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ŁÓDŹ IN ARCHITECTURE – ARCHITECTURE IN ŁÓDŹ, I.E. TRUE OR FALSE IN THE CONTEMPORARY CITY LANDSCAPE

ŁÓDŹ W ARCHITEKTURZE – ARCHITEKTURA W ŁODZI CZYLI PRAWDA CZY FAŁSZ WE WSPÓŁCZESNYM KRAJOBRAZIE MIASTA

Abstract

Łódź is a relatively young city, the city of which was built mainly in the era of steam engine development, i.e. at the end of the 19th century, when next to the creation of textile factories, palaces and residences of their owners grew in the architectural landscape of the city. The second period important for Łódź's development was the interwar period. At that time, the city was raised to the rank of a provincial city for the first time in its history. Obtaining new administrative, service or cultural functions by the city, building a network of public spaces resulted in an increase of its spatial and landscape values as well as the sense of local identity of the inhabitants. And how do we perceive Łódź in the 21st century?

Keywords: Łódź, architecture, modernity, city landscape

Streszczenie

Łódź jest miastem stosunkowo młodym, miastem którego wielkomiejskość budowano głównie w końcu XIX wieku, kiedy to obok tworzenia fabryk włókienniczych w krajobrazie architektonicznym miasta wyrastały pałace i rezydencje ich właścicieli. Drugim z ważnych dla rozwoju Łodzi okresów były czasy międzywojenne. Wówczas to podniesiono je do rangi miasta wojewódzkiego. Uzyskanie przez miasto nowych funkcji administracyjnych, usługowych czy kulturalnych, spowodowało wzrost jego walorów przestrzennych. A jak postrzegamy Łódź w XXI wieku?

Słowa kluczowe: Łódź, architektura, współczesność, krajobraz miejski

1. INTRODUCTION

The creators are still looking for the truth. Sometimes the inner truth of the work, the truth of time, the truth of art, the personal truth of the creator. Artists, observers, art theoreticians, philosophers believe in the existence of the truth of art and accept this idea. Viewers can believe that the picture of Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci contains some

mysterious truth. One can also believe that there is a truth of abstract painting. The truth of literature is widely accepted, such as the truth of the worlds of Joyce, Kafka, Gombrowicz, and Borges. But we do not think about the essence of the truth of Wagner's *Valkyrie Gesamtkunstwerk*. In the recent past of architecture, the issue of "truth" played a central role. There were trends in architecture based on certain ethics and form. The architectural form resulted from the assumptions referred to as the sincerity of architecture, while aesthetics was a kind of game of truth. In brutalism, the truth lay in the "sincerity" of the material, later the truth of form was also related to function. The issue of truth was also an important clue in creating concepts related to the logic of the object's construction system. However, these concepts were supplanted by individual efforts to demonstrate the originality of architecture and – the architect.

The process of shaping space has accompanied man from the beginning of his existence. Each of us possesses a unique ability to create, perceive, understand and evaluate. The rank of the work, the degree of understanding and objectivity of assessment depends not only on the creative potential, emotional intelligence, but also on the knowledge of both the creator and the recipient. Knowledge of the process of shaping space is necessary for both the creator and recipient. The designer learns humility and responsibility for what he creates. It educates the recipient in respect of cultural heritage and tradition. Secondly, the style classification is one of the elements of the systematization of the examined material and serves the primary purpose, i.e. determining its role in creating the spatial structure of the city in shaping the urban landscape, and then using the value in both the typological, qualitative and quantitative aspects in search for premises for the development of 21st-century Łódź.¹

2. THE ARCHITECTURAL LANDSCAPE OF THE CITY BY THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Łódź is a relatively young city – it was built mainly in the era of steam engine development, i.e. at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time, besides the creation of textile factories, palaces and residences of their owners grew in the architectural landscape of the city. The first, turbulent and spontaneous period of development was associated with the industrial revolution. Industrialist Ludwik Geyer brings to his textile factory a lace making machine and then the first steam engine (in the city). Łódź, which has been one of the largest textile centers for over 150 years, received city rights in 1423,² while its development as an industrial city dates back to 1820. On September 8, 1820, the governor of the Kingdom of Poland, General Józef Zajączek, issued a decree establishing various centers, including Łódź ("Factory cities"). The father of the new Łódź

