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THE CONTEMPORARY RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD TOWN IN POLAND AND GERMANY IN 21ST CENTURY – TRADITION AND MODERNITY

WSPÓŁCZESNA ODBUDOWA STARYCH MIAST W POLSCE I NIEMCZECH W XXI WIEKU – TRADYCJA I NOWOCZESNOŚĆ

Abstract

Article presents issues of current reconstruction of the selected historical cities in Poland and Germany. After the period of post-war dominance of modernist ideas in urban planning and architecture, ideas became outdated and obsolete. Modernistic projects based on the idea of the Athenian Charter of 1933, Bauhaus and C.I.A.M. were regarded as disharmonious for old town, especially layouts of detached houses, repeatability of buildings and disharmony with the historical landscape. In the modern cities, it is necessary to restore the cultural values of historical districts. Reconstruction of creative city centers, in addition to restoring cultural potential, will result in: rebuilding of the proper structure of historical districts, economic recovery, restoring social trust, and returning residents to their homelands. The first part will present the results of research on the causes of economic decapitalization of old town and disharmony of cultural values in their landscape. The analysis includes urban planning and the architecture of historical cities of several dozen old town complexes in Germany after 1945 (Dresden, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, Hildesheim, Lübeck, and Cologne). The second part will present contemporary urban and architectural solutions of reconstruction of historical centers, restoring their former commercial and tertiary position, which harmonize the old town landscape in Poland (Elbląg, Poznań, and Wrocław). The next part will present theoretical and conceptual solutions prepared for Szczecin at the end of the 20th century and implementations from the beginning of the 21st century, along with original authorial projects. Contemporary urban and architectural structures in the Szczecin's historical center aimed to restore the cultural potential of the city; it revives the economy and regains the status of a center in the modern agglomeration. In the last chapter there will be given the conclusions and proposals for the contemporary development of old districts, the economic progress of historical cities, restoration of lost artistic values, creation of modern functional architectural solutions and the process of evolution of architectural art in Europe.

Keywords: reconstruction of old cities, reconstructions, contemporary architecture, traditionalism, contemporary architectural context

Streszczenie

Artykuł dotyczy zagadnień obecnej przebudowy tkanek historycznych w wybranych miastach w Polsce i Niemczech. Po okresie powojennej dominacji modernistycznych idei w urbanistyce i architekturze nastąpił kryzys koncepcji modernistycznych w urbanistyce i architekturze. Uznano za dysharmonijne dla starych miast projekty modernistyczne powstałe według idei Karty Ateńskiej z 1933 roku, Bauhausu i C.I.A.M. – układy wolnostojących domów, powtarzalność zabudowy, dysharmonia z krajobrazem

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historycznym. We współczesnych miastach konieczne jest przywrócenie wartości kulturowych historycznych dzielnic. Odbudowa funkcji centro twórczych, oprócz przywrócenia potencjału kulturowego, spowoduje: przywrócenie właściwej struktury historycznych dzielnic, ożywienie gospodarcze, odbudowę zaufania społecznego, powrót mieszkańców. W pierwszej części przedstawione zostaną wyniki badań nad przyczynami zdekapitalizowania gospodarczego starych dzielnic i dysharmonii wartości kulturowych w ich krajobrazie. Analiza obejmuje urbanistykę i architekturę miast historycznych kilkunastu zespołów staromiejskich w Niemczech po 1945 roku (Drezno, Frankfurt nad Menem, Hamburg, Hildesheim, Lubeka, Kolonia). W drugiej części przedstawione zostaną zrealizowane współczesne rozwiązania urbanistyczne i architektoniczne odbudowy historycznych centrów, przywrócenia ich dawnej pozycji handlowo-usługowej, zharmonizowania krajobrazu staromiejskiego w Polsce (Elbląg, Poznań, Wrocław). W kolejnym fragmencie przedstawione zostaną rozwiązania teoretyczne i koncepcyjne, przygotowane dla Szczecina w końcu XX wieku i realizacji z początku XXI wieku; wraz z oryginalnymi autorskimi projektami. Współczesne struktury urbanistyczne i architektoniczne w historycznym centrum Szczecina, służą przywróceniu kulturowego potencjału miasta, ożywieniu gospodarczemu i odzyskaniu statusu centrum w rozwijającej się nowoczesnej aglomeracji. W konkluzji przedstawione zostaną wnioski i propozycje dla współczesnej zabudowy starych dzielnic, rozwoju gospodarczego miast historycznych, przywrócenia utraconych wartości artystycznych, wykreowania nowoczesnych rozwiązań funkcjonalnych i architektonicznych – współczesnej kontynuacji procesu ewolucji sztuki architektonicznej w Europie.

