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ARCHITECTURE AS THE ART OF TRANSFORMING SPACE ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE REVALORISATION OF THE MYTHICAL PIOTRKOWSKA STREET IN ŁÓDŹ

ARCHITEKTURA JAKO SZTUKA PRZEKSZTAŁCANIA PRZESTRZENI NA PRZYKŁADZIE REWALORYZACJI MITYCZNEJ ULICY PIOTRKOWSKIEJ W ŁODZI

Abstract

In the twentieth century, Jan Sztaudynger wrote: *It is the citizens of Lodz who care most to fit everything on Piotrkowska Street*. In the 21st century, however, the city authorities lost their sleep over what to do to revive Piotrkowska Street. This important communication route of Łódź of a commercial and service character around which the city was developing, with time turned into a “showcase” of an industrial agglomeration concentrating the life of the city. In April 1940, by order of Adolf Hitler, the city was given the name Litzmannstadt, and Piotrkowska – Adolf Hitler Straße. After World War II, it significantly deteriorated. After the last major renovation, it becomes an important place again.

Keywords: Łódź, the mythical Piotrkowska Street, revalorization

Streszczenie

W XX w. Jan Sztaudynger pisał: „Jest Łódzian największą troską, by zmieścić wszystko na Piotrkowską”. Natomiast w XXI w. sen z powiek władz miasta spędza myśl, co zrobić, aby ulicę Piotrkowską ożywić. Ten ważny trakt komunikacyjny Łodzi o charakterze handlowo-usługowym, wokół którego rozbudowywało się miasto, z czasem zmienił się w „wizytówkę” koncentrującą życie aglomeracji przemysłowej. W kwietniu 1940 r. rozkazem Adolfa Hitlera nadano miastu nazwę Litzmannstadt, a ul. Piotrkowskiej *Adolf Hitler Straße*. Po II wojnie światowej znacznie podupadła. Po ostatniej kapitalnej renowacji staje się ponownie miejscem kultowym.

Słowa kluczowe: Łódź, mityczna ulica Piotrkowska, rewaloryzacja

1. INTRODUCTION

Piotrkowska Street in Łódź was originally an important commercial and service route of the city. Its length, which is over 4 km, makes it one of the leading places in Europe. It runs in a straight line, connecting two main squares: Wolności and Niepodległości. The city was developing around it. Also today, it is the “showcase of the city”. It became a promenade with

a special atmosphere after 1990. It is a cult place for the inhabitants of Łódź. Its reputation, especially after the last major renovation of the Monument to the People of Łódź and the Avenue of Stars, reaches beyond Poland. (Ill. 1).



Ill. 1. Piotrkowska Street, view towards south-north, photo by the author, 2021.

2. HISTORY

Piotrkowska Street consists of two parts: designated in 1821 in the New Town, and the newer one in the settlement of Łódka, south of the Upper Market Square.

In 1824, the populating of Piotrkowska Street began. Clothiers from the Grand Duchy of Poznań and Lower Silesia settled in the New Town, while the Łódka settlement was inhabited by linen and cotton weavers from Saxony, Bohemia, Lower Silesia and Prussia. The newcomers received a plot of land for “hereditary and rental” ownership as perpetual utility, financial aid for development, wood for building a house and tax exemption for 6 years. The assigned plots at Piotrkowska Street usually had an area of less than 1 to almost 2 morgen (i.e. from 0.5 to 1 ha according to the New Poland conversion rate), and their width at the street ranged from 17 to 22 meters. In 1827, the eastern side of the street had 143 plots, and the western side – 153 plots. In addition to the first houses built by weavers, at Piotrkowska Street (near the Jasień River, near the Bielnik at Tymienieckiego Street), government houses (12 wooden and 28 brick) were built with a plan to rent them to handicraftsmen. These houses were standardized and served as models by which craftsmen should build their own. Despite the large amenities, the development of the plots progressed slower than expected – the craftsmen first erected small wooden buildings at the back of the plots, leaving the street fronts empty for future, more magnificent buildings. In 1832, 228 plots of land were undeveloped at Piotrkowska Street.¹

¹ M. Czochański, G. Kowalski, *Plany i rejestry regulacyjne pierwszych osad fabrycznych miasta Łodzi*, Zeszyty Naukowe. Budownictwo, 2010, no. 61(1066), pp. 47–61.

