

THE ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SPACE ON THE EXAMPLE OF KATOWICE AND BYTOM

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A well-designed public space is friendly to its users. There are several different research methods to evaluate its utility quality. This study analyses town market squares in Katowice and Bytom, and two commercial complexes in these cities: SCC in Katowice and Agora in Bytom (both include representative-public squares in their concepts). First, their essential compositional-spatial features have been presented, then their dominant functions have been determined and eventually the quality of land use has been analysed (according to Hall's concept) as well as the potential of the presented spaces (PPS method).

Keywords: public space, quality assessment, PPS method, Hall's concept, Katowice, Bytom, market, shopping centre

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, dr. eng. architect Joanna Serdyńska and I have been investigating the quality of public space, on examples of squares in Katowice. They resulted in the following elaborations:

[1] *Place Katowic wobec redefinicji funkcji przestrzeni publicznej współczesnego miasta.* (2005r) – elaborated in cooperation with dr eng. arch. Zbyszko Bujniewicz.

Town squares were analysed in terms of their urban structure.

[2] *Place Katowic – próba usystematyzowania ich funkcji w mieście.* (2008r)

The elaboration was an attempt to systematize the squares of Katowice in terms of their dominant function. For the purposes of this elaboration the following functions were assumed:

- public
- sacred

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- trade
- representative
- communicational
- recreational

[3] *Place Katowic – przestrzeń publiczna czy odspółeczna.* (2009r)

Pro-social space (acc. to E. Hall's) „*Sposób zorganizowania przestrzeni wpływa na kondycję psychiczną przebywających w niej ludzi.*”

The evaluated properties are:[5]

- space closure
- scale and proportions of spaces
- lighting
- ordering of spaces
- “furnishing”
- colour of urban interior
- individualisation of spaces
- distracting elements

[4] *Place Katowic w świetle metody PPS (Project for Public Spaces).* (2011r)

While elaborating the revitalisation strategy, it is essential to observe the place systematically, and to collect the feedback from their users. The following parameters are defined as four basic components: [6]

- functionality
- social value
- comfort and image
- accessibility

The methodology and conclusions of these studies were used as a basis to compare the quality of main public spaces in Katowice (market and SCC shopping centre situated on the grounds of former Kleofas mine) and Bytom (market and Agora- shopping centre in Kościuszki Square – as both of them declared possessing representative-public squares).

2. PRESENTATION OF THE COMPARED SPACES

2.1. Market in Katowice

Rynek (Market Square) together with streets leading to it: Warszawska, Teatralna, Dyrekcyjna, Staromiejska, Dworcowa, św. Jan, Poczтова, Wawelska, 3 Maja, Stawowa, A. Mielęckiego, Starowiejska, as well as with the beginning of A. Mickiewicza Street and W. Korfańtego Avenue, form one functional-architectural unit. There are many historic dwelling houses. There are prohibitions or restrictions on admission for cars to Rynek and most of the

streets mentioned above. The bed of the Rawa River runs under the square. In its vicinity there is Obrońców Katowic Square with Pomnik Harcerzy Września, a monument commemorating scouts from the September. [8]

Rynek A – the space of the square is poorly defined. Its main facility is the Stanisław Wyspiański Theatre, located on its eastern side. The western side is occupied by department store Dom Handlowy Skarbek. The north-western side of Rynek A is adjacent to Obrońców Katowic Square, its southern side – to Rynek B. Tram tracks with stops are located within the market, which makes the space impossible to be used as a walking passage for pedestrians. There are also bus stops as well as the railway station in its immediate vicinity. Rynek 1 is approached from the north by one of the main roads of the city centre, Korfantego Avenue.

Rynek B - is closed by the surrounding buildings along its three sides: the eastern side is adjacent to department store Dom Handlowy Zenit, the southern side – to a 6-storey building providing services on the ground floor, the western side – Dom Prasy with a café, Town Office and a bank, and from the north it is directly adjacent to Rynek A. In the square's space there are flower and vegetable stalls in the arcade of the department store. Until the 90s of the previous century, Rynek (together with streets 3-Maja and Staromiejska) was the commercial centre of the town.



Fig. 1. Market in Katowice



Fig. 2. Market in Katowice, a postcard from 1908



Fig. 3. Market A ...



