

ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACE BASED ON SOCIAL COOPERATION

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ABSRTACT

Aim. The subject of this work are contemporary methods of designing public space based on cooperation with city users. The typical architecture design process requires transformation to fully use resident's knowledge. Cooperation of architect and experts representing social fields is essential to understand space users and to gather information which helps to design functional space.

Methods. The author of the article describes various procedures of designing public space involving citizens, based on experiences of Warsaw (Poland) between 2016 and 2017. The analysis of design processes, during which the information and opinions concerning particular space are gathered, is conducted from the architect's point of view.

Results and Conclusion. The gap between designers and inhabitants is one of encountered difficulties. The way of filling in this gap is the presented and analyzed process of cooperation with specialists representing social fields. The essential conclusion of the article is the importance of careful preparation of the consultation process and interpretation of the research. It helps to understand space users and their expectations that should be reflected in architectural design.

Key words: architecture, urbanism, social cooperation, public space, participation.

INTRODUCTION

The city is a reflection of both: dynamic changes and solid factors. Is a result of topography and climate impact but moreover is a result of historical and economical movements (Eberle, 2007). On every stage of changes architecture was inseparably bonded with society. "First and foremost, architecture and urban design are services. They are responsible for certain tasks, which they have to fulfill as well as possible" (Nerdinger, 2007, p. 76). Architecture is designed to meet diverse human needs; physical, as well as cultural and social.

Davos Declaration, the result of Conference of Ministries of Culture held in 2018, describes the need of obtaining high-quality building culture (Baukultur). It concerns diverse aspects of well-functioning space as a result of interdisciplinary discourse. "A high-quality Baukultur is therefore expressed in the application of conscious, well-debated design to every building and landscap-

ing activity, prioritising cultural values over short-term economic gain. High-quality Baukultur thus not only fulfils functional, technical and economic requirements, but also satisfies people's social and psychological needs." (Davos Declaration, 2018, p.3). Inhabitants expectations and aspirations are reflected in space they live in and work. As the result people's need to influence the space is visible and evident. Davos Declaration also emphasizes this particular aspect: "to be successful, high-quality Baukultur also requires the participation of civil society and an informed and sensitised public." (Davos Declaration, 2018, p.4).

Social cooperation has a significant impact on the design process. Complements architecture analysis, revealing unique knowledge of space and the way of using it. The measurable factors, such as urban context, structure of urban tissue, way of commuting, relations and proportions between public and private space are taken into account on the first stage of designing. Social cooperation helps to describe the unmeasurable factors, determined by subjective perception of the space, as well as experience and preferences of its users. In this case, the cooperation of architects and specialists representing social fields becomes crucial to gather and analyze information helping to shape public space.

Another important factor is well-informed society. Through the social cooperation, inhabitants not only are able to influence the design, but also to familiarize themselves with the process of upcoming changes. It results in acceptance and usage of designed public space.

SOCIAL COOPERATION

Public participation is a term describing social activity in planning process. "Today, this concept encompasses many types of practices and collaborative participation processes that address a wide range of planning issues, both physical and social" (Beraman, 2017, p. 7). Polish Spatial Planning and Land Development Act constricts social participation to public discussion and making remarks on the proposal for strategic documents of Spatial Planning Studies and Local Plans (Act of 27 March 2003 Spatial Planning and Land Development). Other forms of social cooperation, according to Spatial Planning and Land Development Act, are not regulated, mandatory or binding. Although the Act of Council of The City of Warsaw describes procedures and forms of social consultation processes (Act no. LXI/1691/2013 of Council of The City of Warsaw, 2013). Furthermore, Warsaw City Hall established Social Communication Center (Centrum Komunikacji Społecznej) and Social Consultation and Co-decision with the Residents Department (Wydział Konsultacji Społecznych i Współdecydowania z Mieszkańcami). Both departments are responsible for conducting consultation processes in Warsaw described as "dialogue, the purpose of which is informing residents about some essential matters, as well as finding out what they think about them". The same document states that "public consultation is an advisory voice on the basis of which the office makes the final decision" (Social

consultation – making decisions with residents, n.d.). Every procedure of public space design process is related to its specific location and certain social groups. Although the formulas of competition, workshop etc. are crucial for planning social cooperation processes. Public consultation plays the fundamental role in social cooperation procedures presented in the following chapter.

