

MARTA PIECZARA

ORCID: 0000-0002-1826-574X

Poznan University of Technology, Poland

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD IN CONTEMPORARY DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE MARKET SQUARE IN PUSZCZYKOWO

PRAWDA I FAŁSZ WE WSPÓŁCZESNYM PROJEKTOWANIU PRZESTRZENI PUBLICZNYCH NA PRZYKŁADZIE RYNKU W PUSZCZYKOWIE

Abstract

The purpose of this work is to discuss the paradox of simultaneous positive and negative perception of the attractiveness of public spaces, based on the example of the market square in Puszczykowo. The methods used are literature study and field query. The main research findings cover diverse aspects of visual evaluation of the selected public space example, further discussed in the context of the Poznań County and compared with the results of selected studies by other authors. The conclusions drawn indicate a significant impact that the authenticity of architectural and urban solutions used has on the positive evaluation of public space. This locates the problem in question in the context of the opposition of the truth and falsehood in design.

Keywords: design, planning, public space, visual quality, authenticity

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest omówienie paradoksu jednoczesnego pozytywnego i negatywnego postrzegania atrakcyjności przestrzeni publicznej na przykładzie rynku w Puszczykowie. Zastosowane metody to badanie literaturowe oraz kwerenda terenowa. Rezultaty badania obejmują szczegóły oceny wizualnej rynku w Puszczykowie, omówione na tle badań dla powiatu poznańskiego i w kontekście wybranych badań innych autorów. Wyciągnięte wnioski wskazują na istotny wpływ autentyczności stosowanych rozwiązań architektoniczno-urbanistycznych na pozytywną ocenę przestrzeni, co pozwala umiejscowić omawiany problem w kontekście opozycji prawdy i fałszu w projektowaniu.

Słowa kluczowe: projektowanie, planowanie przestrzenne, przestrzeń publiczna, jakość wizualna, autentyczność

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is to discuss a paradox related to the practice of designing contemporary public spaces, which concerns the authenticity of currently used architectural and planning solutions consisting in referring to the regionally established typology of buildings by copying its characteristic forms and features, while maintaining modern implementation technology. The essence of the paradox revealed in such realisations is the simultaneous coexistence of the truth and falsehood. As a general rule, referring to the regional types

of buildings can be considered a pursuit of the truth, while falsehood emerges from common limiting this quest to the facade layer and using a completely different implementation technology. In the final effect, new buildings resemble traditional architecture from the outside, but are in reality modern constructions. Imitating historical types of buildings through copying their selected characteristic features in the facade, while at the same time adjusting them to today's requirements and technical possibilities, is usually intended to satisfy both pragmatic and aesthetic goals. While modern building technologies increase the investment efficiency, among others, the investors generally count on good acceptance of such architectural amalgams from everyday users. Such a scenario is also suggested by the contemporary theory of architectural design, which indicates references to the local building tradition as one of the essential factors with which to blend new architecture into the existing context, also in the social meaning of the term. Indeed, numerous designs could be cited to confirm the validity of this theory, having succeeded in referring to historical models of local architecture through the means of creative adaptation of their characteristic features into modern language. This approach to design has allowed to achieve excellent results not only in terms of incorporating new architecture into existing landscape, but also in terms of its social acceptance. Derived from the trend of critical regionalism, which is, according to Kenneth Frampton, focused on achieving "a self-conscious synthesis between universal civilisation and world culture,"¹ the contemporary tendency that combines selected features of regional architecture with universal ones, has found application in many locations around the world and in various ways. In an extremely successful form, such a combination of local and universal architecture features, realised with the use of modern implementation techniques, allows to create a new architectural or urban icon. Being in each case a result of the designer's creative interpretation, such nonstandard realisations are both widely commented publicly in architecture-dedicated media, as well as appreciated by everyday users. On the other hand, however, reusing selected features of traditional architecture in contemporary design is sometimes used for marketing purposes. In such cases, referring to the regional architecture does not necessarily result from the will to ensure that the new construction remains authentic to its location, but rather from a marketing approach aimed at matching the taste and expectations of average customers. In the result, the way the architectural features drawn from the heritage are interpreted in contemporary projects is often limited to their optimisation in terms of quick implementation and increasing the investment's acceptance, and thus its profitability. In the latter extreme situation, the end result is not a new iconic work, but a pastiche of local architecture or, on a larger scale, a pastiche of historic urban layouts. What is particularly interesting from the point of view of rivalry between truth and falsehood in architecture and urban planning, this kind of pastiche is often based on a pre-assumed scenario that an optimised and effective in many respects object imitating local architecture or historic urban layout will be positively received by the general public, and that the forgery will be unnoticed by ordinary users. Is that really the case?

The work presented below will investigate the above-mentioned relations, which depict the coexistence of truth and falsehood in contemporary architecture and urban design, on the example of the recently designed and implemented market square in Puszczykowo near Poznań. Here, the paradox discussed is clearly presented in the comparison of the results

¹ K. Frampton, *Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance* [in:] Foster H. (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture*, New Press, New York 1998, p. 25.

of the public space quality evaluation, carried out using an expert method of field query, with the opinions of everyday users. While the space wins high marks in expert opinions, it remains deserted on a daily basis, and the citizens openly criticise it. Simply speaking, they do not like the space. The situation is actually the opposite of the normal presumptions that an expert would immediately recognise the contemporary imitation of regional architecture, also concerning the artificial introduction of the market layout, which is known from the history of urban planning but in fact never took place in the given location, while an average passer-by would be satisfied with the forms that are rooted in the collective memory of the region's population.

