

Project site: everyday Eden

Urban and architectural projects respond not only to place, but to time. Today, two urgencies intersect: the global climate crisis and a local housing crisis. Cities must become resilient ecosystems, while in Croatia – as across the EU – housing is increasingly unaffordable. Without clear spatial standards, new developments are too often reduced to pure market logic. A good, affordable home with access to ample open space has become rare, but we believe it should be a basic urban right, not a luxury. As Croatia's largest and most developed city, Zagreb has the potential to lead by example. Rather than isolated architectural gestures, the city needs a scalable model for affordable, high-quality public housing that reflects today's realities. Klara becomes a testing ground.

Our moment is also shaped by shifting dynamics of community and connection: despite hyper-individualism, people still seek proximity, care and shared experience. This doesn't mean reviving nostalgic collectivism, but designing spaces that support how we live and relate today – both offline and online. Equally vital is nature. In a time of climate crisis and post-pandemic reflection, the garden re-emerges as essential – not a luxury, but a planetary and personal necessity. Our proposal weaves these two themes – community and nature – across three scales: the neighbourhood, the building, and the apartment.

(1) The neighbourhood: a framework for spatial and social sustainability

The placement and morphology of built structures responds to the site's edges with varying degrees of permeability: opening where green continuity is needed (northwest fields, Z-R diagonal) and shielding where protection is required (southeast road). A slightly elevated central 'acropolis' hosts a market, garden, and communal hub, while informal public spaces, playgrounds and dog zones activate the site throughout. A minimal road network ensures a walkable atmosphere. Ecological resilience is supported through green corridors, solar roofs, water retention, circular systems and habitats. Economic sustainability comes from affordable housing, and social cohesion is fostered through shared amenities and spaces that invite care and connection.

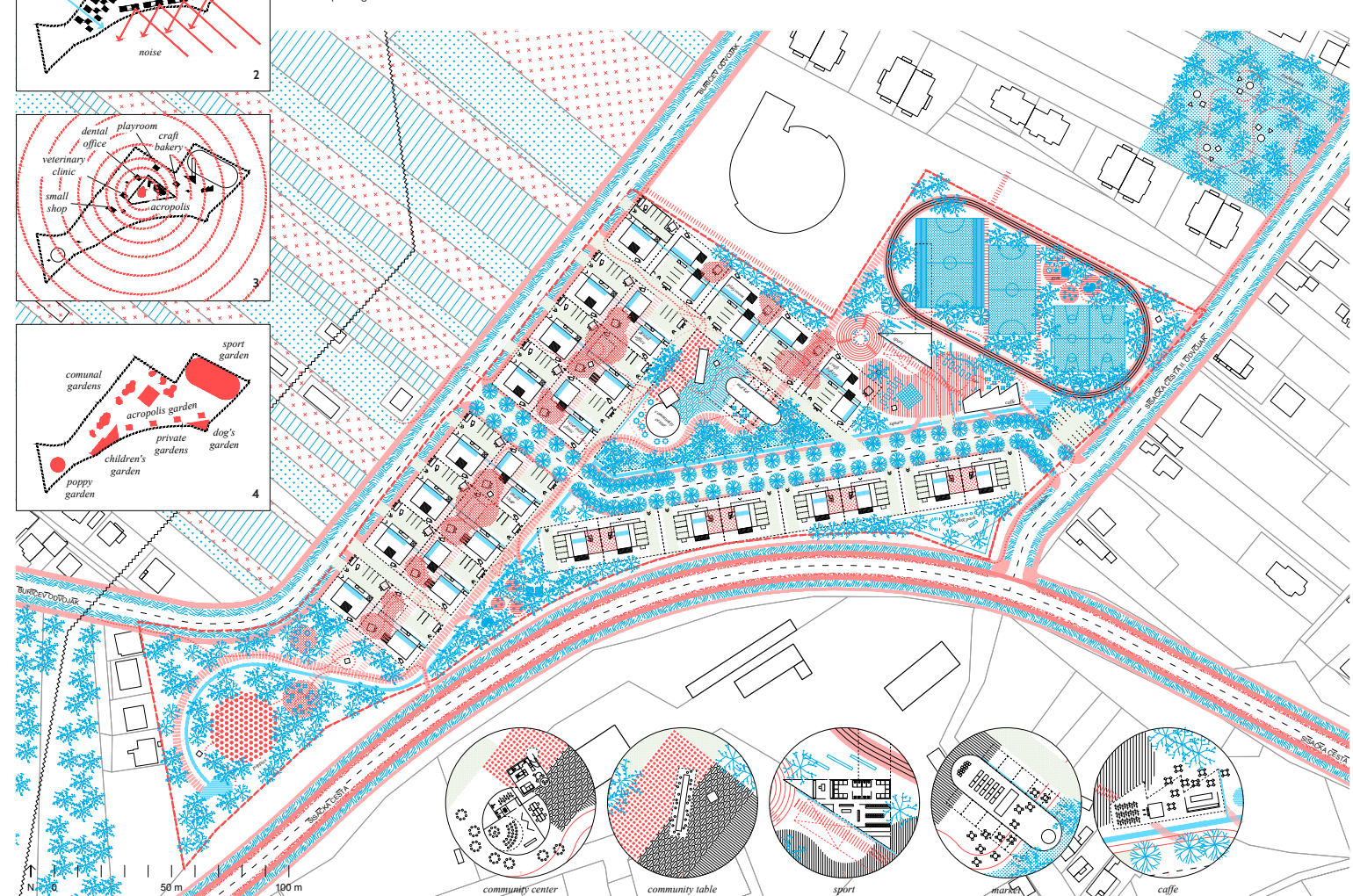
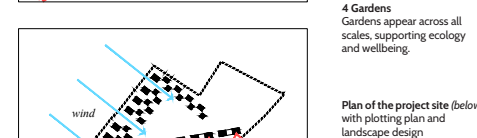
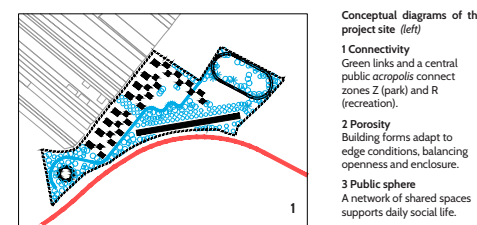
(2) The buildings: mediators between private life and shared space