CASE STUDIES

The following chapter describes selected methods of involving residents in the process of shaping their city on the example of Warsaw in 2016/2017.

Local Centers

The Warsaw Local Centers (LC) program was launched in 2016 and assumed the transformation of local city spaces. The main goal was to improve them and adapt them to the current user's needs (Domaradzki, 2016). The establishment of the LC project was to involve the residents in redesigning process of spaces in which they function on a daily basis. 32 Warsaw locations matching the definition of a local center have been selected for the project. The main role was played by location and accessibility for residents, as well as possibility of carrying out many functions, primarily social ones. For the pilot project at the turn of 2016 and 2017, 10 locations were chosen. During the tender process teams of architects and sociologists were selected to design transformations for the indicated space.

The design process for each location proceeded in a similar manner. Residents participated directly in the decision making during the various meetings (example of LC Grunwaldzki Square and LC Ursus Niedźwiadek):

- Information meeting,
- Information walk,
- Local consultation point,
- Workshop,
- Local consultation point with physical model presenting the design,
- Summing up meeting and discussion,
- Suggestions and comments received by e-mail.

The whole process lasted 3 months. The architectural design was preceded by series of social consultations which were to illustrate challenges of the given place and identify the resident's expectations and needs. The form of meetings and the way of gathering information was prepared by the team of sociologists. In the next stage, an urban physical model was prepared, which was the subject of discussion with residents during further meetings. It was one of the most important steps because it enabled residents to imagine future changes in space. After a number of meetings, a final architectural-urban concept was prepared and presented to the residents.

The designing process was promoted in various ways: by posters, leaflets, email information sent to the local organizations, articles in the local newspa-

pers and departments website. However, according to the district's inhabitant factors, the number of participating residents was insufficient. The author of the article indicates data of two LC design processes.

1. LC Grunwaldzki Square (Report of Social Consultation Process for Local Center - Grunwaldzki Square, 2016):
Żoliborz District - 8.5 sq. km area, 50 825 residents (GUS, 2016).
Number of participants in each meeting:
 - Information meeting - 31 participants,
 - Workshop - 19 participants,
 - Summing up meeting 60 participants.
2. LC Ursus Niedźwiadek (Report of Social Consultation Process for Local Center - Niedźwiadek, 2016):
Ursus District - 9 sq. km area, 58 233 residents (GUS, 2016).
 - Information meeting - 13 participants,
 - Workshop (held in park) - 80 participants,
 - Workshop - 4 participants,
 - Summing up meeting 31 participants.

Such a small percentage of residents taking part in designing process is insufficient. Every gathered information is valuable, however the data is deficient to create credible image of the space and its users.

Another difficulty in familiarizing with the space was the kind of gathered information. The research method, on every stage of the process, consisted of question: "What and whether you like or not?" (Report of Social Consultation Process of Local Center - Grunwaldzki Square, 2016). Final report lacks the answer to the question "why?". In effect, architects received general and unrelated opinions without valuable motives.

The most positive aspect of the LC designing process was the opportunity of meeting architects with inhabitants. It was one of the essential stages - letting introduce architects to the space users, and attempt to understand them. Although recognizing the architects was equally important. The designers ceased to be anonymous which helps to develop relation based on trust.

Ultimately, only some of the 10 selected locations have a chance to implement the designed changes in life. Problems arise from the ownership structure or technical infrastructure that prevent the project from being completed in upcoming years. These difficulties might influence the future cooperation with residents in designing processes, which might be not perceived as reliable one.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN COMPETITIONS

Architectural competitions, in which the voice and opinion of the residents are taken into account, are a new proposition for obtaining design solutions in Poland. One of the models, in which social cooperation was conducted, will be introduced in the following chapter.

The process involves consultations with residents before the announcement of the competition. At the end of the consultation process an extensive report is prepared and attached to the competition regulations. It is available to architects participating in the competition and jury. Thus becomes one of the guidelines for design.

The following examples present two consultation processes conducted during the Warsaw competitions.