2. STATE OF KNOWLEDGE: LITERATURE STUDY

The basic background of the presented research are the existing studies, which on the one hand relate specifically to architecture and urban design in Puszczykowo, and, on the other hand, are devoted to the way the references to vernacular architecture and built heritage are made in recently completed buildings in the Poznań County, to which Puszczykowo belongs. In the first step, however, general information on Puszczykowo, both as a town and as a commune, will be presented. Then, a brief overview of existing literature will be divided into two parts, corresponding to the above-mentioned themes.

2.1 PUSZCZYKOWO – GENERAL INFORMATION

Puszczykowo is a small town with about 10,000 inhabitants,² located in the province of Greater Poland, in the Poznań County. It obtained city rights relatively recently, as it was only in the 1960s. As an urban commune, Puszczykowo was formed out of four agricultural villages, which were originally focused on the cultivation of cereals and were inhabited by the Polish and German population.³ The town is situated about 15 km south of the centre of Poznań and borders with three out of seventeen communes of the Poznań County, namely with the communes of Komorniki, Stęszew and Mosina (Ill. 1). An important advantage of the geographical location of Puszczykowo are the natural and landscape values of the commune. From the west, north and east, the town is surrounded by the forests of the Wielkopolski National Park, while the Warta river valley stretches along the commune's eastern border. Puszczykowo covers an area of 16.4 km², of which almost half is covered by forests and wooded areas (49% in 2015).⁴ The next place in the land use structure of the commune belongs to built and urban areas, the majority of which are residential (19% in 2015).⁵ Agricultural land, which

² Data from: Bank Danych Lokalnych GUS (Local Data Bank, Central Statistic Office of Poland), as for the end of June 2019, <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/> (access: 12.05.2020).

³ Official website of the City Hall of Puszczykowo, <https://puszczykowo.pl/strefa-turystyczna/miasto/historia-miasta> (access: 12.05.2020).

⁴ *Strategia Rozwoju i Promocji Miasta Puszczykowa*, Załącznik do Uchwały Nr 248/17/VII Rady Miasta Puszczykowa z dnia 26 września 2017 r., Urząd Miejski w Puszczykowie (*Strategy for the Development and Promotion of the City of Puszczykowo*, Annex to the Resolution No. 248/17 / VII of the City Council of Puszczykowo, 26th of September 2017), https://puszczykowo.pl/application/files/3115/1118/6318/strategia_rozwoju_2017.pdf (access: 12.05.2020), pp. 10–11.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

in the past constituted the main economic profile of the villages included in Puszczykowo, currently covers 13% of the commune's area.⁶ The decreasing importance of agriculture in the commune is justified by the poor quality of soils occurring in its area.⁷ The functional distribution of the land use thus shaped was influenced by both the natural values occurring in the commune as well as by its location in the context of the transportation network (Ill. 1). The commune of Puszczykowo, once of a rural nature, offering attractive views and lush nature, is located by the provincial road No. 430, linking Poznań with Mosina, and by the main railway line connecting two major cities: Poznań and Wrocław. This influenced the touristic popularity of the commune, which became a well-known summer resort at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the results of which can be observed nowadays in the significant share of villa-type residential housing in the land use structure as well as in the representative character (as for a village) of the railway stations.⁸ On the urban scale, in turn, attention is drawn to the perceptible significance of the main road and railway line, expressed in the longitudinal orientation of the urban structure development. Another important feature of the urban structure in Puszczykowo is the legible division into four former villages that have become part of its present territory (Ill. 2). As a result of the fact that the main direction of urban development of the commune, and earlier also the villages that formed it, took a rather linear form, Puszczykowo did not have a market square that would function as its urban centre until modern times. The purpose of this work will be to observe the effects of introducing a market square based urban system in this town. The analysis will be carried out from the point of view of the authenticity of this solution, both in terms of its architectural and urban features, as well as in terms of making references to the built heritage of the region.

2.2 ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN STRUCTURE OF PUSZCZYKOWO

The architectural typology of Puszczykowo results strictly from the history of the commune within its present borders. As mentioned earlier, an important stage of its development was associated with the tourist trend, which was particularly marked at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and during the interwar period.⁹ Being a popular summer destination at that time, Puszczykowo as well as nearby village of Puszczykówko, both located by the main railway line connecting Poznań and Wrocław, gained new railway stations. Their construction confirmed raised status of both localities and also became an important element of their further development. The first building of the station in Puszczykowo was built in 1904,¹⁰ and then significantly expanded in 1910, with an addition of its characteristic clock tower and a restaurant with large, multi-pane windows. The station's characteristic feature, in terms of its architecture, is the visible timber frame structure with its filling covered with painted wood cladding (Ill. 3). Importantly, the overall appearance of the station has remained unchanged to this day, which makes it a significant reference in terms of the architectural

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

⁸ The commune of Puszczykowo has two historic railway stations from the beginning of the 20th century: Puszczykowo and Puszczykówko. They will be described in the next section.

