

Article

# The Integration of Campsites in Cultural Landscapes: Architectural Actions on the Catalan Coast, Spain

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**Abstract:** Over the last 60 years, the development of tourism in Spain has produced an unprecedented occupation of the territory. Urban growth, hotels and infrastructures have transformed much of the natural environment. This phenomenon has irreversibly altered conditions of regions with great landscape value, putting their cultural heritage at risk. Yet, the campsite is a model of tourist settlement based on shared living in the open natural space. It promotes minimal and temporary interventions in the territory, by means of transportable accommodations with precise occupations of place, leaving a slight footprint. Therefore, architecture contributes to affording the order and services that these individual artifacts cannot provide by themselves. In terms of slight land occupation and natural qualities preservation, the campsite has proven to be one of the most responsible tourist models. It is an opportunity for the future: a resource for landscape integration and local dynamics reactivation. We present a set of architectural actions for the integration of campsites in cultural landscapes along the Catalan coast. These are recommendations catalogued by means of a diagnosis tool that proposes strategies at different levels, from enclosure to lodgings. Focusing on end-users, this research fosters cultural identity preservation and responsible communal living in nature.

**Keywords:** campsites; landscape identity; architectural strategies; itinerant tourism; cultural heritage; Mediterranean tradition

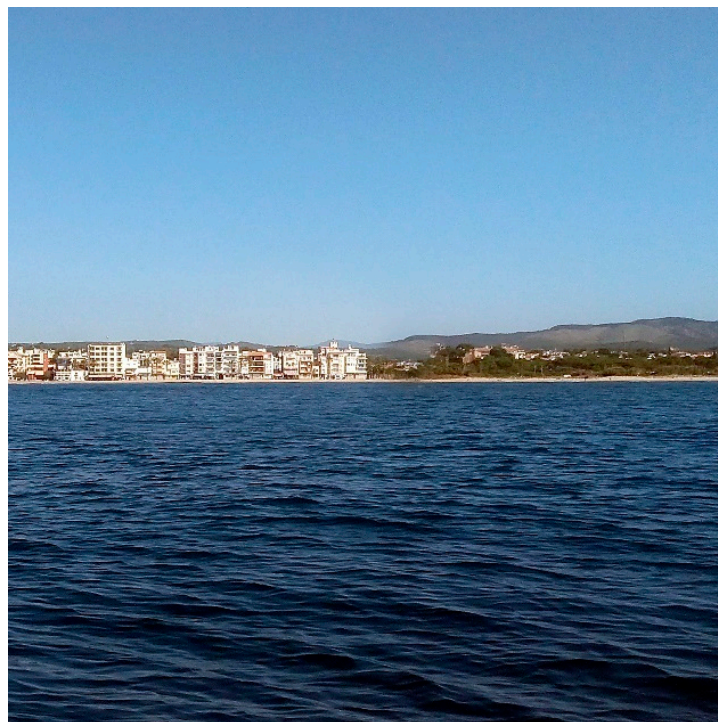
## 1. Introduction

Over the last 60 years, the development of tourism in Spain has produced an unprecedented occupation of large areas of its geographic territory [1]. Urban growth, hotels, infrastructures or extensive urbanization have transformed much of the natural environment. And in some cases, this phenomenon has irreversibly altered the conditions of domains with great landscape value, putting their cultural heritage at risk [2].

This process has resulted in a great paradox (Figure 1). Landscapes evoke memories of our experiences, they are the result of the tradition and history of their inhabitants, and they make a region desirable [3]. Being the fundamental desire of tourism [4], the effects of this economic activity have incomprehensibly consumed landscape values for its own benefit: much architecture of the tourist boom was designed for contemplating, but very few to be seen [5].

In response to this situation, this article presents research that recognizes nature as a cultural function [6]. Beyond reducing it to a strictly geographical entity or to an economic good with which to speculate, nature is recognized as the addition of actions that has endured over time and has shaped values and meaning in the cultural landscape [7]. In this sense, the study of the role of architecture in the transformation of the environment and the construction of the touristic spaces should not only be a recording of what has already happened, but also a commitment to provide a more responsible and sustainable architecture [8]. New design solutions should be more adapted to the needs of the moment

and the place, facilitating spaces of relationship and encouraging the discovery of landscapes' inherent values to foster their preservation for future generations [9].



**Figure 1.** Influence of formal tourism in contrast to lightweight occupation by campsites. Sea view from the coast of Torredembarra (Catalonia, Spain). (Source: authors' own.)

Landscape, architecture and tourism are the three axes that articulate this research, focused on the drafting of a catalogue of architectural recommendations for the landscape integration of campsites in the territory of Catalonia (Spain). This region is historically one of the most representative of the country, since it is the gateway from Europe, and has gathered a greater concentration of campsites. Holidays intensify leisure in nature, social relationships among people and the aesthetics perception of our surroundings [10]. Therefore, they allow us to experiment with new ways of living outdoors and in community. The campsite is a model of tourist settlement based on these qualities. Using transportable lodgings, it promotes minimal intervention with light and precise occupations at the place. In addition, its flexibility and ability to integrate into the site conditions favor its recognition as a potentially sustainable tourist settlement, in close relationship with nature and with a lightweight footprint [11].

This research proposes a collection of architectural actions or strategies to facilitate the integration of these settlements in the environment. It also sets out a project methodology based on recognizing the importance of the singularities of the place in order to act on it with a coherent proposal related to its geography and culture. It is an applied, analytical and purposeful study that offers guidelines and tools to promote the landscape integration of campsites and the preservation of the natural qualities, local traditions and cultures of the territory—through both its geographical and historical aspects [12].

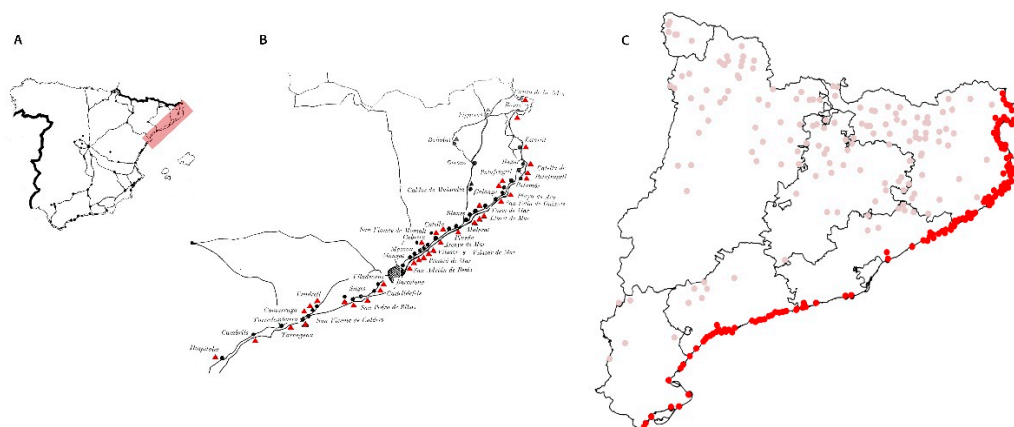
The following sections develop the methodological research process and focus on the results obtained and collected in the “Good Practices Manual. Architectural Actions in Campsites.” [13]. The article reflects on the role of this manual in the future of the sector and its possible effects on the regeneration and enhancement of the cultural landscape. Finally, as a conclusion, it explores the capacity of the campsite to propose new ways of living based on the most primal itinerancy, but still valid and necessary in the dynamic and transformative societies of the 21st century.

## 2. Tourism Setting of Catalonia

The tourist development of Spain was caused by the confluence of a series of conditions that in the late 1950s triggered a process of great intensity that quickly transformed the economy, life, landscape and customs of the inhabitants [14]. On the one hand, the good climate of the country allowed to share experiences in the open air: running away from cities to foment the contact with nature and to discover singular landscapes with a recognized cultural value. In short, to do during holidays everything that was not possible in everyday life [15]. On the other hand, the low cost of living in Spain offered a very economical tourist option, as a result of more than twenty years of international isolation. In addition, since the late 1950s, the car had given freedom of movement to travelers. According to the International Road Federation, the number of vehicles in Europe increased by 72% over the previous decade and made the whole territory accessible to tourism [16].

From the early years, one of the Spanish regions with the highest incidence of tourism was the coast of Catalonia. In addition to being a land that meets the above conditions, its privileged location in contact with France allowed it to act as a gateway for international tourism in the country [17]. This phenomenon accelerated the cultural exchange with travelers from all over the world—mainly from Europe and the United States—and introduced new trends, experiences and lifestyles linked to the freedom of leisure and holidays [18]. Suddenly, towns and environments of eminent rural character saw the need to adapt their features and activities to be able to assimilate the large number of travelers which continued to increase year after year [19]. In addition to hotels, spas or tourist developments, the demands of travelers to leave the cities and flee the asphalt led to the consolidation of the campsite as a unique temporary tourist model, in close contact with nature [20].

In 1960, according to the Trade Union of Spanish Tourist Camping Sites, there were 115 campsites scattered around the country, of which 70 were located in Catalonia (Figure 2A–C). And only three years later, the Guide Iberocamping already mentioned the existence of 218 campsites in Spain, 139 of them in Catalonia [21]. These tourist settlements in Spain doubled in three years and the Catalan territory already housed more than 60% of them. Two more facts from the evolution of this model stand out: in 1985, 72% of campsites in Spain were located in coastal areas (527 units out of a total of 733) [22]; and currently, the total number of Catalan campsites has increased to 354 which represents 33% of the overnight stays in Catalonia, compared to hotels, tourist apartments and rural tourism [23,24].