Słowa kluczowe: odbudowa starych miast, rekonstrukcje, architektura współczesna, tradycjonalizm, współczesny kontekst architektoniczny

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to present the reasons and justification for the contemporary efforts to rebuild ruined historical cities that reflect the expectations of the inhabitants, a restoration of the cultural identity, integration the local community and an economic development. The implementation of restoration and reconstruction programs of the artistically valuable old buildings in perspective plans are connected with the necessary modernization of old urban complexes. The significant elements of the systemic transformation carried out after the political changes in Poland after 1989 and the reunification of Germany in 1990 included extensive investments in historical cities defined by those modern structural and spatial solutions. The reconstruction of the old urban arrangements is connected with the restoration of traditional functions of services and crafts (the reminiscence in modernized forms, the merchant cantors as stylish restaurant interiors and art galleries) by locating the modernized catering services, hotel services, tourist services as well as the office services and flats-apartments. The combination of various functions that restore the climate of the former merchant and port centers serves to revitalize the functioning of the former centers of historical cities, urban-architectural and infrastructural modernization and the development of economic systems on a regional scale together with a significant impact on the local economy.

2. THE CONSERVATION STRATEGIES FOR MODERNIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF OLD TOWNS AND CITIES

In the 21st century it is necessary to prepare a strategy for the modernization and transformation of neglected and poorly organized old town districts, which are in a period of economic crisis and cultural values as hundreds of years old urban organism, shaped in

the process of changes in the urban structure and evolution of architectural forms². After 1945, there were unfavorable changes in the spatial structure (detached buildings in the place of demolished old town houses) and in terms of the traditional functioning of several hundred years old urban structures (the former centers converted into complexes of housing estates and service and administrative centers). Nowadays, the process of depopulation of former residents is taking place displaced due to difficulties in functioning in complexes transformed into centers dominated by uncontrolled processes of tourism industry. There are also inappropriate architectural changes in terms of transformations of unique cultural features of old districts and the importance as a centre in the structure of developing modern cities and agglomerations.

3. THE CAUSE OF THE CULTURAL CRISIS IN THE OLD TOWNS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

After the post-war dominance of modernist ideas in urban planning and architecture there was a crisis of concepts originating from the environment of Bauhaus and C.I.A.M. After half a century the realization of modernist spatial concepts and architectural solutions concerning the functionality within the old towns (from the 1940s to 1960s) were critically evaluated due to the disruption of the continuity of the historical structure and the location of free-standing as well as repetitive buildings disharmony with the historical landscape³.

The weakening of the position of historical centers in economic, social and cultural terms was emphasized as shown mainly by the process of depopulation of old districts, lowering of the economic rank of new investments and importance in the administrative system of temporarily developing large cities and agglomerations. The criticism of the appearance of old-town complexes built after 1945 according to modernist and post-cubist spatial concepts was presented to the general public by residents, art historians, conservators along with a large part of the architectural and urban environment.

The post-war development of destroyed old towns was considered inappropriate due to the lack of reference to the historical context which – as perceived by new generations of residents (as a result, partly, of political changes and national borders after 1945) – had a negative impact on social identity and cultural and artistic significance leading as a consequence to a weakening of investors' entrepreneurship and economic development of the former shopping and service centers that in harbor cities were located in the area of the old city's quay.

The common criticism referred to incorporated spatial solutions: the development of destroyed old city quarters by modernist urban systems in the type of multi-family housing estates with detached houses with similar façade appearance, commercial pavilions and free-standing public utility buildings (medical services, education) situated in the surroundings of greenery.