⁹ *Strategia Rozwoju i Promocji Miasta Puszczykowa*, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁰ Official website of the City Hall of Puszczykowo, <https://puszczykowo.pl/strefa-turystyczna/atrakcje-turystyczne/dworzec-puszczykowo> (access: 12.05.2020).

character of the town, of its authenticity, also in the sense of shaping the local identity. A similar situation applies to the station in Puszczykówko. Built in 1911 in the result of the area's growing popularity as a summer resort, the station consists of two clearly separated parts. The first, containing the lineman's workplace, has a visible timber frame bearing structure with brick filling, while the second, containing mainly waiting rooms, has its timber frame structure covered with celadon-coloured wooden cladding. Already in its original form, the station had two waiting rooms: one for summer and another for winter.¹¹ The station's architectural style refers to the so-called *Swiss style*, very popular at that time in the region of Poznań, and characterised by the use of timber framed structure, visible trusses in the roof gables and woodcarving decorations. Another architectural style of key importance for the identity of Puszczykowo is the so-called *Landhausstil*, derived from the idea of the English cottage house¹² and extremely popular during the heyday of Puszczykowo as a summer resort at the beginning of the 20th century. Characteristic features of this style include the use of half-timbered construction, as well as "asymmetrical facade composition, fragmentation of the building's volume with bay windows and turrets, and the use of stucco detail, operating with varied plaster texture"¹³ (Ill. 3).

After Poland regained independence, there was a significant change in shaping the architecture of Puszczykowo, with a noticeable shift towards the so-called *manor house style* (i.e. the style of nobility manor houses). The first villas built in this style began to appear in Puszczykowo after 1923,¹⁴ and the solutions adopted in their composition were modeled mainly on the baroque and classicist architecture of manor houses. The use of this style, considered the essence of Polish identity and characterised by the simplicity of the building's volume, symmetrical front facade "with a mandatory porch on the axis, supported on columns or pillars,"¹⁵ a hip roof, or often a Polish mansard roof, was intended to serve "enhancing attachment to the national identity and tradition."¹⁶

The same period of intensive development of Puszczykowo, associated with its popularity as a holiday destination, has effectively shaped its urban layout, readable to this day and based essentially on the skeleton formed by the main road connecting Poznań with Mosina and a set of perpendicular streets. Moreover, the urban structure is particularly dense in the proximity of the two railway stations (Ill. 2). Due to its satellite location in relation to the city of Poznań and proximity of the Wielkopolski National Park, combined with its recreational character and prevailing villa typology of housing, Puszczykowo is often considered by researchers as a garden city.¹⁷ The role of the commune's natural assets has not been omitted in its development strategy, where Puszczykowo is also referred to as a garden city, despite the fact that the history of its urban development does not show a real

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² L. Bednorz, D. Dymek, *Puszczykowo – miasto-ogród czy podmiejskie letnisko?* [*Puszczykowo – garden-city, or suburban summer resort?*], *Prace Komisji Krajobrazu Kulturowego*, 2014, no. 25, p. 137.

¹³ E. Grzegorzczak, *Puszczykowo – genius loci dawnej miejscowości wypoczynkowej* [*Puszczykowo – the genius loci of a former resort town*], *Renowacje i Zabytki*, 2016, no. 4, p. 101.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 103.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ M. Banach, *Architektura Puszczykowa (miasta-ogrodu): wczoraj i dziś* [*Architecture of Puszczykowo (The garden-city): now and then*], *Czasopismo Techniczne. Architektura*, 2011, vol. 108, no. 4-A/2, p. 13.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, L. Bednorz, D. Dymek, *op. cit.*

connection with the garden city principles as defined by Ebenezer Howard. It can, therefore, be assumed that “any attempts to attribute the characteristic features of garden-cities to Puszczykowo arise from the desire to promote it as an attractive town, full of greenery, with clean air and wonderful natural values”¹⁸ and are not substantiated by the facts. The simple urban layout of Puszczykowo, based on a skeleton formed of the main road and perpendicular streets, does not show any features that are convergent with Howard’s concept of the garden city. From the point of view of reliability, attempts to make Puszczykowo a garden-city can therefore be described as a marketing lie that harms the original character of the town, trying to ineffectively make it something that it is not and never has been. The effects of another such attempt, which consisted in building a new market square in Puszczykowo, will be observed in this article.

The simple urban layout and three architectural styles described earlier played a significant role in shaping the unique character of Puszczykowo, which is still felt today, despite the town’s further development and the appearance of other architectural styles. The local identity of Puszczykowo, formed with such a significant contribution of architecture and spatial order, had to give an impulse to undertake contemporary attempts to continue, or even imitate the heritage. The current architectural trends that look at the built heritage to draw inspiration from it will be briefly presented in the context of the Poznań County in the following section.

2.3 CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE BASED ON HISTORICAL MODELS IN THE POZNAŃ COUNTY

Nowadays, the return to the regional building patterns, deeply rooted in the local tradition, often coincides with an intention to recall the truthfulness of the architecture that originates strictly from a given place. In order to be able to discuss, even to a limited extent, the problematics of referring to the building tradition of a given place in search of authenticity, the meaning of the term of regional architecture should firstly be examined. According to the definition provided in the Cracow Charter of Regional Architecture, traditional architecture of a given region is the result of centuries of human work in the surrounding environmental conditions and thus constitutes one of the foundations of cultural distinctiveness.¹⁹ The characteristic features of regional architecture include, among others, use of local building materials, adjustment of the form (e.g. roof shape) to the local environmental conditions (e.g. climate) and remaining in harmony with the landscape. Moreover, as a result of centuries of tradition, regional architecture has been implanted in the minds of people as an inherent element of a given type of landscape. Continuing this thought it can be said that regional architecture is characterised by authenticity in relation to the landscape, it is genuine.

Respect for the building tradition of the region, which is very important from the point of view of sustainable development,²⁰ often becomes the driving force of a pursuit to

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 138.

¹⁹ A. Skoczek, *Krakowska Karta Architektury Regionalnej* [Cracow Charter of Regional Architecture], Architektura, 1987, no. 1–2 (435–436).