¹ Cf.: S. Gzell, *Wstęp* [in:] *Krajobraz architektoniczny Warszawy końca XX wieku* Warsaw 2002, p. 7: "[...] from the very beginning a problem arose of choosing what should be the theme of the book and how it should be included. It was decided, firstly, that the form of publication should not give the impression of an 'atlas of architecture', but should place a much greater emphasis on the description of urban phenomena and in their context refer to forms of development. Secondly, that the characteristics of these phenomena are to take into account the way they are perceived by ordinary passers-by, visitors or residents of Warsaw."

² King Władysław Jagiełło erected the city on St. Martha Day on July 29, 1423 in Przedborz.

was the president of the Mazowieckie Voivodship Commission, Rajmund Rembieliński, author of the government's proposal "on the establishment of cloth factories."³ Unfortunately, the subsequent dynamic period of industrial development, the rapid increase in the number of inhabitants of Łódź, destroys the regular, geometric framework set for the New City with its unique, centrally located octagonal market, radial arrangement of roads and plots, rectangular street grid, metrology of most elements of the plan, based on a common 5-bar module, also destroys the compositional uniformity of the first regulatory plan of the Łódź cotton linen settlement, drawn up in 1827 by the geometry of Jan Lesniewski, in which the industrial core of the settlement is marked by "water and factory areas" on the Jasień River. This led to the uncoordinated development of the city as a whole, subordinated to the ruthless exploitation of people and areas, took place without any regulatory plan, without a guiding urban thought.

3. THE CITY DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

The development of Łódź of the Second Polish Republic was dominated by two important facts – the atmosphere of the revival of Polish statehood and the aspect of raising this industrial center, for the first time in its short metropolitan history, to the rank of a voivodship city.

The beginning of the 1920s brings Łódź new, non-industrial city-forming functions – on February 15, 1920, the city becomes the capital of a higher-level territorial unit – the Łódź Voivodeship, and Pope Benedict XV with a bulla of December 10 erects the Łódź diocese, a Łódź garrison is also created. The slowdown in the process of the industrial development of the center, with the simultaneous increase of its rank in the hierarchy of state, church and military administration, gave it a unique chance to make up for lost time and managing the city structures. A chance, thanks to which the center could deserve to be called a modern city, which, despite impressive demographic, economic and spatial development at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, did not yet deserve.

In the new political and economic conditions emerging in Poland after the end of World War I, in the first period of activity, the Building Department established at the City Council of Łódź appointed regulatory lines for major streets and began developing regulatory plans for selected areas of the city. It was established that the properly understood issue of regulation and development would become a significant factor in the economic, health and cultural development of the city. The ideal plan of modern urbanization – a communication skeleton from 1919. A project to shape iron railways in the Łódź region from 1919, or the design to shape the area of the Central Railway Station from 1920, testify to a progressive approach to the city and confirm that ongoing discussions were subordinated to the assumption of creating the best development conditions for this most important industrial and factory center in Poland, which is Łódź.⁴

The Polish authorities accepted the enlargement of the city area introduced by the German occupier in 1915, while in 1919 they reduced its division from 18 to 14 police districts. The

³ Cf.: Z. Lorentz, *Trzy raporty Rajmunda Rembielińskiego, prezesa Komisji Województwa Mazowieckiego z objazdu obwodu łęczyckiego w roku 1820*, Rocznik Oddziału Łódzkiego PTH, 1928, vol. 1.

