

REVITALISATION AS A FORCE PROMOTING SPATIAL CHANGES IN WROCLAW

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Abstract

The idea of revitalization, which grew out of the need to repair degraded urban spaces, has taken on a new meaning in the context of contemporary development challenges. The work includes references to the basic programme documents and strategies. It shows regeneration activities carried out in Wrocław in connection with the organization of international events, cultural and sport events, and with the improvement of spatial order. These actions contributed to the revitalization of the image of the city. The paper contains the results of these changes, the complementarity of decisions and their impact on social behaviour.

Keywords: Wrocław, strategy, revitalisation programmes, investments for Euro 2012, public space, WUWA 2.

1. THESIS

Revitalisation programmes have become a tool of socio - spatial transformations of a city, its most devastated and impoverished areas, as well as neglected historic buildings and sites; they were developed in parallel with visions of Wrocław development as a open, metropolitan city which cooperates with the region and plays a significant role in the country and Europe. The implementation of revitalization programmes is a long-term, multi-faceted and mutable activity, planned for many years. After a dozen years of intensive revitalization activities, a number of investments were realised, which contributed to a new quality of residents' lives and Wrocław's built-up area.

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2. INTRODUCTION

Remedial actions of public spaces took place yet in 1996, e.g. restoration of the market place, construction of new flooring, lighting, urban furniture setting. The following years witnessed the projects to strengthen the potential of Rynek (market). The following activities were undertaken: the reconstruction of the pillory, a competition for the design of an urban fountain, long-term discussion on its modern form and how to fit it into the historical structure of the Old Town, followed by its construction and enthusiastic reception by Wrocław residents. At the moment, the fountain in Rynek has become, next to the Spire and the Centennial Hall, a symbol of Wrocław architecture and its contemporary distinctive hallmark.

2.1. Strategy and programmes

Wrocław authorities have developed and implemented a series of strategic documents and programmes which, in the medium-term programming perspective, resulted in establishing legal basis for making and justifying investment decisions and brought specific socio - economic benefits. The medium-term programmes which promote urban transformations include:

- Strategy “Wrocław in the perspective 2020 plus” [1]
- Communal monuments care program for the years 2010 - 2013 [2]
- Local Revitalisation Programme [3]

The aforementioned documents result in short-term implementation programmes: the assumptions to the socio-economic policy of Wrocław for the subsequent years [4], long-term investment plans and public campaigns.

Strategy “Wrocław in the perspective 2020 plus” was passed in 2006 and established directions for the evolution of the city, developed programs that included projects for implementation at various time intervals. The strategy “Wrocław in the perspective 2020 plus” was based on the achievements attained during the period of eight years, from 1998 to 2006 and formed within the “Strategy - Wrocław 2000 plus” from 1998. Unlike the 1998 strategy, the Strategy “Wrocław in the perspective 2020 plus” did not declare priorities and did not try to assign tasks to be performed, but focused on describing the desired civilization changes by indicating the directions in which Wrocław should be changed.

The strategy exploited operational tools for town development management: long-term investment plans and the related assumptions for socio - economic development, most of the tasks which were included in the strategy were assigned to specific drafts and social projects.

An important part of the document “Wrocław in the perspective 2020 plus” is the mission statement: *“Wrocław the meeting place - a city that unites”*. The consequence of the adopted mission was Wrocław's readiness to participate in the organization of major cultural and sporting events: promotion actions aimed at: being granted the organization of the World Exhibition EXPO 2010 (exhibition was held in Shanghai), locating Football Championship Euro 2012, or obtaining the title of European Capital of Culture 2016. The undertaken initiatives required from the authorities to prepare a proper technical infrastructure, and non-governmental organizations, volunteers and residents were expected to involve actively.

In 2005 a Local Revitalization Programme was developed. Its main asset was an indication of degraded areas, taking into account functions and time of their development as the basis for the the elaboration of specific remedial programmes. The first inventory of revitalization projects included the so-called pre-accession programming period, i.e. the years 2004 - 2006. The projects were justified by the assumptions to the socio - economic policy for Wrocław for that period.