²⁰ P. Zierke, *Wykorzystanie dziedzictwa architektonicznego do podniesienia jakości środowiska życia człowieka na terenach podmiejskich* [The use of architectural heritage to raise the quality of human environment in suburban areas] [in:] A. Januchta-Szostak, M. Banach-Ziaja (eds.), *Architektura wobec*

achieve a similar level of truthfulness in new architecture. This, in turn, encourages to undertake formal architectural research aimed at isolating individual features typical of a given region, so that they can be cited or interpreted in contemporary architecture. Research in a similar scope was carried out in the Poznań County by Piotr Zierke, who used the case study of Gołęczewo village to carry out a comparative analysis of the historic architecture and contemporary buildings erected between 1945 and 2015. Numerous spatial and architectural features were analysed, including “the location of the building in relation to the street, parameters of height, length and width of its volume, characteristic features of roofs and walls, window and door woodwork, fences and architectural details.”²¹ On this basis, the degree and percentage in which contemporary buildings in the area of the village derive from, the built heritage were determined. The buildings analysed in terms of the degree in which they refer to the heritage were divided into three groups according to the period of their construction. The results showed that the largest degree and percentage of buildings referring to tradition falls in the post-war years until 1960. Then, in the period from 1961 to 1990 both parameters are the lowest, and after 1991 again show an upward trend.²² Convergent with the principles of sustainable development, design trends that pay special attention to respect for the regional building tradition, encourage treating the built heritage as an architectural and spatial model, as a source of information on how to build in order to harmoniously fit into the context and correctly relate to the identity of a given place. As Piotr Zierke showed in his research, the trend of references to heritage came to life in the Poznań County after 1991 and is currently very important in shaping both architecture and spatial composition. However, is the reference to the features of traditional architecture always effective in shaping good public space, positively evaluated in terms of its visual quality and simply liked by its everyday users? Or, should there be other criteria met? The authenticity of the solutions used in terms of architecture seems to be the key issue in this respect. Traditional forms of regional architecture can be presented as *gestalt* entities, creating in each case an inseparable whole, in which one element cannot be replaced without consequences for its integral significance and veracity. In contemporary architecture inspired by regional heritage, it is a common practice to replace the original material with a cheaper and more efficient one, which may be the reason why such trends give effects of varying quality, leading to both good and bad realisations. This article will focus on the aforementioned case of the market square in Puszczykowo, whose architecture visually refers to the regional heritage, however, with the change of building materials and techniques.

2.4 MARKET SQUARE IN PUSZCZYKOWO

The decision to build the market square in Puszczykowo was taken at the turn of the 20th and 21st century. The local authorities intended the construction of this public space to seal Puszczykowo's urban status, but it was also expected to act as the town's main shopping centre²³ and become its major showcase. The market square was to become a space that

wyzwań zrównoważonego rozwoju [Architecture and the challenges of sustainable development], vol. 2, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Poznańskiej, Poznań 2016, p. 149.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 142.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 144.

²³ *Strategia Rozwoju i Promocji Miasta Puszczykowa, op. cit.*, p. 17.

integrates the local society²⁴ and represents its aspirations. However, it was separated from the main street running through the town and constituting its spine, and then it was also divided into two parts: the southern part for pedestrians and the northern part intended for a carpark (Ill. 4). The market square's frontages are formed of mostly two-storey buildings with a commercial and service function on the ground floor and residential on the upper floors. The roofs are sloped and the facades of the buildings closest to the entrance from the main street have cladding that imitates half-timbered wall construction (Ill. 5 and 6). Other tenements maintain a similar architectural form, but have been finished with plaster in various colours.²⁵

Both the spatial layout and the architecture of the market square in Puszczykowo are trying to visually refer to the historical typology of small towns in the Greater Poland region, while the lack of success of this public space among the commune residents is usually blamed on creating a supermarket instead of a previously designed hotel.²⁶ However, is this the only reason? The below presented research consists in evaluating the visual quality of public spaces in Puszczykowo commune, including the market square. Collected research results can help to understand the paradox of situations when public space frontages are visually compatible with local tradition, but for some reason the space is not accepted by the local community.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The literature study presented above constitutes the first stage of analysis, whose function was to explore the work's context. Against this background, the results of the field query will be presented, in which a visual assessment of public spaces of roads, streets and squares in the Poznań County was made, including the area of Puszczykowo.

The field study was carried out in 2017 by architecture students of the Poznań University of Technology as part of their summer internship. The used method of field query is an expert method and it consists of simulating the authentic, dynamic perception of the space by a moving user, realised with help of the tools provided by the Google Street View online service. The method combines the feelings of a moving observer with the dynamically changing set of stimuli, being a result of his interaction with the landscape.

In the first step, the area covered by the survey was subdivided into ranges and the axes of action, i.e. the routes followed by the user, were delineated (Ill. 7). Each axis of action was then divided into nodal points, most often intersections or bends, which due to their location are places that draw attention more than other elements of the street or road. The sections between these points were further divided into shots, which constitute the basic unit of evaluation (Ill. 7). Moving along a given axis of action, each student evaluated the shots located on the route of the observer. The shots can be defined as stops allowing a thorough analysis of the environment visible around (straight ahead, right and left, up and down).

²⁴ W. Bonenberg, P. Zierke, *Dobra kultury współczesnej jako element krajobrazu powiatu poznańskiego* [*Goods of contemporary culture as an element of the Poznań County landscape*], Wydawnictwo Wydziału Architektury Politechniki Poznańskiej, Poznań 2014, pp. 176–177.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ *Strategia Rozwoju i Promocji Miasta Puszczykowa*, op. cit., p. 17.

