

MODERNISATION OF HISTORIC HOUSING COMPLEXES IN PYSKOWICE

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In an Upper Silesian town Pyskowice, there are three urban complexes: a historic centre with traditionally arranged medieval buildings, a housing complex built before World War II for the needs of railway workers and a housing estate built in connection with a planned vast industrial investment for its workers in the socialist realism times. The first complex was subject to the slow transformations related to the cultural changes characteristic for the European culture. Despite the dramatic misfortunes, its 13th-century origins preserved. The two remaining complexes were built as houses for new economic investments. At present, the communities of the estates face the problem of how to further develop the ideological remnants of the estates on their own. A problem of functional integration of the housing complexes, designed as separate ones, occurred. The modernisation works, related to the town development, refer to the fields of town planning and architecture. They also make it possible to observe the technical and technological advancements of the times they were erected. The presented examples of the modernisation works throw light on the cultural awareness of the designers and investors of the times and their understanding of the importance of the notion of surrounding. The newly arising architectural forms demonstrate an interesting reference to the local tradition and the existing forms.

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1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In an Upper Silesian town Pyskowice, there are three urban complexes: a historic centre with traditionally arranged medieval buildings, a housing complex built before World War II for the needs of railway workers and a

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The current development of Pyskowice is based on the Local Development Plan. The observations of how the assumptions of the Plan are realised by specific investments allow the evaluation of their quality and usefulness to the communities. The modernisation works, related to the town development, refer to the fields of town planning and architecture. They also make it possible to observe the technical and technological advancements of the times they were erected. The presented examples of the modernisation works throw light on the cultural awareness of the designers and investors of the times and their understanding of the importance of the notion of surrounding. The newly arising architectural forms demonstrate an interesting reference to the local tradition and the existing forms.

The Local Development Plan provides a frame within which the specific investments are realised. The market economy should rationalise the investments in terms of their functions and the used construction technologies. The arising forms prove the cultural awareness of their designers and investors. What particular modernisation and developmental works in Pyskowice have been undertaken since the system changed in 1998? Is the rational, money-ruled economy beneficial for the residents, too? What forms, technologies and materials dominate in new investments? Is the reference made to the already existing forms clear?

Pyskowice is the town in Silesian Voivodeship situated 12km north from Gliwice. It transformed from a village into a town, thanks to its favourable location on the trade route Wrocław – Kraków, over seven hundred years ago. The route separated here into two directions: one to Częstochowa and the other to Kraków. The area of the commune takes 3.114 ha, out of which 1.693 ha is covered by buildings of an urban character.

The first documented information about Pyskowice comes from 1256. It describes the fact that Tomasz, Bishop of Wrocław, grants the tithes from several neighbouring villages to the church of St. Paul in Piscowiczach, acceding to the request to support brothers Lutozat and Lonek, Pisc's sons, the builders of the church. The historians assume that the City Rights were granted

by Władysław I, the Duke of Opole, probably in 1260. In 1532, after the death of Jan, the Duke of Opole, Pyskowice became the property of the Habsburgs. The elaborated then "urbariusz" (land register) informs us that there were 34 houses around the market and 63 ones in the surrounding streets. They were small, wooden and thatched with rushes or straw, placed on narrow plots. The town was surrounded by an earth embankment and a moat filled with water from the river Drama.

Two gates, Tarnogórska and Toszecka, were placed along the defensive fortifications. There was a wooden town hall in the market square. The population of the town was approximately 500 dwellers.

Numerous markets were held in Pyskowice due to the town favourable location on an important trade route.

The further development of the town took place in connection with the destructions of the Hussite wars in the 15th century, the Thirty Years' War, including winning it in 1642 by the Swedish, the Silesian War II and the Seven Years' War. The subsequent destructions were followed by rapid recovery and further development of the town. The number of population of the town grew up to 1862 dwellers in 1787. Two charcoal-fired furnaces for pig iron smelting were built between the 17th and 19th centuries. After a tragic fire in 1822, which resulted in more than half burnt houses and public buildings, the reconstruction was carried out according to the plans restoring the thirteenth century system.