⁴ W. Ostrowski, *Urbanistyka współczesna*, Arkady, Warszawa 1975, p. 82.

territory of 58.75 km², despite the efforts of the local government, remained unchanged until the end of the considered period. However, it was not useful in new realities of the coordination of spatial development, planned by the German occupier in 1917, based on outdated program assumptions in the conditions of new statehood, administration and economy. Only one of his plans was implemented – the disinfection of the coast and the riverbed of the Łódka River from Nowomiejska to Wschodnia Streets, which was a source of infectious diseases and fumes in the most populated district of the city. In this situation, the need to develop a city space plan covering the entire area became more urgent, supported by the development program and deep studies of all important conditions: historical, demographic, natural, legal, economic, infrastructural, functional and spatial. This study was commissioned by the city authorities in 1926 to the Warsaw urban planner Władysław Michalski, who after 1917 managed the section, then the office for regulation and development of Warsaw. In 1927, he submitted for an opinion, a short-term sketch plan of regulation of the voivodship city of Łódź. Unfortunately, this enlightened plan, which corresponds perfectly with the administrative advancement of Łódź and the ideas of wider shaping of cities that were emerging at that time in the Second Polish Republic, was not approved. Not only because of comments submitted to the project by a specially appointed regulatory committee, representing the City Council of Łódź, voivodship authorities, urban environment in the persons of Tadeusz Tołwiński and Teodor Toeplitz, which could have been included as part of the author's correction of the original sketch study. The plan, due to the proposed expropriations, became the object of sharp criticism from the organization of industrialists and property owners – the city council had to succumb and commissioned the draft plan to the largest Polish authority in the field of urban planning, Tadeusz Tołwiński.⁵ The first draft of the plan, developed under the guidance of Professor Tadeusz Tołwiński in The City Regulation Department was approved and adopted by the City Council in June 1930 (Ill. 1).

It was definitely less radical than Władysław Michalski's plan. It basically covered the area included within the perimeter railway loop, going beyond the administrative boundaries of the city only in the western zone, in the region of Polesie Konstantynowskie and Karolewo. The general development plan for the city of Łódź from 1930 included the current area of the city and was largely conservative – corrective in relation to the existing regionalization of city-wide services, residential and industrial areas, layout of green areas and the condition of the street network. However, as before, industrialists and property owners protested many intentions of the plan's design, despite the significant reduction in radical demands for shaping the city space in relation to the concept of W. Michalski and a number of concessions taking into account the previous reservations of these social groups. Neither the positive opinion of the City Council nor the authority of Professor Tadeusz Tołwiński helped. In this situation, the City Regulations Department began to develop a revised version of the plan taking into account subsequent negotiation arrangements and concessions. In addition to professor Tadeusz Tołwiński, the architects Waław Leyberg (Ostrowski) and Brunon Hein participated in the study and regulatory works carried out in this department since 1929. This variant, completed in 1934, finally met the expectations and was approved in 1935. It became the first in the history of Łódź of the Second Polish Republic and the only one for 25 years (the next plan was approved in 1961) a substantive and formal document for making final decisions in the field of planned city development.

⁵ *Ibidem*.



III. 1. General building plan for the city of Łódź from 1930 developed under the guidance of Professor Tadeusz Tołwiński. Original in the collection of the Museum of the History of the City of Łódź

Undoubtedly, this plan was definitely less radical than the concept of Warsaw Functionality by Jan Chmielewski and Szymon Syrkus. Nevertheless, it applied the principles of functional segregation, in line with the trends of avant-garde urban thought promoted at that time by the progressive creative environments of Europe, represented in the CIAM. As mentioned before, the beginning of the 1920s brings Łódź new, non-industrial city-forming functions. The promotion of Łódź in the hierarchy of state, church and military administration required extensive creative activities in the area of creating the city's technical infrastructure and public spaces. Starting from the buildings of state and municipal services, public offices and

institutions, through facilities for education, science, upbringing and culture, health care, social care, recreation, religious buildings, monuments, and finally commercial and urban infrastructure facilities as well as leisure facilities (Ill. 2).



Ill. 2. Marshal Józef Piłsudski People's Park, view of the foundation, photo: W. Stępień 2000