The second call for proposals for LPR (a EU program) in 2006 was adapted to new investment challenges and possibilities for their realization basing on aid funds from the programming period 2007-2013. In the period before the implementation of the Program Euro 2012, the Municipality of Wrocław, in cooperation with other entities, started the implementation of revitalization of 100 tenement houses, including overhauls of the building structures and technical infrastructure, including the construction of approaches to the heating network as well as a program of special purpose grants for conservation, restoration and construction works at buildings enlisted in the register of historic monuments.

An international urban-architectural competition was announced for the development of Społeczny Square, which currently is a two-level traffic junction, dividing the large downtown area into four undeveloped quarters. The outcomes of the competition were used in the preparation of the local development plan for Społeczny Square [5], the implementation of which will be possible after the construction of a bridge over the Oder River, the extension of the downtown ring road towards Wielka Wyspa (Big Island) (Biskupin, Sepolno).

2.2. Investments for Euro 2012

In 2007, Wrocław was among the cities organizers of Football Championship Euro 2012. The following investments became priorities: the construction of a new stadium [6] and an airport terminal [7], the modernization of Wrocław

Główny railway station [8] and minor stations within the city limits, as well as improving urban public transport: the construction of a new tram line, the reconstruction of stops in the area of the railway station and bus station, the construction of a new stop at the stadium Euro 2012.

Simultaneously, the following activities were undertaken: the enhancement of the potential of Centennial Hall (technical and functional modernization), the construction of a multimedia fountain, the expansion of Restaurant Pavilion (Pawilon Restauracyjny) for the Wrocław Congress Centre [9], the modernization of the Four Dome Pavilion (Pawilon Czterech Kopuł) [10]. Wrocław Zoo received a prestigious facility – Afrikarium [11].



Fig. 1. Main Railway Station (Dworzec Główny) in Wrocław after revitalization.
Project by Group 5 Architects.

2.3. Public space

Also Wrocław public spaces were revitalized. This included streets: Oławska, Szewska (together with a square in front of St. Mary Magdalene Cathedral), Świdnicka, Kuźnicza, Grodzka, Old Town Park near the Puppet Theatre (Teatr Lalek), a part of the Old Town Promenade between Podwale and Włodkowica Streets with the construction of a footbridge over the moat. The new

architectural image was given to Włodkowica Street, where new objects were created: the Puro Hotel, an office and conference building Wall Street House, and some buildings were subjected to revitalization: White Stork Synagogue and a part of tenement houses belonging to the Jewish Community.

A new image was also designed for one of the main streets of the city, the so-called Grunwaldzka axis, 1300m long, situated between the Grunwaldzki bridge and the Szczytnicki bridge, and with the focal point located around Rondo Reagana (Reagan's Roundabout). Street-adjacent green belts were subjected to recultivation and were equipped with new furnishings and filled with greenery compositions. The northern section of the Grunwaldzka Axis was surrounded by new facilities belonging to the campus of the Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences, frontages of Grunwaldzki Square include administrative and commercial buildings: Grunwaldzki Passage and Grunwaldzki Centre. A draft of the renovation and the functional modernization of residential and service buildings on the overpass was prepared.



Fig. 2. The new airport in Wrocław. The project by JSK Architects [7]

The effects of revitalization activities, the main initiator of which were the municipal authorities, were widened by ventures undertaken by the Wrocław

universities and businesses. The following facilities were expanded: Campuses of the Wrocław University of Technology, the University of Wrocław, The University of Environmental and Life Sciences, The Wrocław University of Economics, the Wrocław Medical University and the Wrocław Academy of Fine Arts in Tragutta Street, higher schools of arts as well as cultural facilities such as: the National Music Forum closing the Wolności Square (the West Liberty Square) from the west side, The Capitol Theater, supplementing the frontage of Marsz. J. Piłsudskiego Street.

