Misraħ il-Granmastru - Rethinking the Piazza

This project aims to redesign Misraħ il-Granmastru, an open space in Qormi, bordered by the parish church of St. Sebastian, the St. Sebastian primary school and several blocks of terraced houses. Situated within this space is Pinto's Loggia, an architectural landmark constructed in 1772, during the reign of the Grand Master Manuel Pinto da Fonseca. A series of investigative tasks were carried out to understand the relation that Misraħ il-Granmastru has with the surrounding urban fabric, be it the different building types, the abutting busy main road and the possible connections to other important secondary nodes. Other issues such as size, orientation, permeability, functionality and legibility, together with pedestrian movement and vehicular flow were also addressed and integrated in the proposed interventions. The formulated strategy for Misraħ il-Granmastru creates and connects social hubs within the piazza and its surroundings. The masterplan marries the socio-economic, cultural and historical dimensions into a single space which can be enjoyed by the whole community. It celebrates local characteristics such as the Saturday market and Pinto’s Loggia by leaving a free visual dimension. The design allows a balance of both formality and flexibility in a cultural, economic and environmental sense, as it transforms the piazza from a parking space to a strong functional node which offers leisure and recreation as well as a space where different members of the community interact. A Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) is also implemented in the design of the piazza for sustainable water management. Moreover, a system of paved paths and carefully articulated landscape architecture connects the surrounding green areas to the piazza and promotes a safer, car-free environment.