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FORMATION OF A PUBLIC CENTER OF A SMALL URBAN SETTLEMENT OF BELARUS DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGULAR MEDIEVAL URBAN CULTURE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF KOBRIN)

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The purpose of this research is to characterize the historical development of the planning structure and the main building of Kobrin in the XVI – XVII centuries, to identify the principles of regular medieval urban planning embodied in the formation of the central part of the city.

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CITY MOBILITY AND COMPLETE PUBLIC SPACE IN MODERN CITY. CASE STUDY OF THE CITY CENTRE OF POZNAN, POLAND

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The article concerns the questions of the role of communication system in terms of creation of the places for people within a public space. There is presented a question of possibility and need of complete places which satisfy not only basic communication requirements but above all answer the pedestrians needs. There is accentuated the urgency in terms of searching for the best spatial solutions within a city and its centre to provide well-balanced and sustainable solutions concerning walkable and livable cities. The paper touches especially chosen issues of Poznan city centre, in Poland.

Introduction. Sustainable transport and well-balanced housing policy is, apart from spatial education, the basic pillar of urban

renewal processes. It is considered that contemporary cities are the residence for most people in the world. They should therefore be the subject of special care, both for city authorities and residents. Cities are also hubs of cultural life and the main centers of economic activities. The global domination of cities shows not only the dynamics of changes in the organization of space for living, but also reveals new phenomena of contrasts. It means that large urban clusters generate semantically dual spaces which are full of contradictions. It is observed the visible contrast

between global users of modern metropolises and local inhabitants of dilapidated districts, suburbs and small towns.

Changing consumer needs and negligence in creating high-quality public spaces are factors that weaken spatial and social attractiveness of central and downtown districts, and reinforce artificially created, monofunctional quasi-sites. Formerly vivid streets are under the process of depopulation, favoring the new generation shopping galleries, which are trying to become more and more similar to the real public space. Unfortunately, there is observed a worrisome trend that most of shopping malls, especially in the city of Poznan, are built with no linkage to the existing urban structure and they turned to be "black holes" draining the economic and social potential out of the city center.

The uncontrolled development of shopping centers located on the outskirts of city center caused the collapse of small business and local entrepreneurship. It caused the undesirable situation that formerly important and active trade routes for pedestrians so characteristic of the inner city districts are becoming less important and more neglected. The well-known and popular shopping streets within city centre of Poznan, like St. Martin street or 27th December street, are endangered by losing their attractiveness, original function and their identity as well. The combination of multiple services on a relatively small area - as in the case of shopping malls, contributes to excessive concentration of car traffic, causing uneasy and unwanted situation that weaker groups of road users like pedestrians and cyclists, are pushed to narrow pavements and crowded streets blocked by cars.

Communication solutions triggering conflicts are causing unpleasant situation of decreasing public space quality within central parts of Poznan. The dominance of car traffic which causes many distressing results like e.g. local traffic overloads, illegal parking zones, disintegration of pedestrian routes, affects the gradual degradation of the city centre space and its spatial and social

attractiveness. The reasons for this state are to be found on several levels. The most important one seems to be the convenience of using a car. Dissemination of this mode of transport resulted in a change in the lifestyle of the majority of city dwellers and allowed the new forms of space use development, without paying attention to hidden spatial, social and economic costs. Decreasing the share of cars in street traffic, as well as changing consumer attitudes in relation to the use of public space is an important postulate in the implementation of sustainable urban policy¹. The idea of New Urbanism also underlines that one of the most crucial tasks of the proper urban transport policy is, inter alia, the restoration of the public spaces dominated by car traffic.

Contemporary city problems in terms of creation attractive and complete public space. According to a study by Central Statistical Office² the average inhabitant of Poland spends one twentieth of his life on moving. Does this time have to be lost to us? Although the space in which we move is of great importance to us, places designated for communication do not create a friendly, inspiring space with the possibility to interact. Underground and street level passages, footbridges, public transport stops, etc. often present architectural and design solutions that seems to be a compromise between pedestrian safety in road traffic and the technical and organizational capabilities of the road administrator. From the point of view of traffic organization, the underpass is a good way out of a situation where there is a conflict related to the intersection of significant traffic flows – circular and pedestrian. But still, not all legitimate solutions from a technical point of view are accepted by users.

¹ It has been almost 20 years since there was accepted in Poznan the document directing City Transport Policy which was in accordance with sustainable development rules.

