounding urban structure. However, they should not be treated as isolated open fields or as potential commercialized real estate.

This perspective would lead to environmental degradation and the programming operation of these extensive areas. The military units in Greece are not an

issue that receives a simple and unambiguous interpretation, so the approach was guided by the smooth integration of land in the urban fabric.

According to the relativistic theory the creation of patterns and relationships between variables in a specific context is proposed. In this case the variables are set by the dwellers, the strength of the students and the intention of the relevant authorities and the creation of the framework that organizes the exploitation facilities.

Due to the continuous variations of the standards nowadays the proposal raises the issue of proceeding management with regard to man and the processes of change and development instead of a result-oriented planning. A plan where structures and their application have been concentrated in the conventional design and all the procedures and actions on the harmonization of extensive surfaces, such as military camps. The words "change" and "adaptive capacity" characterize the transformation of spatial planning. At the same time, the study highlights the changing attitude towards land use planning, a programming action concerning the ownership of an inactive surface with particular characteristics because of the prior use. Aim of this proposal is the preparation of spatial design to the extent that it determines the future development intention.

The design modifies the restrictions, setting new vocabulary in dealing with the proposal so to join the city's daily routine. The project refers to the relation between the city and the urban voids when the latter include large building stock which can be exploited. The advantage of this programme is that it has the possibility of transformation according to the parties' needs or the influences. What is important in this aspect is that it sets the framework of a clear strategy in order to ensure the flexibility of the program.

The space management is performed through a flexible procedural / optional course of action. In other words, this process constitutes a tool that appertains to relativistic theory. Such development strategies are essential in this era which is defined by fast-paced society. The design of modular space is imperative; in other words a way that is based increasingly on the

management of the existing building stock and not only in the design.

Nevertheless, the management of the military building stock raises the issue of maintaining in a broader aspect and the preservation of a lean infrastructure that form a unity with special qualities, they can also embrace the needs of the city. Finally, what should be noted is that the rehabilitation, the reuse and the management of such areas certainly creates expectations, concerns, complaints, and sometimes disappointments. In any case, it triggers the interest of both specialists and citizens (Figure 14).

Acknowledgements

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Figure 14. Debrief square

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