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RENEWAL OF SELECTED FRAGMENTS OF RZESZÓW BASED ON THE LOST SYMBOLS AND FUNCTIONS OF PLACES AS A MEANS OF STRENGTHENING THE CITY'S IDENTITY

The article discusses the method of revitalizing public space, consisting of recreating local stories, after which no artefacts have survived, and telling them to pedestrians by means of innovative interactive objects of small architecture and urban furniture. The method is based on literature research, as well as observation and descriptive analysis of the surrounding landscape. Development plans for two fragments of the center of Rzeszów are described in detail: the crossing of Grunwaldzka and Bernardyńska streets and the part of Mickiewicz street. In the first location, the sculpture presenting life-size figure of photographer Edward Janusz, whose atelier functioned near-by at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, is planned to be placed. One of the elements of the sculpture is to be an old-fashioned camera with a digital camera inside, which will take photos of interested persons, and insert the contemporary photo into the photo taken from this place by Edward Janusz. The reference to cultural heritage in the Mickiewicz street restoration project comes down to recalling non-existent buildings in an augmented reality environment, as well as to reminding Two Pump Square, a former meeting place for residents coming for water. The function of former water pumps will be realised with the use of two bicycle wheel pumps and movable seats will be located in the vicinity.

Keywords: public space, city's identity, cultural heritage, innovations

1. Introduction

Rzeszów is a city that has transformed during the last 80 years from a small town into a 200,000-strong city. Now, population growth is caused by settlement of young people who after completing education in Rzeszów find in it a friendly haven for their further life stage. The population growth is accompanied by the city's spatial expansion. Rzeszów's quantitative success coincides with development of entities whose activity bases on the high technology industry.

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The city's advertising slogan is: *Rzeszów - the Capital of Innovation*. Such an image brand does not fully express the city's identity, because it does not refer at all to its heritage, which although is not clearly visible in such the transformed city, but finding it is not impossible. The author is searching for the ways of strengthening the identity of Rzeszów by reorganizing public space, which would expose better the city's cultural heritage shaping awareness about him in its new inhabitants. The achievement of this goal is proposed by enriching the public space with innovative objects that would universalize the memory of the heritage in a way adequate to the chosen image brand of Rzeszów. The idea of the concept is an evocation to realize in selected fragments of the historical city centre of three areas of time: the presence of past things, the presence of present things and the presence of future things [2]. The author believes that making within the historic centre of Rzeszów the public space more attractive will have a positive impact on the intensity of its exploration, and bringing the residents closer together and focusing their attention on the city's identity indicators will strengthen the sense of belonging to the local community.

2. Well organized public space and heritage as key factors creating identity of the city and its inhabitants

The word identity refers to continuing and remaining the same, as well as being separate and distinct [4]. The identity of the city is considered by the identity of its inhabitants, i.e. their individual sense of personal relationship with the city, as well as a set of those features of public space that stand out with unprecedented specificity. There is a close relationship between the identity of the spatial structure and the identities of its users. Cities last longer than people. The identity of old cities is due to their history. It is visible in the spatial arrangement and through preserved architectural objects. In relation to events whose material traces have been blurred, it remains in memory passed down from generation to generation. This condition is disturbed if the city is experiencing dynamic development, which is usually accompanied by a significant influx of people from outside. Mental identification of settlers with the city requires making an effort. The city authorities and local leaders, whose degree of identification with the city and motivation to act on its behalf are very high, should take on this challenge. The city's identity, which is the basis for the integration of newcomers, should refer to its history, but also take into account the circumstances that have become the reason for the sudden dynamic development of the city.

The quality of public space is presented as an important factor influencing the attitudes of residents in modern urban planning. Well-organized public space encourages people to stay in it for periods of time longer than just to meet the necessary needs, while being together with unknown people builds a sense of community. Fragments of public space that are organized as eye-catching

microcosms of meanings play a special role for the identity of cities. In the literature they are called places [15].

