Gustafson Porter win Valencia Parque Central competition

The landscape architecture practice Gustafson Porter from London has won the international competition on 25 January for a contemporary public park in Spain – the Valencia Parque Central. Selected from 36 international teams, Gustafson Porter developed its winning masterplan “Aigua Plena de Seny” in an international multi-disciplinary team. The team with Borgos Pieper architects, Nova Ingeniería Project Management and Grupotec Engineers succeeded against high-profile teams, including Foreign Office Architects, Zaha Hadid Architects and West 8 Urban Design & Landscape Architecture.

The Valencia Parque Central project covers the central urban area affected by the arrival of high-speed trains to Spain’s third largest city. The new contemporary public park is made possible by tunnelling the existing railway lines. More than half of the available site – a total area of 66 hectares – will be planted. A new 23-hectare central park is to become the heart of Valencia’s most important redevelopment project to date, with large green open spaces, play areas and cultural and educational activity space. Furthermore, a new residential area covering another 43 hectares is proposed. According to Mayor Rita Barberá, Parque Central will become “the most attractive, important and certainly the economically most significant project in Europe”.

Gustafson Porter’s design responds to the character of the landscape and culture of the Valencia region. The site is situated between the ecological habitats of the Turia River reserve, the agricultural plane, the Albufera natural park and the Mediterranean Sea. The landscape architects took their inspiration from the local ceramics tradition. They used the image of a bowl or container and gave each of these containers a theme, such as art, activities, people, landscapes, history and cultural memories. In addition to the individual bowls they proposed an arts plaza, a flower garden, a children’s garden and a promenade of palms and jacarandas which opens out onto a central square that links all the main pathways in the park.

Gustafson Porter integrated woodlands in the design for Milan CityLife Park to shield the activity field and to create a habitat for flora and fauna.

Gustafson Porter used landform, plants and existing buildings as the design elements for the Valencia Parque Central, with water as the overarching design theme.

Gustafson Porter won competition to design the Milan CityLife Park

London-based landscape architects Gustafson Porter have won the international competition to design the Milan CityLife Park – a 170,000-square metre green space in the centre of Milan. The park is a central element in one of the largest urban regeneration projects in the recent history of Milan. Gustafson Porter’s concept “A Park between the Mountains and the Plain” – builds on Milan’s commanding position between the rich agricultural plains of the Po to the south and the routes across the Alps to the rest of Europe to the north. Built on the Milan microcosm, the twofold scheme of Parco Il Bassa (The Lower Park) and Parco la Alta (The High Park) will include the following key features: the Belvedere Pergola Garden with spectacular views over the park and an activity field with space for temporary events, such as garden festivals. They designed a sculpted park as a natural amphitheatre with informal seating for performances and concerts, a garden attracting butterflies and two plazas – the Piazza Tre Torri with a pattern of tram rails that are reminiscent of the streets in Milan’s inner city and Fontanili Piazza, which is filled with fountains at the heart of the park.

Initially more than 70 competition entries were submitted. Gustafson Porter outstripped the design teams !melk (New York), One Works (Milan), Arup Italia (Milan), Ove Arup (London), Studio Tre Architetti (Milan) and Ferrara Palladino (Milan). They succeeded against seven other short-listed teams that had submitted a masterplan: Agence Ter (France), Rainer Schmidt (Germany), Latz + Partner (Germany), Christophe Girot (Switzerland), Erika Skabar (Italy), Latitude Nord (France) and PROAP (Portugal).

In second place was PROAP, and Atelier Girot in third place.