² Data published by the Central Statistical Office, Department of Social Research and Living Conditions, Study of the population budget in 2013, published in Warsaw 2014.



Fig. 1. An example of a technical solution that does not meet the expectations of users. Pedestrians have indicated themselves what kind of solution would be the most suitable for them. Case study of Poznan.
[photo by Author]

Pedestrians seem to be very reluctant in terms of using this type of solution. There are a lot of reasons why only technically satisfied communication solutions do not fulfill inhabitants' needs. The cause lies e.g. in low level of aesthetics, insecurity or monotony caused by a small amount of perceived sensations etc. Public space in the context of transport solutions can be recognized as identical with the pedestrian zone because pedestrian accessibility is a prerequisite of a public space proper functioning. The concept of pedestrian zone is, from the point of view of traffic engineering, a part of the city reserved only for pedestrians, where traffic is forbidden or is only to serve the residential quarters. Providing pedestrian zones in city is to ensure better accessibility and mobility for pedestrians in order to adapt to their perceptual and kinesthetic abilities. This improves their ability to take socially active part in public space life. This can positively result in increasing attractiveness of business premises located within the boundaries of such a zone, which favors the expansion of services and social facilities offer thus increasing their competitiveness.

In addition to economic goals, the introduction of pedestrian zones affects the improvement of space through the aestheticization of urban equipment as well as reduction of air pollution and noise. It also affects the reduction of accidents involving

pedestrians. Unfortunately, as American research³ shows, the exclusion of street traffic is not always the starting point of changes that can turn into proper habits.

So as to create complete, vivid, active and socially accepted public space it is needed to meet not only communication exigences but to satisfy other needs of the city life. It should be a place of rest and recreation, exchange of material and intellectual goods, a place for expressing one's views and beliefs with the possibility of starting interactions and contacts as well as experiencing social activities with other people. In order to take the best advantage of the full values of pedestrian zone it is required to introduce multilayered changes that take into account not only solving car problem, but above all, creating comfortable and visually attractive space that provides clear information and social activity.

Implementation of new solutions to communication system in terms of complete public space creation. Complete place visioning is an idea promoting creation of attractive and socially active space of high aesthetic and compositional quality. Thanks to high level of attractiveness and desirable spatial solutions and functional offer it is possible to have an impact on provision of positive emotional experiences, psychophysical comfort and active social interactions. So as to start rethinking communication system in terms of complete places it is needed to take into account the multilayered determinants of existing situation in terms of spatial, social and economic aspects.

One of the desirable concepts to help solve these problems may be the promotion of urban lifestyle, promoting pedestrian communication, use of public transport and bicycles. To make this possible, large-scale road investments are needed - from the construction of beltways to P + R (park and ride) or P + G (park and go) parking lots. In order to incorporate infrastructural projects into renewal process it is needed to realize that public space should be above all a place of

³ <http://downtowndevelopment.com/pdf/americanpedmallexperiment.pdf>

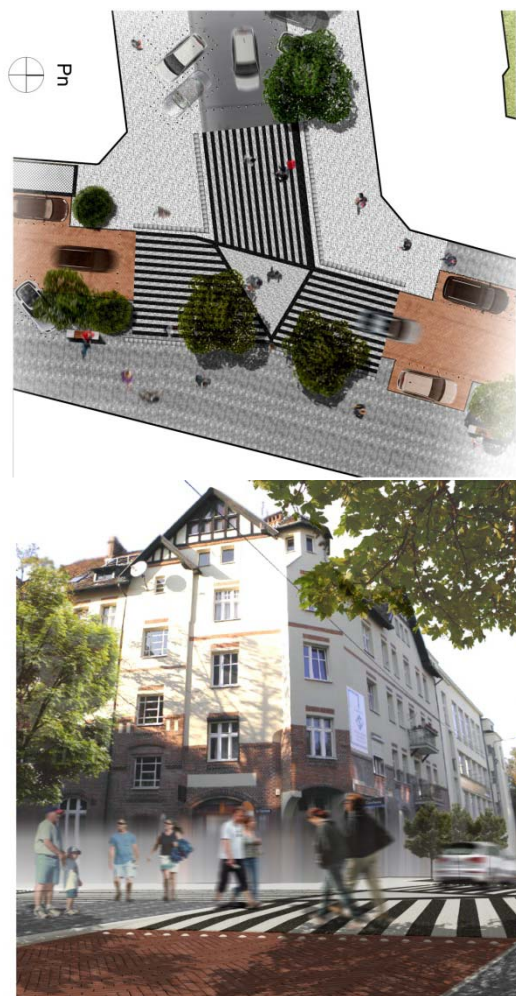
increased social contacts and a carrier of identity and sense of the city.