4. POST-WAR PERIOD

It should be noted that outside the ghetto located in the northern part of the city, Łódź came out relatively well from the conflagration, including in the area of downtown buildings. At the same time, the borders of the so-called “Great Lodz” (introduced by the Nazi occupier in 1940) were established. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the first post-war years, the unfinished inter-war investments were continued, maintained in the stylistic convention of a good class modernism, located primarily in downtown, and new buildings in this region were created on the principle of complementing existing ones. On the other hand, in a completely different, creative convention, “socialist in content – (pseudo) national in form”, the spatial structure and architectural expression of the buildings, destroyed as a result of the destruction of the ghetto in Bałuty, was shaped. Some of the new investments were also located, in accordance with the guidelines of Tołwiński's plan, in the southern area, (underinvested in the interwar period), and within connected areas, located outside the perimeter loop. Communion with interwar modernism, ubiquitous in Łódź, which had not

been destroyed by the war, on the one hand influenced the softening of the overtones of new architectural forms shaped in accordance with the aesthetic principles of the era of socialist realism. On the other – the designers quickly taking on the stylistic challenges of the '60s modernism. Already some implementations appearing almost in parallel with those kept in the spirit of socialist realism, heralded the imminent revival of creative, modernist thinking about the form of architecture containing elements of functionalism. Meanwhile, it was necessary to think about the huge, once well-formed post-factory assumptions that were of great value in the spatial landscape of the city. How to revive these post-industrial, lifeless cubatures? Attempts in this area have generally gone in the right direction. They oscillated towards including these spaces in the city's organism by adapting them to serve as public facilities in the form of department stores, market halls, hotels, restaurants, office premises, and university buildings. Successful adaptations include the headquarters of Gazeta Wyborcza in Łódź, which occupies the hundred-year-old Józef Balle factory, in which transmission belts for steam machines were manufactured at the beginning of the 20th century, Pub Fabryka and Forum Fabricum, Faculty of Process Engineering and Environmental Protection at the Technical University of Lodz, for which the historic Schweikert factory was restored. The university continues the modernization works of subsequent post-factory buildings bought from the former Lodex Wool Industry Plant in order to adapt them to the needs of the Departments of Organization and Management, Electronics as well as Technical Physics and Applied Mathematics. Recently, the academic community has been provided with a perfectly restored and modernly equipped, former factory building – the new seat of the Main Library of the Lodz University of Technology. The University of Lodz also located the headquarters of Collegium Geograficum in a factory taken over after the liquidated Textile Wool Industry Plant. Interesting post-factory buildings are also occupied by The Insurance and Reinsurance Company "Polonia" SA, and The Universal Commercial Bank. Finally – the pearl of "Promised Land" – the former "Kingdom of Israel Kalmanowicz Poznański". The contemporary fate of this "Kingdom", covering an area of about 28 ha, employing until recently 10,000 employees, consisting of a palace complex and former factory buildings with its own railway siding, is a significant example of post-industrial degradation. The recipe for reviving this region and including it in the city's organism was found in the form of the well-known shopping, entertainment and recreation center "Manufaktura". The palace complex, containing the Museum of the History of the City of Lodz with reception and exhibition rooms, has been restored and is "alive."⁶ Restoring the role of the main center of the textile industry to Łódź is currently impossible, and even if it is, it will be accompanied by the creation of new spaces adequate to modern production technologies. In the light of these facts, any movement that stops the progressive degradation of post-industrial areas is valuable for the protection of the cultural heritage of the "Promised Land." Searching for methods of modernizing existing space, can be a starting point for creating a concept of breaking the city out of stagnation and finding a new city-forming factor that would introduce Łódź to a period of dynamic development. To this end, refer to the rule (introduced in the interwar period) for considering the role of the urban center

⁶ See: J. Olenderek, *To miejsce, ten czas, ci ludzie – jak ocalić „Ziemie obiecane”?*, Przegląd Budowlany, 2000, no. 10, pp. 4–8; eadem, *Museums Quartiers – Wiedeński przykład definiowania przestrzeni publicznej* [in:] *Definiowanie przestrzeni architektonicznej*, International Scientific Conference of the Institute of Architectural Design, DjaF, Kraków 2001, pp. 185–190.

on a regional scale. First and foremost, working, supportive communication. Its scale can determine the city's place on the national arena (III. 3).