Within the revitalization programs measures were also taken to support the most neglected residential areas: Nadodrze, Psie Pole, Oławskie Suburbs; new principles were developed for the renovation of buildings constructed in 1929, within the international construction exhibition: WUWA - House and Workplace.

2.4. The idea of the estate of the future - WUWA 2

In 2016, Wrocław will be the city-host the European Capital of Culture and this idea requires further investment ventures which would organize the urban space (Nowe Żerniki - WUWA 2, modernization works in Old Town area, completion of the earlier commenced project). W 2016 r. WUWA 2 is the revitalization of the idea [12], the transfer of design methods used in the 20's of the twentieth century, to search for spatial and compositional solutions, principles of public participation in the shaping of a modern residential area. The project engages the best teams of architects from Wrocław. Their task is to create an ecological and diversified in form housing estate, with a full program of social services: a school, a kindergarten, a senior house as well as culture, service and trade points. The streets will be surrounded by green avenues. From the south, the estate will be closed by a park equipped with sport, recreational and educational devices.

The project is organized jointly by the authorities of Wrocław, The Lower Silesia Regional Chamber of Architects, in collaboration with Wrocław branch of SARP. For New Żerniki, a new local land use plan was prepared, construction projects that would complement functional facilities for the new settlement are being implemented.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The observation of such phenomena as the formation of a vision of the city development and its functions, of the process of transformation of urban areas as well as the realization of new facilities during their implementation is not easy and obvious. Development programmes evolve over time along with

trends, patterns of behaviour, cultural and economic potential; they are changed along with new external stimuli and conditions as well as space barriers. Defining revitalization projects is conditioned by financial capacity and the effectiveness of operation. The completed revitalization projects spread out in the urban space give a new image of the city. The urban fabric of Wrocław, interrupted by vacant spaces, devastated spaces, loss-making investments of previous decades, has gained a new density, new meanings, connections, interesting places for meetings, business contacts and recreation. The city authorities managed to develop regeneration programs which formed the basis of Wrocław's rise to become a European city and stimulated new social behaviour. Revitalization projects, taking account of their rank, can be divided into those that contributed to the enhancement of the city's supra-regional potential and those that organised space. The most important ones include: construction of a new airport terminal, the stadium Euro 2012, expansion of cultural facilities: the National Music Forum, campuses of the universities, but also functional reconstruction and modernization of existing facilities, including the Centennial Hall, the Capitol Theatre. The second group includes projects affecting public spaces: modernization of streets and squares, urban green areas and courtyards of tenement houses. Revitalization programs of building facilities coincide with social programs. The idea of revitalization became a determinant of the city development in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

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IDEA REWITALIZACJI MOTOREM PRZEMIAN PRZESTRZENNYCH WROCLAWIA

Streszczenie

Idea rewitalizacji, wyrosła z konieczności naprawy zdegradowanych przestrzeni miejskich i zniesienia konfliktów społecznych, nabrała nowego znaczenia w kontekście współczesnych wyzwań rozwojowych. Władze Wrocławia opracowały strategię i szereg dokumentów programowych, których efektem są zrealizowane przedsięwzięcia rewitalizacyjne: obiekty stanowiące infrastrukturę techniczną dla realizacji imprez sportowo – kulturalnych (Stadion Miejski Euro 2012, obiekty Hali Stulecia, rozwoju nauki: kampusy uczelni wyższych i obiekty kultury). Rewitalizacji przestrzennej zostały poddane przestrzenie publiczne miasta: ulice i place, modernizacji i rozbudowie podlegały układy i obiekty transportowe: nowy terminal lotniczy, przebudowa Dworca Głównego we Wrocławiu. Działania rewitalizacyjne wpłynęły na nowy wizerunek miasta, podniosły jakość życia i wyzwoliły nowe zachowania społeczne.

Praca zawiera wyniki tych przemian, komplementarności podjętych decyzji i ich wpływ na zachowania społeczne.

Słowa kluczowe: Wrocław, strategie, programy rewitalizacyjne, obiekty Euro 2012, kampusy uczelni, obiekty kultury, przestrzenie publiczne, WUWA 2.

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