There is a common practice in Poznan, that the importance of public space is perceived mainly in terms of infrastructure demands and development is defined primarily in technical terms, not in the context of improving the quality of life. The project cost is more often a key issue than the aspect of future social benefits. Fortunately, thanks to the gradual implementation of the principle of social participation, Poznan infrastructure projects like the reorganization of traffic system in the city centre, improvement of pedestrians and cyclists safety and the arrangement of parking spaces, more and more often take into account the needs of city users building up a solid basis for well-executed renewal activities.

There were taken several actions within Poznan city centre aiming at the improvement of communication system. The one of the examples which is to be presented in the paper is the project prepared by the Author in 2013 for the Wilda district. It was a conceptual design developed at the request of the Poznan Town Hall. The aim was the reorganization of parking zones along the streets so as to: provide the best accessibility for pedestrians to existing functional offer, increase the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and improve the aesthetics of so called “groundfloor zone”, altogether with pavements, small architecture and greenery. The study included an area adjacent to the Old Town and extending up to the Wildecki Market. The main assumption of the project was to reduce the traffic within Wierzbicice street area owing to the regulation and reorganization of parking spaces so as to minimize their negative impact on the reception of space by pedestrians altogether with arranging existing and newly designed public squares. The project uses innovative solutions called shared communication space. The desirable solutions are simple and very effective like e.g. implementation of various forms of division of paved areas such as diagonal crosswalks, pedestrian islands or shared spaces. The purpose of these treat-

ments was to adjust the vehicle speed to maximum 30 km/h.

The project was discussed and developed at the request of the Department of Roads at Poznan Municipality and it was used as a starting point for discussions with the inhabitants of Wilda district and as a concept for the initial valuation of the needed works.



Pic. 2. Author's conceptual design of public space of Wilda district reorganization. [elaborated by Author]

The next step taken by the Department of Roads at Poznan Municipality was preparation of the concept of traffic reorganization and the creation of new pedestrian areas on St. Martin street. Formerly, the street was one of the most vivid and attractive shopping street in the city centre. Currently, not well organized, it is characterized by functions that are not suitable for the main street and do not fit the rank of a place. St. Martin street connects the area of small scale shop-

ping center called Kupiec Poznański with Adam Mickiewicz Square which is one of the city's main public spaces. This is a very important area within city centre of Poznan which is closely connected with urban transport node of high importance – Rondo Kopernika, which has recently been thoroughly modernized in order to improve bicycle and pedestrian traffic.



Pic. 3. The former spatial situation in terms of communication system within neighbouring area to St.Martin street in city centre of Poznan.
[photo by Author]



Pic. 4. The introduced corrections to the communication system allowed to increase the safety of public space use in terms of pedestrians and cyclists.
[photo by Author]

The subsequent project prepared by the Author⁴ was a concept of the communication reorganization aiming at cut off the transit access to St. Martin street. The main aim was to create new pedestrian spaces, rearrange parking spaces, introduce the zone of

⁴ Author prepared the design work in cooperation with Dominika Pazder PhD and Przemysław Gwizdała MSc.

reduced speed to 30 km/h and implement intersections organized on the principle of shared spaces. There was also a need to use the concept in order to start a public discussion. It was needed to welcome real participatory planning as well as to prepare the project meetin all the technical criteria and inhabitants' needs. The Cultural Center "Zamek" organized several meeting and other social activities enabling participation in changes. Finally the project was evaluated by inhabitants during numerous panel discussions, focus tests and other public opinion tools. The concept gained social support, though a few issues - like urban furniture, technical equipment, etc. - were left as matters for further studies. Most importantly, the general principles of the organization of space have been agreed and accepted thoroughly. It should be accentuated that this was the first project in the city of Poznan so widely consulted, in which many non governmental organizations were involved.



Pic. 5, 6. The introduced changes that seemed to be only cosmetic allowed for a complete reorientation of priorities in the field of traffic organization.
[photo by Author]

The project's success encouraged the continuation of activities and the inclusion of other streets in the SPEED 30 programme. A project team was asked again by the Municipality to develop the next concept for the most prestigious area of Poznan city centre. There was prepared a project of public spaces reorganization on a very important crossroads of the "Royal-Imperial Route". The conceptual design introduced another innovation for Poznan conditions – there were not only introduced communication solutions but at the same time a built-in system of connections with the media available in the street for small gastronomy and trade.