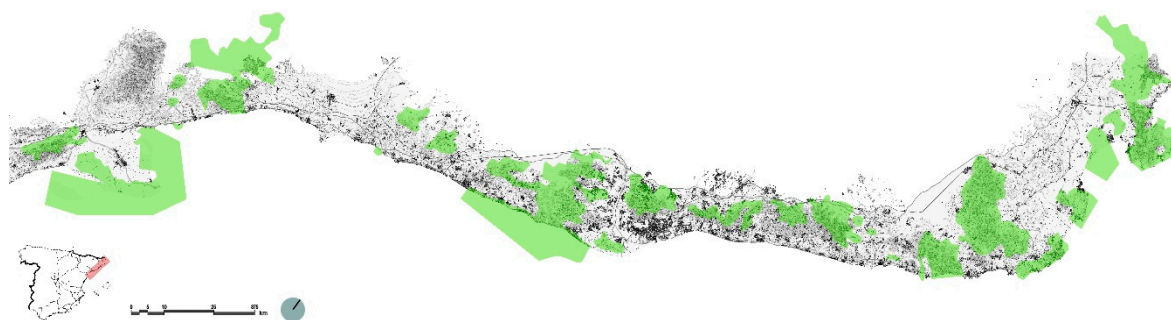
**Figure 2.** Evolution of tourism incidence of the Catalan coast in relation to the whole region. (A) Location of the Catalan coast in Spain; (B) Campsite locations along the Catalan coast, 1950 (Source: authors' own based on [20]); (C) Campsite locations along the Catalan coast, 2019 (Source: authors' own based on [25].)

The first Catalan campsites have already celebrated more than 60 years since their opening, and the main Catalan campsite association recently celebrated their 40-year history [26], with events aimed at promoting and raising awareness of the sustainable values of this model and its integration into nature.

These entities are part of both the Catalan Campsite Federation [27] and the Mediterranean Campsite Confederation [28], in a sample of the great associative capacity of the sector and of the acquired commitment in favor of a touristic model of family origin, strongly rooted in the dynamics and local traditions of the land. In this sense, with up to 203 member campsites, the Catalan Campsite Federation is leading the recognition of this tourism sector values based on its close relation to the natural environment. For this purpose, in December 2019 it commissioned the publication of the Catalan Campsite White Paper to dig in depth in the activity analysis and future challenges, highlighting that 87% of member campsites are located in rural (14%), natural (30%) or periurban (43%) contexts, and only a 13% are located in urban sectors [25].

On the Administration side, since 2018 the Department of Territory and Sustainability of the Generalitat de Catalunya has been developing the Urban Master Plan for Camping Activities (PDUAC), with a proposal to establish the regulation and parameters that must articulate the implantation of camping activities in the Catalan territory [29]. Furthermore, with the aim of regulating the future of the Catalan coast through urban planning and of preserving those most sensitive sectors of its geography—such as potential natural parks—, in 1992 the Generalitat de Catalunya published the Plan of Areas of Natural Interest (PEIN) [30], and in 2014 the Urban Master Plan of the Coastal System (PDUSC) [31]. According to the Department of Territorial Policy and Public Works, in 2004, before the drafting of the PDUSC, from the total amount of 627 km of coastline on the 500 m deep strip, 46.5% (312.6 km) were urban land, 39.6% (266.5 km) were protected as undevelopable land, 8.2% (54.9 km) were undevelopable land without specific protection and 5.7% (38.3 km) were delimited and undelimited developable land [32].

The interpretation of these documents indicates that approximately 50% of the Catalan coast has already been transformed, with a worrying 26.4% of degraded coast [33] (Figure 3). But it also reflects that some of the protected natural areas, or those which have kept their natural conditions, are currently occupied by campsites or have been at some point [34]. Therefore, the territory of Catalonia, and especially its coast, is presented as a geographical area of great importance for the study of this model of tourist settlement and allows to deepen knowledge both on the evolution of its typologies and on the repercussions on the landscape.



**Figure 3.** Distribution of protected territories by the Plan of Areas of Natural Interest (PEIN) along the Catalan coast. (Source: authors' own.)

### 3. Conceptual Background. Hypotheses and Objectives

We are currently at a turning point: we have discovered nature when we almost covered it with cement [35], but it is not too late to foster in the campsite its capacity for active response. After more than 60 years of accelerated tourism development, its effects on the landscape have become clear, and its causes can be studied or contrasted with similar actions in other territories [36]. In general terms, the campsite has been consolidated as a paradigmatic tourism model due to its lightweight occupation of the environment [37]. In this way, its qualities may foment it as a preserver of the landscape and local traditions, values of great significance in the cultural heritage of the territories [38].

However, the campsite's current evolution is starting to diminish this great opportunity. Lately, the presence of stable lodgings is increasing, with lodgings such as bungalows, mobile homes or glamping accommodations. In addition, the architectural design of the common facilities is becoming homogeneous due to both building regulations and standardized solutions. These two aspects, in an incipient phase, are altering the campsite relation to the place, converting these settlements into enclosures of artificialized and globalized landscapes. Yet, camping is a tourist model with a consolidated historical evolution over more than a century. Therefore, taking into account what has happened in recent years, considering the campsite as a phenomenon to be investigated from other areas besides tourism studies is necessary.

In this sense, the General Assembly of the United Nations dedicated the year 2017 to Sustainable Tourism for Development and the Institute for Responsible Tourism (RTI) [39] framed this model in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by developing a specific tourism sustainability certification for campsites—Biosphere Camping—[40]. The following year, the European Union (EU) declared 2018 the European Year of Cultural Heritage, recognizing the importance of its four categories in the sustainable progress of societies—tangible, intangible, natural, digital—[41]. These consecutive events have raised an awareness of the population and the economic sectors and administrations, establishing a new starting point to recognizing the values of our environment and to considering our history as a dynamic process in constant evolution [42].

Therefore, camping can be understood both as a potential sustainable tourism model and also as a preserver of cultural landscapes identities. The campsite, as a camp, arises from the countryside, from the open spaces linked to the rural land [43]. As a social activity it derived from a sport: hiking is based on a deep respect for nature and inspired by the curiosity to discover new places [44]. Thus, its two fundamental axes—naturalness and temporality—favor a type of light and itinerant environment's occupation, of little impact and short duration. Unlike other tourist models, the campsite's users are agents involved in the construction of the settlement, and the accommodations are transportable elementary units. Each inhabitant adapts the plot with light and removable artifacts [45]: fabrics, ropes, sunscreens, folding furniture, and so on. Furthermore, the user implements it under the guidance of an upper order set by architectural design [46] that provides a structure linked to the qualities of the place and fosters landscape integration as a whole.

To achieve this specific adaptability, the campsite provides a series of services that could hardly be supplied by transportable lodgings: toilets, restaurants, supermarkets, recreation areas, and so on. This scheme minimizes constructions and facilities in common sectors and generates a form of habitat in which movement dilutes the boundaries between public and private [47]. It also promotes responsible use of shared outdoor spaces and social relations between users. Therefore, the feelings of belonging and appropriation of the place are generated both from the individual and from the community, and so the transformations of the environment become much lighter, temporary and reversible than those produced in other types of tourist settlement [48].

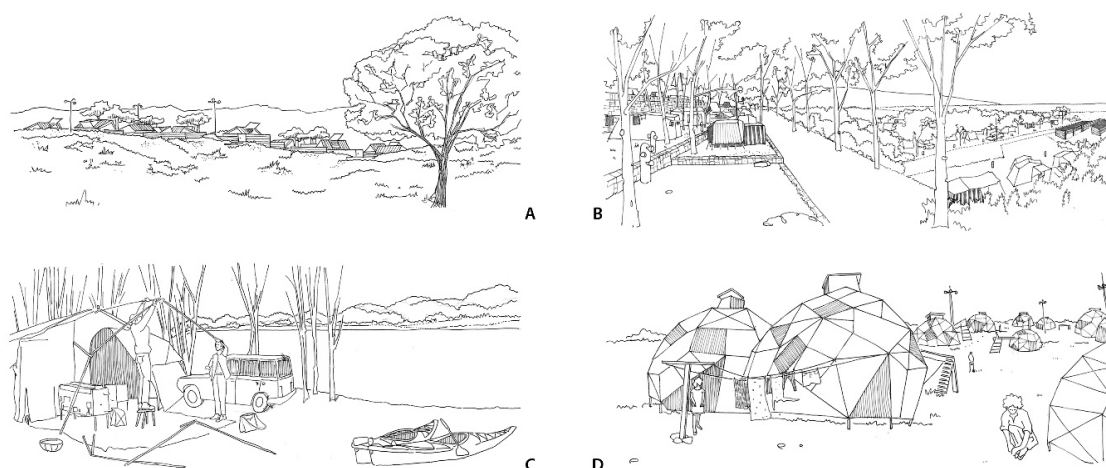
In relation to cultural heritage, each specific place has its own activities, characteristics, qualities and singularities rooted in the identity of its landscape. All this acquired values directly affect tourist aesthetic judgment in a positive way, as these are main factors for fostering inhabitants' sense of belonging to a place [10]. Beyond the physical characteristics, in a landscape design project it is also convenient to understand its social, historical and cultural dynamics [49]. These aspects are directly related to the uses supported in their evolution and allow to recognize their presence, giving continuity to the heritage value rooted in the memory of the inhabitants [50].

With the certainty that the landscape is the fundamental value of the cultural heritage of each territory [51], any sustainable intervention or occupation should follow the laws and meanings of the site to foster its preservation, as it is clearly stated in the Catalan Urban Regulation [52]. In this sense, the campsite has the capacity to promote outdoor living and leisure, fostering a responsible way of occupying land in natural contexts. Furthermore, through itinerancy and continuous movement

around the territory or within the settlement's boundaries, this tourism model allows to recognize the public space as support for social interactions and shared activities in close relation to nature.

