



## EUROPAN17 - THE GREEN HEART - Concept

### The Green Heart

The conceptual guiding idea describes a reactivation and expansion of inner-city natural potentials in order to develop a health-promoting, healing urban landscape. Special attention is given to the establishment of a new medical center and therapy campus, easily accessible and appealing, which will make Bad Lobenstein a radiant destination for health tourists. Young people will also be invited to the town by the newly created training and employment opportunities in the medical sector, and they will be happy to stay for the long term because of the high quality of life.

In order to generate the design area required for such a project, fallow land is reinterpreted and unnecessary traffic routes as well as sealed areas are reduced. The resulting differential areas offer space for various activation possibilities.

Thus, the Green Veins concept envisions the reworking of these spaces through greening, planting, and revitalization. The result is a network of renaturalized squares, green islands and planted streets. These green veins will eventually open up the entire city center and form a guiding path that connects to prominent access roads and hiking trails in the surrounding area of Bad Lobenstein. In this way, visiting people are welcomed and seen off with green arms.

A newly conceived hierarchy system of the traffic network and a precise mobility concept lead to further inner-city restructuring. Parking spaces will be relocated at important positions in the city, paths will be narrowed to a usable minimum, inner-city speeds will be decelerated, and a large number of streets will be made passable or accessible only to residents.

The totality of these measures represents the foundation for achieving a Green Heart.

### Heartpiece

**Overview** | In the center of the city, there are already individual areas with different identities that need to be intensified. In addition to the spa park, which is strongly cultivated and also occupies a fixed, creative place in the current Bad Lobenstein, the former fairground area, the open space in front of the thermal bath and the fallow quarry in particular represent enormous development opportunities for the future of the town. To seize these opportunities, it is necessary to develop a new use for the fairground elevation, reactivate the little-used spa park, repurpose the open space in front of the thermal baths, and relocate the existing building materials business at the quarry. These four primary development areas form the metaphorical heart chambers of the design: City Forest, Palace Ground, Therapy Campus & Lodging Quarry.

### City Forest

**Overview** | On the heavily wooded hill of the former fairground, a city forest is being created, which, in parts barrier-free, will feature an adventure trail and thus offer young families and active seniors the opportunity to experience nature in the midst of the spa town. Stations of a playful and informative nature guide visitors to the hilltop, where resting places and gastronomy are located and provide an impressive view.

**Landscape** | The new adventure trail is themed "Animals in the Forest" and is specifically aimed at families and children in Bad Lobenstein. It aims to counteract the current lack of leisure activities, both for residents and prospective residents. It will also create a strong attraction for tourists and spa guests. The plan is to offer a combination of playful activities and information about the forest and its animals. Nine different stations will be spread along the new wooden path. The highlight will be the viewpoint, which offers a view over Bad Lobenstein and also invites visitors to observe the animals. At the plateau, at the top of the adventure trail, a new playground will be built for Bad Lobenstein, featuring playhouses, nest swings, and caves. For those who prefer self-catering, a picnic area with tables, benches, and barbecue spots will be created. Additionally, a new restaurant will be built, offering a spectacular view over the new centerpiece of Bad Lobenstein through its glass facade.

### Palace Ground

**Overview** | At the foot of the City Forest, you will find the existing spa park, which will be optimized as a place for cultivated leisure activities through minimal adjustments. For example, meadow areas will be used as meditation and sports areas for free



use, while the disused salon will be revived as a café. Furthermore, a new ramp will be built to provide barrier-free access. The existing art and event program will be complemented by the involvement of local clubs, which will be supported with funding in return. In this way, amidst the meticulously maintained landscape, framed by the cultural center with an outdoor event area and the castle with exhibition spaces, the new center for sports and culture in Bad Lobenstein will be created.

## Therapy Campus

**Overview** | The newly established Therapy Campus is prominently located at the lowest point of the valley, right on the banks of the widened Lemnitz River, which flows into the reactivated City Lake. Advanced new buildings create a unique identity with high recognition value. Patients, visitors, trainees, and medical professionals are all welcomed by an intimate, natural atmosphere as soon as they enter the campus. The sensory therapy garden contributes to this atmosphere, stretching across the entire site between the distinctive main buildings and encompassing single-story learning pavilions in picturesque greenery.