At the exit of Piotrkowska Street, two representative buildings were built, the Town Hall (Ill. 2) and an Evangelical church (Ill. 3), both in the Classicist style. These buildings were a kind of gate that opened the street. Government and private schools were built to function as elementary schools, such as the one established in 1839 by Mikołaj Olszewski, on the plot at 178 Piotrkowska Street.



Ill. 2. Town Hall at Wolności Square, photo by the author, 2021.



Ill. 3. Church at Wolności Square, photo by the author, 2021.

3. THE PROCESS OF CHANGING THE NATURE OF THE STREET

The changes to the facades of buildings by converting windows into shop doors and thus changing the use of the premises on the ground floor, initiated in the mid-nineteenth century, inaugurated the process of changing the nature of the street from factory to commerce and service. Apart from

shops, inns were also created. The first building of this kind was a tavern with an inn at the New Town Square at 45 Piotrkowska Street. In addition to taverns, there were also breweries, restaurants and confectioneries. From 1853, at 47 Piotrkowska Street, Fryderyk Sellin sold confectionery products and opened a cafe, and in 1862 Adolf Manteuffel opened a restaurant. The street was the first in the city to be illuminated by oil reverber lanterns in 1835, and in 1841 at 124 Piotrkowska Street a public well was located with a manual pump added in 1845. From the mid-1830s, paving of the street with field stone began. In 1860, wooden bridges in front of the houses were removed and the side earth ditches draining water from the property were filled in, and in their place paved gutters were built, which changed the appearance and increased the prestige of the street.

In the years 1848–1850, in connection with the assessment of buildings for tax purposes, the numbering of the property was arranged on Piotrkowska Street. Since the regulation of Łódka in the years 1823–1828, each of the three parts of the street (in the Old Town, New Town and in the Łódka settlement) had a separate numbering, starting with 1. However, the historical division into settlements was left in order to be continuous. The confusing numbering system, where individual streets were given numbers with the addition of letters, was changed for the second time in 1891 (after the property was marked with separate numbering on the crossroads) and this system of property marking, with minor changes, has survived to modern times. In September 1863, the City Council approved the renaming of the street section from the New Town Square (today's Wolności Square) to Zgierska Street, which was named Nowomiejska Street, and the Piotrkowska Street itself was marked with new tin plates. In addition, the names of those parts of the streets leading to the west of Piotrkowska were changed. In 1887, as a result of progressive Russification, the plates were changed to bilingual.²

4. PUBLIC UTILITY BUILDINGS

At 273 Piotrkowska Street in the years 1901–1912, according to the design of the architect Zillmann, a neo-Gothic Catholic church was built, raised in 1920 to the rank of a cathedral and in 1992 to the rank of archcathedral (Ill. 4). On the other hand, at 283 Piotrkowska Street, in 1909, the construction of a Neo-Romanesque Lutheran Saint Matthew Temple began (Ill. 5). At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, many manufacturers moved or rebuilt factory buildings into residential ones. Ludwik Meyer built The Grand Hotel at 72 Piotrkowska Street. In the 1920s, the owners of the property at Piotrkowska Street were mainly Germans and Jews. Among the municipal facilities created for the needs of trade and services, it is worth mentioning the Market Hall at Niepodległości Square, former Leonhard Market. The market hall, centrally located on the property, erected until 1934, was preceded by a one-story building situated along the retracted line of the frontage of Piotrkowska Street.