In terms of landscape integration and its identity preservation, the campsite has proven to be one of the most appropriate tourism models due to its natural qualities and its low carbon accommodations [53]: for its rational nature management beyond its limits [54], for the fact of promoting a shared way of living outdoors and for its little constructive footprint [22]. Thus, it could be considered as an opportunity for the future, a resource for the historical recognition and conservation of the cultural heritage of each place, as well as for facilitating the sustainable activation and regeneration of local dynamics [55]. Under the initial idea that a campsite design is a landscape design project, the research is based on four objectives that this settlement should achieve in order to strengthen itself as a paradigm of sustainable tourism and a way of preserving the cultural heritage:

- **Integration and Identity:** one of the fundamental pillars of the research is the recognition of the intrinsic qualities of the place, to enhance them in the design and thus give continuity to the identity of the landscape that surrounds it. The campsite has to be a univocal part of its environment, assimilating pre-existing conditions and reinforcing the values acquired over time (Figure 4A).
- **Preservation and Responsibility:** the commitment of the sector is to promote landscape integration at all levels. Not only dealing with its possible visual impact, but also with its ability to generate energy, consume less, reuse waste or preserve the characteristics of the ecosystems, while preserving their environmental functions over time (Figure 4B).
- **Temporality and Reversibility:** one of the differentiating features of the campsite is its ability to adapt to the changing dynamics of the context and users. It is a model where settlement and activity follow cycles of operation and rotation that encourage reuse. Thus, the vocation of non-permanence and its capacity for regeneration as an active natural space must be able to give continuity to existing values and strengthen them as a complement to the new supported activities (Figure 4C).
- **Individual and Community:** the campsite encourages the use of the natural environment as a shared public space. Pathways, outdoor activities or common pavilions are aspects that reinforce the identity and sense of belonging to a group. But the individual, as an inhabitant, must also be able to solve his or her most basic needs and have a refuge from maintain daily rites (Figure 4D).



**Figure 4.** Ideal of a campsite based on the research's main objectives (Source: authors' own.) (A) Campsite integration in landscape; (B) Sustainable land development based on lightweight occupations; (C) Reversible users' adaptations to inhabit nature in leisure; (D) Individuals living in community and sharing open spaces.

Thus, this research recovers the historical and architectural values of the campsite as a form of temporary and respectful type of nature dwelling. As an alternative small-scale tourism, it interrelates with the community and contributes to the long-term social well-being, fostering users' interaction and cultural landscapes' regeneration [56]. In order to enhance its qualities and its unique approach, this research identifies the architectural criteria that define the campsite as a potential sustainable settlement, open to the stimuli of its natural environment [57]—with special emphasis on the four announced objectives—. Although tourism has been the most intensive landscape transformation agent in recent decades in Catalonia, especially along the coast, it can also become the engine of change to rectify this situation [58]. Tourists are interested in sun and sea, but also in the natural landscape and the architectural heritage, or the warm human atmosphere of each land, its housing and its inhabitants. Tourism also seeks genuineness, that of the peculiar character of villages and landscapes [59].

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Mediterranean Strategies Research Line

The objectives of the Mediterranean Strategies research line are the promotion, conservation, regeneration and dissemination of the cultural and architectural heritage of tourist settlements, mainly on Catalonia's Mediterranean coast [60]. Through a technical and critical assessment of the architectural design project, we intend to recover the characteristic mechanisms of Mediterranean construction: the principles of settlement on a place, the use of own materials, traditional construction solutions and climate protection tools [61]. Most of these aspects are considered sustainable passive tools defined by vernacular architecture over time [62].

The present research is based on the inductive methodology followed in previous similar studies [63–65]: obtaining new ways of acting from the study of specific cases and concluding with the definition of a series of strategies applicable in the studied area (Table 1). Through this method, we analyze several reference solutions that are distributed in environments with some similar characteristics, in a process of approaching from the general to the specific. Thus, the analysis focuses on the capacity of the campsite to settle within the context, recognizing the different levels or scales of action: from its landscape integration to the user's occupation of the plot by means of small individual lodgings.

**Table 1.** Research process based on Mediterranean Strategies inductive methodology.

Methodology	Analytical Stage	Proposal Stage
Analysis of the territory	1) Cultural landscape values. Campsite location.	5) Evolution of campsites <sup>1</sup> . Landscape transformation.
Case study	2) Selection of 5 pioneer examples. Architectural project analysis.	6) Extended sample up to 84 campsites. Characteristics of the place listing.
Comparative approach	3) Five levels of analysis. Conceptual mapping.	7) Topics and concepts definition. Architectural Actions catalogue.
Reflections and conclusions	4) What does landscape integration of campsites mean?	8) What can campsites offer to cultural landscapes?

<sup>1</sup> Graphic catalogue on how both campsites and landscape have influenced each other, from 1954 to 2019.

In a more analytical first stage, once the territory's values and characteristics have been identified, we carry out a comparative analysis between five referent case studies to recognize the characteristics that define them. Subsequently, following from the differences and similarities between the analyzed solutions, there is a deduction of a series of architectural guidelines which are applicable to other locations and similar settlements. At this point, a second stage widens the case studies sample to validate and complete the identified solutions. This research finally concludes with a catalogue of specific architectural actions to foster campsites planning development in relation to place conditions.

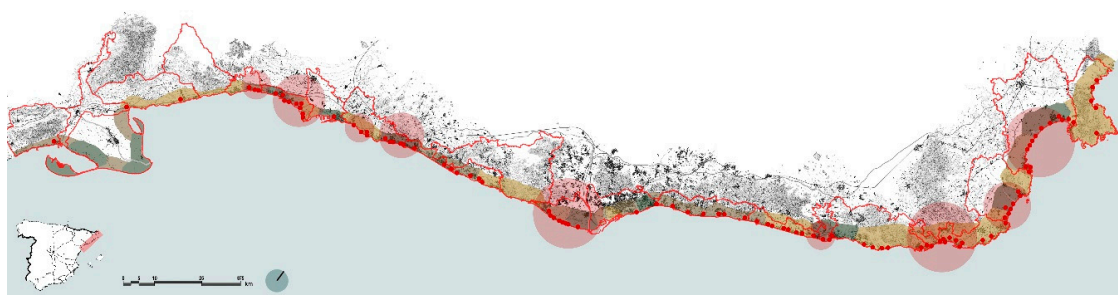
Throughout this approach, we keep in mind that a campsite is an element of the landscape and that the landscape is a common good [46]. Therefore, the methodology is aimed at establishing criteria that allow to reinforce the qualities of the natural environment and its public use for future generations, through correct implementation of tourist activities in campsites.

The whole research is seen from the architectural design point of view and is based on graphic records as tools to represent the developed ideas. The specific use of photographs, plans, models or diagrams visually reinforces all the aspects highlighted in the research. This encourages the use of a universal architectural language, with clear informative and communicative qualities that allows to transfer the debate to the public domain. In fact, the social impact on knowledge transfer is a key aspect of the group's research methodology. Administrations, local entities, developers and institutions, public and private, are involved throughout the study with the aim of responding to the territorial needs, while nurturing resources for all agents meant to directly act on it. Therefore, it is not just a matter of establishing collaborations with the institutions for gathering information and data, but of opening a dialogue to recognize the sensitivities of the tourism sector and to establish links with all the stakeholders and end-users involved.

#### 4.2. Analysis of the Territory

We understand the territory as a conjunction between a geography which acts as a support and a history that adds symbolic value on it [66]. Therefore, any intervention on the territory is far from being on a blank sheet where we can erase its memory, but on the contrary: we must recognize its identity and preserve the elements or systems that give it meaning as a place. We must consider that we build on something already built, physically and symbolically [67].

For this reason, the first step in the research is to identify the values of the area throughout several readings of the territory: in-situ field work, digitized air flights, up-to-date data and archives documentation [68]. The results of this data collection are recorded in a thematic map: the Index Map of the Catalan Coast [69]. This document is a graphic catalogue which highlights the geographical conditions of the territory—topography, hydrography—, the infrastructures—highways, train, ports—, the urban frameworks—centers, expansions, urbanizations-, the activities—camping sites, fields, protected zones-, or the administrative scopes of the territory—landscape units, municipalities, counties- (Figure 5). The aim of this study is to place the campsites in relation to the geographical context and to record the transformations undergone over time.



**Figure 5.** Index Map of the Catalan Coast with landscape interpretation, campsite locations and most relevant camping regions identified. (Source: authors' own.)

#### 4.3. Case Study Campsites. Selection and Analysis

Once the campsites have been identified in relation to their territorial context, we proceed with the assessment of the case studies to analyze. The selection criteria are based on various aspects, such as the quality of the architectural proposals, the type of environment in which they are located, their evolution over time or the access to the necessary information. In this research we have selected five representative cases within the geographical field of study, out of 159 identified cases along the Catalan coast—. These five are considered reference examples as they were pioneers of this typology



in Catalonia and were designed by architects with a recognized career. From south to north of the coast, the case studies are:

- COSTA BLANCA campsite (Cambrils, Tarragona, 1962–1989): it was designed by the architects Robert Terradas Via and Jordi Adroer on a plot surrounded by fields on the outskirts of Cambrils. The main communication road between Cambrils and Salou crossed the center of the settlement, which allowed to experiment with the boundaries between public and private. The common buildings were located in the public area nearby the entrance, and the water tank tower rose like a landmark visible from a distance. Once its activity ended, the area was urbanized with apartments (Figure 6A).
- SALOU campsite (Salou, Tarragona, 1956–1987): it was initially designed by the architect José Maria Monravà, but over time other architects also took part in its development, such as Antoni Bonet Castellana, Josep Puig Torné and Jaume Argilaga. It was located below a pine forest, halfway between Salou and Cap Salou, so it had some sectors with sloped topography and sea views, protected by the pines' shade. The urban growth of Salou exerted great pressure on the settlement, which was finally converted into the Municipal Park of Salou (Figure 6B).
- EL TORO BRAVO campsite (Viladecans, Barcelona, 1962–2005): it was designed by the architect Francesc Mitjans under a dense pine forest in the marshy area of the Llobregat Delta. It was one of the four campsites that Mitjans designed in this area of the coast, always with the premise of preserving the forest as a unifying element of the settlement. It had a capacity for about 6000 campers, with singular buildings and a flexible layout to be implemented in that unstable natural environment. The expansion of El Prat airport forced its closure and was declared a protected natural area (Figure 6C).
- CALA GOGÓ campsite (Calonge, Girona, 1961–present): it was designed by the architects Antoni Bonet Castellana and Josep Puig Torné on a land with a topographic difference of about 90 m from sea towards inland. The coastal road crossed the settlement at the bottom, where the main entrance and one of the first nightclubs in the area were located. For its implementation they used the development of existing agricultural terraces. The buildings were built on stone platforms and with a common system based on the traditional Catalan vault. It is still active today with some adaptations motivated by new trends in the sector (Figure 6D).
- LAGUNA campsite (Castelló d'Empúries, Girona, 1968–present): it was designed by the architect Josep Maria Pla Torras in an isolated estate between marshes and located at the end of a 5 km road, which runs between agricultural fields towards the beach. This natural context contrasts with the upcoming tourist development of Empuriabrava, right on the opposite bank of La Muga river. The public buildings follow a common system formed by vaults. The plots are located around a lagoon that structures the settlement. Nowadays, it is still active within the Integral Protection Zone of the Aiguamolls de l'Empordà Natural Park and it maintains its natural character in relation to the landscape (Figure 6E).