The assessment of visual quality of public spaces realised by students was divided into four categories based on the following aspects: quality of horizontal surfaces; space furnishings and greenery; visual attractiveness of the primary field of perception (up to 2–2.5 m high) and the attractiveness of the secondary field of perception, including vertical planes above the primary field. The scale of grades awarded by students is five-level, where 1 is negative (the lowest) and 5 is positive (the highest). Assessments of visual quality of space granted by students were included in the evaluation sheets which also contained the coordinates of each shot, allowing to locate the evaluated points with precision on the canvas of a map created in the GIS system. The results of the field query will be presented below and then discussed in the context of existing literature on the subject.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The area of Puszczykowo was subdivided into 6 axes of action, 2 of which have crossed the inner space of the market square, while 2 others passed along its outer perimeter, viewing its buildings within the frontage of the main Poznańska street. In total, 2,408 shots were rated within the commune borders, each in four evaluation categories, which gives a total of 9,632 ratings. 11% of all grades were the highest (5) and 14% were the lowest (1). Against the background of the county, this result is good, which indicates a generally positive perception of the visual quality of street spaces in the commune (Table 1). The assessments granted within the commune borders concern the market square only in 1%, however, thanks to the geolocation of the results they can be easily distinguished. When comparing overall results for the county and for the commune with those that refer precisely to the market square in Puszczykowo, particular attention shall be paid to the lack of negative ratings (1) in all evaluation categories and a very high share of the highest ratings (5) in the latter group of results (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of the ratings assigned in the field query in Puszczykowo against the background of the average ratings for the Poznań County. Own material

Area	Shots No.	Ratings No.	5 rating No.	1 rating No.	% of 5 ratings	% of 1 ratings
Puszczykowo	2,408	9,632	1,099	1,353	11	14
Therein: market sq. and Poznańska St.	36	144	110	0	76	0
Total for the county	40,651	162,604	10,322	29,915	6	18

In a more detailed breakdown of the positive ratings (5) according to the four adopted evaluation categories (horizontal planes; equipment and greenery; primary field of perception and secondary field of perception), it can be seen that the area around the market square in Puszczykowo significantly deviates from the average, both for the commune as well as for the county, with a very high percentage of the highest ratings (Table 2), and, at the same time, zero lowest ratings (1). Very good ratings around the market square in Puszczykowo are distributed similarly in all four evaluation categories, while their breakdown is basically proportional to the overall result in the commune, where the share of highest positive ratings (5) is generally higher than the average result for the Poznań County.

Table 2. Summary of the highest (5) ratings assigned in four categories for the market square in Puszczykowo, in the commune and in the Poznań County in its total. Own material

Evaluation category	Market square and Poznańska St.		Commune of Puszczykowo		Poznań County	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Horizontal planes	30	83	380	16	3,170	8
Equipment and greenery	27	75	214	9	1,668	4
Prim. field of perception	25	69	196	8	2,091	5
Sec. field of perception	28	78	309	13	3,393	8
Total	110	76	1,099	11	10,322	6

First of all, the results of the field query indicate better than the average for the county assessment of visual quality of public spaces in the Puszczykowo commune, especially in terms of horizontal planes, equipment and greenery. In addition, the market square in Puszczykowo, similarly to the section of Poznańska Street whose frontage is formed by the market square buildings seen from the other side, ranks as one of the county leaders in the visual attractiveness of public space. A quick conclusion that could therefore be drawn from the research results is that, in theory, the market square in Puszczykowo should be a role model; an answer to the question of how to design. And yet, while the market square in Puszczykowo received such high ratings in the visual evaluation of the quality of space, why is it empty and why do the residents spare no criticism of numerous elements of its design? This paradox will become the main aspect of the discussion below.

5. DISCUSSION

Albert Einstein said that “in theory, theory and practice are the same. In practice, they are not.”²⁷ The market square in Puszczykowo constitutes a perfect architectural and urban example of this problem. The research results presented above clearly indicate a distinctively positive perception of the visual quality of this space, at the same time confirming the good position of Puszczykowo in this respect against the background of the entire Poznań County. This result is also confirmed by research carried out in other scientific centres using other methods, as for example in the work realised at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań on the basis of surveys, where Puszczykowo achieved the best result in the evaluation of public spaces among the eight selected towns from the Poznań County.²⁸ The cited survey, in which questions about spatial order were asked, indicates at the same time the high awareness of the respondents about the social significance of these issues and their role in creating and maintaining local identity. The residents of Puszczykowo, who generally appreciate the features of spatial order in their town’s public spaces, are reluctant to express their opinion on

²⁷ This thought, in various modified forms, is today attributed to different people, but Albert Einstein remains its oldest “father.”

²⁸ B. Konecka-Szydłowska, *Ocena przestrzeni publicznej małych miast aglomeracji poznańskiej* [Assessment of public spaces of small towns in the Poznań agglomeration], *Problemy Rozwoju Miast*, 2016, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 8–9.

the market square, which they consider a dead space.²⁹ They openly criticise it, not only on the town's online forum, but also in direct conversation. During a visit to the market square in Puszczykowo on a warm summer's day, one could be convinced of the most common diagnosis that the space looks nice, but is overwhelmingly empty. If the situation cannot be blamed on the visual quality of the space, which received very good ratings in the field study carried out by architecture students of the Poznań University of Technology, also confirmed by the results of the survey realised at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, where should one find fault for this situation? Both literature as well as opinions of many residents and councillors of Puszczykowo attribute it to the change that occurred in the function of one of the largest facilities located on the market square from a hotel or combined service and cultural function to a commercial one, specifically to a 600 m² supermarket. "In assumptions, the City Council agreed to erect a building with combined service, cultural and residential function, while the market square was intended to perform a representative function, favouring cultural and social gatherings. A supermarket appeared instead of culture, and a carpark was created instead of a representative public space."³⁰ Changing the function of such a large building next to the market square was undoubtedly a big disappointment, but attributing it with all the blame for the fact that the new space does not meet its purpose in the public life of the town, seems to be a major simplification. Would the residents like the space more if the originally planned hotel was built? Would this encourage them to come and spend their time here?