² D. Kłosek-Kozłowska, *Ochrona wartości kulturowych miast a urbanistyka*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Warszawskiej, Warszawa 2007, pp. 29–37, 63–66, 97–107, 111, 122, 132, 172–177.

³ J. Jokilehto, *A history of architectural conservation*, Elsevier, Amsterdam 2004, pp. 223–244, 256–257, 283–286.

4. THE DOCOMOMO – A MOVEMENT PRESERVING THE VALUE OF CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

In the old town complexes the transformation and destruction of valuable realizations of modern architecture, whose originally the structural and compositional solutions were a continuation of the centuries-old process of evolution of European architecture, was brought about. Regardless of the criticism of modernist urbanism and architecture – and the justified demolitions of buildings degrading the landscape of historical cities – it is necessary to maintain and revitalize the realization of the cultural value of the contemporary building art.

The model references to the necessary scale and methods of proper protection of modern architecture result from the principles implemented by the *International Working Party for Document and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement (DoCoMoMo)*.

In the 20th century, the evolution of views took place on the basis of the adopted principles of the monument protection and the idea of shaping contemporary cities which were a reaction to the scale of destruction during the First and Second World Wars and the effects of contemporary buildings and historical development. The most important periods of determining the rules for the reconstruction of destroyed cities and the development of new ones resulted from the adopted rules: 1931 – The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments; 1933 – The Athens Urban Charter; 1964 – The Venice Charter; 1972 – The Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Paris; 2000 – The European Landscape Convention, Florence. The most outstanding architectural projects in terms of art were created these days in Florence, Hamburg, Hanover, Cologne, Kiel, Lübeck, Milan, Münster, Palmanova, Kraków, Poznań, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Vienna, and Wrocław.

5. THE MODERNIZATION AND RESTORATION OF THE CULTURAL VALUES OF OLD-TOWN ENSEMBLES

In the 1960s and 1970s in western Europe⁴, and a decade later in the eastern part of the continent, the emergence of a postmodern phenomenon in architecture led to a renewed interest in urban heritage and the traditional principles of urban planning. In the last decade of the 20th century, the implementation of concepts reconstructing the historical structures of the location-based cities began. It was considered appropriate to reconstruct selected and most valuable monumental buildings along with the old town houses as testimonies to the cultural past of historical cities that were destroyed by the cataclysm of the war. After the system breakthrough in Poland (1989) and German Unity (1990), architectural and conservation programs were carried out, consisting in restoring the appearance of historic old-town centers which were not properly developed after 1945⁵; they were built according to the modernist urban planning instructions or those centers were prepared for (unrealized) modern

⁴ W. Durth, N. Gütschow, *Träume in Trümmern. Planungen zum Wiederaufbau zerstörter Städte im Westen Deutschlands 1940–1950*. 2 Bd. 2, Braunschweig/Wiesbaden 1988, passim.

⁵ Z. Mazur, *O adaptacji niemieckiego dziedzictwa kulturowego na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych*, Instytut Zachodni, Poznań 2001.

space organization, rejecting the reference to the historical planning and composition of old bourgeois buildings.

6. THE RESULT OF A CULTURAL MODERNIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION

The significant examples of modernization of old towns, which contributed to the economic revival, the increase in the number of inhabitants and in the creation of original architectural solutions harmonized with the landscape of historical centers, are: the projects from Elbląg⁶, Gdańsk, Głogów, Kołobrzeg, Poznań, Szczecin, Wrocław in Poland, and Dresden, Frankfurt am Main (Ill.1), Hamburg, Hildesheim, Lübeck, Kiel, Cologne in Germany⁷.



Ill. 1. Frankfurt am Main – Römer Dom. Reconstruction of old town part, in place of demolished city hall (post war modern architecture), <https://www.domroemer.de/ubersichtskarte> (access: 12.02.2019)

⁶ M. Lubocka-Hoffmann, *Miasta historyczne zachodniej i północnej Polski. Zniszczenia i program odbudowy*, Urząd Ochrony Zabytków w Elblągu – Oficyna Wydawnicza Excalibur, Elbląg – Bydgoszcz 2004, passim.