The available documentation on the design projects has included mainly the original plans and the architects' writings. Unfortunately, the small size of this type of settlement means that in many cases the information is scarce and inaccurate. The documents' sources were municipal historical archives, collections of the Architects Association of Catalonia and the Cartographic and Geological Institute of Catalonia, as well as private archives of the architects that designed them.

At the same time, we have consulted books, magazines, audiovisuals and tourist promotion campaigns. Most of them are documents published during the first years of the campsites and they show an original reading of the project, without the subsequent interventions they have undergone over the years. In addition, the fieldwork has been a source of great value, since we have been able to visit in-situ the locations of the analyzed cases, even though some have already disappeared. Finally, historical photographs have been one of the most relevant complements to be able to identify projects in their original context and to understand the evolution of the effects of tourism on the

landscape. Photographs, and especially postcards [70], have helped us to know how landscape has been transformed by the activities that have taken place there: from walking or sailing, to cultivating, fishing, moving or living [71].

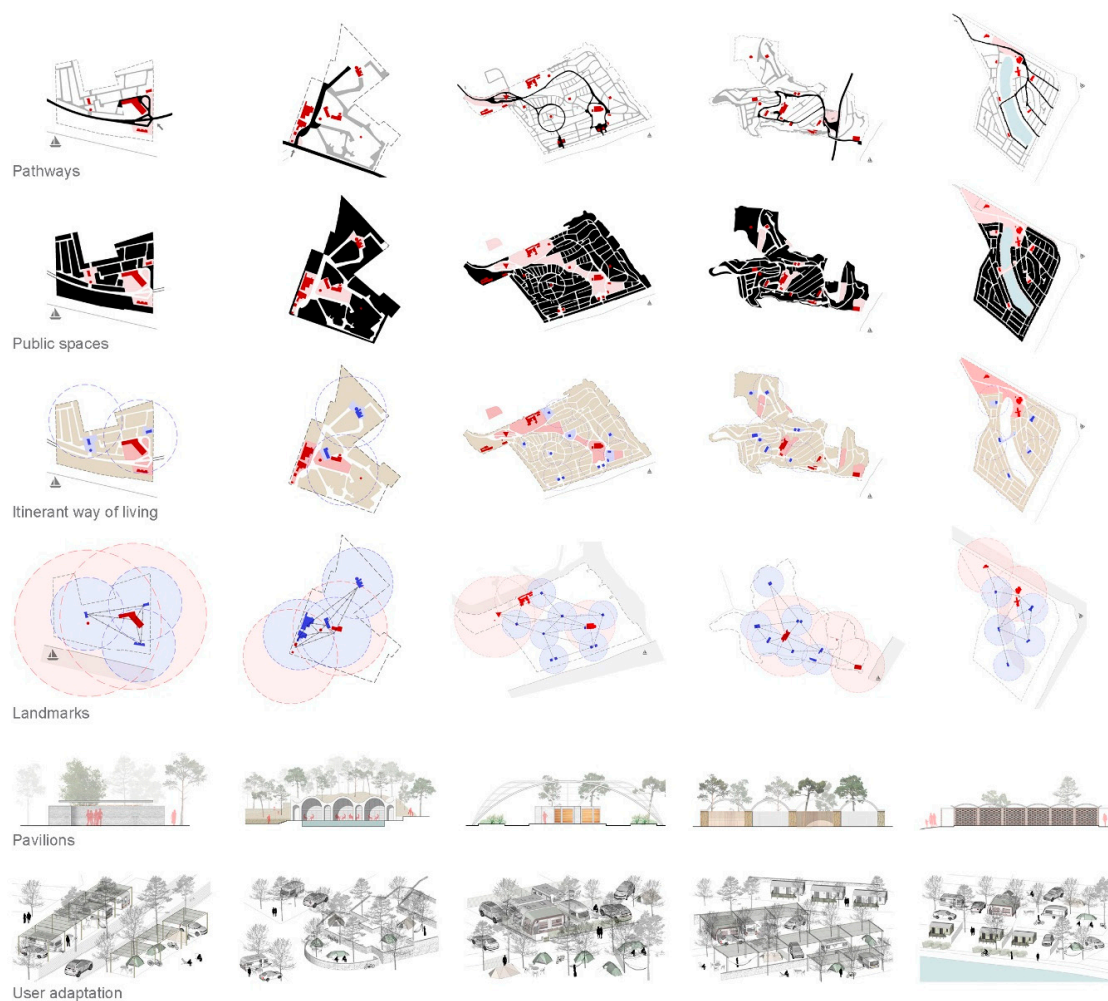


**Figure 6.** Selection of five case studies designed by relevant architects during 1950s and 1960s along the Catalan coast. (Source: authors' own.) (A) Costa Blanca campsite; (B) Salou campsite; (C) El Toro Bravo campsite; (D) Cala Gogó campsite; (E) Laguna campsite.

The analysis of the case studies, from the design to the construction, has been essentially based on the graphic documents of the architectural proposals, therefore, it is built on qualitative data. The plans have been redrawn, interpreting the project from the scale of the compound layout to the building's construction details. This process of reconstruction has involved the identification of the pre-existences of the site, on which the architects based their decisions. This exercise of restitution has been done by contrasting documents of varied formats, completing what is missing by assumptions that solve the existing inconsistencies between what was designed and what was finally built.

#### 4.4. Comparative Analysis. Approaches

The analysis settled five sections according to the different levels of approach: the territory (Enclosure), the context (Layout), the settlement (Clusters), the buildings (Pavilions) and the accommodation (Artifacts). Focusing on research objectives, a set of categories was established for the analysis of each of these approaches. Thus, the information obtained is summarized graphically in some diagrams or conceptual schemes to be studied (Figure 7). The methodology's purpose was to provide a reading to every design project in each of the categories, but also to establish a comparative analysis between the five case studies. For that purpose, they were represented schematically following the same graphic criteria: colors, line types, orientation and scale.



**Figure 7.** Sample of six different categories developed in the comparative analysis. Each column belongs to a case study keeping the same order as in Figure 6. Each row belongs to a different category, drawn with a specific scheme to emphasize its concepts. From top to bottom: Pathways, Public spaces, Itinerant way of living, Landmarks, Pavilions, User adaptation. (Source: authors' own.)

This comparative graphic process provides a cross view on the general design project conception: on their common decisions, but also on their singularities. It allows us to identify a set of architectural criteria—actions or strategies—that may be suitable for other case studies, or for new design proposals. For instance, if some case studies were set by a clear road hierarchy and these have fostered a slight mobility—bicycle, pedestrian—we can set that a road system organized in relation to context is appropriate for landscape integration of campsites. Furthermore, we can expand on this conclusion by analyzing a wider sample of campsites to identify which layers may define that hierarchy, which permeable materials avoid soil alteration and limit paths, or which vegetation provides adequate shadows and protection.

During this comparative analysis we have followed a similar process in all of the identified topics, taking into account both campsite current evolution and other similar examples to validate the reliability of each architectural action. These architectural project guidelines do not have a regulatory vocation, rather the opposite: they are offered as a tool for diagnosis and decision-making to respond to the specific conditions of each site, knowing that the more they can be applied, the more capacity of landscape integration the campsite will have.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. A Study Applied to the Site

In landscape interventions, there is no certainty that generic or universal norms can meet the same needs in places with different dynamics [72]. Each specific place has its own characteristics, its qualities and singularities which have given it a specific and recognized historical memory. Therefore, while designing, the role of the architect or the landscape architect is considered a continuous negotiation between nature and artifice, between social activities and the places that host them, between the individual and the space [73]. For this reason, the campsite design project must be inserted into the attributes of the place considering that in many cases only a slight intervention might be needed: a minimal architectural action that reinforces the meanings of the place [74].

The results of this research are catalogued in six thematic blocks. The first one contextualizes and sets out the content of this research: its convenience, its essence, the importance of the place in the design project and the aspects that have guided the methodology. The other five thematic blocks show the collection of architectural actions, grouped into the five levels of approach following the comparative analysis—from the territory scale to the user one—. Each one of these sections is divided into different topics that provide a further detailed classification of concepts. The Architectural Actions are catalogued by means of the following sequence (Table 2):

**Table 2.** Classification of Architectural Actions with Sections, Topics and Concepts.

Section	Topic	Concept	Actions (n.)
A_ENCLOSURE It expands on the relationship between the settlement and the landscape.	Context	Visuals	8
		Mobility	6
		Climate	8
		Permeability	8
	Access	Arrival	7
		Equipped area	7
		Car park	11
	Limits	Natural elements	9
		Artificial elements	8
		Edges	14
B_LAYOUT It develops the internal structure of the campsite.	Road	Main routes	12
		Secondary routes	10
		Network	11
		Treatment	12
	Free spaces	Squares	9
		Axes	8
		Indefinite areas	7
		Facilities	7
	Landmarks	Vertical	7
		Horizontal	5
Punctual		7	
Functional		6	

Table 2. Cont.