Another potential reason for the discussed paradox may be the incompatibility of the market square based urban system with the true identity of Puszczykowo, whose spatial character was formed on the skeleton of the main road and subordinate perpendicular streets. Similarly to untruthful references to the concept of the garden city, the introduction of the market square based urban system in this town is more due to the desire to promote it as an urban centre, than to the authentic history of its development. The very idea of building a market square in Puszczykowo feels false, and to make matters worse, the market's inner space was cut off from the main street, thus trying to take away its status as the town's main public space (Ill. 4 and 6). It is quite probable that it is precisely such measures, aimed at taking away the significance of Poznańska Street and combined with the introduction of a market square based urban system, which has nothing to do with the true history of the town's spatial development, are an important reason for the fact that the space has not been accepted, while Poznańska Street still fulfils its role as the main public space of Puszczykowo. It can also be said that the market square in Puszczykowo has been isolated from pedestrian traffic and all public interest already in the design phase, when the decision to divide its inner space from Poznańska Street has been taken.

Strenuous attempts to change Puszczykowo's historically established spatial arrangement to a type associated as "more urban" find their counterpart in the mock architecture of the market square. Besides "stylistically dubious tenements forming its frontages,"³¹ the market square contains a few buildings (including centrally located public library and the aforementioned supermarket building with residential function on its upper levels), which

²⁹ Forum Puszczykowo, [Online forum for the residents of Puszczykowo], <http://forumpuszczykowo.pl/martwy-rynek/> (access: 27.05.2020).

³⁰ M. Banach, *Krajobraz...*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

clearly attempt to recall the authentic models of regional architecture by founding their facade composition on the appearance of half-timbered wall construction (Ill. 5). The idea is theoretically correct, however, the actual implementation betrays beyond any doubt and even to the unprofessional eye that the half-timbered wall is only a cladding and has nothing of authenticity, being used interchangeably with plaster or clinker cladding. The mere use of modern construction techniques and historically adapted cladding is obviously not incorrect in principle, but in the discussed case the cited material and construction solution has not been properly interpreted, especially on the aforementioned building with a combined commercial and residential function, where it was treated as a decoration. This is demonstrated by the fact that the half-timbered wall technique has been used as inspiration of the facades' graphic design, without any attempt at its structural interpretation, which can be seen, among others, in the use of cantilevers without visible wooden beams.

When discussing the architectural solutions of the market square in Puszczykowo, it is impossible to ignore the issue of its pavement with colourful concrete cobbles arranged in patterns. Overgrown with weeds³² it looks rather caricatured, but from the users' point of view its impact on the perceptible temperature seems far more important. The heat island effect discourages residents from using the space. To remedy this situation, residents proposed to introduce more greenery, water and shade pergola constructions as part of the civic budget. So far, these proposals have not yet been implemented.

The discussed problem of the market square in Puszczykowo revealed the paradox of truth and falsehood, which appears in both urban and architectural design. The basis for this observation was a good assessment of the visual quality of public spaces with its simultaneous poor acceptance by target users. Such a situation was caused, among others, by an imprecise approach to the authenticity of material and construction solutions used in architecture, as well as the lack of historical legitimacy of urban planning solutions. Puszczykowo was a village and a summer resort, which is why the contemporary attempt to transform it into a historic town with a market square layout could not be a complete success, especially since the space of the new market square was cut off from the main street, the true spine of the town's urban layout. Analogically, putting the "architectural skin" of regional buildings on objects with completely different proportions, height and construction system is almost false. These aspects mean that, although visually the market square makes a good impression, it does not give a sense of real belonging to the place. It looks good from a distance, but it is not genuine.