⁷ S. Grzelachowski, *Rekonstrukcja rynku w Hildesheim*, *Ochrona Zabytków*, 1993, R. 46/2, no. 181, pp. 170–173; H.R. Müller-Raemisch, *Frankfurt am Main. Stadtentwicklung und Planungsgeschichte seit 1945*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 1996; M. Rodenstein, *Römer und Römerberg, Frankfurt am Main* [in:] W. Nerdinger, M. Eisen, H. Strobl (eds.), *Geschichte der Rekonstruktion – Konstruktion der Geschichte*, Prestel, München 2010.

In the Polish old town centers (Elbląg, Gdańsk, Głogów, Kołobrzeg, Szczecin), after 1989, the quarters destroyed during World War II were rebuilt, from which the ruins of old town houses and houses suitable for reconstruction (also in good technical condition) were removed, preparing after 1945 a site for the construction of modernist urban complexes, which were not completed, partly due to economic conditions⁸.

In German cities, the recovery of lost identity was carried out after the demolition of post-war buildings, in disharmony to the landscape of old towns and cities, which were built after 1945 according to modernist ideas of shaping urban complexes and modern, functionalist architectural solutions (blurring the old layout of market squares, streets and cadastral divisions)⁹. In order to implement the plans to restore the historical architectural landscape of old towns, such as Berlin, Frankfurt am Main (Ill. 2) and Hildesheim (Ill. 3), it was decided to demolish post-war buildings, regardless of their functional values, utility and material value.



Ill. 2. Frankfurt am Main – Römer Dom. Reconstruction of old town part, reconstruction of the look of Old Town tenements, [in:] <https://www.domroemer.de> (access: 14.03.2019)

⁸ P. Fiuk, *Architektura miasta odbudowanego. Wybrane przykłady: Elbląg, Głogów, Kołobrzeg, Szczecin na tle historycznym*, Wydawnictwo Uczelniane Zachodniopomorskiego Uniwersytetu Technologicznego w Szczecinie, Szczecin 2017, passim.

⁹ A. Kadłuczka, *Architektura Niemiec – między wczoraj a dziś, czyli „conservatio znaczy creatio”*, Czasopismo Techniczne. Architektura, 2011, no. 3-A..



Ill. 3. Hildesheim – Old Town Market Square, restoring historic architecture in the city center. Author's photography 2012

The decapitalized buildings were also demolished (Technical City Hall in Frankfurt am Main, Rose Hotel in Hildesheim), awarded for their modern and functional spatial solutions during the domination of post-war modernism, which at the end of the 20th century were considered to be elements of harmonizing with the old town landscape, negatively affecting the functioning of medieval districts as centers of developing cities and agglomerations. The modern forms and scaled up dimensions of modernist objects located in the exposed fragments of the complexes, in combination with the individual appearance of tenement houses with intimate features, made it impossible to restore the landscape of old towns and reconstruction of decorated facades, which was “expected” by residents along with the art historians and conservators of monuments.

In the developing German cities, it was decided to reconstruct the most valuable, in artistic terms, old town tenement houses, to restore the layout of the quarters with individual forms of the former homes of patricians and merchants, as well as to exhibit archaeological exhibits from the Ancient Rome period and the Middle Ages in originally solved museum objects¹⁰. The formation of a harmonious architectural landscape of old town complexes positively influenced the economic development of historical centers, along with the functional solutions reflecting the unique character of the place, also the restoration of cultural identity¹¹.

¹⁰ P. Fiuk, *Modernizacja, postmodernizacja i rekonstrukcja centrum Frankfurtu nad Menem* [in:] G. Rzepecki (ed.), *Integracja sztuki i techniki w architekturze i urbanistyce*, T. 4/I, Wydawnictwa Uczelniane Uniwersytetu Technologiczno-Przyrodniczego, Bydgoszcz 2016, pp. 67–76

¹¹ B. Kalusche, W.Ch. Setzpfand, *Architekturführer Frankfurt am Main*, Reimer, Berlin 1992, passim.

7. THE AUTHOR'S CONCEPTS AND REALIZATIONS OF SHAPING OLD-TOWN STRUCTURES

The restoration of the historical structure of port cities was undertaken in Elbląg and Szczecin as in the (Ill. 4), defining a model method of conservation work for the reconstruction of old city complexes in Poland during the period of political transformation after 1989.