The hall was covered with an arched roof with skylights in the form of arched pine trusses of the 'Stephan' system, with steel ties, with roof purlins, beams and pine rafters. The roof is boarded with pine boards and covered with roofing felt. The strip skylights and huge windows in the front walls were originally made of a wooden structure filled with mesh reinforced glass.³

Currently, the facility is being modernized and extended (Ill. 6).

² M. Janik, Z. Szambelan, *Łódź na mapach. 1793–1939*, Wydawnictwo Jacek Kusiński–Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi–Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, Łódź–Warszawa 2012.

³ D. Lasociński, R. Bonisławski, M. Koliński, *Łódź. Przewodnik turystyczny*, Piątek Trzynastego, Łódź 2004.



Ill. 4. Archcathedral, photo by the author, 2021.



Ill. 5. Saint Matthew Church, photo by the author, 2021.

5. UNREALIZED BUILDINGS

Unfortunately, the much earlier (1927) competition design of the Municipium Building at Wolności Square by Prof. Czesław Przybylski was never implemented (probably due to the global economic crisis). The unique location of the facility, which was to form one of the frontages of the octagonal Wolności Square, occupying two plots separated by the outlet of Pomorska Street, the longest important communication artery in Łódź, which was intended to be extended to 25 m, was a real challenge for the creative imagination of architects. The concept selected for implementation excellently solved the program and functional



Ill. 6. Market Hall at Niepodległości Square, photo by the author, 2021.

problems, including the skilful connection of the new cubature to the neighboring building then occupied by the Magistrate. It was also outstanding in terms of the spatial composition of the complex of monumental bodies composed of wings with arcades, flanking the corners of Wolności Square and Pomorska Street, connected by the creative shape of the main body with the representative hall over the passage. The high attic of the main building, with a characteristic crowning cornice, giving it the features of a horizontal composition, cut into the asymmetrically situated clock tower, adjacent to the building of the City Board. This expressive interpenetration of horizontal and vertical forms, with the simultaneous use by the author of the external style of the facades corresponding to the internal function, proves the artist's outstanding talent and the openness of the evaluation committee to new trends in the art of shaping public facilities. It is a pity that this spatially creative new City Hall of Łódź of the Second Polish Republic was not realized, because also today it would be an excellent showcase of the city, transforming the character of the most important square from a "small town", inherited from the times of the Piotrków Governorate, into a "metropolitan", worthy of a provincial city. The erection of the Łódź diocese by Pope Benedict XV with the papal bull "Christi Domini" of December 10, 1920, required the creation of spatial facilities for the proper functioning of the curia, which was temporarily placed in the former Heinzl palace at 102 Piotrkowska Street (now the seat of the City Hall). It was decided to form the center of the diocese's religious life in the area of the church of St. Stanisław Kostka – the newly appointed Łódź Cathedral. The design of the Bishop's Palace, ready in mid-1922, was prepared by Józef Kaban, an architect from Łódź, who was permanently associated with the curia. In October 1924, the offices of the curia were introduced into the completed building, and the Łódź Bishop Ordinary Wincenty Tymieniecki began to reside there. The Bishop's Palace became the nucleus of the complex of buildings accompanying the basilica, now already archcathedral, which is being extended to this day. The recently restored building is an interesting example of academic classicism in Polish architecture of the interwar period (Ill. 7).

During World War II, on April 11, 1940, by order of Adolf Hitler, the city was given the name *Litzmannstadt*, and Piotrkowska Street was renamed *Adolf Hitler Straße*.



Ill. 7. Bishop Palace, photo by the author, 2021.

6. POST-WAR SHOPPING STORES

After World War II, a three-story Cooperative Department Store “Central” and a 13-story office building for the Powszechna Spółdzielnia Spożywców were erected at 165/169 Piotrkowska Street. The designers were: Maciej Gintowt, Ewa Krasieńska and Maciej Krasieński (Ill. 8). SDH “Central” was very modern at that time. It had an escalator, a characteristic neon sign with men and women gradually getting dressed, and scarce items imported from abroad. In 1991, Central II Store was opened on the opposite side of the intersection. Currently, SDH Central consists of two department stores that have been owned by the Handlowy Investments Centrum (HIC) Consortium since 1998.