Section	Topic	Concept	Actions (n.)	
C_CLUSTERS It outlines the potential display of elements and uses at the settlement.	Upper order	Natural	7	
		Buildings	9	
		Elements	13	
	Common Buildings	Common Buildings	Reception	7
			Restaurant	8
			Commercial	7
			Warehouses	7
			Toilets	13
			Sports	11
	Lodging	Lodging	Dynamic situations	8
			Settled situations	6
			Distributions	12
D_PAVILIONS It explores the common buildings' architectural and constructive typology.	Exterior	Open buildings	9	
		Passive systems	8	
		Platforms	11	
	Shape	Shape	Geometry	7
			Modulation	7
			Flexibility	7
			Horizontality	7
	Construction	Construction	Tradition	12
			Unique schemes	8
			Industrialization	9
E_ARTIFACTS It deals with the individual adaptation of users in the accommodation.	Plots	Minimum conditions	13	
		Variety	6	
		Delimitation	10	
	Itinerant	Itinerant	Situation	8
			Rotation	8
			Adaptation	13
	Permanent	Permanent	Situation	6
			Rotation	6
			Adaptation	14

The research and dissemination of the Architectural Actions are designed to facilitate their understanding by a wide range of stakeholders: architects, entrepreneurs, administration, campers, maintenance managers, and so on. For this reason, each concept is developed following multiple simultaneous speeches that can lead to parallel readings, focusing on one or several aspects. Altogether, as a result of the research, a total of 464 architectural actions are classified into 54 concepts and 15 topics. In addition, the graphic record's methodological importance is shown in the 117 published photographs and in the 147 plans, drawings or icons included.

### 5.2. A Cross-Reading with the Characteristics of Place

The construction of landscape has been the consequence of man's intervention on nature, and landscape's identity has become the fundamental feature for the recognition of its cultural heritage [75]. For this reason, an integrative and valid action for a specific place can be absolutely contrary to the needs of a different environment, where processes, conditions and significantly different meanings have probably intervened over time [76]. Therefore, this research highlights the importance of "reading the site" as a process for linking design requirements with the characteristics of the context. It is a procedure which consists of identifying the pre-existing elements of the site from the analyzed case studies, as well as its conditions and the values that give it meaning. The recognition of these aspects

makes it possible to draw an x-ray of the environment, its shortcomings and, above all, its strengths. The following list shows pre-existing characteristics to consider in this previous reading of the site, selected for their direct influence on design decisions (Table 3):

**Table 3.** Pre-Existing Features and Identifiable Elements throughout the “Reading the Site” Process.

Characteristics of Place	“Reading the Site”	Elements
Architectural heritage	The built elements often belong to local tradition, reinforce landscape identity and can be reused.	Walls, paths, fountains, farmhouses, buildings, etc.
Cultural heritage	Intangible qualities enhance cultural dynamism and discovery of toponyms, local products and customs.	Legends, memory, experiences, characters, gastronomy, etc.
Activities	Existing or previous uses of the site relate the settlement to its context and encourage the rooting.	Agricultural, livestock, leisure, commercial, residential, educational, etc.
Layouts	Linear elements of the environment provide an upper territorial order which can be followed.	Borders, fences, irrigation, pathways, infrastructures, green corridors, etc.
Hydrography	The water introduces a reference to the place, allows distant views and is a source of biodiversity.	Streams, canals, rivers, lagoons, lakes, sea, etc.
Topography	Traditional terrain transformations have given rise to systems of great value and low visual impact.	Dunes, slopes, walls, margins, terraces, platforms, etc.
Flora	The existing vegetation is a sample of the activities the site has endured over time.	Undergrowth, bushes, tress, monumental trees, unique species, cycles, etc.
Fauna	The animal life reflects natural cycles of the habitat and it directly relates to landscape dynamics.	Insects, fishes, reptiles, mammals, birds, migrations, farms, etc.
Climate and Energy	Site conditions and technological innovations facilitate low consumption and waste treatment.	Orientation, sunshine, winds, rainwater, waste, drainage, etc.

### 5.3. The Matrix. A Diagnosis Tool.

The identification of these pre-existing elements on the site, and their deep analysis in relation to the context, provides valuable information on what actions need to be implemented in order to remain part of the cultural landscape of the place [77]. With the aim of highlighting architects’ decisions on the case studies’ design projects, the comparative analysis also expands on their specific site conditions. By means of a cause-effect sequence these design solutions are related to the issue they overcome (Table 4). Furthermore, the comparison between these different aspects clarifies the most adequate classification for all different topics identified throughout the five levels of approach.

All the architectural responses to each of these pre-existing features are raised as potential actions to be implemented in forthcoming developments. The clue of this proposal stage of the research is validating the capability of these specific architectural solutions to announce them as design recommendations in other locations with similar conditions. Thus, once a first collection of actions is set from the referent case studies, a second round is developed through other examples from the same geographic frame. In this sense, from the five initial case studies, the sample is expanded up to 84 campsites located in different contexts along the Catalan coast. At this point, both pioneer and current campsites are selected if their evolution can be traceable enough to determine the adequacy of their architectural solutions.

**Table 4.** Synthesis of the Comparative Analysis. Architectural Actions Identified in the Case Studies.

Characteristics of the Place	Architectural Actions Identified in the Case Study Campsites <sup>1</sup>				
	Costa Blanca	Salou	El Toro Bravo	Cala Gogó	Laguna
Architectural heritage	A road crosses the settlement and sets a shared public space	Traditional stone walls for terraces and buildings	A house converted into a <b>common building</b>	Buildings based on a traditional vault system	Buildings <b>shape</b> based on a local vault system
Cultural heritage	Traditional agricultural sheds define territory scale	Nearby tourism facilities foster leisure offer	Place of isolation provides a naturist camping zone	Typical local farmhouse become a <b>landmark</b>	Light footprint <b>construction</b> to be integrated in the Natural Park
Activities	Water tank tower sets a landmark for road tourists	Seafront and tourism set main <b>access</b> towards beach	Fishing and water ski as commercial birdcall	Existing agricultural terraces facilitate plot setting	Nature is preserved from nearby formal tourist sprawl
Layouts	Agricultural fields and a road set access and <b>limits</b>	Agricultural fields and fences define plot pattern	Fields and irrigation canals define plot pattern	Main <b>road</b> goes through and around plot terraces	Marshes, fields and trails define plot pattern
Hydrography	Existing reservoir used for rainwater collection	A stream defines side edge and beach connection	A lagoon and the beach define edges	Two streams and the beach define edges	Inner lagoon fosters nature quality and <b>free spaces</b>
Topography	<b>Upper order</b> on flat terrain set by wattle pergolas	Low stone walls create platforms for setting plots	Flat terrain facilitates bike and pedestrian mobility	Stone walls create terraces and <b>exterior</b> buildings	River and lagoon embankments define edges
Flora	Cane margins foster main road protection	Combination of existing and planted trees	Pine forest ease <b>itinerant</b> plots in shadow	Addition of wattle pergolas for lack of trees	Plantation of local tamarinds ease shading
Fauna	No permanent <b>lodging</b> to foster natural regeneration	Natural habitat protection from urban sprawl	Marshes drainage to prevent mosquito	Varied marine fauna as a commercial birdcall	Natural protected land for bird migrations
Climate and energy	Centralization of buildings and facilities	Lavatories and pool nearby water tank	Irregular <b>plot</b> layout preserves pine trees	South-oriented <b>permanent</b> plots over sea	Solar power and reuse of rainwater

<sup>1</sup> Highlighted words are related to the 15 topics of the architectural actions catalogue.

Once the topics classification is defined and initial architectural actions are validated and completed through other selected cases, a diagnosis tool can be established to simplify the “reading the site” process prior to design: the Matrix. This chart directly relates each of the pre-existing elements in the context to the topics of the Architectural Actions (Figure 8). Therefore, following a visual source, we can quickly identify which are the most relevant recommendations to consider in any particular place, according to the characteristics detected and taking into account the classification by different topics and levels of approach.

In this sense, the Matrix offers a view focused on results and in response to the qualities of each landscape. Thus, it is a typological chart which follows design guidelines from the analyzed case studies, and which can evolve globally. Columns show each of the identified concepts, in their five scales in which project actions will be developed. Rows collect the typologies of pre-existing detectable elements on the site. The relation among concepts is classified by levels of incidence, discerning the relevance that an element may have for developing a specific architectural action.

	A. ENCLOSURE			B. LAYOUT			C. CLUSTERS			D. PAVILIONS			E. ARTIFACTS		
	1. Context Visuals Mobility Climate Permeability	2. Access Arrival Equipped area Car park	3. Limits Natural el. Artificial el. Edges	1. Flood Main Secondary Sewage Treatment	2. Free space Squares Avenues Terraces Facilities	3. Landmarks Vertical Horizontal Functional	1. High order Natural Buildings Elements	2. Buildings Residential Commercial Cultural Public Sports	3. Lodgements Dynamic Static Distributors	1. Exterior Open buildings Reserve Systems	2. Shape Geometry Modularity Flexibility Horizontality	3. Construction Traction Uniqueness Installation	1. Plots Conditions Valley Definition Permeability	2. Itinerants Situation Rotation Adaptation	3. Permanents Situation Rotation Adaptation
<b>Architectural heritage:</b> <i>walls, paths, fountains, ponds, farmhouses, buildings...</i>	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●
<b>Cultural heritage:</b> <i>legends, memory, experiences, characters, gastronomy...</i>	●	●	●		●	●	●	○		●		○	○	●	●
<b>Activities:</b> <i>agricultural, livestock, commercial, leisure, residential, educational...</i>	●	●	○	●	●	○		○	●	●	●		●		
<b>Layouts:</b> <i>borders, fences, irrigation, roads, paths, infrastructures, corridors...</i>	●	●	○	●	○		○	●			○	●	●	●	●
<b>Hydrography:</b> <i>streams, canals, rivers, lagoons, lakes, sea...</i>	○		●	○	●	○	○	●	●	●			●		●
<b>Topography:</b> <i>dunes, slopes, margins, terraces, platforms, walls...</i>	●	●	●	○	○	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	○
<b>Flora:</b> <i>undergrowth, bushes, monumental, trees, unique species, cycles...</i>	●	●	○		○	●	○	●	○	●			●	○	○
<b>Fauna:</b> <i>insects, fishes, reptiles, mammals, birds, migrations, farms...</i>			○		○		●	●	○	○			○	●	●
<b>Climate and energy:</b> <i>orientation, sunshine, winds, rainwater, drainage...</i>	●		●		○		●	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	○

**Figure 8.** Representation of the Matrix. Each column belongs to a specific topic within the five sections. Each row belongs to a pre-existing feature of a place. This design tool shows the relevance of the site elements to focus on the most adequate architectural actions in each concept. (Source: authors’ own.)