**Landscape** | The new sensory therapy garden creates a health-promoting and directly experiential environment by incorporating diverse plantings that appeal to the different senses of visitors. Various textures such as soft leaves, fluffy flowers, and rough bark, for example, create an appealing tactile experience for visitors, while the scent of blooming flowers and aromatic herbs can be smelled from a distance. To make the therapy garden accessible to all people, the planting areas are designed at different heights. This allows older people and people in wheelchairs to comfortably view the plants up close. The planting of the thermal area is staggered in height from west to east, providing a good view of the therapy grounds. Additionally, the dense and tall vegetation serves as sound and visual protection from the adjacent railway tracks.

The city pond now offers a high quality of stay due to the newly created connection with the widened Lemnitz River and the diversity of possible uses. The flowing form of the water creates a natural image. To make the water accessible to people two seating areas in the form of stepped seating are created directly at the water's edge. By using stepping stones in the northern area of the pond, one can quickly and playfully reach the other side. This is also where the new Kneipp facilities are located, allowing for natural water treatments for relaxation. A bit further south, there are two water steps where the water cascades down, creating an audible rushing sound. At the southeastern edge of the pond, a wooden boardwalk extends slightly over the water, and the existing buildings nearby house a pedal boat rental and a gastronomy establishment.

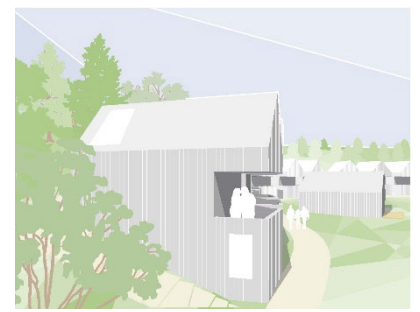
**Architecture** | A total of six new buildings are being constructed on the Therapy Campus, which are arranged along the widened Lemnitz River. Each of these buildings is constructed in a lightweight timber construction and has a polygonal basic shape that adapts to the course of the river. Externally, the buildings present themselves with a fine lamellar facade, which grays over time. An image of boulders and pebbles, shaped and moved by the water, emerges. The three distinctive main buildings are titled as erratics, while the three seminar pavilions depict said pebbles.

The main buildings include the Trainee Welcome Center, the Medical Center and the Trainee Dorm. All buildings have a strong connection to the course of the river and the surrounding greenery. Generous glazing, especially at the corners of the new buildings, creates a visual connection to the natural surroundings. Recessed facades on the upper floors create space for extensively planted roof terraces, which can be used as communal areas and are conducive to healthy relaxation.

Even the single-story pavilions develop visual relationships into the surroundings, for example to the Lemnitz and the Kneipp installations, to color-intensive planting areas, and not least to each other. This is achieved through the positioning and orientation of the learning spaces, the skilful use of the natural slope and the extensive glazing of the respective exterior halls.

## Lodging Quarry

**Overview** | After the relocation of the local trade to the decentralized industrial area, the conversion to a community hub for visitors of the new heart of Bad Lobenstein takes place. Characterized by a steep slope, a down-to-earth housing possibility for a stay of several days is created in the disused quarry. The cubature of the lodges evokes associations of rustic wooden huts. By varying the floor plan structure and the number of floors, different age groups and different numbers of people are offered comfortable overnight accommodations.



**Landscape** | The convenient location of the area to the east of the railroad tracks will make the new quarry site one of the first points of arrival for tourists traveling to the area. In the northern part, a grassed parking lot with about eighty parking spaces will be created. Newly planted trees with heat and drought resistance will provide shade. In the southern part, which will be vegetatively separated from the northern part by a row of trees, lodges for multi-day tourists will be built in addition to a dozen parking spaces for mobile homes. The construction of these dwellings will take place in stages and can be expanded as needed. The special flair of the old quarry is not only evident from the quarry edges, into whose slope the houses will fit. In addition, the wild vegetation, which has grown here over several decades after the end of mining, will be deliberately preserved and staged. A complete unsealing and loose new plantings in the center of the disused quarry, complete the image of a former mining landscape, which is reclaimed by untamed nature and in whose peripheral areas a living space is created. In the transition from the quarry to the mobile home sites, the vegetation gradually becomes more orderly, not only to visually and acoustically separate the individual sites, but also to create a smooth transition between the wild growth of the quarry and the orderly planting of the parking lot. In the center of the southern area, the former storage hall of the building materials yard functions as a connecting element between the camping and residential areas. As a communal area, it offers meeting places such as a shared kitchen and a spacious outdoor area, but also becomes the first stop for those arriving through the registration and reception offices.