Fig. 4. ... and Market B



Fig. 5. Works aiming at Rynek's redevelopment have been commenced recently, and they are planned to be finished by 2015.

2.2. Rynek (Market Square) in Bytom

The market was built in the Middle Ages, but today it does not resemble its original form. Originally, the market was in the shape of a square, now it clearly resembles a rectangle. The revitalization of Rynek carried out in 1998r included both the market area limited with the existing buildings and the surrounding buildings. At the moment, it is a modern town square, providing people with a space that, through its formation, promotes various activities or small cultural events, and which is a place of relaxation for both the town dwellers and tourists. During the reconstruction of the Market Square's board, the orthogonal division of the square was maintained, dividing it into a functional zone and a commercial zone that combines elements of the trade and services, as well as a central zone, actually the most static part of the square, underlined with a lighting system. The most important design assumption was to obtain the feeling of the unification of the spaces while visiting the market (Rynek), despite its three-functional division.

In the central part of the Market (Rynek) a fountain with varying compositions of water figures were performed. The Market (Rynek) was lit by a basic lighting system, additionally, its board was illuminated by spot lighting, and also the fountain and trees were illuminated by separate lighting systems. A Middle Aged well, discovered in the eastern part of the market's board, was exposed. The outlines of the original Market Square (Rynek) and the Town Hall were shown on the surface of the market's board, as well as a commemorative plaque was issued. Two complexes had some trees planted: the south-west part - hybrid planes, the south-east Norway maples. [9]



Fig. 6. Rynek (Market) in Bytom.



Fig. 7. Rynek (Market) in Bytom, postcard from 1910.



Fig. 8. Bytom Rynek (Market) before...



Fig. 9 ... and after modernisation.

2.3. Silesia City Center (SCC) in Katowice

Shopping Centre Silesia City Center was built in 2005 on the grounds of the former mine "Gottwald", Chorzowska Street. The architectural design of SCC assumed the restoration of the historical buildings of the old mine and the transformation of their functionality. It intended to create a modern facility, which was expected to meet the requirements of a large conurbation – a bustling city centre. The SCC has been designed as a miniature city with a number of streets (e.g. Zabrska, Sosnowiecka, Będzińska) and squares (e.g. Tropikalny (Tropical), Zimowy (Winter), Muzyków (Musicians), Poetów (Poets)) to create a specific ambience. The hall of the restored historic building hosts exhibitions, concerts, fashion shows, games for children, contests, youth happenings, and even performances of movement and mime theatres. Whereas, the former bath provides room for "art market" i.e. a gallery. Also a place of prayer was arranged - the hoist building was transformed into the chapel of St. Barbara, the patron saint of miners. A blue shaft tower of St. George of the former Gottwald mine dominates over SCC. It offers a panoramic view of Katowice. [10]

As a result of the expansion, which was carried out from October 2010 to October 2011, the complex was increased by more than 30% and thus SCC has become one of the largest of its kind in Poland. The total area of the building is 100tys.m², of which the commercial space occupies 85tys.m². There is a shopping mall with 300 shops (Tesco as the biggest one), banks, a post office or a chemist's, and also a leisure centre: 11 comfortable multi-screen cinemas and numerous pubs and cafés. SCC is provided with a parking for three thousand cars. According to the investor (Immofinanz Group), the centre is able to host 15 million customers a year. [10]

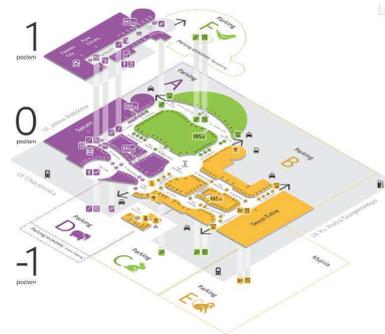


Fig. 10. Functional arrangement of SCC complex.



Fig. 11. SCC in Katowice.



Fig. 12. SCC, view from Chorzowska Street...



Fig. 13. ... and onto the newly built extension.