Ill. 8. “Central” shopping mall, photo by the author, 2021.

However, slightly earlier, in 1967, in the southern part of Piotrkowska Street at 4 Niepodległości Square, in the vicinity of the “Górniak” market, a department store was erected in Łódź, PDT “Uniwersal”, which was supposed to compete with the marketplace. Its attraction was the first escalator in Łódź, which, along with valuable goods, attracted approximately 130,000 customers every day. At the beginning of the 90s, the building was deserted. In September 2012, the building belonging to a businessman from Łódź was commissioned after renovation as a modern shopping center “Unioncity” (Ill. 9).



Ill. 9. “Unioncity” shopping centre, photo by the author, 2021.

7. MONUMENTS

The present Central Museum of Textiles was established in the historic building of the Ludwik Geyer’s White Factory at 282/284 Piotrkowska Street. At the beginning of the 1990s, the northern section of the street was rebuilt into a pedestrian zone according to the design of Włodzimierz Nowakowski. In 2000, a monument to John Paul II by Krystyna Fałdyga-Solska was unveiled.

On August 1, 2002, at Piotrkowska Street, the Monument to the Lodzians of the Millennium Turn was erected – that is, the named surface covering a fragment of the main street of the city (from Tuwima to Nawrot Street). On May 16, 2008, a vertical obelisk was erected to commemorate the 185th anniversary of renaming the old Piotrkowska Road into Piotrkowska Street. Each 1 cm thick rod (obelisk) symbolizes one year from this event (the initiator was Marek Janiak, the then president of the Piotrkowska Street Foundation).⁴

8. TRANSPORT

In terms of transport, the most important change concerning Piotrkowska Street was the withdrawal of tram and car traffic. This process proceeded gradually from the post-war peri-

⁴ C. Jaworska-Maćkowiak, T. Maćkowiak, *Pomniki łódzkie*, Regionalna Pracownia Krajoznawcza PTTK, Łódź 1998.

od to the turn of the century. The tram and bus traffic was taken over by Aleja Kościuszki, which, along with Sienkiewicza Street, was filled with car traffic as well. Currently, Piotrkowska Street serves as a walking boulevard and is the site of the main cultural events organized by the city authorities. Worth emphasizing is the Festival of Light (known in Europe) or occasional street exhibitions.

9. DEGRADATION

In the post-war years, the street underwent gradual degradation. Until the mid-1970s, the old, eclectic or historical tenement houses were not considered monuments by the authorities of the time. A dozen or so of them were demolished for the construction of office buildings and department stores, usually created in an international style.

Even in the 1980s, decorative elements of the façades of decaying tenement houses were falling off, threatening passers-by, and often simply removed from the walls, although renovation of a few selected objects had already begun.⁵

10. RENOVATION

Recently, the society of Łódź has started a discussion on the identity of the city, considered in multiple aspects, including the structure of architectural space, including the well-known big-city Piotrkowska Street – the former Piotrkowski Road, which is particularly demanding for modern revival. After the Second World War, the street deteriorated significantly. In the 1950s and 1960s, it was decided to organize its space by designing a number of buildings in new regulatory lines, in accordance with the then prevailing trends, favoring the widening of the street light. In the seventies of the twentieth century, facilities were built in the area of several intersections, creating widenings along them as squares in front of the entrances to service premises. As part of the strictly frontage buildings, they are disturbing the existing, very characteristic for the nineteenth-century Łódź, developed in the past period corner layout. The cubature of these objects, although they refer to the existing neighborhood in height, is the drawing, proportions, façade division, and whether the materials used do not conflict with the neighborhood of tenement houses with eclectic architecture rich in hysterical detail.