Place cannot be anywhere. The potential contained in the landscape, expressed through its physical features and imaginary contents emanating from them, is necessary. It is such a set of properties characterizing a specific section of space, which is referred to as *genius loci* [13]. Subsequently, the creation of the place is decided by a conscious choice called heritage, consisting in the intention to consolidate and pass on to posterity those testimonies of the past that respond to current demand and it is possible to applicate them in contemporary use [1]. Thanks to the designer's perceptiveness and creativity, they can be perpetuated in forms that tell about the past, present and future of the place [9]. So that the city could be read like a book [8].

The most attractive places where poetry and symbolism are combined with good organization of public space are becoming effective landmarks for the city's users. Their presence is necessary for the possibility of full assimilation of the city and identification with it [11]. Because attractive places entice people whose activity entices even more people to these places [6], attractive public spaces in city centres not only counteract the economic degradation of downtown caused by the outflow of permanent residents, but even contribute to their economic growth [16].

An important problem facing the designer of any public space, including one that due to the presence of *genius loci* in it aspires to the rank of place, is a good design of seating places. Benches that are most often chosen by pedestrians are those that provide a view of events in the environment, and especially allow observation of other people. A well-equipped public space should offer various seating options to create opportunities for different, larger and smaller groups of users to stay in it, as well as for individuals [5]. If there are many eye-catching landscape features in the environment, the placement of the benches should allow to choose to observe any of them. The last issue is the arrangement of the benches so that it allows you to choose not only sitting back to back or face to face, but also to place people in relation to each other in intermediate positions, which are more conducive to establishing communication [14].

3. The goal and methodology of the research

The research conducted has been focused on a problem specific for Rzeszów, but the applied methodology can be adopted in any localisation. The generalized goal of the study can be described as the transformation of selected fragments of the city, characterized by high landscape and historical potential, from places imperceptible into centres of emanating *genius loci*, which would attract people.

In the author's opinion, the main reasons for the fact that certain places are not expressive in the city's fabric, despite trumps in the form of a rich history

and preserved architectural objects remembering it, are disorder traffic and the lack of the objects or institutions able to generate high activity of residents. Permitting car traffic means that car users do not focus their attention on the landscape. First of all, traveling by car they are surrounded by a private space, that means the car's interior, which weakens the perception of the outside world [10]. Secondly, the attention of drivers is focused on analyzing the movement of other vehicles or searching for a place to park as close as possible to the destination. The attention of pedestrians and cyclists moving in such conditions, in turn, focuses on avoiding collisions with passing or parked cars. Therefore, the first point of the research work is to outline the boundaries of space that should be intended only for pedestrians, along with recommendations regarding the diversion of existing car traffic.

In the research issue aimed at the qualitative transformation of specific fragments of urban fabric, it is difficult to apply quantitative and statistical research methods. The study must be based on the method of logical argumentation, i.e. on analysis and logical construction. Useful research techniques are literature studies covering historical sources, people's memories and archival photographs and maps, as well as participatory observations and descriptive analyses [12]. With their help, you can visually reconstitute the nature of original human activity in a given area and determine the points from which the perception of the most valuable landscape elements is the best.

The next stage of the research boils down to the precise route tracing so as to force pedestrians to observe what is most valuable, and to arouse interest in their past by enriching public space with objects referring to the former functions of places. Making the space available to pedestrians is the basic generator of activity. A side effect is a change in the speed of the movement. The space travelled on foot is penetrated by the eyesight much more accurately than the space travelled by car or at least by bicycle [6]. Creation a crossing point of routes in a transformed place is very valuable. The location of additional activity generators, e.g. in the form of atypical small architecture objects, including seating furniture, will contribute to the creation of a real nodal place, whose surroundings will attract the activities of entities offering services previously absent in this location.

