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COMPUTER GRAPHICS AND GEOMETRY IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Landscape architecture is a field of knowledge connected with shaping people's living space by means of plants, water and architectural elements. Its most significant roles are to shape and transform the existing open spaces, as well as renewing of landscape and architectural assumptions. Nowadays, landscape architecture is understood as the association of three basic fields: architecture, town planning and spatial planning. Despite its long practical history, it is still juvenile as an academic discipline. In Poland the interest in landscape architecture began to grow in the last quarter of the 20th century and only recently becomes really vivid. At most universities, if it is present at all, it does not have a deep-rooted tradition. The studies of landscape architecture students cover a wide range of subjects mainly connected with natural science. Students also get a chance to develop their artistic skills through the medium of art classes. Students of landscape architecture obtain a Master of Engineering degree, therefore, technical subjects such as geometry or engineering graphics remain particularly significant. However, subjects connected with informatics and computer graphics, which acquaint them with computer-aided architectural design programmes, are the most popular among the students. Teaching methods which make the taught subjects relevant to the future occupation of the students or closely related to the faculty, draw a favourable response from the students. To practice the skills in managing the tools of the computer programmes students have to cope with a variety of tasks. Mini-projects of landscape architecture, architectural detail, small in scale town planning and street, garden or park furniture seem to be popular among the students. Some examples are shown in the pictures below.

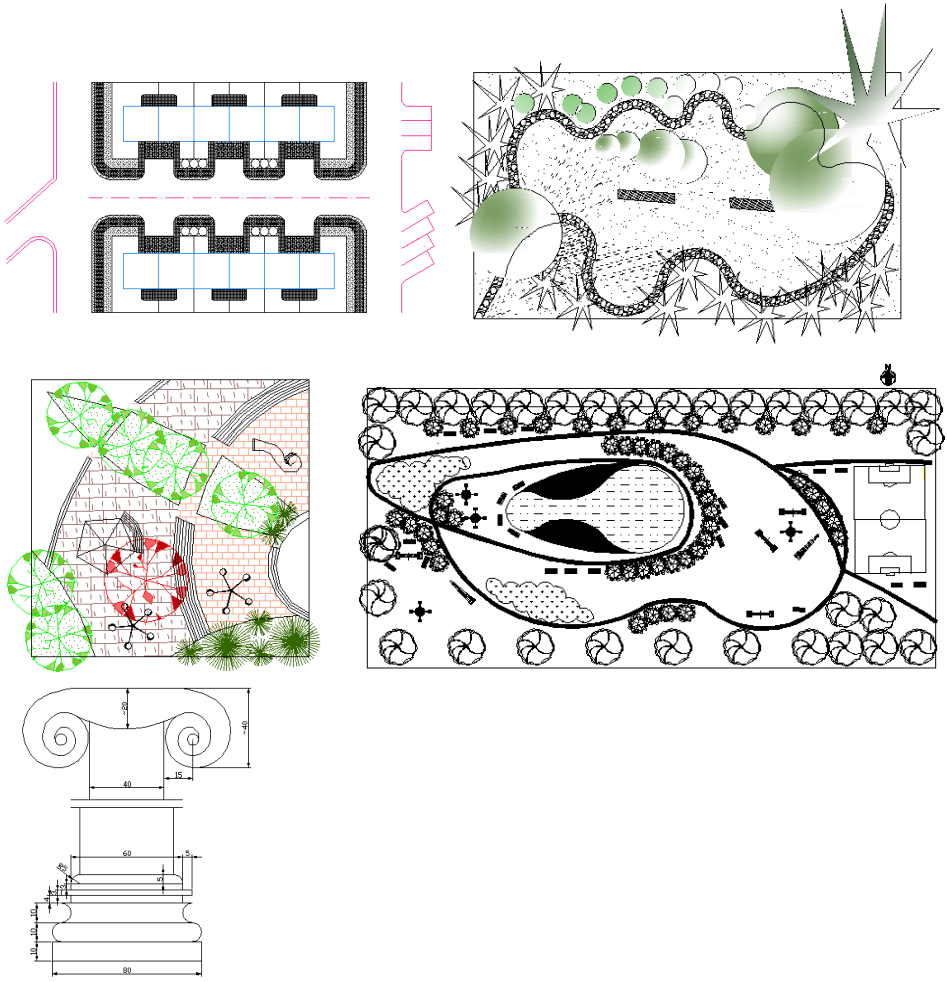

Fig. 1 Examples of the works of the Landscape Architecture students.

The computer-aided architectural design programmes are the most popular among the students since they realise that the programmes are used in design classes during the studies and will remain necessary in their future work. Unfortunately, the awareness of the importance of developing skills in descriptive and engineering geometry is undervalued. Due to its appliance in geodesy and cartography, marking projection is a fundamental issue in geometry classes.

Nowadays, it is difficult to observe students' craving for purely theoretical academic knowledge. To be well received it has to be "smuggled" under the guise of practical use and immediate usefulness in their vocation. Anyway, it seems that what is most important is the result. Theoretical knowledge should be a good foundation for the future work of the graduates and will hopefully develop them intellectually.