The neighbourhood features three residential types (A, B, C), each with distinct forms but a shared logic: generous outdoor spaces, a balance between private and shared life, and a commitment to giving back to the wider community. Most units have direct entries and gardens, blending collective housing with the intimacy of a home. Type A forms a protective edge along Sisak's road. Semi-detached buildings face inward, opening towards suited for communal use. The street facade hosts shared amenities, facing the central acropolis. Type B is freestanding and compact, forming micro-neighbourhoods with Type C. Oriented toward the northwest fields, its metal-clad top floor softens the volume, while gallery access blends privacy and casual encounters. Type C is open and varied in form. Volumes shift and hover, creating terraces, shaded zones, and spatial variety. It introduces new housing typologies, with some units lifted for permeability and others integrating public functions at ground level.

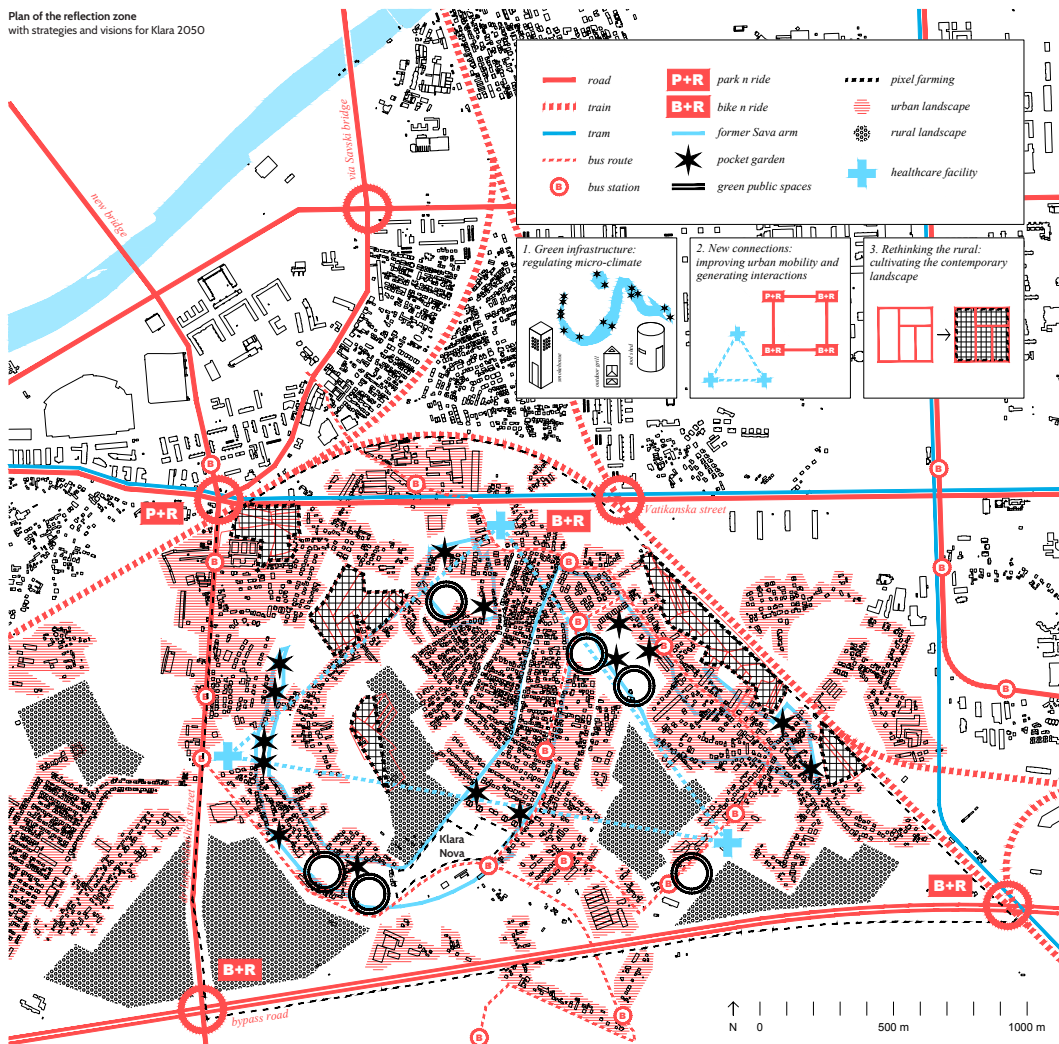
(3) The apartment: a flexible space for living, working, belonging

Apartments balance generosity and collectivity. Each includes outdoor space (balcony, terrace or garden) and one or more dedicated work zones. Service areas (kitchen, bathroom, storage) are aligned along access paths for privacy, ventilation and spatial clarity. Residents may outsource select functions (laundry, storage, exercise, etc.) to shared spaces, gaining flexibility at home while supporting soft collectivity.

All these spatial and social strategies at the levels of the neighbourhood, building and apartments converge into a liveable whole – rooted in place, yet open to change. A gentle ecology is planted in the urban fringe: an everyday Eden, where the wildflowers grow.



Plan of the reflection zone with strategies and visions for Klara 2050

**Reflection site: friction on the fringe**

At the edge of Zagreb, Klara reveals a productive tension: scattered development and missing infrastructure meet open fields, wildflowers, and a freedom of form. Neither fully urban nor fully rural, this in-between condition offers space for new possibilities. Rather than erasing and overwriting, we work with what exists, regulating instead of replacing. We re-shore knowledge from three domains:

(1) **Novi Zagreb**, whose efficient urban plans solved urgent housing needs, but whose social fabric took time to grow.

(2) **Klara itself**, where fairs, gardens, and semi-rural customs express a quiet, collective intelligence.

(3) **Nature**, as a resilient, living system that can guide a less anthropocentric urbanism.