Ill. 3. A diagram of the location of Łódź in the region, developed at the Municipal Urban Workshop

operating at the time. Today, in the time of their bankruptcy, they can serve wholesalers or warehouses located inside, or after modernization, constitute an excellent network of urban passenger transport stops. Therefore, pending strategic decisions in this regard, the practice of dismantling post-factory areas and facilities used by temporary owners or tenants should be stopped. Even more controversial activities were undertaken at the end of the 20th century by the former municipal services, transformed into limited liability companies managing tram lines. Although, as part of modern restructuring, the division into urban and suburban electric railways, perfectly functioning during the Second Polish Republic, was restored, but the temporary lack of imagination and coordination of activities between individual network operators (Urban Tram Communication + Inter-municipal Tram Communication) led to partial destruction of the existing infrastructure. Why, at a time when big cities run away from the nuisance of car communication, returning to the electric rail system, expanding metro and ground train systems, reactivating streetcar networks, Łódź tracks (e.g. along Rudzka St.) and loops (e.g. Popioły, Skrajna) were liquidated, was the operation of peripheral depots limited (e.g. Chocianowice), the number of routes not only suburban, but also inter-city were reduced, although the frequency of connections was increased, but forcing passengers to repeated transfers within usually uncoordinated and colliding communication nodes? In return, the network of non-ecological bus lines was expanded. Recently, there has been a tendency to revive the constructive cooperation of managers of both networks (municipal and inter-municipal), which resulted in the launch of the tram line Ozorków-Chocianowice – and Pabianice in the future. An attempt was also made to introduce to Piotrkowska Street (next to the original rickshaws) the so-called “Trambus.” Maybe it is worth trying, as in Vienna, Warsaw or Krakow, to also restore cabs or, as in Strasbourg, introduce low-floor, quiet-running downtown trams, with which passengers travel with a parking card (instead of using cars). Although a fast city tram of the aforementioned Vienna, Warsaw or Krakow appeared in Łódź, but the use of its parameters, due to the dense network of streets, is difficult. As for the road network, civilization backwardness is enormous. As in the whole of Poland, there is no segregation of transit and destination traffic, and the condition of the surface of existing roads is tragic. The Lublin Airport, launched in the interwar period, was reactivated in 1997, but its scale and rank does not meet modern expectations. So much for transport, which is the basis for the functioning of every urban organism. Let’s hope that Łódź will one day become a city of efficient, ecological mass transport, comfortable, well-lit and safe roads.

Another important factor stimulating the spatial development of the city is the structure of its utilities in installation networks. The condition of the sewage and water supply network is decisive in this aspect. Let us remember that their construction begun in Łódź only in the interwar period (sewage system – 1925, water supply system – 1934), but until the outbreak of World War II only the initial stage was completed, leaving the city still far behind large Polish cities. Despite intensive efforts in this regard in the post-war period, today the condition of the network, especially the sewage system, is unsatisfactory. Both in the downtown of the city and in the peripheral zones there are significant enclaves without a sewage system. Łódź’s overall level of city sewerage is clearly inferior to other major Polish cities. The state of gas, electricity, telecommunications and the municipal heating network launched in 1959 is much more favorable. It should be noted that while the managers of the above installations have power reserves, the technical condition of the network requires significant renovations and modernizations, the costs of which are borne by modern investors, discouraging them (often effectively) from constructing new facilities. Even greater claims against participants

in the process of shaping space in the city relate to roads. It is expected not only, understandably, proper communication service and parking facilities for the proposed designs, but also participation in the costs of reconstruction and modernization of access roads or entire communication nodes. Of course, from the point of view of the city's interests, this is a strategy beneficial to making up for civilizational backwardness in the field of infrastructure, but it cannot constitute the basis for long-term actions necessary in the policy of prospective spatial development of Łódź, which, nomen-omen, is sinking.