Today, these objects do not create such strong emotions as in previous years, some residents have come to terms with this new space. Several city plinths and monuments are housed in it, but the topic of how to include them into the landscape of the street, its continuity, its identity is constantly recurring. Today's discussion concerns the possible recognition of their location and spatial activities within the housing as to restore the original structure of the street road. Here, the opinions of contemporaries are very divided as to the recognition of the historical values of the spatial events occurring within the street's housing. The sixties of the twentieth century was also a revival of the street, a very positive revival, supported by the location of a number of stores with prestigious brands for those years and supplementing their equipment with wonderful advertising neon lights. The great loss of value of this space

⁵ W. Małek, *Detal architektoniczny ulicy Piotrkowskiej*, Wydawnictwo Artus, Łódź 1990.

took place after the liquidation of illumination, which was unique in the country. Neon lights designed on a grand scale were objects of significant artistic rank. Today, there is more and more talk about restoring illumination with a similar artistic expression in order to revive tourist interest in the street. A prime example of similar activities based on the possibilities offered by illumination is the competition called Luminale, organized every two years by the city of Frankfurt am Main, on the occasion of the lighting fair, attracting thousands of tourists who want to admire new possibilities of lighting technology, discovering the beauty of buildings. At the turn of the seventies and eighties, many famous architects erected residential and service buildings as “seals” filling the frontages after numerous demolitions. These buildings of different artistic level are another statement of artists representing different views on the way of supplementing the 19th- or 20th-century urban fabric. These years were extremely important for the growing sense of the identity of the place among the inhabitants of Łódź, and revealed the special location of Piotrkowska Street in the mentality of the inhabitants. At that time, the tourist interest in urban spaces grew as a result of the worldwide interest in buildings in the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. In the nineties, after regaining independence, the street, its frontage and surface were revitalized. Gradually, the street space was transformed into a pedestrian route serving as a city lounge with prestigious commercial, office, gastronomy and banking facilities. Buildings, urban planning, institutions, restaurants, clubs and pubs located in the area and on this street create a special atmosphere of a classic character, determine its identity and fame, reaching beyond Łódź. The years of the first decade of the twenty-first century abound with great changes in the functioning of the “Piotrkowski Road”. A decision was made to build two large commercial complexes, i.e. Galeria Łódzka in the area of the intersection of Sienkiewicza Street and Piłsudski Avenue and the “Manufaktura” – shopping, service and entertainment complex on the site of the former textile factory, the “Kingdom of Israel Kalmanowicz Poznański”, adjacent to the Wolności Square area, from which the interior of Piotrkowska Street opens to the south. These two enormous assumptions resulted in the gradual disappearance of the commercial, gastronomic and service attractiveness of the traditional street. With the outflow of trade, the space was filled only during planned, occasional street events of a cultural or entertainment nature, related to the city festival. Recent years have been a positive breakthrough in the considerations supported by practical actions of the authorities striving to promote the unique spatial structure of the city, preserved in its entirety after the war, being a witness to the phenomenon of “The Promised Land”. A number of contests were announced in the form of urban and architectural concepts concerning key urban spaces, i.e. the areas “closing” the line of Piotrkowska Street from the south and north, along with its area. Great interest in topics from designers resulted in a multiple approach to the way of perceiving and understanding architectural space, the role of continuation and building the avant-garde, especially in the context of the avant-garde art tradition of Łódź. The cultural and historical elements of places special to the city in works sent from various parts of Poland and Europe confirmed the rightness of creating architectural spaces with modern, innovative or even avant-garde means as part of building the continuity of the perception of the rank of a place. It also turned out that the underestimated young inhabitants, compared to other Polish cities, turned out to be exceptionally mature in jointly making strategic decisions, weighing on the appearance of the city’s architectural space. The society watches with interest and discusses the results of the competition for the project of transforming and modernizing the Schiller Passage. The extremely important space of the Passage, ennobled by the inhabitants

of Łódź to the main city square, for reasons of habit rather than actual functional conditions, has been traditionally perceived for twenty years as a place for the implementation of various cultural projects initiated by the city authorities and artistic groups.

