

LANDSCAPE 2014

Completion Date: November 2013

The Zorlu Center, Istanbul, Turkey **WATG**

WATG developed the concept, schematic and detailed design for this multi-use urban park for Istanbul's newest and most exclusive mixed-use destination. The development concept for the park is a multi-purpose "urban oasis:" a lush, green space in the dense urban environment of central Istanbul where park space is at its most valuable. The Zorlu Center is located between the popular shopping area of Levent and the prestigious neighborhood of Besiktas and covers approximately 1.5 hectares of open space.

The urban park offers exploration, as well as a sense of play and discovery. The design concept is based on connection and integration to overcome challenging circulation issues within and to the site. The park connects the retail areas of the Zorlu Centre to cultural uses, transport links, and active and passive recreation areas. It also integrates soft landscape and hardscape areas of different sizes and functions. A predominantly soft landscape includes swathes of wild flowers and endemic species that provide amenity areas for the public and that increase the ecological value of the site. These amenity areas accommodate a number of programmed activities (a performance area, a plaza for markets and temporary retail, an activity lawn and a playground for children of all ages and abilities). However, the design's biggest challenge was to create a flexible space that allows for a large variety of activities and events, yet still feels engaging and intimate when those activities are not occurring.

The design process was completed in only four months, in coordination with local landscape practice DS Landscape. WATG also worked closely with the playground consultant, CARVE.