5. THE FACE OF ŁÓDŹ'S URBAN LANDSCAPE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The author of this article has been dealing with the issue of revitalization of selected areas of the city since 2005 in the face of contemporary spatial, social and economic changes resulting from the phenomenon of ubiquitous globalization. Based on her own research on the architectural structure of the city and analysis of the achievements of the authorities in the interwar period, she noticed the urgent need to undertake multi-faceted research on modernization and restructuring program – spatial or even gentrification of the metropolitan area. Since the regaining of independence again, i.e. since the end of the 1980s, the city authorities have sought to determine and objectively assess the rank of the cultural heritage of objects existing or potentially inherent in this area. And how do we perceive Łódź in the 21st century? Let's trace it on the example of the area adjacent to the very center, i.e. constituting the immediate vicinity of Piotrkowska Street and the nearest parallel and serving streets, i.e. Aleja T. Kościuszki and H. Sienkiewicza Street. The buildings erected here show the possibilities inherent in the innovative, rational transformation of the downtown space. At the same time, they provide decision-makers with arguments about the need to carry out transformations, their scope and nature so as to preserve the genius loci, identity, historical and cultural value of the post-industrial city. Recently, the society of Łódź has begun a discussion on the city's identity, considered in many aspects, including architectural space, the particularly demanding revival of the well-known Piotrkowska Street (Ill. 4). A number of urban-architectural concept competitions have been announced regarding key urban spaces, i.e. "closing" the Piotrkowska street along with its area from the south and north. The designers' great interest in themes resulted in a multiple approach to the way of perceiving and understanding architectural space, the role of continuing and building avant-garde, especially in the context of the avant-garde art tradition in Łódź. Cultural and historical elements of places special for the city in the works sent from different parts of Poland and Europe confirmed the decision to create architectural or avant-garde means of architectural space as part of building the continuity of perception of the rank of a place. The public is watching with interest and discussing the results of the competition for the project of transforming and providing new and pleasant elements to the Schiller Passage. Perceived as an extremely important space on the "main city square." This ennoblement raises a number of controversies in the environment of Łódź architects, although it must be admitted that it is perceived by Łódź citizens, for reasons of habit rather than actual function, as it has been for twenty years, a place of implementation of various cultural projects initiated by city authorities and artistic groups. There is an awareness of the need to continue cultural values by promoting unique and avant-garde architecture. Discussion among the creators, however insufficient,



Ill. 4. Piotrkowska Street in Łódź, aerial view in the south-north direction, photo: W. Stępień, 2004

proves the dilemma that appears in those who are given broader vision than conservative and “safe” action in the space found and inherited from their predecessors. The desire for broad social and environmental acceptance is often unfortunately strong enough to inhibit the new avant-garde approach to defining the architectural syntax of a work, trying to add new values, as it is for avant-garde, often incomprehensible and rejected a priori. How to educate society, a conscious democratic society, able to adopt in the discussion creative

solutions that build the best architectural spaces for future generations, while preserving the legacy of past generations? The only way to achieve this goal is to constantly present investment intentions, meetings with a wide representation of social groups together with the direct inclusion of groups interested in a given venture to discuss its spatial and cultural effects for this group and society as a whole. In Łódź, good results were obtained by establishing a social body in the form of the “Staff of Piotrkowska Street.” For a comprehensive development of both functional and spatial policy, especially in the field of understanding architectural spatial codes (existing and being designed), an attempt was made to define the architectural space most suitable for building the future of this street route. Interesting spatial designs must appear in the new architectural space of the city that is being created, in order to maintain interest in discussions about architecture, since the building process is carried out over long periods of time, it seems to be the right decision to revitalize elements of historical heritage, factory complexes and downtown spaces. There was also a discussion on elements of the architectural space “crystallizing” the city structure. In the case of Łódź, the public was asked the question: how to build a nineteenth-century city? Political changes in Poland in the late 1980s initiated the process of transformation of the economy towards its marketization, including restructuring and privatization of industry. Łódź from the current, proverbial “Promised Land”, attracting crowds of the region’s inhabitants to work in the textile industry and its branches, along with the rapidly progressing process of liquidation of large workplaces as a result of unsuccessful attempts to transform them and the collapse of key Eastern markets (collapse of the USSR), has changed into “unwanted land” over the past