The city authorities, understanding the essence of the matter and thanking the competitors, uttered the words that are significant for the continuation of the transformation process:

The image of our city – present and future, drawn in the architects' visions, is a topic that touches us all. The high attendance testifies to the popularity of the competitions of the Municipal Urban Workshop, thanks to which the city gains invaluable information about the direction in which to go when creating local plans and creating new urban spaces.⁶

There is awareness of the need to continue cultural values by promoting unique and avant-garde architecture. After 1990, on the initiative of the current city architect, Marek Janiak, a member of the Łódź Kaliska Artistic Group, the Piotrkowska Street Foundation was established, which aimed to modernize this street and implement the idea of a promenade. Then a social body was established in the form of the "Staff of Piotrkowska Street" to comprehensively develop both program and functional policy and spatial strategy, especially in the field of understanding architectural codes, both existing and planned. An attempt was made to define the most appropriate architectural space for building the future of this street route. The place where an architectural work is created defines its character, it is impossible to avoid it. It is time to restore the value of the place, its uniqueness, and on this basis let's build avant-garde architecture in form and content. Architectural space defined in this way offers a unique opportunity to respect heritage. The section from Piłsudskiego Avenue to Tuwima Street was lined with colorful cubes, modernist lanterns and other elements of small architecture were added. This fact was criticized by conservators and cultural historians as inconsistent with the general atmosphere of this street. The next parts of the street to the north, up to Wolności Square, were rebuilt and closed to traffic in the years 1993–1997. They were lined with gray paving stones or stones imitating old cobblestones and provided with more and more stylish elements of small architecture. Each consecutive section, however, had a different surface and a different style of accessories, which was also criticized. Even before the last section intended for the promenade was handed over, the stones in the first section were significantly damaged. From 1995, they were gradually replaced with a grayer and more solid stones, into which the Monument of the Millennial Breakthrough of Łódź was also built. Along with the change in the street design, the houses and palaces next to it were also renovated, where pubs, restaurants, shops and cafes were opened. Initially, mainly the facades of tenement houses were renovated, but with the growing popularity of the street and the occupation of most attractive front premises, revitalization gradually began to reach yards and outbuildings. Currently, although not all of them, a significant percentage of the courtyards are also paved with cubes and used for trade and gastronomy. In 2012, it was decided to renovate Piotrkowska Street on the section from Wolności Square to the intersection with Piłsudskiego and Mickiewicza Avenues, as the concrete block was in a deteriorating condition. The renovation was divided into stages, the aim was to unify the surface along the entire section – the concrete cube was replaced with granite slabs, the lanterns were replaced, and the road was narrowed. The biggest change, however, is street furniture – there are benches, racks and baskets, all of an anthracite color. The renovation was completed in

⁶ Architectural competition „U Źródeł Piotrkowskiej” Miejska Pracownia Urbanistyczna w Łodzi, Łódź 2010, p. 3.