After World War I, Silesian Uprisings and the Plebiscite, Pyskowice were incorporated to Germany. An important event for the town development was a railway, built in 1898, which connected Gliwice and Opole. It was then that the housing estate for railway workers started to be built and the railway station started to be modernised.

For a short time, Pyskowice was a final station, and then it was connected to Gliwice, Zabrze – Biskupice, thus becoming an important railway junction. A systematic and planned modernisation of the station, carried out at the turn of the centuries, was ceased by the events taking place in the 1920s – connected with the Plebiscite and the Silesian Uprisings. During the 1930s and in the years of World War II, the extension of the marshalling yard was being built, of which western part was completed and eastern one was not completed. Simultaneously, the housing estate for railway workers was built.

While the damages after World War II were inconsiderable, the entry of the Red Army resulted in the destruction of 32 buildings. In March 1945, Pyskowice were taken over by Polish authorities. By the end of the 1940s the burnt buildings were restored and their historic arrangement was preserved.

On 5th of December, 1964, a 5-kilometre section of a road to the newly built railway station, Pyskowice – Miasto, was opened to the public. In June

1986, the first section of the rail Kolejowy Ruch Regionalny was commenced. It was planned to shuttle with a high frequency, just as it was organised in Trójmiasto, between stations Pyskowice and Mysłowice. The beginning of the 90's are characterised by the political changes in Poland, which caused a decline in rail transport and the closing down of unprofitable lines, Pyskowice railway junction including.

At the beginning of the 50s, the socialist-realism housing estate was completed. In the 80's, a bypass of the town was built, moving the transit transport in the direction Kraków-Opole out of the old town.

During the 70s and 80s, new housing estates were built with the use of prefabricated materials technology. The height and the layout of the buildings refer to the socialist-realism estate built in the 40s and 50s. Residential estates, as well as the factories and other urban infrastructure facilities were built according to the Local Development Plan.



Three urban complexes were formed in Pyskowice over the centuries:

1. Primary connected with the location of the town in a traditional medieval system, in a form of rectangular quarters with an oval ring, a town hall at the centrally situated market. The system, in spite of the vicissitudes of fate, wars, and changes in the construction technology was restored by a

conscious decision during the restoration works after the devastations in 1822.

2. An estate complex for the railway workers, which developed together with the railways set up in 1879. It was essentially expanded when the railway junction was being built in the 30s, before the World War II.
3. A socialist-realism housing estate, built in connection with the planned vast industrial investment, the existing neighbouring factories and mines as a housing estate for their workers.



Fig. 1 Urban complexes in Pyskowice, 1 – the medieval system, 2 – the railway housing estate, 3 – the socialist-realism housing estate.

2. URBAN COMPLEX IN PYSKOWICE

The form of the first urban system was designed to surround the town with defensive fortifications. It entered the registry of historical monuments and thus was not substantially rebuilt.

The historical centre underwent natural, evolutionary changes characteristic for the European culture. The dwellers experienced fires, wars, uprisings, industrial and social revolutions.

In 1882, after a series of 11 fires, when majority of buildings was burnt, a planned restoration of the town was commenced. The centre was decided to be rebuilt to respond to the new social needs; the historic layout was maintained, though.

The development of Pyskowice railway junction was accompanied with the construction of the housing estate for its workers. The vast advancements in the construction of the estate took place during the extension of the railway junction, in the 30s until the end of the World War II. The estate was planned along the road adjacent to the railway. Thus, there are railway facilities along one side of the road, and apartment buildings on the other side. The perpendicular access roads converge to form the main street, leading to the historic centre. Their curves are built-up with houses. The estate is stylistically homogeneous in parts realised up to 1945. The war interrupted its construction.



Fig. 2. Historic photograph of the market in Pyskowice.