III. 5 Schematic layout of the city tram network in Łódź in the interwar period. Author’s drawing according to A. Ginsbert, *Łódź – studium monograficzne*, Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, Łódź 1962, p. 127 and J. Wesołowski, *Łódź w okresie międzywojennym i w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej* [in:] S. Liszewski (ed.), *Atlas miasta Łodzi*, Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Łódź 2001, Tabl. VI

few years. “Wandering of peoples” to work in Łódź industrial giants ceased. Worse – the “for bread” migration began, mainly towards the capital. And this is the migration of young people who are well educated at the local academic universities. Interestingly, they still live in Łódź because of lower living costs, family ties, and often emotional and sentimental references, as well as faith in the future development of their hometown. This new trend of social behavior may be an important element in creating a counterweight to the overall downward trend of the demographic growth of the city, compounded by the ubiquitous approach to life and the deficit in birth. In 1995, the city’s population was 823,215, while at the end of 1999 it dropped to 800,110.⁷ As of September 30, 2000, the population of Łódź was 795.5 thousand people. Women constituted 54.3% of the population, there were 119 per 100 men, the birth rate for three quarters of 2000 was negative and amounted to -4116 people.⁸ Current forecasts foresee a continuous decline and indicate that in the years 2000–2030 the number of inhabitants of the city will decrease by 90.5 thousand persons, i.e. by 11.4%. If the forecasts come true, in 2015 Kraków will overtake Łódź in terms of population.⁹ At the same time, the phenomenon of delayed start to family life, the fashion for independent, “comfortable” existence, and the loneliness of older people cause a significant increase in the number of one-person households. Łódź needs new apartments, but not so much because of the increase in the number of inhabitants, but because of:

- huge decapitalization of existing resources;
- justified expectations regarding the improvement of the equipment standards;
- change in demand on the real estate market towards the popularity of smaller one-room (35% of total transactions) or two-room (55% of total transactions) structures;¹⁰
- satisfying the aspirations of local elites to own metropolitan apartments or suburban residences;
- to meet the new trend – the need to create rotational and target housing for youth and academic staff.¹¹

In the light of these facts, the correct response to social and demographic changes – municipal urban policy – becomes the imperative of the moment. Crystallization of the process of population growth of Łódź is a great opportunity for its balanced, urban development and making up for huge civilization backwardness. The consequence of this must be an intense cooperation with the entire region in solving infrastructure problems related to the upgrading of the area (continuation of the construction of the municipal sewage system), expansion of suburban communication, organization of an environmentally friendly street and tram network (very well-functioning in the interwar period as part of cooperation KEŁ and ŁWEKD), and perhaps in the future the creation of a high-speed urban overground railway, based on the existing beltway with a number of unused branches running deep into the city in the form of factory siding tracks (Ill. 5). The birth of a new democracy and

⁷ *Statystyka Łodzi*, Urząd Statystyczny w Łodzi, Łódź 2000, table 18, p. 68.

⁸ *Sytuacja społeczno-gospodarcza Łodzi 2000 R.*, Urząd Statystyczny w Łodzi, Łódź 2001, p. 14.

⁹ *Prognoza ludności i gospodarstw domowych województwa łódzkiego do roku 2030*, Urząd Statystyczny w Łodzi, Łódź 2001, p. 16.

¹⁰ Let us remember that these types of premises were recognized in the period of the Second Polish Republic as “socially necessary.”

¹¹ The number of universities in Łódź from 10 in the 1995/96 academic year increased to 15 in 1999/2000, the number of students increased from 41,452 to 70,377, and academic teachers from 4,607 to 4,954, while the number of student houses remained unchanged (26), *Statystyka...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 214, 222 and 242.