#### 5.4. Architectural Actions

Once the pre-existing elements of the site have been identified and their impact on the project has been assessed through the Matrix, the architectural guidelines can be introduced both in the design process and the decision-making to face any action that may be taken in that place. Following the methodology, this catalogue of recommendations is organized into the five thematic sections defined by the levels of approach. In addition, each section addresses three specific topics, and each of these topics develops the proposed architectural actions highlighting the main one as a reference.

These strategic actions guide the great challenges of the design process to achieve a campsite model that guarantees the qualities defined in the research objectives: its landscape integration, its preservation of nature, the promotion of reversibility and the identification of the individual in the community. The following sub-sections set out the considerations for each of these topics and detail the concepts developed. In addition, each one of these reference actions is exemplified by means of a specific campsite solution which is illustrated by a picture and conceptualized in a diagram.

##### 5.4.1. Enclosure

The campsite is an outdoor unit that forms a settlement by means of a layout of boundaries that define its perception as a private area. Despite being an enclosure, the implementation criteria must generate proposals to reduce its tightness and minimize the image of a hermetic sector. Incorporating the qualities of the context can serve to facilitate the reaction to the dynamic conditions of the environment and enhance integration into the natural landscape, avoiding the consolidation of occupations in sensitive areas of public interest.

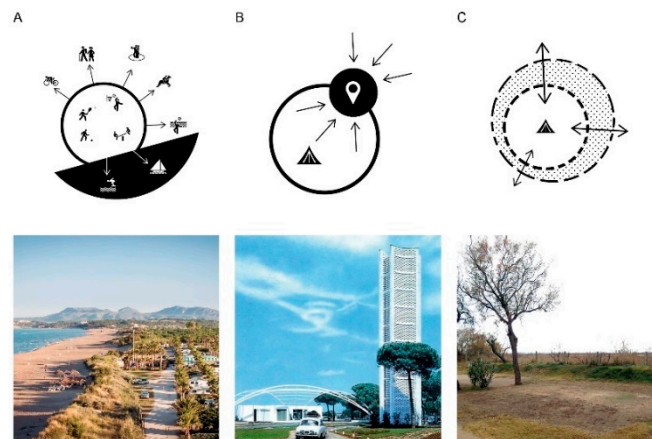
The topics, concepts and reference actions developed in the Enclosure approach are:

- Context: visuals, mobility, climate, permeability. The campsite must recognize the qualities of the place, be part of it and assimilate its own dynamics. Integration in the landscape involves giving value to its characteristics—geographical, visual, historical, functional, etc., introducing



and enhancing them in the design. For instance, in littoral campsites, beach dunes free from users' occupation enhance autochthonous flora preservation and flood prevention (Figure 9A).

- **Access:** arrival, equipped area, car park. The arrival to or departure from the campsite is a transition process that requires an area of relation between the inside and the outside. Access is a breaking point of the boundaries that define the site, so it is an important space of interaction between users and the general public, as it may contain shared activities and act as a reference of the settlement. For instance, a vertical water tank in close proximity to a welcoming reception pavilion provides a unique accessing experience and fosters place belonging (Figure 9B).
- **Limits:** natural elements, artificial elements, edges. The campsite must be a permeable enclosure, which is directly related to the elements of the site. The boundaries must be transformed into edges, as areas with thickness that meet all the requirements and incorporate multiple superimposed filters, both natural and artificial [78]. For instance, in rural contexts, a sequence of low embankment, vegetation, water and a transparent fence provide a slight but secure separation which improves the quality of the views (Figure 9C).



**Figure 9.** Enclosure: sample of architectural actions represented by icons and pictures. (Source: authors' icons and authors' or public domain pictures.) (A) Context in Las Dunas campsite; (B) Access in El Toro Bravo; (C) Limits of Laguna campsite.

#### 5.4.2. Layout

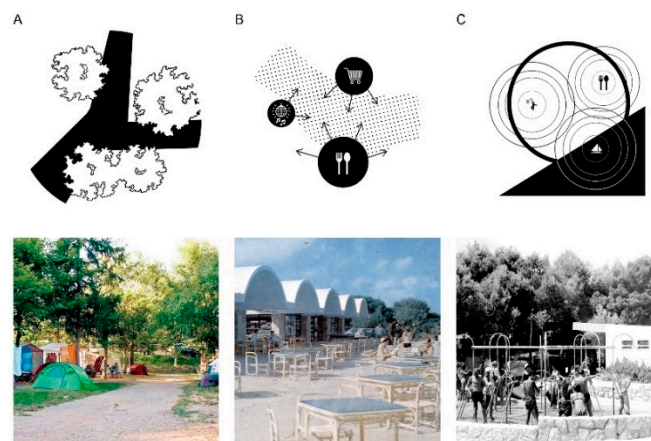
On an overall scale, the campsite is organized with a structure that links the characteristics of the environment with the needs of the inhabitants. It also has the capacity to do so in a way that is flexible enough to dynamically adapt to the context's changing conditions and the daily needs. The layout, far from imposing, is subtly introduced into the context and guides the actions of users towards the domestic, recreational and social. The campsite is organized from the arrangement of the whole: a new order or structure ensures that the temporary prevails over the permanent.

The topics, concepts and reference actions developed in the Layout approach are:

- **Road:** main routes, secondary routes, network, treatment. The basic structure of the campsite must recognize a hierarchy of pathways and displacements of different types and formats. Vehicles and transportable lodgings must be able to coexist with pedestrians, bicycles or scooters; thus, the establishment of a road gradation according to the intensity of use adds order to the campsite and organizes the different areas according to their character and materiality. For instance, irregular narrow paths with permeable pavements and abundant vegetation soften traffic around plots and foster the use of public spaces (Figure 10A).
- **Free spaces:** squares, axes, indefinite areas, facilities. In the campsite, all unoccupied space must be part of the shared natural environment. The open spaces organize recreational activities within the settlement, so their distribution must recognize the pre-existences and introduce the character

of the uses that relate to leisure in nature. For instance, in topographic developments, a sequence of buildings related to different terraces create sight views that reinforce coexistence of multiple activities in a public axis (Figure 10B).

- Landmarks: vertical, horizontal, punctual, functional. The structure of the campsite must be clear enough to facilitate the user's orientation and be a birdcall for visitors. Landmarks are the elements that define a known environment. These also guide displacements and dynamics of the settlement, with clear visuals and suggestive architectural solutions that are introduced into the site dynamics. For instance, outdoor facilities—showers, lavatories, sports areas—become daily-use places which reinforce social experiences and highlight specific areas (Figure 10C).



**Figure 10.** Layout: sample of architectural actions represented by icons and pictures. (Source: authors' icons and authors' or public domain pictures). (A) Road in Molí Serradell campsite; (B) Free spaces in Cala Gogó campsite; (C) Landmarks in Salou campsite.

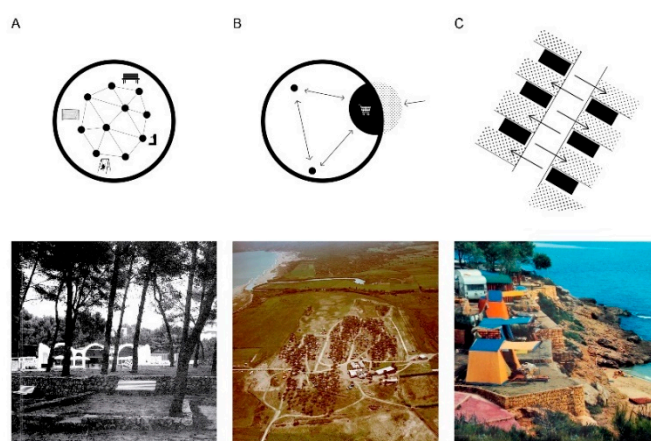
#### 5.4.3. Clusters

Campsites are based on social relations, characteristic of an inhabited place. Besides, campsites have a temporary vocation, with dynamic or time-limited activities and transportable lodgings that generate itinerant occupations. This temporary nature makes it necessary to provide the settlement with qualities that facilitate the users' orientation and dwelling, reinforcing the shared use of public space and the sense of belonging. Therefore, clusters are a resource to provide the place with common spaces for interaction which reinforce its identity.

The topics, concepts and reference actions developed in the Clusters approach are:

- Upper order: natural, buildings, elements. The campsite must shape its own identity and relate it to that of the environment, following its qualities and singularities. The upper order generates a common thread that facilitates the recognition of the campsite as an autonomous entity, with a hierarchical organization at different levels, and with a series of unique elements—natural or artificial—that give it its character. For instance, the distribution of a singular pattern based on everyday elements such as low walls, benches or fountains defines communal outdoor spaces and fosters users' sense of belonging (Figure 11A).
- Common buildings: reception, restaurant, commercial, warehouses, toilets, sports. The equipment must complement the domestic functions of the lodgings and contribute to provide character and leisure value to open spaces. The organization of buildings in the campsite must be balanced and consider the structure defined by paths and open spaces, in order to promote shared activities, social relations and a sense of belonging to the place. For instance, in isolated campsites located in rural landscapes, centralization of main buildings around the access frees the rest of the enclosure for both accommodations and leisure activities in close proximity to nature (Figure 11B).