4. Cases studies

4.1. Grunwaldzka street

Grunwaldzka Street was in the past a communication route leading traffic towards Sandomierz. Currently, its section between Kościuszko and Sobieski Streets (Fig. 1) serves as a promenade. The crucial point on this section is the intersection with Bernardyńska Street in the form of a small square. The closing of the perspective of Bernardyńska Street visible from this place is the silhouette

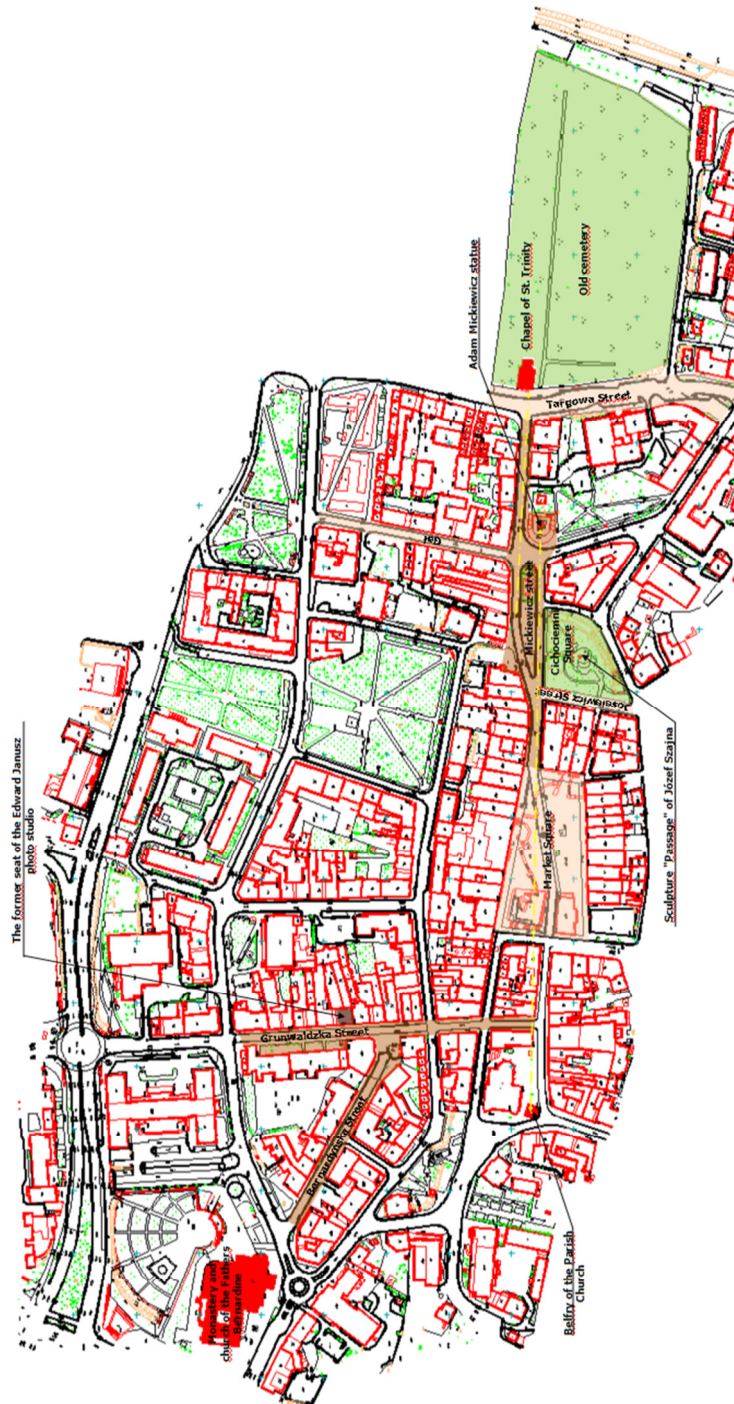


Fig. 1. The fragment of Rzeszów with places considered in the article

of the 17th century church of the Bernardine's. This landscape value is not exposed, because the section of the street adjacent to Grunwaldzka Street is actually a half-official - half-wild parking lot. Pedestrian traffic along Bernardyńska Street practically does not exist, because it is discouraged by narrow pavements and the lack of service offer that would generate this traffic.