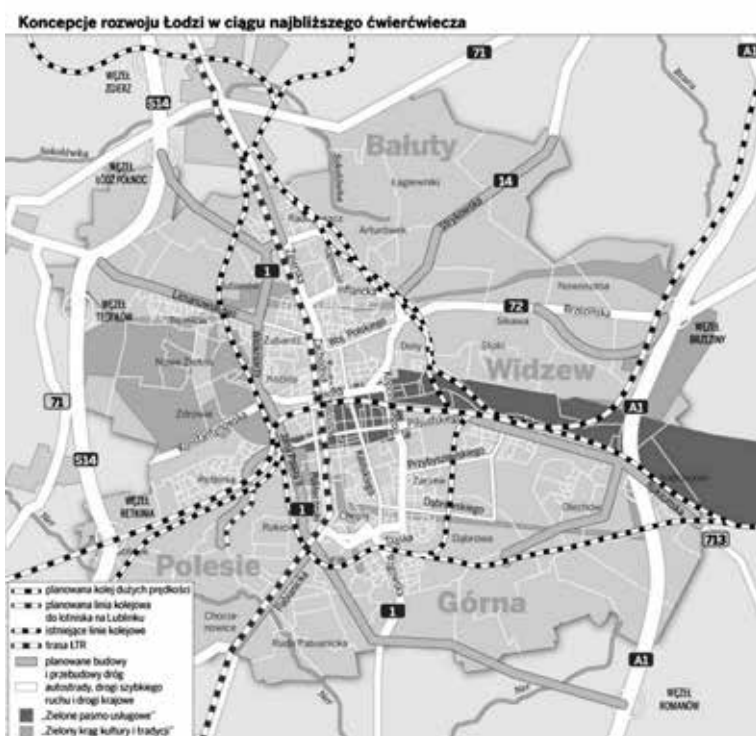
changes in the system of managing the goods of the Commonwealth oblige politicians and decision-makers to broadly involve fellow citizens in the process of creating the surrounding space. At the same time, they impose on all participants of this process responsibility for its shape and functioning (Ill. 6). "Local patriots", including crowds of educated architects, have been working at the Institute of Architecture and Town Planning of the Lodz University of Technology for nearly 50 years. They were the founders of the Piotrkowska Street Foundation, which initiates many actions integrating the city's inhabitants – Łódź Festival, Best Interior of the Year, The Monument of Łódź Residents etc. Therefore, the practice of making decisions regarding the creation of city space under limited tenders or closed competitions should be abandoned as soon as possible, and constructive cooperation with co-residents should be developed in the organization and settlement of open, universal architectural and urban competitions regarding the implementation of public buildings, housing complexes, expansion of public transport, shaping bicycle routes, bus and tram routes. The sooner this dialogue is established, the sooner the process of creating space that meets users expectations, raising awareness of their responsibility for its shape and sense of belonging to the local community, will begin (Ill. 7).

6. SUMMARY

More than 50 years have passed since the realization of contemporary culture goods representative of the city's cultural spaces created in the 1960s. Among them, special attention should be paid to public buildings erected originally according to the *pro publico bono* principle. They performed socially responsible utility functions, for which the demand in the 21st century is increasingly decreasing. At this point, one should be aware of the complexity of the process of their revitalization, because the proposals associated with the contemporary change of their program and functional purpose are combined with not always positive interference in the interior arrangement, form of blocks and architectural style of facades. The basic rule of creation in the convention of modernism is often broken, i.e. form follows function. Therefore, what should such activities be called, to what extent they contribute to gentrification, and to what extent to the degeneration of architectural resources? Art is not truth, art is a lie that allows us to get closer to the truth, at least to the truth that is recognizable. It is not known what is this truth, the lie has gained a new color. Again, we are moving within aesthetics, which emanates with the category of fiction. The play of the artist and the recipient can be compared to a game of chess and understood as the conscious acceptance of the rules of artificiality on both sides of the mirror of fiction. To preach fiction as fun and a great lie as an excuse is a way to create things. Architecture also hides behind a curtain of fun, irony, and all others that proclaim their artificiality. And the synonyms of "wonderful lie": fiction, mystification, illusion, fantasy, poetry, irony, joke ...are justified. The very lie of art is the area of greatest sincerity, "easy lie," the area of kitsch – the art of happiness. Kitsch is not only a description of a thing, it is also a definition of a kind of attitude and then, as a result, action. In architecture, there are, for example, works of Friedensreich Hundertwasser, in Warsaw – the Palace of Culture and Science, kitsch tamed over time. It is an architectural thing with references to a certain tradition of historical architecture, built for the people's happiness. And right on the edge of kitsch – the great art of postmodern architecture and the play of super modernism.



III. 6. The findings of the Study of Spatial Development Directions of Łódź



III. 7. The concept of Łódź's development over the next quarter of a century, developed at the Municipal Urban Workshop

A great lie and search for the truth – they do not fit into any one theory of architecture. One can get the impression that the main value has become not so much the art called architecture as the goal – its originality enabling it to stand out from everyday life and be accepted by the world! (III. 8)



III. 8. Diagram of the face of the city's cultural landscape of Łódź, author's work based on materials obtained from the City Monument Conservator

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