

The area of today's Šmartinski park was used for informal gardening prior to the new arrangement. In the master plan the area was defined as green space and infrastructural corridor, but in reality it was covered with garden beds and sheds, cut by a traffic road and crossed by some of the main power lines. Before 2007, the area mainly served as a buffer zone between busy roads and the city's central cemetery Žale and was constantly mentioned as a problem zone.

The main reason for the criticism was related to the contradiction of unregulated gardening to the iconic architecture of the Žale cemetery, designed by famous Slovene architect Jože Plečnik. Ironically allotment gardening was indeed planned on the site in late 50-ies but went out of control through the years. At its final stage, gardening was declared illegal, nobody knew how many gardens there are or who are the owners.

The area consisted of vegetable beds with various wooden or tin shacks and small constructions, scattered around. The area was randomly planted with different fruit trees and numerous perennials. From the outside the place seemed unfriendly, even confusing and difficult to transit, as it belonged to a closed community of gardeners.



view of the playground (after)



informal gardening area (before)



clearing the gardens (before)



satellite map of the area in city context



playground design plan