

## **Lochau**

### **Reflexion Site**

In the captivating and uniquely developed village of Lochau, a paradox unfolds, where division intertwines with connection, and vice versa. As described in the brief, Lochau's vital economic survival hinges on its connection to other cities via train and car. However, this connection comes at the expense of dividing its landscape. Yet, we must view Lochau's policentricity as an asset, not a weakness. An example is the issues caused by the problematic contemporary tourist behavior. Concentrating all gatherings in one place can overwhelm a village, city, or country. Exploration is a wondrous journey of discovery, and Lochau offers numerous treasures, from its majestic mountains to its scenic coastlines, as well as the historical sites and vast fields in between.

As designers, we pondered various ways to connect territories through large-scale infrastructural interventions, but ultimately, we hesitated to endorse any environmental violation. Instead, we firmly believe that spatial coherence can be achieved by embracing visual continuity through interventions that minimally impact new space or damage existing areas. By preserving Lochau's natural beauty and heritage, we can create a sustainable and harmonious bond between its diverse elements, fostering a future that celebrates both connection and preservation.

### **Forgetting... not!**

In most villages the centre is marked by towers, mostly of religious character. Such towers hold a significant role in the fabric of rural life, representing not just architectural landmarks, but also cultural and historical touchstones. These structures stand tall, gazing over the village with a commanding presence, serving multiple purposes that contribute to the well-being and cohesion of the community.

In the context we are exploring, we found that the church tower alone would not truly capture the diverse character of Lochau. Embracing the village's policentricity, we envisioned four additional peak points scattered throughout the area. These smaller towers are dedicated to celebrating different aspects and attributes of the village, thoughtfully placed to guide visitors on a captivating journey.

The significance of these peak-point pavilions lies not in their height but in the stories they unravel about the village's rich history and precious ecosystem. Their

meaning is also deeply rooted in their materiality, as they are crafted using repurposed parts from the old ferry boat, the former clubhouse, and eatery, which will be removed. Preserving elements of the beloved ferry boat, a vessel ingrained in the collective memory, is our homage to its legacy, preventing it from fading entirely.

Moreover, the nautical character of these towers gracefully brings a slice of the coast into the heart of the village, bestowing a unique identity upon the pavilions and fostering the visual coherence we sought to achieve. By integrating old boat parts into the pavilions, we delve into the realm of new visual narratives, exploring new architectural aesthetics that reimagine the past while shaping the future. These towers, symbolic of continuity and transformation, epitomize our vision for Lochau, where heritage and innovation intertwine harmoniously.

### ***Project Site***

The project site holds a cherished place in the hearts of locals and frequent visitors, a space filled with memories and meaning. This place belongs to the inhabitants, humans and not, and our interventions try to minimize the space of occupation and maximize space of interaction for them.

The former parking area is transformed into a vibrant public sports park, and a spacious ramp acts as the primary link to an underground passage and a safety barrier between the train rails and sports park. The passage is not replaced by a bridge since we believe it to be an additional mobility barrier. Instead it is widened to make the experience of passing through it less claustrophobic. After going through the underground passage we arrive in a walkway between two parks that offer diverse activities for the body and mind. At the end of this walkway we arrive at the new square. The ground is paved with light coloured stones, that absorbs less heat. In order to stay true to our purpose of taking as little ground space as possible we imagine the Yacht/Sailing school as an addition to the existing harbour building. By introducing stairs and converting one of the harbour buildings rooms to an elevator we guarantee accessibility for all. The footprint of the existing building allows enough spaces for the school and additional terraces with great views. By separating the school and restaurant we also ensure more privacy and concentration.

The restaurant is designed as a simple wooden structure on a 4x4 meter grid, placed across the harbour building/ yacht school, where the old ferry used to be. The building is designed in a way that a bit more than half of its footprint, the service parts, is enclosed and the 200m<sup>2</sup> of the restaurant are a semi open space.

What we mean by this is that through the sliding facade and the grid structure, this space can either be partly or completely open depending on the season and the needs of the restaurant/visitors. The paved floor of the square continues into the restaurant hinting continuity of space seamlessly merging with the square when fully exposed.

The kiosk is conceived as an independent selling point and is the base of the lake tower. It is a more informal option for people who would rather sit independently around the square or that are visiting the cinema pavilion, built by railings and benches taken from the old ferry. A low water pool is placed in front of the harbour building in order to hinder any activities blocking the view while providing a refreshing retreat for humans and animals on hot days.

Meadows are planted around the square and swimming zones as well as around pavilions to support diverse plant and animal species the biodiversity that is essential for the overall health and resilience of the ecosystem.

Grilling terraces are installed at the foot of the eastern basin to give people a new barbecue area away from the swimming zones but still close to the water and the shade of big trees.

The new coast square strives to cater to a diverse array of activities and attractions, satisfying physical and spiritual needs for as many people as possible. Throughout the project, we sought to enrich experiences of sports, culture, history, and leisure while preserving and respecting the existing built and natural environment. With the belief that sometimes doing less can yield more profound results, we see architecture's potential to shape spaces, experiences, and minds during the ongoing environmental crisis. By harmonizing thoughtful interventions with the site's intrinsic beauty, we envision a space that nurtures community spirit and ecological harmony.