- Lodging: dynamic situations, settled situations, distributions. The layout of the plots must allow groupings of lodgings to foment shared dynamics. Different types of accommodation generate situations and ways of living of very varied characteristics, but they can be adapted following organizations around a shared space, a twisted alignment or using low topographical differences. For instance, in topographic terrains, irregular stone-made terraces provide a series of misaligned plots which improve privacy, sight views and landscape integration due to their fragmentation and materiality (Figure 11C).



**Figure 11.** Clusters: sample of architectural actions represented by icons and pictures. (Source: authors' icons and authors' or public domain pictures.) (A) Upper order in Salou campsite; (B) Common buildings in Delfin Verde campsite; (C) Lodging in Torre de la Mora campsite.

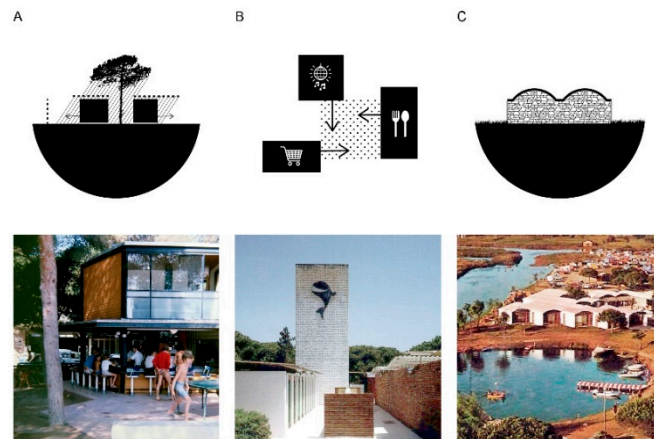
#### 5.4.4. Pavilions

In the campsite, the common buildings are constructions open to natural environment in order to reinforce the original values of camping. These conditions determine the singular typology of the pavilion. This is a set of qualities that, beyond proposing specific solutions, resolve the implantation of the settlement as a system, considering the pre-existences and singularities of each place. They are effective, simple and unique objects that infiltrate in leisure and shared contexts following construction systems of the local tradition. They propose innovative and suggestive formal designs that resolve the contact with the ground and the dynamic adaptation to climate conditions. Due to their unique and effective composition, they have a great capacity for attraction, without the need to be apparent, but accompanying the user at all times.

The topics, concepts and reference actions developed in the approach of the Pavilions are:

- Exterior: open buildings, passive systems, platforms. In the campsite, buildings must follow the typology of the pavilion, as elements that are related to the outside and add value to it. The pavilions are buildings open to nature and adaptable to the topographic conditions of the place, with terraces, courtyards, porches and large openings. For instance, open facades at ground level extend pavilion activities to the open spaces, reinforcing their public character (Figure 12A).
- Shape: geometry, modulation, flexibility, horizontality. The geometric control in the pavilions is key to being able to propose unique and innovative solutions with efficient use of resources. Buildings are conceived as containers of activity, open spaces and are easy to enlarge so that they can accommodate multiple uses over time. Furthermore, these require clear and recognizable designs, with basic geometries and easily identifiable in their context. For instance, the combination of buildings with different rectangular volumes creates a slight urban character with an inner shared courtyard for social interactions surrounded by nature (Figure 12B).
- Construction: tradition, unique schemes, industrialization. In the campsite, buildings must reinforce the identity of the place, with the use of local materials and construction systems.

Traditional solutions respond to the climate and comfort needs following architectural typologies that have evolved over time; therefore, their current implementation facilitates the design of efficient, innovative and site-based proposals. For instance, the Catalan Vault is a traditional brick-made dome that enhances landscape integration due to its modular conditions and its capacity of aggregation and subtraction of elements (Figure 12C).



**Figure 12.** Pavilions: sample of architectural actions represented by icons and pictures. (Source: authors' icons and authors' or public domain pictures.) (A) Exterior in Salou campsite; (B) Shape of La Ballena Alegre campsite; (C) Construction in El Toro Bravo campsite.

#### 5.4.5. Artifacts

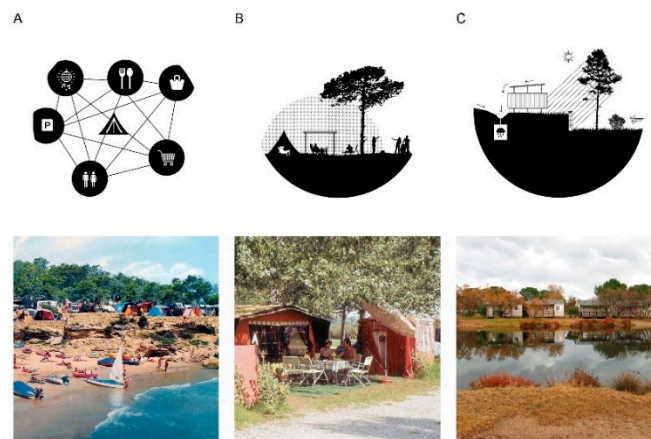
Life during holidays, in a carefree context, allows us to explore a habitat without restrictions and while linked to the outdoors and nature. In terms of ways of living, dynamic and leisure contexts are more permissive than stable and routine ones. Therefore, they can be developed in accommodations with less demanding conditions, where comfort and basic needs can be supplied by the whole settlement. Besides, home at the camping is not a unique space but it is distributed throughout the land and is diluted between paths, squares and buildings. Each action of the dweller can take place in a different location, through a continuous pathway, but always with a fixed reference in the most personal unit of use: the plot. This represents a small portion of the landscape, a fragment of nature that the user temporarily transforms into a dwelling place, giving rise to spontaneous and ephemeral situations. The inexistence of physical boundaries enhances the shared use of open space, relationships and itinerant occupations. Therefore, an unoccupied plot has the condition of free space, and remains as such once the user leaves it.

The topics, concepts and reference actions developed in the approach of the Artifacts are:

- **Plots:** minimum conditions, variety, delimitation. In the campsite, the plots should meet the right conditions to enjoy a leisure habitat in nature, based on horizontality, shade and connectivity. In this way, the individual adaptations of the users will be of little entity and able to be reversible, according to the temporality of their stays. Yet, there are other factors that also influence and configure a wide range of choices for users: orientation, privacy, dimensions, supplies, etc. For instance, in littoral campsites, front line plots offer sea views but a lack of privacy which can be solved by means of topography and autochthonous vegetation (Figure 13A).
- **Itinerant:** situation, rotation, adaptation. Occupations with transportable lodgings should be facilitated and enhanced due to their temporary and environmentally nature friendly character. Itinerant accommodation belongs to the users, who install it, adapt it and move with it. Thus, at the end of the stay it disappears and frees up areas of the settlement that can be easily renewed. For instance, users' adaptation by means of tents, caravans or fabrics in relation to the natural

elements on-site—trees, bushes—provides different levels of intimacy and social interaction, from public space to private beds (Figure 13B).

- **Permanent:** situation, rotation, adaptation. Stable lodgings remain on-site and must be designed according to pavilion typology criteria. The qualities of openness to the outside, contact with the ground, geometric control and local construction solutions allow the design of permanent accommodation to be linked to their environment, enabling individual adaptation by means of the use of light elements. For instance, modular lodgings such as mobile homes are stand-alone elements that follow Passivhaus strategies for lowering energy consumption [79], foster waste re-use and enhance user comfort adaptation in relation to climate conditions (Figure 13C).



**Figure 13.** Artifacts: sample of architectural actions represented by icons and pictures. (Source: authors' icons and authors' or public domain pictures.) (A) Plots in Torre de la Mora campsite; (B) Itinerant artifacts in Cala Gogó El Prat campsite; (C) Permanent artifacts in Laguna campsite.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. The Role of Campsites in the Preservation of Cultural Landscapes

As a result of the research, Architectural Actions are not only set as a catalogue of recommendations, but as a methodological framework for developing a campsite design project integrated into the landscape. These recommendations are not proposed as mandatory regulations but as a guide to facilitate the decision-making. In addition, the Matrix eases the initial diagnosis and consolidates the importance of understanding the site as a place with specific qualities that must be identified and enhanced within the design process.

Thus, this study proposes a way of doing, a guided path to achieve the recognition and preservation of the cultural landscapes' values through campsites. As recommendations, the more they can be introduced into the dynamics of the settlement, the more likely this will be integrated into its context. But the determining point of the process is to correctly identify which actions are appropriate for each place by means of the Matrix. On the other hand, the approach to the field of study from different scales of work—from the territory to the user—and the incorporation of different readings and graphic resources with an informative character—actions, images, icons, descriptions, etc.—facilitates the understanding of its contents.

This document is aimed at anyone who is sensitive to or involved in promoting the enjoyment of nature while preserving its essential values—what makes each place unique—in a process that must increase the quality of the campsites and their landscape integration. Therefore, beyond this study, it is pertinent to convey to citizens, administrations and businesspeople the relevance of cultural landscapes in recognition of the history and the result of our actions on nature. It is important to make the debate public, to incorporate different sensitivities and to realize that the responsibility is shared, as it is to do with the enjoyment of the natural environments that surround us.

In that sense, the Catalan Campsite Federation and related associations have recently launched several initiatives to explore and publicize the current situation of the sector: the Good Practices Manual is one of them, as well as the drafting of the Catalan Campsite White Paper, the Girocamping PRO congress, the participation in international fairs or the holding of technical seminars, round tables and open debates. All these activities seek to publicize the role of the campsite as a nature-friendly tourist model, as well as generate synergies to promote new points of view on the sector, and diagnose the current situation to improve its capacity to act as a preserver of the landscape and culture of the places.

The more than 60 years of campsite development in Catalonia—since the country’s tourist boom—provide an evolution that must be taken into account, placing more emphasis on the paradigmatic cases of the early years. In its beginnings, this was a field of exploration of new architectural typologies, without restrictions or regulations. In addition, architects followed a very strong desire to combine modernity imported by international tourism and the tradition imposed by the economic precariousness of the time. This duality has conditioned the campsite’s relationship with the environment during all these years.