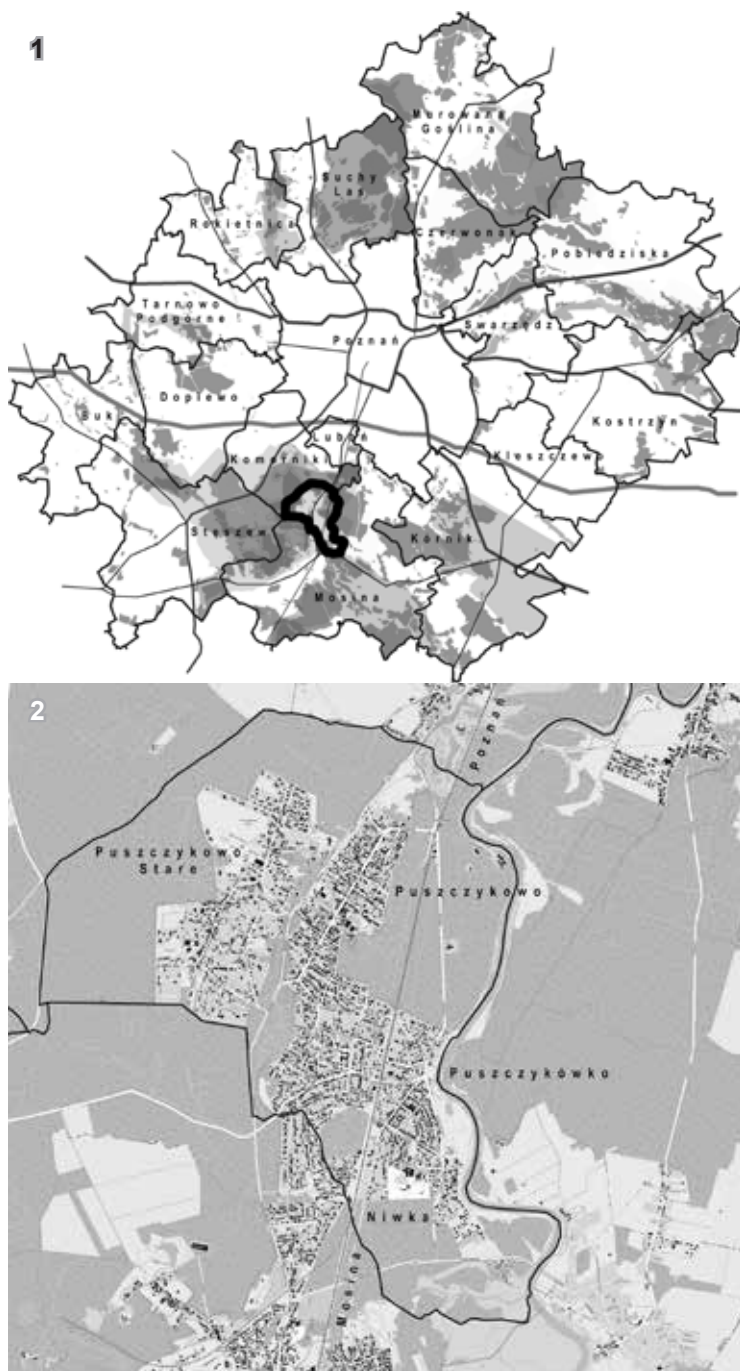
6. CONCLUSIONS

The example of the market square in Puszczykowo is a warning to planners and designers, showing that the application of patterns withdrawn from regional architectural and urban types in modern practice is not a guarantee of success. Moreover, transferring these patterns from one town to another, even within one region, may turn out to be, in its final effect, a manipulation of only slightly smaller format than building a mountaineer's cottage by the sea. Just as in any other case of drawing inspiration from different sources, the designer constantly balances between the truth and falsehood, and sometimes he forgets that good

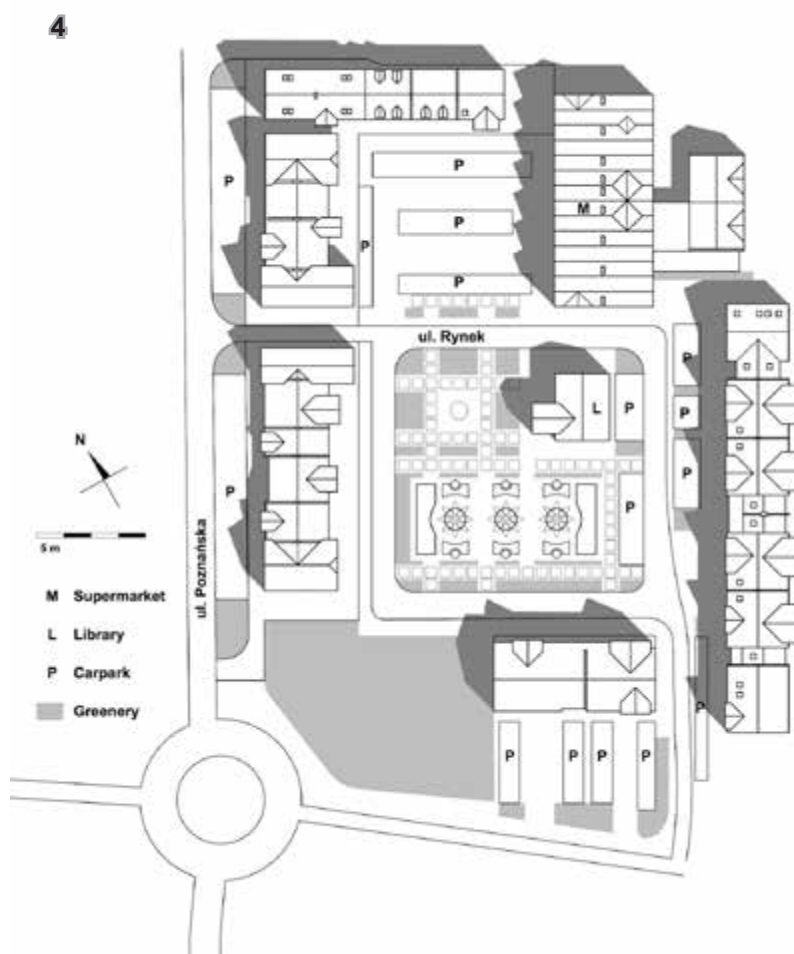
³² Based on a visit of the place, July 2019.

intentions and faith in an idea do not always allow to lean unambiguously towards the truth. On the other hand, falsehood inevitably leads him to a pastiche, in architectural or urban sense. And just like in Puszczykowo, searching for the truth about the regional character can lead to the creation of a mock, an imitation in which the identity of the place reflects as if in a distorting mirror, falsifying its image. In other words, when the pursuit of truth anaesthetises the architect's vigilance, the final product of the design process can turn out to be nothing but a great lie.

