

REVALORIZATION PROBLEMS OF THE DOWN-TOWN AREAS ON THE EXAMPLE OF ZIELONA GÓRA

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Abstract

The aim of the considerations presented in the article is to determine the developmental directions of the inner urban areas respecting and honouring the cultural heritage of Zielona Gora city. The formation of useful physical form of the urban lifestyle environment is particularly important in the process of urban regeneration. The article presents polemics with the planning documents and raises the issues related to urban green areas and street furniture. The design proposal shows one of the possibilities to bring the improperly developed areas back to the city. Every city is made of people and, therefore, it is essential for these people to have social awareness of individual influence on the shape of urban areas.

Keywords: revalorization, down-town areas, urban policy, Zielona Góra

1. INTRODUCTION

The downtown area of each city is a space especially important, of a specific and individual character that distinguishes it from other places, it is a scene on which flashes social life. The city undergoes constant transformations. The changes refer to its structure, functions, construction resources, and above all to the people and their needs. Over the centuries, the urban structure has continuously evolved,

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from primary forms to increasingly complex ones. Reaching the subsequent levels of complexity entails the creation of an adequate system of heritage protection and the change of urban policy, providing the necessary and actual means of control of this process and planning consistent with sustainable development. Specialists in the field of protection, conservation and urban regeneration pay attention to the phenomena that affect the condition of historic resource. Today we are faced with an increasing and accelerating process of transformation. Globalization, the growing need and ease of adapting the environment to users' requirements forecast that in the short term a significant part of the building resource will be thoroughly modernized, demolished or replaced by new buildings. Only objects clearly indicated for protection will survive [15]. Another phenomenon is closely related to tourism as a sector of the economy. The temptation to use the cultural heritage as a product results in giving it a specific nature (determined by consumers) and in adapting it to their expectations shaped by mass culture. This process, difficult to control and requiring promotion, can lead to economic dependence and can impede the permanent residents' lives [2,15,12]. The last phenomenon that researchers indicate, is the fact that historical monuments are treated as property. Previously, we only "stored" monuments for future generations, today we consider them to be the property of our generation. Once, we used to ask a question: "how to protect monuments?". Today, we increasingly frequently ask the question: "how to exploit them?" It is necessary to constantly compromise between modernity and cultural values [2,15,7].

2. THE CONCEPT OF REVALORIZATION OF A PART OF THE ZIELONA GÓRA DOWN-TOWN

2.1. The directions of the city spatial policy

One of the indicated directions of activities of the city is the protection of the urban interiors against the chaotic development projects. The analysis of spatial policy of Zielona Góra, however, reveals inconsistencies between the assumptions and their implementation. Detailed arrangements often deprive of the basic instruments for such protection. The latest update of the spatial development conditions and directions study (SUiKZP) of 24.06.2014 contains a record that the building area for the downtown area amounts up to 100%. What is the value of the record of one of the priority objectives: "preservation and cultivation of features of a garden city?" [18]. As it turns out, this is the spatial policy of Zielona Góra which can be the source of threat for the sustainable development of the city. New investments are directed, under the local law, to valuable natural forest areas surrounding the city, while there are still "lost spaces", degraded in technological and social terms, in the very centre of the city [13]. It is these "lost spaces", which

have the potential and a terrain reserve which, together with the proper spatial development, will be beneficial for the entire city. So the first point of the revitalization of Zielona Góra should be an idea and a method of integrating the degraded down-town quarters into contemporary urban space structure [3]. The direction of the territorial expansion of the urban structure should be alarming in light of the latest forecasts of the Central Statistical Office, according to which the city of Zielona Góra is shrinking demographically and by 2050 could lose approx. 11 930 inhabitants compared to 2013 [10].

2.2. Location of land, elaborations and historical background

The area, subject to the elaboration, consists of two urban quarters adjacent to the pedestrian area. The first quarter, which is one of the largest undeveloped spaces in down-town - is the area bounded by: al. Niepodległości, Kupiecka Street, Jana Matejki Square and Dra Z. Piętnego Street. The second quarter of a degraded space is an example of the ill-spatial policy, which allowed for a location of a large-volume building for commercial purposes. This area is bounded by: al. Niepodległości, Kupiecka Street, Bohaterów Westerplatte Street and dra Z. Piętnego Street.

Quarters are connected by Niepodległości Avenue (formerly Bahnhofstrasse), laid out in the 2nd half of the nineteenth century as a representative street leading towards the station, built-up with villas of the wealthiest residents as well as public buildings, surrounded by greenery. In the 1970s, the street was closed to vehicular traffic. The street, together with the renovated part of Kupiecka street, belongs to pedestrian zone. The oldest part of analyzed area includes frontages of Kupiecka Street and Jana Matejki Square. Among the peripheral buildings, objects from nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century are prevailing. The interiors of the quarters are filled with buildings from the second half of the twentieth century [3.18].