On the scale of the reflection site, this intelligence is used to regulate Klara's most urgent urban issues: lack of greenery, access to amenities and poor urban connectivity. These are our propositions:

(1) Green pockets: regulating micro-climate

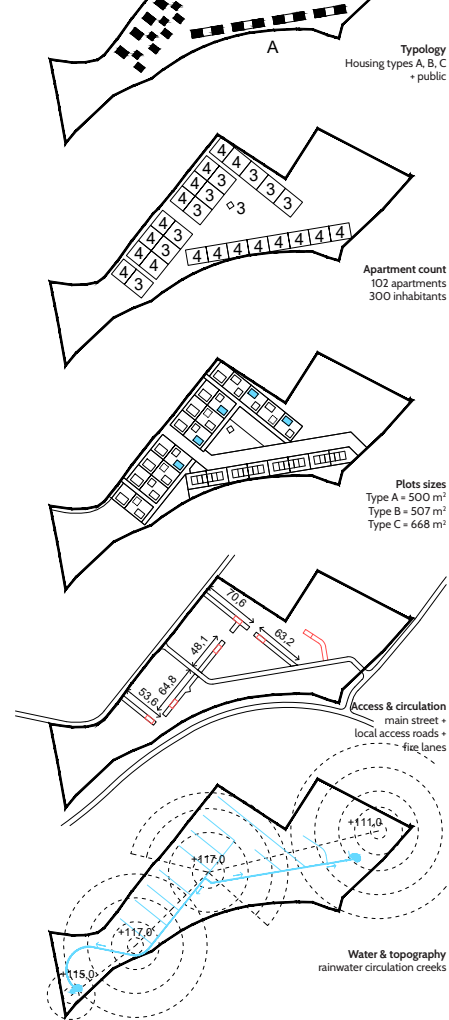
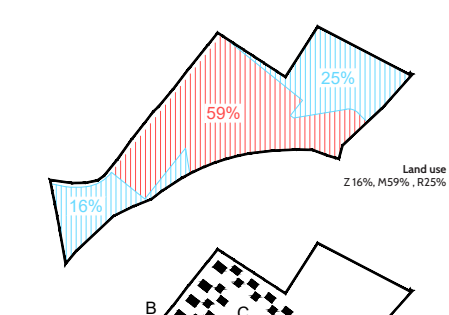
A network of small-scale green interventions – pocket parks, tree planting and soft landscaping – is proposed across the reflection site. These micro-insertions fit into leftover or underused plots, requiring minimal or no demolition while offering considerable spatial and climatic benefits: green breathing space in an overbuilt area, in addition to mitigating urban heat islands, they serve as meeting points: small social condensers, equipped with minimal shared amenities such as outdoor grills, communal tool sheds or smokehouses. By providing collective value and shared utility, these interventions encourage a shift from a purely individual use of space toward semi-collective models. Residents may gradually be inspired to remove redundant auxiliary structures on private plots, as their functions become absorbed into a more communal urban fabric.

(2) New connections: improving urban mobility and generating interactions

Klara must become a node in a broader, sustainable mobility network. A new bus loop connects all stops and key tram stations such as Savski most and Vukovarska, with timed transfers and priority routing during peak hours. Cycling is strongly encouraged: small-scale bike & ride hubs are installed on key nodes, enabling a smooth switch between bikes and public transport. Internally, movement is based on distance-sustainable Type C, which should be accessible within 15 minutes on foot or by bike. Alongside mobility, the new social infrastructure supports everyday life. In and around the project site, several new programs are introduced – a kindergarten, a market, sports and recreational grounds, and a network of green public spaces. But the broader area still lacks key services, such as a health centre. Where permanent buildings are not yet feasible, temporary and hybrid models can fill the gap: modular extensions to existing facilities, pop-up services, or community-run initiatives. Together, these spatial and social connections foster a more complete and inclusive neighbourhood fabric.

(3) Rethinking the rural: cultivating the contemporary landscape

Klara is not just located at the edge of the city, but also at the edge of the fields of Turpoglie. Here, therefore, urban regeneration must be matched by a new way of thinking about the rural. Can this agricultural land be reformed as productive, ecologically valuable space – not just an undeveloped terrain vague? We explore new practices and patterns: re-plotting, peat farming, targeted crop planting and biodiversity enhancement. Wildflower meadows, rotational fields and pollinator-friendly zones become part of a renewed rural ecology. This is not about nostalgic return to traditional farming, but about designing a future-oriented, multifunctional landscape.



Porosity: view from the fields towards the northwest facade (housing type A)



Protective edge: morphology of the buildings shielding the neighbourhood (housing type B)



Playfulness and community: shared gardens, backyards and in-between open spaces (housing type C)



Public sphere: communal hub & gardens, gathering spaces, marketplace (the central 'acropolis')



Active lifestyle: public square, amphitheatre and sports facilities (recreation zone)

**Type A****Type B**