Near the street intersection, in the building at Grunwaldzka 18, Edward Janusz (Fig. 2a) opened in 1886 a photo studio [7]. Thanks to his extraordinary talent, he quickly gained the reputation of an excellent portraitist. Having the photo taken by Janusz became the ambition of the inhabitants of Rzeszów and the surrounding area. The fame of the atelier (Fig. 2b), which was to 1968 managed by the founder's family, outlasted after the death of Edward Janusz in 1914. The studio was finally closed in the 1990s. In 1997, the legend of Edward Janusz was revived again. In the attic of the house where the atelier was located, 30,000 glass negatives were preserved in perfect condition. They are a unique resource of the cultural heritage of Rzeszów. The idea of reviving this place at the intersection of the streets is based on the legend of Edward Janusz and the photo he took, which shows a view from this square towards the Bernardine church.

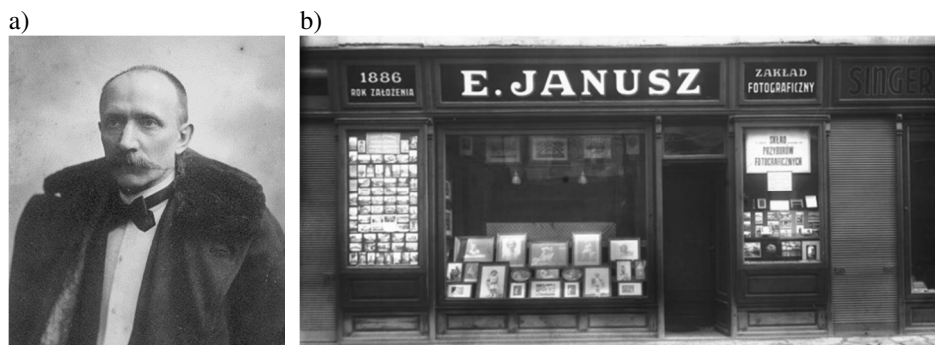


Fig. 2. a) Edward Janusz, b) Edward Janusz's photo studio



Fig. 3. The concept and localization of sculpture of Edward Janusz with his old-fashioned camera equipped with a modern digital camera inside

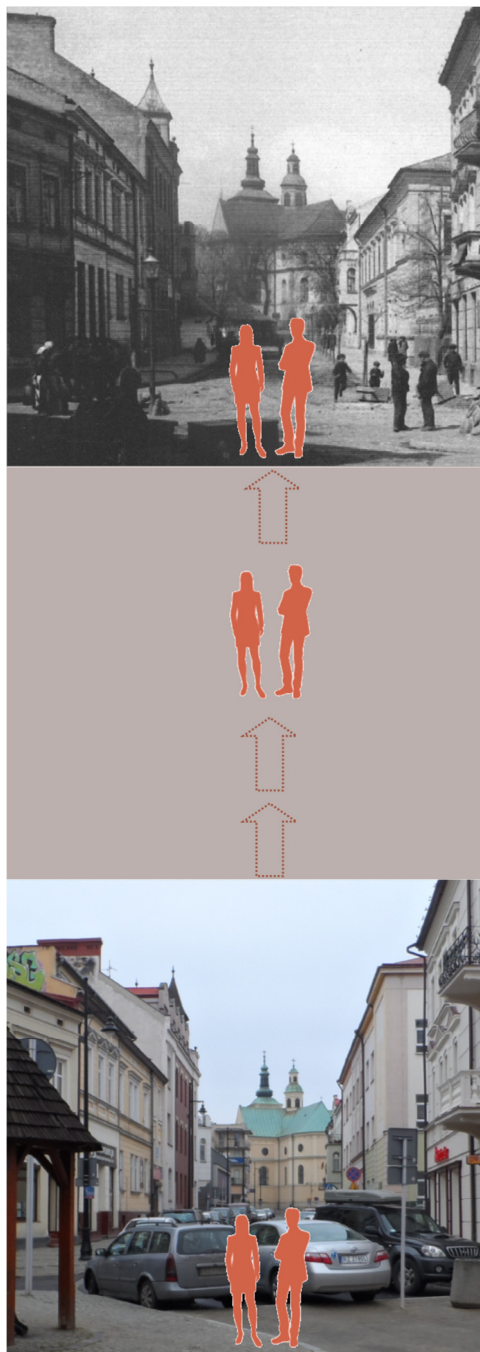


Fig. 4. The concept of making photos referring to the historical appearance of the place, with the use of the camera installed in the monument of Edward Janusz