July 2014. Today, Piotrkowska is the axis of the Łódź agglomeration. It is here or in its vicinity that almost all the most important public administration offices, bank offices, shops, restaurants and plenty of pubs are located. Most events, festivals, marches and state ceremonies take place here. The part of Piotrkowska Street (the promenade) closed to traffic was called “bigle” by the inhabitants of Łódź. Now the street is much more often referred to as “Pietryna”. It is the cultural, political, sentimental, commercial and business center of Łódź. Between Tuwima Street and Nawrot Street there is the Monument to the Lodzians of the Millennium Turn, that is, a nominal surface covering a fragment of Piotrkowska Street; it is probably the only monument of this type in the world, currently comprising of 13,454 named cubes. From June 1, 2009, there are street springs on Piotrkowska Street, i.e. a series of small architecture objects, created thanks to the initiative of the Zakład Wodociągów i Kanalizacji in Łódź as part of the “Fountains for Łódź” project. The springs, in the form of granite columns with sculptures of children and fish, provide drinking water to passers-by. Their creators are sculptors from Łódź: Magdalena Walczak and Marcin Mielczarek, who also designed the Monument of Uszatek the Bear, located at 87 Piotrkowska Street. From 1999, the street is decorated with bronze outdoor sculptures standing on its sidewalks, commemorating famous people associated with Łódź, which create the so-called Gallery of Great Citizens of Łódź. At Piotrkowska Street, between the 6th of August Street and Rubinstein’s Passage, the Walk of Fame is located. The originator of the alley, following the Hollywood pattern in 1996, was Jan Machulski. The first brass star – for actor Andrzej Seweryn – was laid two years later. On the even (eastern) side there are the stars of the directors, on the odd side there are bas-reliefs of the actors. In 2015, Piotrkowska Street was recognized as a historical monument.

Considering the problem of Piotrkowska Street, we should therefore ask ourselves: when did this most representative street in Łódź lose its prestige and began to decline? This situation started with the emergence of other facilities in the city with a competitive function to the one that had previously been the privilege of only Piotrkowska Street. Is the problematic situation of the most important street in Łódź the fault of the newly created buildings, or is it the lack of the ability to properly adapt it to new challenges? At a time when the whole world is facing the phenomena of competition and competitiveness every day, it is difficult to find the only reason for the failures that Piotrkowska experiences in the newly created shopping and service centers. It would be too simplistic. Processes similar to the aforementioned ones take place in most European cities, where streets with functions similar to Piotrkowska Street, such as the famous Mariahilfer Strasse in Vienna, do not become extinct habitats for “second-class” shops. The problematic space of Piotrkowska Street lost its importance precisely in the face of the emergence of other facilities with a similar function. Therefore, it would be advisable to thoroughly analyze the source of the problems of this particular public space in Łódź and try to find more coherent, well-planned systematic and long-term actions that could heal the former Piotrkowski Road and restore it to its glory from the 1990s.

11. SUMMARY

Łódź is a city whose specificity is related to the lack of a main square that would be clearly identified with the most important metropolitan public space. The Schiller Passage once aspired to such a title, now it is the C.H. Manufaktura market, where every year more and more public and attractive mass events are held. It is difficult to get rid of the impression that for some time there have been no ideas for finding the real, specific identity of Piotrkowska Street in the face

of architectural, urban and cultural changes that have occurred in Łódź. Piotrkowska Street is about 15 m wide and the buildings height oscillates around 20 m, which creates favorable conditions for a user-friendly space. A number of actions were taken to increase public interest in the public function of the frontage, such as: introducing a traffic ban, gradual renovation of backyards, setting up sculptures related to the history of Łódź, creating the Walk of Fame, adding transverse lighting, Christmas trees in winter, gardens in summer, rickshaws, etc. However, it is regrettable to admit that despite good ideas, Piotrkowska is home to more and more empty premises, and on weekdays around 7.00 p.m. most of the services are closed. There are few passers-by and the street falls asleep. The only period when you can actually notice a clear recovery in the region are the summer months. The street then blooms with fresh flowers oozing from the gastronomic gardens and joyful conversations of satisfied customers. Therefore, an obstacle may be the lack of climatic barrier for the use of the space protected from precipitation and wind in less favorable weather seasons. It should be said, however, that only in summer this space offers something special in the form of soft lines of well-developed, segregated and assigned “semi-public” areas. Perhaps we should take it as an intention to maintain this state of affairs throughout the year, so that Piotrkowska attracts residents and tourists with its unique atmosphere at any time of the day or night. It is a street of contrasts that brings together everything that is in Łódź. Piotrkowska Street is a symbol of Łódź, it is a melting pot of multiculturalism, combining commerce with entertainment and gastronomy. Its subjective architectural space is the mediator of uniqueness revalued with the spirit of the times.

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