**Architecture** | The lodges, which are terraced and dug into the slope, are accessed from two sides: the lower living levels, which are structurally separated from the upper floor in some of the accommodations, are accessed by a gravel path, while the upper floor levels are accessed by a walkway downslope. These accommodations are called Couple Lodges. In addition, lodges are offered whose room program spans both floors: the Family Huts. Couple Lodges and Family Huts are placed in groups. In their external appearance and rectangular footprint, said buildings are the same: wooden boarding, gable roofs and free, asymmetrically placed windows in different formats are reminiscent of romantic wooden lodges in a modern guise. Their fanned-out orientation creates patios between the grouped lodges, which form a garden for the lower floors and enable natural lighting and ventilation in the buried part of the buildings. Roof terraces are provided for the upper residential floors. At the lowest point of the planning area, there are more spacious senior cottages that meet accessibility requirements. This creates a wide range of housing options that can provide an optimal overnight experience for all interested parties.

## Inner City Green

**Green Veins** | The design intends to minimize and decelerate the street and traffic space within Bad Lobenstein. The resulting differential spaces offer various possibilities for reuse and are supposed to lead to a variety of positive changes:

Reducing the amount of traffic space allows streets to be converted to pedestrian zones and bicycle paths or existing paths to be widened. The reduction of roads and parking spaces offers the opportunity to improve the city's public transport system. Reducing street space also provides an opportunity to incorporate more green and active spaces into the city. This can be divided into three different categories depending on the size and location of the available spaces:

**Street Greenery** | Street greenery is used in areas where there is a high degree of sealed surfaces as well as sufficient space. They are intended to break up the heavily sealed cityscape, strengthen biodiversity and act as a link with the surrounding nature.

**Solitary Plantings** | Solitary plantings are placed at specific locations where there is not enough space for street greenery. They are intended to break up heavily sealed areas, provide shade at selective spots and also serve as guiding elements for the green veins.

**Active Spaces** | Active spaces are places that, due to their location, are suitable for providing recreational opportunities for residents. They are therefore designed in less frequented and quieter street areas. Simple seating and play facilities in various designs are envisaged here.



**Marketplace** | The market place of the city of Bad Lobenstein was not very inviting in its original state. It currently functions primarily as a traffic and parking area. The goal of the inner-city restructuring is to create a car-free space in which residents and visitors can feel comfortable. To this purpose, the existing vegetation will initially be supplemented by selective tree plantings that provide shade. Furthermore, raised planting areas with surrounding wooden benches are designed in which additional trees are positioned. These planting islands also serve as infiltration areas for rainwater accumulating on the square. The positioning of the new islands was chosen in such a way that the local market continues to find space, but surrounding businesses, such as restaurants, can benefit from it.

### **Town, Moor and Thermal Water**

Due to the prospect of legislation prohibiting the extraction of natural peatlands until probably 2040 (National Peatland Protection Strategy), the strengthening of other predication criteria becomes Bad Lobenstein's main concern. A strategy centered on air quality, thermal treatments and Kneipp in combination with large-scale renaturation promises to give the town a new lease of life. Through the planned renaturation of the moor and the city center, coupled with an identity-creating marketing concept focused on a green, healthy future, Bad Lobenstein is experiencing an increase in popularity in both leisure and health tourism. The favorable location of the city, in the midst of popular hiking and excursion destinations in Central Thuringia, is also a contributing factor. With the funds acquired in this way and possible government grants, the construction of a new health center in the form of the therapy campus becomes a tangible possibility. Such a development leads to the reputation of an attractive health center, which offers work and training places and in this way a young to middle-aged demographic.

### **Milestones on the way to a green Bad Lobenstein**

**Reactivation & intensification** | The natural cultivation of sealed areas and the reworking of existing potential forms the basis of future-oriented, green urban development.

**Establishment of therapy landscape** | By building a cultivated natural landscape, Bad Lobenstein can maintain its status as a health resort in the future. The establishment of a Kneipp waterstream through the widening of the Lemnitz, as well as the improvement of the air quality through new greening, guarantees the long-term recognition as a recreational area.

**Architectural restoration** | Existing structures are being renovated, while character-defining new buildings create space for both a modern therapy campus and a unique lodging facility in the old quarry. said therapy campus is composed of an informative welcome building, a new medical center and trainee sites while the lodges appeal to different demographics through variation in cubature and space.

**Long-term management** | Event programs by community benefit organizations, plant maintenance by volunteer clubs, and citywide cultural offerings ensure positive, long-term urban development.