The author's concept includes placing a sculpture at the crossing of Grunwaldzka and Bernardyńska Streets, showing the life-size figure of Edward Janusz, who is taking a photo with an old-fashioned camera placed on a tripod (Fig. 3). The model of the nineteenth-century camera will be equipped with a digital camera, photographing willing people using a dedicated smartphone application. The original photo taken by Edward Janusz is planned to be used as the background on which the photographed persons will be presented. The project also involves placing next to movable benches, which would allow changing the observed view in accordance with preferences of resting people, as well as switching off car traffic on the dead end of Bernardyńska Street. After the revitalization of this place, residents of Rzeszów and visiting the city, just like they used to, will be able to "go to Janusz" to take a picture, and also observe the "work" of a 19th century photographer (Fig. 4).

4.2. Mickiewicz street

Mickiewicz Street connects the Market Square with Targowa Street (Fig. 4). It is one of the oldest streets in Rzeszów. It used to be an exit road to the east. For almost 120 years, residents were also undergoing their last trip this road. At the end of the street there is the Old Cemetery with the classical chapel of St. Trinity. In the middle part the street was once narrower than today. The buildings marking the southern side of the street were standing in the place of the nowadays strip separating roadways and they formed the spaces of two piazzas non-existing today. On both piazzas there were pumps, which through the utility function integrated the community of nearby houses [3]. The buildings were demolished during the German occupation in the period of World War II. The tightly built-in place was replaced by an open space in which two street roadways were marked out. The loss was compensated by the unveiling of the viewing axis marked out by the bell tower of the parish church and the monument of Adam Mickiewicz. Unfortunately, the axis is located on the southern roadway, where traffic is allowed. In turn, allowing traffic and parking cars on the northern road deprives pedestrians of the possibility of perceiving the chapel of St. Trinity. The qualities of the street are aggravated by the presence of a public toilet, while they are strengthened by the vicinity of the successfully arranged space of Cichociemni Square, with the sculpture of Józef Szajna "Passage".

In response to the announcement made by the mayor of Rzeszów of the intention to revitalize Mickiewicz street combined with the elimination of car traffic, the author prepared a concept for developing a section of this street between the crossings with Joselewicz and Gałęzowski streets. The project includes the following elements:

- directing pedestrian and cyclist traffic,
- restoring the memory of former buildings by marking the place occupied by buildings in the street pavement and recreating their solids in an augmented reality environment,

- reminder about Two Pumps Square by installing stationary bicycle pumps,
- reactivation of the integrating street function by organizing a place creating a "city salon", equipped with sets of rotating benches whose orientation in space can be adjusted for the needs of meetings in larger or smaller groups, or the organization of the audience for events taking place on one side.

The condition of canalizing the traffic of pedestrians and cyclists is to eliminate car traffic. The demarcation of a pedestrian promenade is envisaged on the southern side of the northern roadway, while the southern roadway is to be converted into a pedestrian street along with the location within it of a set of seats forming the so-called city lounge. Cyclists will have the separated space between areas once occupied in the past by buildings (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. The concept of organization of the space within Mickiewicz street



Fig. 6. The perspective of Mickiewicz street: a) historical view, b) nowadays view with marked the solid of non-existing building

The starting point for the presentation of former buildings in augmented reality technology is to build a digital model made on the basis of preserved maps, drawings and photographs. Access to the model is assumed using stereoscopic stationary devices, which also would emit a signal allowing for omni-directional view of objects with the use of a smartphone and a special application. The intention is not to present buildings with photographic

accuracy, but to show contour ghost-houses superimposed on the image of the real environment (Fig. 6).