Pic. 7. Reorganization of St. Martin street has been a pilot project remodelling not only communication system but an overall image of the main shopping street within a city centre of Poznan.
[photo by Author]

Conclusion. The conceptual design works presented in the paper turned out to be a very effective tool to promote participatory planning idea concept of complete places which are easily accessible, of high attractiveness and vivid. Public presentations of projects in 2013 opened the possibility to change the way of thinking about reorganization of

communication system and enabled to start a broad debate about the condition of public space in Poznan. These kind of projects should always be conducted with reference to long term renewal programmes. As a result of two years of participatory planning actions, in 2015, the open urban competition was announced. The topic was a conceptual design of possible changes within the city centre of Poznan in the vicinity of St. Martin street. A number of architectural offices took part and the winning design work was the one of famous in Poznan ADS office. The selected project underlined the fact that dogma of full car accessibility should be replaced by the principle of creating safe, aesthetic and attractive public space and above all meeting pedestrian and cyclist needs. Until now, a number of architectural and urban solutions promoted by Author and presented during public debates have been implemented and realized. Some of public spaces within city centre of Poznan have changed completely - like St. Marcin street, others have been slightly altered by introducing a new traffic organization or small architecture and urban greenery. Fortunately, a lot of positive actions has been taken but still there are a number of public spaces that are waiting to be revived and rearranged.

The right level of attractiveness of services offer, shops and cafes, cosy places to stay and relax, greenery, nice scents and bustle – this is what make public space livable and complete. These are the elements needed in renewal process. Fortunately, these kind of changes has already begun in city centre of Poznan and number of them where undertaken in accordance to the convenient transition of functions making chosen public spaces attractive. Still there is much to be done and there is a number of questions to answer specially in the context of St. Martin street reorganization. Will the new aesthetic setting be a sufficient magnet for entrepreneurs who want to invest in street premises? Will it become a fashionable place where one can spend time pleasantly or will it remain only as a convenient connection between transport hubs? To what extent it will

affect the preferences of city users to change the way of thinking about various means of communication? Will these alterations help to promote the idea of walkable city centre? Will the implementation of the undertaking in the field of improving the quality of public spaces cause the real social and economical revival of degraded parts of a downtown area? It is needed to observe the changing situation and wait so as to find right answers to the questions. What is for sure, city is like a living organism and city centre seems to be its most important part – the heart. It is crucial to deal with it carefully and within a long-term and multilayered process. The renewal process must be overthought and sensible so as to protect what is valuable, to answer people's needs and to provide desirable, comfortable and attractive living environment.

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COMPLETE PLACES AND ACTIVE INNER CITY SPACE – CHOSEN ISSUES OF HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC SPACE CREATION. CASE STUDY OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA OF POZNAN, POLAND

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In the following article there is tackled a problem of high-quality public space creation. The author accentuates the importance of idea of complete places formation in terms of functional and spatial exigences as well as in social dimension. The public space is understood as the main compositional and semantic scheme of a downtown area. It is also the most crucial space where it is needed to develop interaction and social contacts. The paper presents chosen issues

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ГОРОДСКАЯ МОБИЛЬНОСТЬ И ПУБЛИЧНОЕ ПРОСТРАНСТВО В СОВРЕМЕННОМ ГОРОДЕ. НА ПРИМЕРЕ ГОРОДСКОГО ЦЕНТРА ГОРОДА ПОЗНАНЬ, ПОЛЬША

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В статье рассматривается роль коммуникационной системы с точки зрения создания комфортных мест для людей в публичном пространстве. Рассмотрен вопрос о возможности и необходимости создания комплексных пространств, которые удовлетворяют не только требованиям к коммуникации, но, прежде всего, отвечают потребностям пешеходов. Подчеркивается необходимость поиска наилучших пространственных решений для обеспечения сбалансированных и устойчивых решений, создания городов, удобных для жизни. Затрагиваются вопросы решения конкретных проблем развития центра города Познань, Польша.

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of high quality space creation within a downtown area of the city of Poznan in Poland.

Introduction. While considering the issue of creating high-quality public space, two factors should be taken into account in the context of contemporary changes and current development trends. The first is the need to ensure the protection of cultural value, and