2.4. Agora in Bytom

The modern shopping and leisure centre **Agora in Bytom** (put to use on 15.11.2010 r.) was built in place of the demolished in 1979 representational quarter of dwelling houses between the following streets: Jainty, Dzieci Lwowskich, Piekarska (at the crossing of three axes of the town: the commercial

one, the cultural and the park ones) and T. Kościuszki Square thus forming the city centre. Shopping centre is located at the mouth of Dworcowa Street, the main shopping street of Bytom. The south wall of the complex constitutes the northern frontage of the square, thus restoring its original dimensions before the demolition in 1979, and referring to Bytom's historical spatial structure, with houses built in quarters. Kosciuszko Square is situated in front of Agora. After its extensive revitalization, it has become an attractive complement to the gallery passages and atria designed in the centre. Its newly designed arrangements intended to restore its historical form and meaning. This square houses cafés gardens, benches shaded by trees, and the main attraction was a fountain of water with an interesting program of shows. [11]

The solid of the gallery was divided into three blocks connected with internal passages, which meet in roofed, glazed atria. The four floors of the gallery, with the total floor space of 55,000 m², house 120 shops and service points, multi-screen cinema, numerous cafés and restaurants as well as an intimate auditorium and office spaces. An internal public space was also planned: visitors can benefit from the central square, and there is a square with benches, a fountain and planted vegetation in front of the gallery. In two huge atria, the visitors may admire modern sculptures and monuments and items extracted from Kosciuszko Square during the archaeological excavations. The investor (Scandinavian company Braaten + Pedersen plus Partners) wanted the place to be a popular meeting place for the residents of the city and its surrounding areas. [11]

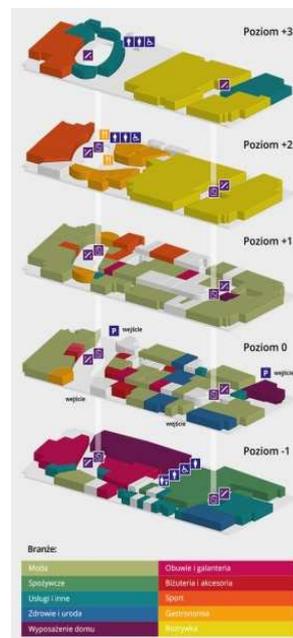


Fig. 14. Agora's functional scheme



Fig. 15. Agora in Bytom



Fig. 16. Kościuszki Square before...



Fig. 17. ... and after the modernisation

2.4.1. The analysis of the compared spaces

The tables below present: the procedure of selecting the dominant function of the considered public spaces, their evaluation according to the Hall's concepts (their pro- or anti- social character), and according to PPS method (Project for Public Spaces).

Tab. 1. Evaluation of the dominant function (from 0 to 5):	Katowice		Bytom	
	Rynek	SCC	Rynek	Agora
• Public function	3	3	5	2
• Sacred function	0	1	0	0
• Commercial function	3	5	3	5
• Representational function	1	3	5	0
• Recreational function	0	2	4	1
• Transport function	4	0	1	0
Dominant function	transport	commercial	repr.+ publ.	commercial

Tab.2. Evaluation of the space – is it pro- or anti- social acc. to Hall's concept (from 1 to +1):	Katowice		Bytom	
	Rynek	SCC	Rynek	Agora
• Space closure	-1	+1	+1	+1
• Scale and proportions of the space	0	+1	+1	0
• Lighting	0	+1	+1	+1
• Space arrangement	-1	+1	+1	0
• “furnishing”	-1	+1	+1	+1
• Colour of the urban interior	0	0	+1	0
• Space individualisation	+1	+1	+1	+1
• Lack of distracting elements	-1	+1	0	0
Final note:	-3/8	+7/8	+7/8	+4/8

Tab.3. Evaluation acc. to PPS method (from -2 to +2):	Katowice		Bytom	
	Rynek	SCC	Rynek	Agora
Functionality:	+1	+6	+7	0
• the presence of the users	+1	+2	+2	0
• age diversity	+2	+1	+2	+1
• variety of services	0	+2	+1	+1
• use of space	-2	+1	+2	-2
Social value:	+2	+5	+7	0
• the presence of groups of users	+1	+2	+2	-1
• social interactions	+1	+1	+2	0
• diversity of users	+2	+2	+2	+1
• order maintained by the users	-2	0	+1	0
Comfort and image:	-1	+5	+5	+2
• comfort of seating places	-2	+2	+2	0
• cleanliness and safety	0	+2	+1	+2
• number of women/number of men	0	0	0	0
• visual attractiveness	+1	+1	+2	0
Transport accessibility:	+7	+5	+6	+2
• visibility from the outside	+1	+2	+2	+2
• lack of obstacles in accessing,	+2	0	+2	0
• convenient neighbourhood	+2	+2	+2	0
• public transport accessibility	+2	+1	0	0
Total note:	+9/32	+21/32	+25/32	+4/32