The basic procedure to restore the memory of Square of Two Pumps (Fig. 7a) will be the installation of two bicycle pumps, one of which could refer to a traditional tire pump in the form (Fig. 7b), the other – to a street well (Fig. 7c). The location of pumps and more bicycle racks in their vicinity, together with the presence of a nearby city salon, will restore the former social function, orienting it towards the integration of the cyclist's community.

The location of the municipal salon is planned in a place previously occupied by demolished buildings, from which it is possible to perceive the three dominants: the Mickiewicz monument (Fig. 8a), the sculpture "Passage" (Fig. 8b) and the parish belfry (Fig. 8c). The living room is to reflect the idea of a house in which residents - inhabitants of Rzeszów can feel at ease, which will be confirmed by the possibility of free turning the seats in installed benches. It is anticipated that the benches will be combined into three-piece modules, in which the rotation of the seats will be interdependent, as a result of joining them by means of mechanisms hidden under the surface of the promenade (Fig. 9). The double symbolism characterize the correlation of bench rotations: inhabitants of a shared house do not operate on their own, and the future, although unknown and multiple, is determined by the existed circumstances. The configuration of the benches in addition to expressing this symbolism, meets the needs of people coming in groups or individually, wanting to maintain a minimum of intimacy in the public space or seeking integration with other people, as well as having different preferences in perceiving architectural landscape views. The multitude of seats means that everyone will be able to use this space according to their preferences.

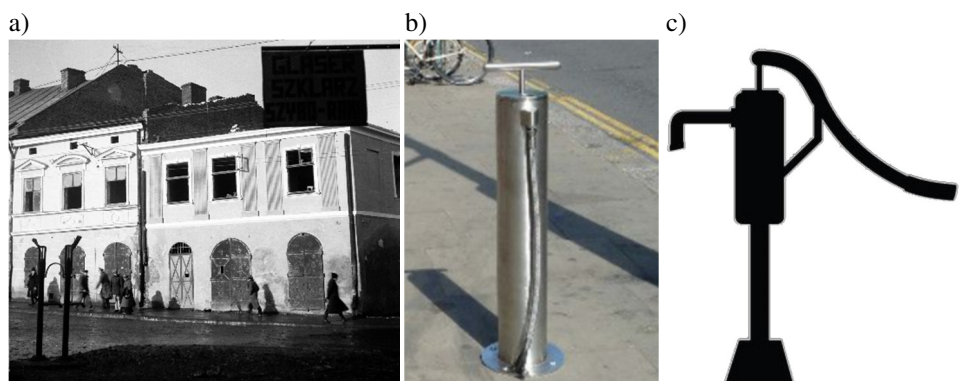


Fig. 7. Two Pumps Square: a) historical photo, b, c) ideas of the pumps for bike tires



Fig. 8. The dominants visible from Mickiewicz street: a) the Mickiewicz monument, b) the sculpture "Passage", c) the parish belfry



Fig. 9. The concept of rotary benches

5. Conclusion

In the author's opinion, the key achievement of the presented methodology of revitalizing public space is to reconstruct local stories after which no artefacts have survived and to tell it with the help of modern devices to pedestrians traversing the city space. The effectiveness of the method is first difficult to assess at the stage preceding the actual implementation in public space, and secondly, it depends to a large extent on the inventiveness of the researcher - the designer of public space development, as well as the artistry of the designer of small architecture objects. The evaluation of a project implemented in real terms can be made by collecting the opinions of city residents, and in the most objective way, by measuring the change in pedestrian traffic in the area.

The article presents ideas of spatial changes in two parts of the strict centre of Rzeszów, whose potential is not fully exploited. They can be treated as a part of a wider district revitalization plan, which due to the limited volume of the article has not been presented in it. It is also possible to tell other stories using appropriately selected means. The author believes that the use of unusual, unparalleled functional solutions in elements of small architecture and urban furniture will influence into an increase in interest in the part of the city where huge heritage capital is contained.

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