The symbolic value of the places is the factor that generates more expectations for the travelers, in their desire to discover new territories [80]. Therefore, it is a paradox that the action of tourism on the landscape can irreversibly alter its qualities when these are its *raison d’être*. The first identified campsites in the country had their origin in the evolution of previous agricultural uses. They were very small scale interventions, often precarious, but they facilitated the basic conditions for inhabiting nature without altering its qualities. This fact, which originally occurred due to a lack of resources, is now becoming a responsible and indispensable way to ensure sustainable tourism and the preservation of cultural heritage (Figure 14).



**Figure 14.** Conceptualization of a campsite surrounded by nature. Once occupation finishes, artifacts may disappear, and the site can keep its landscape identity. (Source: authors’ own.)

The landscape has been built physically and symbolically over time using local techniques from tradition and productive activities, mainly agricultural [81]. Therefore, tourism actions are not the first to transform nature. In fact, there is no certainty that nature is still intact [82]: the different activities are deposited on the site in a specific way and add new meanings that, over time, shape their identity and end up being adopted as genuine. Thus, in order to preserve the uniqueness of each environment and its balance between artifice and nature it is necessary to establish a link between the campsite and the place, to give it continuity. From the scope of this research, these considerations become fundamental to ensure the sustainable development of these settlements and their contexts.

The campsite has qualities that set it apart from other tourist settlements. It can accommodate shared dynamics in an open system linked to outdoors space, with the active participation of users. In addition, it has a temporary vocation and is flexible enough to disappear without leaving a trace, as has happened in many campsites transformed into municipal parks or located in a respectful way in natural parks and other protected areas [83]. For this reason, as the initial hypothesis of the research

has advanced—and as it can be deduced from its results, campsites have the capacity to stand as active agents for the regeneration of cultural landscapes, where temporality and adaptability are key aspects.

Due to their size, campsites may have a positive impact on the sustainable resource management capacity, for example, the generation of renewable energies, the control of water cycles, the reuse of waste, the conservation of large unbuilt areas or the preservation of vegetation and autochthonous fauna. They can also be actively introduced in other sectors such as the productive—agriculture, livestock—or education—school camps, nature discovery, considering new activities for the lower tourist impact seasons. On the other hand, these settlements make it possible to rethink the links between rural and urban contexts, recovering the continuity of the green corridors that connect inland forests with the sea. In this sense, campsites can also diminish the homogeneity of the built coastal front and strengthen the importance of a continuous green littoral.

Therefore, it is a question of recognizing nature as an element in continuous transformation and of adapting the campsite to the climatic conditions while encouraging its dynamic activities. The set of these causes of unsteadiness is likely to alter the existing balance between social activities and their environment, which must constantly introduce new solutions to the demands of the moment. Thus, we assume that the landscape should not be understood as a simple stage to be preserved, but above all as an element to work with, a genuine instrument of a new and emerging design discipline [84]. This means a way of proceeding that recognizes the place and enhances it, but also one that introduces the users' dynamics into the environment's ones to link the two them. This process recognizes the passage of time as a definition of its own history and turns the place into one of cultural value.

Beyond freezing the natural environment in its pretended essence, the new lines of debate must be based on this contrast between artifice and nature [85]. Therefore, the natural environment must also be understood as an architectural element that can favor the proposal of new spatial relationships [86]. In this sense, architects make landscape: just by building, a landscape is being made, since it is adapted as the physical support, and new traces are added to the memory of the place. One of the quintessential Mediterranean towns, Cadaqués, would be an inhospitable place without the constructions that shaped and characterized it [87]. Architecture—art, culture—has formed the landscapes we know through the modeling of nature (Figure 15). In fact, the landscape leaves a mark and prints it inside us, in the same way that it also receives our footprints [88]. Even in those territories without constructions, architecture has also acted over time in a symbolic way, by recognizing its values, giving meaning to places and inciting curiosity in visitors.



**Figure 15.** Conceptualization of a series of plots located on platforms made by traditional stone walls. These pre-existing elements used to be a topographic adaptation for agricultural purposes. Their conservation relates touristic activities to site history and cultural experiences for landscape discovery. (Source: authors' own.)

## 6.2. *The Individual and the Community. Ways of Living in Balance with Nature*

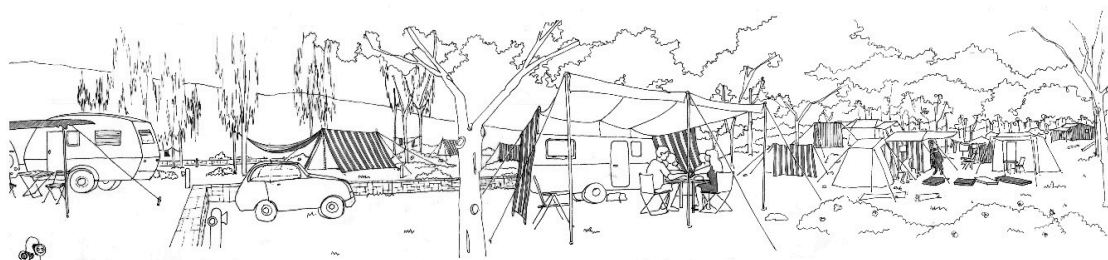
In campsites, both the layout on the site and the users' temporary occupations go hand-in-hand throughout their evolution. When the camper withdraws their accommodation and leaves the plot, the natural environment remains intact or slightly altered, with a high degree of reversibility. In this way we can follow the dynamic cycle of the settlement based on the close contact between nature and tourism—and previously conceived from architecture.

This wide range of possibilities and cross-relationships opens the door to considering the current situation of campsites and what their role should be in the future of cultural landscapes. If the focus remains on the leisure and respectful use of nature, these environments may continue to act as preservers of the identity and meanings of each place. In fact, the most pertinent question is not so much whether landscapes should change or not, but how they can adapt to the passage of time and remain recognizable [89]. Trees, topography, beaches or the climate, as well as gastronomy, music, traditions or postcards, are all elements that have forged a shared ideal of what holiday life means.

The future of the campsite depends on its ability to incorporate these elements of the environment and to generate areas of shared relationships. It is not too late to explore new ways of inhabiting nature and reinventing our experiences [90]. We still are on time to recognize the cultural value of a place and nurture it with some resources to highlight its qualities. In fact, campsites encourage temporary occupations that can reinforce the inherent values of the landscape, as well as dissolve the physical barriers imposed by alien actions, and extend part of community life to the urban structures that support them. In terms of landscape integration and cultural identity preservation, sustainable tourism is evolving through campsites in their nomadic way of inhabiting nature, based on the temporality and informality of primal leisure occupations [91].

Finally, holiday life, free and carefree, may enhance the interaction between users allowing to create such close links between them. However, the generation of this feeling of belonging to a group is definitely influenced by the way in which outdoors space is shared. These settlements must ensure support for the temporary habitat of large groups of people away from their usual homes. For this reason, the environments in which they are located must facilitate community development and increase the multiple relationships that are established with the site.

In order to preserve the landscape's cultural heritage, users must feel part of it and collaborate in caring for it and recognizing the values that make it desirable. Therefore, campsites must be able to guide the experience of the inhabitants, while preserving some of the rituals that link them to the everyday life from which they are momentarily separated. These developments not only must provide a private shelter or community structure, but also enhance individual initiatives and the possibilities for establishing interactions with each other (Figure 16). Individuals, in any community, must be able to contextualize their situation in the group and in the place, in order to relate their personal experiences to the collective memory that links them. Thus, they can strengthen the desire to recognize themselves within the identity of the environment that welcomes them.



**Figure 16.** Itinerant dwelling under a forest. Some low stone walls create a pattern under the homogeneous leaves ceiling. By means of the artifact and some fabrics, each inhabitant adapts the plot to their own needs. The open space free of users' occupation can support plenty of activities, such as playing games, walking, having lunch, teleworking, etc. The campsite shape is flexible and dynamic, directly related to people's interactions. (Source: authors' own.)

## 7. Conclusions

The results of this research allow us to advance on several future lines. First, the catalogue of architectural actions provides criteria for determining the campsite level of integration to the site. This taxonomy becomes a tool for the analysis and measurement of the architectural and landscape



qualities of the settlement. For instance, it allows us to determine the state of the current campsite stock and to establish guidelines for the stakeholders and the administration to improve its quality.

Secondly, the revision of this tourist model confirms its validity as a paradigm, and its potential as a sustainable asset from the architecture and landscape point of view. Most of these camps were established with very few means and have lasted to the present day with slight changes. Over time, characteristics such as the economy of resources and the use of local techniques and materials have become proper criteria for current sustainable design. In addition, due to its own configuration, the campsite maintains an important area of highly preserved land, with the potential to be a collector and distributor of energetic resources: solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, etc. The preservation of undeveloped large areas among highly built sectors positions them as forthcoming green corridors that favor the protection of biodiversity, the passage of fauna, the regulation of rainwater or green mobility, among other possibilities.

Finally, the research also highlights the capacity of these settlements to preserve the identity of the place and its culture, organizing communities based on itinerancy and temporality with a high degree of respect for the environment. Furthermore, the architectural criteria of the actions afforded are also applicable to other types of temporary camps, such as cultural events, refugee camps or pilgrimages. This research offers a fundamental tool in establishing the settlement by prioritizing the recognition of the context when defining its form. From here on, the scale's gradation in the design of the camp ensures the appropriation of the place by the user: everyday rituals and interior routes relate to the neighborhood scale, while the urban structure refers to the community spaces and to the buildings acting as landmarks. The application of these guidelines from the architectural point of view ensures individual and community well-being, protects privacy and fosters social relationships in a natural environment. Thus, the Architectural Actions' contribution should be to favor the construction of scenarios for the generation of community life in balance with nature, empowering both users and entities in the sustainable development of cultural landscapes.

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