2.3. Current state

The planning assumptions for the studied area are determined by two local zoning plans: the first from 2005 - for the area bounded by the following streets: Kupiecka - Bohaterów Westerplatte - Dr. Z. Piętnego - Niepodległości [8] and the second - from 2010, covering the remaining area of the studied area [9].

These documents raise doubts as to the guidelines they include, which do not harmonize the space but allow for, or even provoke, unfavourable transformation of this highly valuable urban fabric. For example, the resolution of 29 November 2005 dedicates the predominant part of the interior of the quarter for service development, leaving aside the necessary technical facilities and significantly reduces the green areas accompanying the existing residential buildings. Such assumptions generate functional problems in the area. Some guidelines of the

resolution of 30 III 2010, supplemented with a graphical annex, are mutually exclusive, e.g. the arrangements for the area designated as A9.6. The zoning plan allows a binding building alignment on both sides of the plot, the maximum building height of 21 m, plot development in 90% without having to respect the biologically active area. These permits contradict the former ones which stipulated the adaptation of the newly constructed buildings to the historic system, which in this case means villa developments with greenery, since such is the character of Niepodległości Avenue.

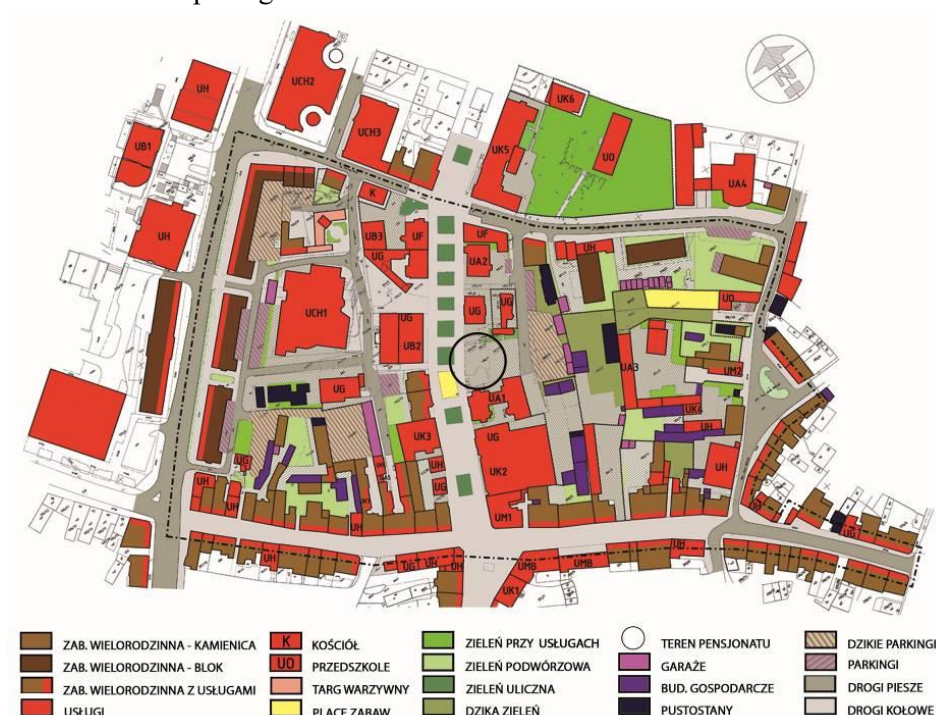


Fig. 1. Functional analysis, current situation. Elaborated by J. Sukienniczak [20]

A considerable omission is also a variable course of the border line of the strict conservation protection zone. The guidelines contained in the first document include the protection of two frontages of Kupiecka Street, whereas in the second document - only one.

Major traffic problems for the area in question are: disorderly parking system, poor technical condition and unsightly appearance of low garage buildings (Fig. 1). The space is dominated by parked cars.

In this region, the city loses its garden landscape. The interiors of the quarters of this area are undeveloped with wild greenery, often appropriated by parked cars. Only in Niepodległości Avenue, we find the well-kept lawns with high aesthetic

values. The adopted urban policy allows investors to significantly reduce the biologically active area.

Buildings, located on the studied area and built in the 2nd half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, create the harmonious whole, in accordance with the general spatial thinking. Especially valuable, in terms of overall spatial composition, are the complexes of buildings at Niepodległości Avenue, Kupiecka Street and Jana Matejki Square. The conducted analyses clearly show that the problem areas are the neglected interior quarters, the spaces in poor technical condition and of low aesthetic values that require restoration.

Another issue is the problem of small architecture. In recent years, the city has taken actions to enrich public spaces of small-size sculptures with the image of Bacchus. Is this actually the appropriate use of heritage? In 1963-1981 artists-painters associated with nationwide exhibitions and symposia "Golden Grape" were very active in public space. It might be worthwhile to resurrect this initiative instead of investing in already heavily exploited idea of miniature sculptures (Wrocław's dwarfs, Świdnica's wild pigs, Legnica's Julek and other children).