Ill. 4. Szczecin – Old Town, Sienna Market, reconstruction of baroque facades from the 17th century (original red and blue colors). Author's photography 2017

The multilateral architectural concepts and studies on the shaping of old towns were prepared for Szczecin by the author (individually and in teams). The author prepared for Szczecin as shown in (Ill. 5), Kostrzyn nad Odrą, Sławno, Koszalin. The studies covered the scope of complex research on the history of urban systems, an evolution of architectural forms, an analysis of contemporary conditions and possibilities of functioning of old districts. The conclusions made it possible to define a strategy for the contemporary development of quarters with medieval tradition, restoring the harmonious landscape of old-town complexes while introducing original structural solutions, reflecting the contemporary functional needs and creating compositional features of architecture emphasizing the period of its implementation.

8. CONCLUSION

The results of scientific research¹² on methods of reconstruction and development of historical districts serve to determine multilateral proposals for the contemporary shaping of urban structures, an adaptation of old buildings in terms of functionality, a technology and

¹² M. Pawlicki, *Strategia konserwacji zabytków architektury w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Krakowskiej, Kraków 1993.

aesthetics to the requirements of the digital revolution era¹³. In the studies and analytical studies prepared by the author since 1990, prospective solutions for new buildings have been defined, serving the multilateral use of economic potential of conveniently located historical districts with simultaneous modernization of the old urban structures. The realized original designs of tenement houses and contemporary development of old city quarters are examples of the implementation of analytical research in investment solutions affecting the economic development and prosperity of businesses in historical districts. The leading design idea was to create a rational system of services, the profile of which is subject to adjustment to the changing utility and spatial requirements. The commercial, catering and hotel services – depending on the needs – were transformed within the same building structures, without disturbing the homogeneous architectural composition (successfully completed functional connections of neighboring modern tenement houses, maintaining their distinctness as well as exposing in the landscape of the restored districts). On the upper floors of modern tenement houses the residential function dominated with apartments of high utility quality and the office function – with a diversified utility profile, adapted to the changing needs of users.



III. 5. Szczecin – Old Town, Sienna Market. [A] Reconstruction of neighboring baroque tenement houses from the 17th century (red and blue) and the “Monin House” from the 18th century (Rynek Sienna 1, color of the barn – author’s design with the team). [B] Contemporary architecture of the cantonal facades of the Old Town tenements (Rynek Sienny 1, 2, 3, 4, author’s project with the team). Author’s photography 2017

The representative values that result from the neighborhood of new houses with historic architecture and a unique atmosphere, a composition and an architecture.

¹³ Z. Paszkowski, *Restrukturalizacja miasta historycznego jako metoda jego współczesnego kształtowania na przykładzie Starego Miasta w Szczecinie*, opublikowana dysertacja doktorska z 1987, wydawnictwo Hogben, Szczecin 2008, passim.

The determination of the arrangement of new functions was a reference to the centuries-old tradition of the former port district and the architectural structure, which was determined by individual forms of tenement houses: the former merchants' residences, rich bourgeoisie and patricians. The new buildings, restoring the urban arrangements of the old towns, which were ruined during the World War II, are a contemporary reminiscence of the composition of the old town houses, emphasizing the period of their construction. The individual solutions of contemporary architecture were composed with reference to formal and artistic features and the landscape of old towns. The new houses are juxtaposed with the reconstructed facades of the most valuable historical tenement houses in Szczecin – baroque architecture from the 17th and 18th centuries, erected after the reconstruction of medieval bourgeois and merchant houses. The compact urban structure of the reconstructed districts in Poland after 1989 significantly restored the compositional and formal readability of the ruined districts, at the same time serving to define the cultural identity of the contemporary inhabitants of the oldest cities, shaped on the basis of the medieval location privileges. The contemporary investments in the historical districts influenced the economic revival, an economic development, as well as the restoration of the activity of local societies. The economic development of historical cities was determined by the proper conditions of their functioning as multilateral centers, which for centuries belonged to the leading architectural ensembles in the structures of urbanized European cities.

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