The housing estate comprises three storey detached buildings with low-standard flats and attics transformed into flats, as well as small single-family terraced houses. There is an inconsiderable range of services. The buildings are of a homogeneous function. There are insignificant recreational areas next to the detached buildings.

After the World War II, in the 70s and 80s, a few housing complexes comprising multi-family four storey buildings were built. They were designed to follow the primary street plan of the town.

At the turn of 1946 and 1947, Joseph Stalin proposed Boleslaw Bierut to locate large metallurgical conglomerate in Poland. A special team, who was to decide on the location of the investment, took into account the area between Gliwice and Pyskowice, area near Skawina, the surroundings of Kopiec Wandy in Kraków as well as at the Vistula River Mouth.



Fig. 3 The medieval street plan around the town hall.



Fig. 4. Buildings in the railway housing estate (author's photo)

At the same time, the construction of a housing estate was commenced in Pyskowice. Undoubtedly, this design also took into account the expected needs of the existing nearby industrial plants. The estate was built in accordance with the principles of socialist realist architecture. However, the main building of the cultural centre or the committee house were not built.

Clear, due to the lack of the further investments, band street system, referring to the housing estates in England, richly decorated with neo-Renaissance architectural details, is equipped with all the basic utility functions. Closed quarters included green recreational areas inside, equipped with sandpits for children.

The estate provides higher-standard flats, thus realising the program of cohabitation of the working class and the working intelligentsia. The ideology behind it assumed class integration between the newcomers, including blue collar workers and managing staff, i.e. people who were directed by the authorities to work here.



Fig.5 Socialist realistic housing estate (author's photograph)

The estate provides a rich variety of town facilities, including health centres, schools, kindergartens, nurseries, retail, catering and services. The services have been situated in detached houses and on the ground floors of houses.

The first complex underwent a slow transformations connected with cultural changes characteristic for the European culture. Despite the dramatic misfortunes, its 13th-century origins preserved. Nowadays, the urban system around the town hall has been inscribed on the register of historical monuments. The two remaining complexes were abruptly deprived of their originally planned functions. The expansion of the railway junction in Pyskowice, continued after World War II, was then ceased, and in consequence it was

liquidated after the transformation period, in the 90s. Its functions were taken over by railway junctions in Gliwice and Kędzierzyn Koźle.

The industrial plants, which the socialist realistic housing estate was to provide the workers with flats, were not built. The existing plants: BUMAR Łabędy S.A. As well as HUTA Łabędy considerably limited the number of employees. All the mentioned above complexes, supplied with residential areas and the surrounding agricultural farm houses, constitute an administrative organism of the town of Pyskowice.

Formal transformations connected with the modernisation activities and the development after the system change in 1998 may be comprised in three groups of subjects:

- Town planning
- Architecture
- Construction techniques and technologies

3. TOWN PLANNING

1. We can observe a rapid growth of residential areas in Pyskowice. Each of the urban complexes is currently vastly exploited by private investors who erect new buildings filling up so-far empty plots, complementing street frontages and forming new ones.
2. New industrial investments are occurring similarly fast, including two logistic centres, a woodwork manufacture, a wholesale for baking industry, and a hydraulic fittings production plant.
3. The basic services are supplemented i.e.: a catholic church at the railway housing estate and a large shopping centre of a large network of international trade near the historic centre.
4. Attractive areas of the former arboretum were sold to a private investor more than 100 hectares of which were intended for residential houses with gardens, however, the implementation of this idea failed to commence.
5. A bypass of the town was modernised at the beginning of the 80's. The most collision cross roads (including the bypass and local roads) were rebuilt, and two others were provided with traffic lights. A petrol station was built in the proximity of one of them. A modern petrol station was built in the immediate vicinity of one of them.