3. CONCLUSIONS

The market of the town should be the city's representative picture. It should provide the public space which would be deeply embedded in the context of the place (the existing buildings and historic arrangements), corresponding to the modern needs of residents and tourists. Table 1 shows that the expectations were met in the case of Rynek in Bytom, revealing at the same time the pathology of Katowicki Rynek, which currently serves solely as a transportation junction. The need for its reconstruction has been an urgent problem for years, as well as the subject of contests and public discussion.

The analysed shopping centres differ in their location – Katowice shopping centre, unlike the one in Bytom, is located outside the city centre. Both of them, to varying degrees, are trying to meet the consumers' expectations. In addition to purely commercial functions, they also weave features of a different type.

Table 2 shows the development of the site, while Table 3 - its potential, hence the discrepancies appearing in the assessment. In paper [4] three situations were separated:

1. When the assessment of the development is negative, and evaluation of the potential is positive, this means that the place is "underinvested" or invested adversely to its potential.
2. When the assessment of the development is positive, or equals 0, and the assessment of the potential is negative – the place is "overinvested", i.e. possible occurrence of a certain malfunction.
3. When both ratings are positive – that means that the development is compatible with potential and the funds for the realization of the square are properly spent.

Comparing these two assessments, both Rynek in Bytom (+7/8 and +25/32) and SCC in Katowice (+7/8 and +21/32) reveal that their developments are in line with their potentials. Bytomski Rynek (market) is an attractive public space popular with their residents and visitors. SCC with its clear spatial arrangement modelled on a city centre, with streets and squares of various nature and functions, shielded against the discomfort of atmospheric conditions. The first note Rynek in Katowice received was negative (-3/8), though the second note was positive (+9/32). This shows that the place is clearly "underinvested". Let us hope that after its conversion, both the first and the second note will improve.

Agora in Bytom may be considered as an "overinvested" place. Although the second note (4/32) is not negative, compared with the potential note (4/8) it is rather low. Comparing it to the SCC, despite the declared functional similarities, the note 1 for Agora is lower. It seems to be due to mainly the organization of space, which is much more readable, logical and orderly, if compared to the Katowice implementation.

In previous studies [1], [2], [3], [4] only squares were evaluated. This study shows that the criteria adopted for the assessment can also be used in the realisation of building constructions (in this case commercial centres) that weave functions of public spaces in their program assumptions.

These findings may provide a valuable source of information when making future modernization or revitalization efforts of the analysed above public spaces, as well as a point to consider while designing squares and other facilities of a public character, so that they were planned in accordance with their potentials.

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OCENA JAKOŚCI PRZESTRZENI PUBLICZNEJ NA PRZYKŁADZIE KATOWIC I BYTOMIA

Streszczenie

Przestrzeń publiczna dobrze zaprojektowana jest przyjazna dla jej użytkowników. Istnieje szereg różnych metod badawczych, dzięki którym można ocenić ich jakość użytkową. W niniejszym opracowaniu poddano ocenie Rynek w Katowicach i w Bytomiu, oraz dwa kompleksy handlowe w tych miastach: katowickie SCC i bytomską Agorę (oba deklarujące w swym koncepcjach posiadanie placu o charakterze reprezentacyjno-publicznym). Po przedstawieniu ich zasadniczych cech kompozycyjno-przestrzennych, określono dominującą funkcję, przebadano jakość zagospodarowania (według koncepcji Halla) oraz potencjał tkwiący w prezentowanych przestrzeniach (metoda PPS). Dzięki tej analizie można oszacować czy analizowane przestrzenie publiczne zrealizowane zostały zgodnie ze swym potencjale, niedoinwestowane, czy też przeinwestowane. Wnioski stanowiąc mogą cenne źródło informacji przy podejmowaniu w przyszłości ewentualnych działań modernizacyjnych czy rewitalizacyjnych dla nich samych jak i punktem do zastanowienia się przy projektowaniu innych placu i obiektów o charakterze publicznym, tak by planowane były zgodnie z potencjałem ich wykorzystania.