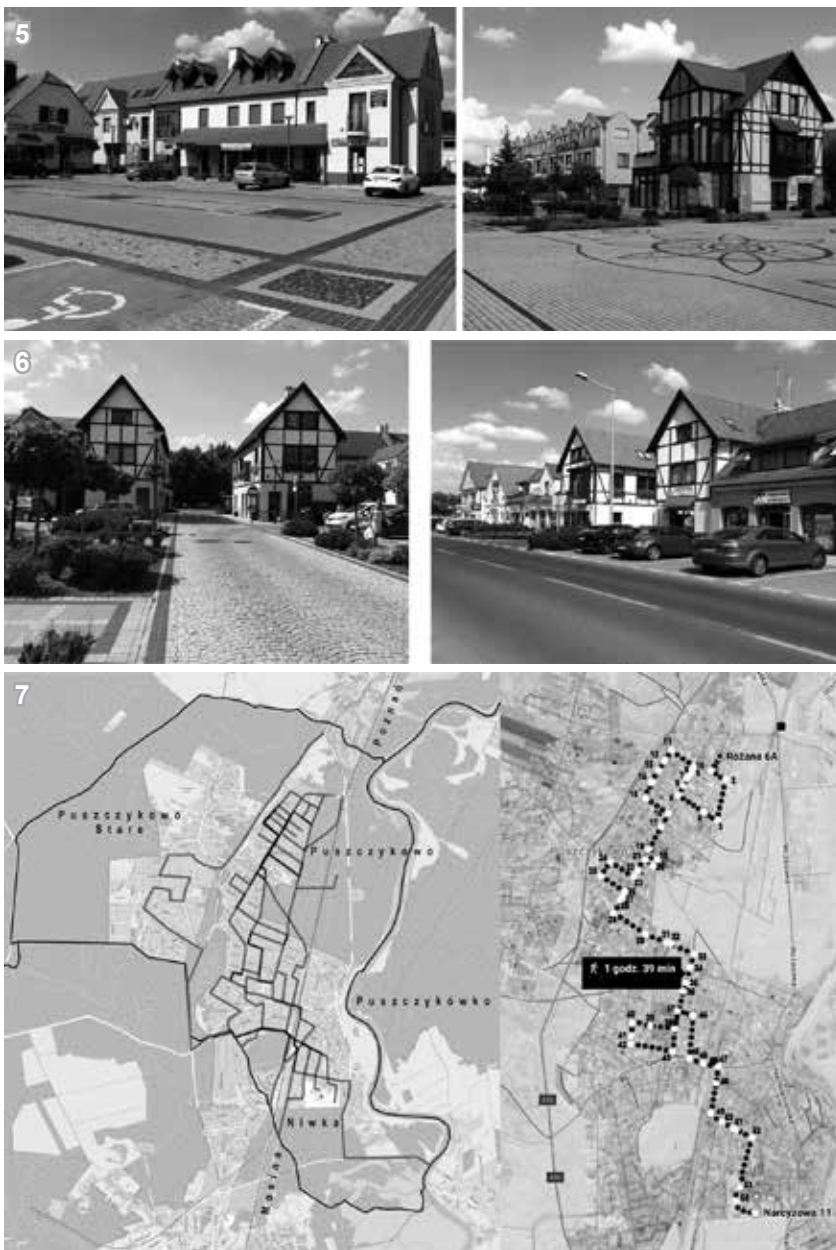
While the respect for the heritage is of key importance in many aspects, including keeping in harmony with the existing context, continuing tradition and strengthening local identity, which are also essential from the point of view of sustainable development, combining old with new may fail, despite a good visual assessment, if based on falsification, on the creation of an optimised imitation made of substitutes. The issue of positive visual assessment of disliked public spaces can be explained by the fact that such assessment is by definition related to the superficial features, i.e. what the space looks like. The authenticity of materials and construction solutions is not subject to visual examination. It can be therefore concluded that this issue is the essence of the discussed problem of simultaneous positive and negative perception of space. Consequently, the authenticity of architecture turns out to be crucial in the good reception of new public spaces. The form alone does not reflect the whole truth about regional architecture. The authenticity of materials and construction techniques is equally important. The same relationship can be observed on the urban scale, where the quality of materials used in public spaces also translates into the perception of its attractiveness.



- III. 1. Location of Puszczykowo in the Poznań County in the context of green areas and main elements of the transport network. Own study
- III. 2. Urban layout of Puszczykowo. Own study based on Open Street Map



- III. 3. Historic architecture of Puszczykowo – the railway station (on the left) and an exemplary villa (on the right). Own work
- III. 4. Market square in Puszczykowo – schematic layout. Own study



- III. 5. Market square in Puszczykowo – architecture. The library building on the right, the controversial supermarket building is visible behind the library. Own work
- III. 6. Buildings which separate the market's inner space from Poznańska Street, seen from the inside of the space (left), and from the outside (right). Own work
- III. 7. Area of the study divided into the axes of action (left); and further division of an exemplary axis (right) into nodal points (numbered white points) and shots (black points). Elaborated by: architecture students at the Poznań University of Technology, 2017

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Author's Note:

Marta Pieczara, Ph.D. Arch.

Obtained master's degree in architecture and planning at Cracow University of Technology, Poland. From 2007 to 2011, she was an assistant at EPFL, Switzerland, where she obtained PhD degree in 2012. From 2014, she is a tutor of architecture at Poznań University of Technology. Besides her academic interest, she gained professional experience as an architect in Poland and in the USA.

marta.pieczara@put.poznan.pl