

The Regeneration of the devastated city parts

Introduction

At the end of the 20th century urban development is in the stage of huge changes. Modification of economical and social conditions reform very intensively the character of cities. Cities are growing in scale, new functions are added, distribution of people and goods is one of the fundamental problems to be solved. And the modern architecture brings into life new esthetical criteria. These problems are actual in Slovakia as well as in other states.

My thesis deals with one specific aspect: the problem of regeneration of devastated city parts. With the notion "devastated city parts" I mean those parts of a city, which have had their own particular character and which can be qualitatively identified. Devastation of them means the loss of these qualities at various levels.

Starting point

From the end of the 40s until the beginning of 80s large change in the character of urban spaces was taking place in Slovakia. Under the ideologically and dogmatically understood modernism the theories of radical changes were presented. The ideology wanted to change the life of man as well as it wanted to change his environment. The building industry was able to supply only simple precast production. This concept of building needed big free areas. The regime decided to solve this problem by removing the existing structures. The simplest solution was the demolition of whole city parts. The second reason, which caused the devastation of city parts was inability to maintain the existing building structure. The last but not least were demands of the expanding traffic infrastructure.

After the change of political system at the beginning of the 90ties the situation started to change. The building procedure has returned to the competence of the individual developers.

It has come to regeneration of older city parts. Theca methods of regeneration are prescribed and they provide theoretical basis for the solution of the individual practical applications. But these theories do not provide sufficient solutions in those city parts, which were demolished or vastly disturbed. Schemes presented nowadays oscillate between a rebuild of copies and development of completely new designs. The aim of my thesis is to define theoretical basis for the solution of this specific aspect.

Definition of the theory

The devastated city parts are characterised by their values. City parts originally incorporated those

values, but under various circumstances they lost them. Besides this we can nowadays define or reconstruct them.

The method of regeneration of devastated city parts uses various present theories. Those principles are summarised in the Washington Chart which was signed in 1987. It also defines the notion value, what does not only mean quantitative attributes, but also the relations (spatial, functional, etc). The protection is connected with economical, social and urban planning.

Fundamental steps of regeneration:

- Analysis (examination)
- Identification of values
- Selection of values
- Setting the method of preserving values
- Determination of principles (regulation plans)

The analysis represents the examination of the territory. The extent can be different and depends on the particular situation. Important is namely:

- Architectural investigation
 - Archaeological investigation
 - Historical investigation
 - Space analysis
 - Coloration analysis
 - Functional analysis
 - Sociological research
 - Infrastructure investigation
- etc.

With the results of this analysis we can define the values of the territory. Each territory (city part) reflects individual interests as well as historical economic and social relations. This presents the documentary value. The degree of documentary value is dependent on its social importance. The value of time belongs also to these direct values. Indirect values are those, which do not yield directly from its form, but are created mainly in mutual relationship.

Selection of values means defining the essential values, which are necessary to be protected. This step presents the important point for the following formation of the structure. When working with the proposal it is necessary to recognise the level of the destruction of the territory. It is also fundamental to identify the real economic and social conditions. They determine the future purpose of use.

Setting the methods of values that should be preserved is characterised by the collection of regulations. It is necessary to define preserved values. Most frequently monitored features are the maintenance of the ground-plan, volumes, proportion of building and functional use.

Determination of principles means the final step in creating the concept of regeneration.

It is a substantial output for planners and architects. The most common is the form of the regulation plan.

Conclusion

In my thesis I want to document the discussed methods on practical examples. Very important moment for the further evolution of this theory is the experience with regeneration of the city part around the castle in Bratislava. It is the territory of the former Vydrica (in the context of the EUROPEAN competition 1997), Zidovska street and former Zamocka street.

Problems associated with this city part in Bratislava can be generalised and they can be seen as problems which arose also in other towns of Slovakia. Therefore my task is not to provide specific solution, but to formulate general principles.

Partial solutions to this topic are often discussed in the literature. One of the most influential theorists is architect Rob Krier. He has developed a new opinion on the theory of urban planning. Most influential are his works from 70s and 80s. He was one of the first, who called for a regeneration of urban space in its traditional forms i.e. streets, squares etc. He resumed his theoretical knowledge in the book *Urban Space*. In this book he also applied this theory to the practical examples. In the outlined framework I prepared an abstract from this book, which would serve as a theoretical basis for my PhD thesis.

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Rob Krier:

URBAN SPACE

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The work of Rob Krier is well known for his contribution to the modern architecture theory.

During the 70s and 80s he formulated the theoretical principles of post-modern architecture. He mentioned the estrange and anonymity of the post-war modern architecture. In his theoretical work and also in his practice he struggles for return to traditional spatial values. The ideas of Rob Krier's theory of Urban space are still alive.

Although his architectural work bear traces of historical architectural forms, his urban space theory has brought new ideas and has noticeably influenced the architecture of the 80s. One of the best examples are his concepts for the IBA in Berlin.

The author has been a university teacher for many years. The material for the book was primarily collected

for students to encourage them to look for new spatial qualities.

The book is divided into 4 chapters. Chapter 1 describes typological and morphological elements of the concept of urban space. Chapter 2 describes an erosion of urban space in 20th century town planning. Chapter 3 describes forms of reconstructing devastated urban space with examples from the city center of Stuttgart (Germany). And Chapter 4 presents the possible development of a city.