2.4. The overall concept of revalorization of the selected area

The main objectives of this concept of revalorization of the area are among others: the protection of cultural and natural values, the clarification and the improvement of the functional and spatial system, the exploitation of the potential of the location and history in order to raise the of functional and aesthetic standards. The implementation of these objectives leads to the following guidelines:

- to identify objects and areas to be protected; to determine the final course of the border line of the zone of strict protection and conservation;
- to indicate any disharmonious building facilities which should be demolished: which are in a poor technical condition or which do not suit (in terms of their forms, volumes or composition) to the character of the down-town ;
- to complement the architecture with special attention to the classifications of utility zones, or readability social interiors and public spaces.

An important aspect influencing the final project proposal is a reflection on the residents' outdoor activities. The planned area should help foster social bonds. Rich utility program is to enable the emergence of various forms of residents' activities and interactions. The renovated and newly designed spaces are to cultivate heritage, its history or local character in order to enable residents to identify with the city.



Fig. 2. The concept of the revalorization of the area. Elaborated by J. Sukienniczak [20]

In the renovated quarters the following places were proposed:

- The restored Jana Matejki Square with a mural by Ryszard Kiełb and a new building of an art gallery in the frontage (Fig. 2 - M, Figure 3);
- Garden of St. Urban (the patron saint of Zielona Góra) - a mini-garden of experiments (Figure 2 - U), connected with a green passage to Jana Matejki square;
- Siedmiu Wzgórz playground (Fig.2 - PZ 7w);
- an intimate grapevine square with a mural and an open air gallery (Fig.2 - W).

It was ensured that the design has green spaces. The concept also assumed organize vehicular traffic, parking spaces were provided and an underground garage for 183 cars.



Fig. 1. A concept of restoration of Richard Kiełb's mural in J. Matejki Square.
Elaborated by J. Sukienniczak

In addition, the concept of restoration includes a preliminary draft of a guest house at Niepodległości Avenue 9. The most important goal was to incorporate the new building into the historic tissue of a villa character. The newly designed building refers to the existing buildings (in terms of its dimensions, divisions of panes and materials). The function of the building is also not accidental. The street is built-up with stately service facilities, mainly cultural services. The existing functions are active during certain hours while the guest house would generate life all the time, which could have a positive impact on the security of this space.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The city is a living organism, so you can not design individual buildings as individual objects in isolation from the urban context. *“To understand the city and be able to work over it and in it, we should see it as a weave of results of human actions and will - things that make up the appearance of places”*[12]. The first step to plan the revitalization of an urban tissue, one should study its history and the processes taking place both locally and globally. Every resident and user bears the responsibility for the shape of the city. This perspective should affect the change in the shaping of the city - programming, design and implementation should involve not only specialists in various fields but also the residents [16,17]. All activities in the city are the art of compromise. The city exists for people,

from the will of past generations, serving the present generation and the future one, and as such should be considered and planned. It is therefore necessary preserve the human scale [4]. It is worth noting that in the first place, the process of restoration should take into account the needs of locals rather than tourists. Man as a social being needs contacts with other people, the city and its location should facilitate these contacts [1]. If the space does not encourage to stay and reside, it significantly weakens this social activity [5]. Urban areas should have a clear structure and a diversity of places, from public to more intimate. In order to keep a city alive, it should be supplied with good public spaces, i.e the following attributes: openness, diversity, freedom, security and aesthetics. The provision of better places in town guarantees the increase in their use and even such seemingly insignificant elements as benches cannot be missed [1,4,5,6,14,19].

In conclusion, it is worth quoting the thought by J. Rykwert, relating to the role of both designers and ordinary citizens in the process of transforming their cities: "*Cities are constantly changing - whatever their advantages and disadvantages. This is the only certainty resulting from the history of our cities. The rate of change has been increasing for more than a half century, and globalization, which affects the whole urban fabric, has further accelerated this process. We must therefore assume that our cities are elastic and that we - citizens, public officials, architects, urban planners - we can do something to present our demands and that we will be to blame if the situation deteriorates.*" [12].

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Z PROBLEMÓW REWALORYZACJI TERENÓW ŚRÓDMIEJSKICH NA PRZYKŁADZIE ZIELONEJ GÓRY

Streszczenie

Celem przedstawionych rozważań jest ustalenie kierunków rozwoju śródmiejskich obszarów miasta z poszanowaniem dziedzictwa kulturowego na przykładzie Zielonej Góry. Kształtowanie pięknej i użytecznej, fizycznej formy miejskiego środowiska życia jest szczególnie istotne w procesie rewitalizacji miasta. W artykule podjęto polemikę z dokumentami planistycznymi oraz poruszono zagadnienia związane m.in. z zielenią i małą architekturą. Propozycja projektowa przedstawia jedną z możliwości przywrócenia miastu obszarów niewłaściwie zagospodarowanych. Miasto tworzą ludzie i konieczna jest społeczna świadomość osobistego wpływu na kształt miejsc.

Słowa kluczowe: rewaloryzacja, tereny śródmiejskie, polityka miejska, Zielona Góra

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