1. Streets of New Prague Competition (Report of Social Consultation Process for Streets of New Prague, 2017):
 - Consultation points (4 meeting held in different locations),
 - Information walk and workshop,
 - Suggestions and comments received by e-mail.
2. Five Corners Square Competition (Report of Social Consultation Process for Five Corners Square, 2016):
 - Collecting opinion about Five Corners Square (interviews, email questionnaires),
 - Architecture walks,
 - Information meeting organized for entrepreneurs, institutions and housing cooperatives,
 - Information meeting for residents,
 - Collecting distributed postcards with answers to the questions: "What I like in the neighborhood?" and "What should be changed?"

Number of participants taking part in consultation process:

1. Streets of New Prague Competition:
 - North Prague District - 11 sq. km area, 65 904 residents (GUS, 2016, p.??).
 - Information walk and workshop - 20 participants.
2. Five Corners Square Competition:
 - Center District -16 sq. km area, 118 301 residents (GUS, 2016, p.).
 - Architecture walks - 50 participants,
 - Opinions collected from postcards - 432.

The designing process was promoted in similar ways as Local Center process. For both competitions were designed and distributed postcards informing about the process and dates of meetings. However Five Corners Square, located in the city center, was additionally promoted by stickers placed on the pavements and windows.

The design process itself was carried out in a manner typical for this kind of procedure. Participants (architects) were tasked to submit an architectural proposal for a given topic within a specified time. All works were evaluated by the appointed competition jury consisting of several up to a dozen members. As a result of jury's meetings, one concept was selected and recommended for implementation - awarding the first prize.

Public Procurement Law regulates the minimum number of the jury: "The jury shall be composed of at least 3 persons appointed and recalled by the head of the contracting authority" and its competences: "The jury shall be composed

exclusively of persons having the qualifications enabling them to evaluate the submitted designs, and where specific provisions require from participants in the contest particular professional authorisations to execute the design, at least a third of the jury members, including its President, must likewise hold the required authorisations." (Act of 29 January 2004 Public Procurement Law). Typically, the jury is composed of architects and clerks of local authority or district council. Such practice results in the lack of interdisciplinary discourse during the proceeding. The absence of resident's representative and sociologists, as external experts, might result in omission of the valuable information gathered during the consultation process. Nevertheless, the procedure of introducing social groups representatives into competition process is also noticeable. The external experts supporting the jury were invited to the process of the competition for the Aleja Marii Dąbrowskiej in Komorów reconstruction, organized by the Powiat Pruszkowski (Oddział Warszawski SARP, 2017). Social groups representatives consulted anonymous designs. The jury was obligated to take their opinion into account. As a result, such a proceeding, ensures that valuable resident's voice is not omitted.

CONCLUSIONS

Poland is facing changes of perceiving public space design process. Various procedures of social cooperation and interdisciplinary discourse are implemented respecting the acts of Polish law. Although the designing formula matches specific location and certain social groups. One of the encountered difficulty is gap between the designers and inhabitants. Architects use professional language and, according to their field, perceive space in other way. One of the methods of filling in this gap is cooperation with specialist representing social fields. Teamwork becomes essential for collecting diverse information and helps to understand the resident's needs. Space user is a valuable source of conscious knowledge of the city as well as source of information which is unaware of.

The selected examples present a several methods of obtaining information through the particular quality researches. Sociologist is a link between architect and space user. It is crucial to understand the way of using the space and the inhabitant's expectations. In chosen examples of social cooperation processes lacked the answer to the question "why the space should look like this?". The motives of human behavior in particular surrounding would indicate adequate architectural solutions for public space. As the article indicates - implemented quality research its insufficient for the architect's work.

The lacking research including observation helps to gather information according to users age, gender, activity engagement, size of groups etc. (The Open Public Life Data Protocol, 2017). The quantity research helps to identify and describe present space users. The observation process is also essential in identifying barriers and highlighting the positive aspects of the city, as long as moving and using the space is intuitive. Quality and quantity research complement architectural knowledge.

As can be seen from the presented examples, there is no one recommended procedure that would ensure positive results of social participation in architectural designing process. It can be achieved by implementing various methods of analysing space and their users. Residents might be also introduced into design processes as experts. From the architect point of view the most important is interpretation of quality and quantity research. It is crucial to fully use inhabitant's knowledge in designing functional public space.

Interdisciplinary cooperation creates opportunity of establishing city which reflects dynamic movements inseparably bonded with society, for which architecture serves.

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