4. ARCHITECTURE

1. The single-family houses demonstrated rich forms (in terms of the building projections and complicated roofs), which was characteristic for the first

years of the transformation period after 1998, then the forms began to be more modest. Simple forms with gable roofs started to dominate. Bungalows, without basements, are becoming increasingly popular.

2. Majority of buildings is erected on the basis of typical designs available in numerous catalogues. It results in very rich architectural forms but also causes a lack of recognizable local style.
3. The buildings comprised in the socialist realism housing estate become subject to systematic repair work. The inventory documentation is completed which may be the basis for further renovation and repair activities. Timber roof trusses are repaired and tails are replaced. The thermal-modernisation activities, related to the roof repairs, cover the details from the socialist realism times.
4. Private investors are adapting fragments of stylish socialist realist buildings to their needs shaping new forms freely.

5. CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGIES

1. The basic technology used in the construction of the walls of houses is a two-layer ceramic brick wall, insulated with lightweight seamless insulation. Extraordinarily, solar collectors and photovoltaic cells occur on the roofs.
2. Big-box stores and industrial buildings are arising as steel structures on footings, shielded with sandwich panels.
3. Roofing of the new sports hall at one of the schools has been based on large-spans glued wood trusses.

6. TRANSFORMATIONS

Despite the exceptional character of the three urban complexes in Pyskowice, they have undergone transformations, typical also for other towns, related with the repair and modernisation activities. The existing Local Development Plan organizes and facilitates the investment process. The conservatory protection of the urban system of the old centre results in a grater discipline as far as the investment decisions are to be made, compared to the socialist realist housing estate which is deprived of such protection.

1. The applied forms and technologies are typical for the modern solutions used all over the world. It is clearly visible that the developers are aware of the rationally applied materials and selected solutions.
2. Taking into account the fact that house projects are commonly searched for in nationwide catalogues proves that there is no need for exploration and cultivation of local architectural forms.

3. The buildings in the railway housing estate have been subject to modernisation works in the slightest degree, which results from their low standard, thus low market value.
4. The emerging industrial plants bring hope for increasing the citizens' wealth, which, in turn, may increase the quantity and quality of undertaken modernisation works.
5. The observed tendency of the rapid growth of suburban residential areas allows us to predict that Pyskowice will evolve to become a town with prevailing single-family-type buildings.

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MODERNIZACJA HISTORYCZNYCH ZESPOŁÓW MIESZKANIOWYCH W PYSKOWICACH

Streszczenie

W górnośląskim mieście Pyskowice, funkcjonują trzy zespoły urbanistyczne: historyczne centrum w tradycyjnym układzie średniowiecznej zabudowy, zespół osiedlowy wybudowany na potrzeby pracowników kolei przed II wojną światową oraz socrealistyczne osiedle mieszkaniowe powstałe w związku z planowaną dużą inwestycją przemysłową, jako zaplecze dla jej pracowników.

Pierwszy zespół poddany został powolnym przemianom związanym ze zmianami kulturowymi charakterystycznymi dla europejskiej kultury. Mimo gwałtownych zdarzeń losowych zachowało się jego XIII -wieczne założenie. Dwa pozostałe zespoły powstały, jako zaplecza mieszkaniowe związane z nowymi przedsięwzięciami gospodarczymi. Obecnie, społeczności osiedli stają wobec konieczności samodzielnego zagospodarowania pozostałości ideologicznego programu swoich osiedli. Zaistniał problem integracji funkcjonalnej, projektowanych, jako odrębne zespołów osiedlowych.

Działania modernizacyjne związane z rozwojem miasta dotyczą zagadnień z dziedziny urbanistyki, architektury oraz pozwalają obserwować ich ówczesne zaawansowanie techniczne oraz technologiczne. Przedstawione przykłady działań modernizacyjnych mogą dać pojęcie o świadomości kulturowej twórców i inwestorów oraz ocenić ich sposób rozumienia kontekstu otoczenia. Interesujące jest odniesienie powstających form architektonicznych do tradycji lokalnej oraz stosunek do form zastanych.