In the introduction author explains his definition of the Urban Space. The intention was not to generate a new theoretical concept, but to define its original meaning. This concept renounces any aesthetic criteria, it only describes all possible types of urban spaces between buildings in a town. Such space is given by geometrical qualities. The polarity of internal – external space is also in evidence of this chapter.

The aesthetical criteria are excluded, because they bring a risk of comparison based on subjective aspects of taste. Every style, every period of historic forms is a unit with its own internal logic, which cannot be fragmented and interchanged with elements of other periods. It is important to accept different styles with their own rules and not to mix them. Another very influential factor on the design process is the architect. He brings subjective and individual decisions to the aesthetic categories. The author asks, which form can result from a free expression of a creative artist, how deep is he joined with political and cultural conditions and whether different periods could generate similar or different artistic solutions.

Thereinafter author describes two main typological urban elements – a square and a street.

A square was in all probability the first discovered urban space, grouping houses around a open space. This arrangement afforded a high degree of control of the inner space, a possibility to defence against external aggression. This kind of courtyard became a symbolic value and was chosen as the model for construction of many holy places (Agora, Forum etc.) The function of a square has been changed throughout the history. Firstly it was a market, a parade place, a ceremonial place. Now in our times a square has lost its primary function. This spatial type waits for rediscovery. This could happen only when it can acquire new functions, like commercial activities, community activities (town halls, libraries, concert halls etc.) A square should generate activities twenty-four hours a day.

A street is a product of the spread of a settlement. Houses have been built on all available free spaces around the central square. The street provides a framework for the distribution of land. It has more functional character than a square. A street performs the distribution of people and goods.

The author describes different types of streets – a pure residential street, and a commercial street. The most important problem of a present residential street are: the relationship between a pedestrian and a car, the problem of parking spaces, the privacy of a flat, the problem with the traffic noise, public open spaces and also the aesthetic quality of adjacent houses. A commercial street has very similar problems, the distribution of pedestrians and cars brings difficult technological solutions. All this illustrates the conflict of interests between transportation demands and living qualities. Results are for example pedestrian zones with no car traffic.

In the next part is formulated the typology of urban space and spatial forms and their derivatives. They result from three basic shapes: square, circle and triangle. Shown are all possible combinations and alternations. Thereinafter the author describes, in elementary forms, different building sections, street elevations from a pierced facade to a window-less facade, the different morphological types of squares, the intersection between a square and streets and how they all affect urban space,

The Chapter 3 is dedicated to problems of the city of Stuttgart. The material included in this chapter was assembled as a part of a course which was given by the author from the year 1973 during four semesters. The motivation for this course and its projects was the devastated situation of the city centre. Original structure of streets and houses was deeply damaged during the Second World War. After the war, the "car-oriented" programme of redevelopment divided the former coherent structure into a large number of small islands isolated in heavy traffic.

The author outlines his own way of how to regenerate the city. His aim is to return the downtown Stuttgart to the pedestrians. Particular examples introduced within this book are represented on an idealistic basis. However, all of them are thoroughly practical – technically, legally and financially realistic. The ideal spatial conditions are in the focus of this projects. Author submits unconventional solutions. He quotes historical forms of architecture, but he re-interprets them in a new way. Author changes priorities in the process of urban planning. Streets, which have lost their primary function, are newly re-designed for pedestrians. The technical problems of car traffic are not important. It is the human scale of space that is important.

In the first part of this chapter is very deeply described the development of the town from the 15th century. The most important hit, which has changed its character, were several air-raids during the Second World War. At the end of the war, about 60 percent of the city was destroyed. After the war the recovery has brought

modern architecture into the city centre. At present about 650 000 people live in Stuttgart.

In the next parts the author describes his proposals for the reconstruction of devastated urban areas. Above all they are: the Station area, the University area, the Rotebuehlplatz, the Oesterreichische Platz, the Wilhelmsplatz, the Charlottenplatz or the Schlossgarten. In all projects Rob Krier is documenting their present state with photos, maps and schemes. In the comparison with proposals will Rob Krier explain firstly the spatial problems and his ideas. He will not offer a solution which could be universally usable. He only explains his theory on particular problems.

Important and very influential in this proposals is his formal language. He distinguishes from other modern architects with a very history-based proposals. His buildings and urban spaces look like from 19th century, they represent an idealistic (romantic) world.

This kind of architecture evoked a big response at the beginning of the seventies. It has brought him a big popularity and his theory was one of the most powerful in its time.

He put grounds to the post-modern architecture of the end of seventies and eighties.

An important point, which I have understood from his theory is "the return of a city to pedestrians". It does not mean only the problems of traffic or distribution of people. It means a complex view on the recovery of a urban space. The regeneration of a devastated urban space he understands in larger context. Therefore in my thesis I will deal with complex attitude towards problems of devastated city parts.

Pedestrians are always in the subject of high priority. A street or a square is related to them. However, problems of traffic and parking are not omitted. Rob Krier deals carefully with spatial relations. He describes very fine differences between various geometrical forms and analyses how they influence the reception of a space.

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