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MODERN TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN SPACE – THE CASE OF THE TOWN OF MALBORK

WSPÓŁCZESNE TENDENCJE W KSZTAŁTOWANIU PRZESTRZENI MIEJSKIEJ NA PRZYKŁADZIE MIASTA MALBORKA

Key words: arrangement, small architecture, design, public space, green areas, street furniture
Słowa kluczowe: aranżacja, mała architektura, projektowanie, przestrzeń publiczna, tereny zieleni, wyposażenie

Abstract

The article focuses on the general concept of public space in the town and possibilities of arranging and furnishing the space by using the uniform Visual Identification System. The town of Malbork was the object of studies. The main assumption of undertaken work was to encourage the local community to use public space areas in the town. The aim was also to create conditions for the development of relationships, interactions between people and intensification of social links. In addition, attention was paid to improving the functionality and aesthetics of arranged urban space. Based on results of studies, the town was divided into 4 zones: historical, urban I and urban II and the park – recreation. Selecting appropriate elements of furnishings for every zone related the best to the character of the place was the next step.

Streszczenie

Artykuł przybliżył pojęcie przestrzeni publicznej w mieście oraz możliwości jej aranżacji i wyposażenia z wykorzystaniem jednolitego systemu identyfikacji wizualnej miasta. Obiektem badań było miasto Malbork. Głównym założeniem podjętych prac było zachęcenie lokalnej ludności do korzystania z terenów przestrzeni publicznej w mieście. Przyjętym celem było także stworzenie warunków do kształtowania relacji międzyludzkich, wzajemnych interakcji i zacieśniania więzi społecznych. Ponadto zwrócono uwagę na poprawę funkcjonalności i wartości estetycznych zaaranżowanej przestrzeni miejskiej. Na podstawie wyników badań miasto podzielono na 4 strefy: historyczną, miejskie I i II oraz parkowo-rekreacyjną. Kolejnym krokiem było dobranie w każdej ze stref funkcjonalnych elementów wyposażenia, które najlepiej odnosiły się do charakteru miejsca.

INTRODUCTION

Public space fulfils an important role in the life of a man and of the town. Its development method influences perception of the environment significantly. This is the place for the users so it should encourage visiting, support interpersonal relations and various forms of recreation. The form and the colour are fundamental components of space. In case of appropriate combination of those elements we may highlight the space in town, give new shape to the neglected locations, highlight certain elements and show appropriate proportions. Recently, introducing artistic elements into the urban space became fashionable. They are designed for specific places to highlight their identity (Tarajko-Kowalska, 2010).

Aestheticization of urban open spaces may be considered one of the actions serving implementation of the sustainable development idea. Public space development in line with the needs of residents aims at creating the face of the town together improving at the same time the quality of their living. The arrangement of space from aesthetic perspective is also important because the equipment of it determines perception of the urban tissue (Sutkowska, 2006).

Visual identification system in town offers numerous benefits because it may use to the maximum the potential of the location to encourage town residents to visit it. Greenery, lighting, surface, street "furniture" should be designed and selected in a way increasing the aesthetic values of the place as well as improve comfort and create opportunities for meetings of people (Czerniawska, 2012).

The paper aims at presenting the issues concerning urban public space creation, the needs of aesthetic development of it and functionality improvement. The town of Malbork was the object of studies based on the example of which the potential for equipping identified zones using the visual identification system have been presented. The main assumption of the work undertaken was to encourage the local population to use the public spaces in the town and to create conditions for mutual interactions and tightening social relations.

METHODS OF STUDIES

The methods of studies that were used in the paper were related to the accumulation of cartographic materials, necessary documentation and subject related literature. Moreover, the studies included numerous works on site, questionnaire based surveys covering town residents and necessary analyses as well as the design study.

The desk work involved organisation of the collected data, defining guidelines necessary for analysis and elaboration of the concept for the division of the town into zones as well as drafting a proposal of street furniture for each of them presented in graphic format.

The area of study covered the entire area of the town, in particular the green areas situated in each of the zones.

The subject scope was to create the transparent image of the town that considered the needs of the residents.

The scope of studies covered:

- taking the inventory of greenery and objects of small architecture positioned in each of the selected areas;
- photographic documentation of all the areas;
- conducting the conversations with residents concerning the green areas in the town.

The desk work covered analysis and standardisation of the data obtained during site studies. Presentation of the space use and proposing appropriate street furniture for each of the zones was the main component of the work. Selected green areas were also presented in photographs.

After analysing the information together with the results of the conversations, the uniform visual concept of the town was elaborated and street furniture was proposed based of the catalogues of small architecture.

PUBLIC SPACE DEFINITION

According to the Act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development, public space is defined as the area of special importance for satisfying the needs of residents, support establishment of new contacts and strengthening those already established that serves improving the quality of their life because of the location and characteristics and functions of such space. Such an area is designated by the Study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune (Act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development (Dz. U. of 2003 No. 80, item 717 as amended)).

Public space is the common good, the scene for daily life of the community. Satisfying the need for identification, orientation in space, possibility of feeling safe and aesthetics of the surroundings are elements of special importance for the quality of life (Porebska, 2010).

Green areas in centres of towns give the shape to their image thanks to the public space system. Greenery possesses calming properties which has stress relieving influence on the users of the space. Also the view axes and openings are attractions within the space. Public space is an unusually evident type of space that is described by one of its kind organisation, legal status and looks. It is an individual type of space that is based on different dimensions coming down to a single system, i.e. the town (Sutkowska, 2006).

Residents of towns, thanks to their behaviours and activities contribute to creating the cultural space. To establish the urban space not an individual but a larger community is needed. That is why creating so-called “good” space the residents should participate in creating it by participation in the processes of planning and in the public communication platform (Freino, 2009).

Formation of contemporary urban space

Factors determining the functions, form and aesthetic of urban space include activities leading to changes initiated by designers that project the needs of the users or artists with nonstandard perception of the surroundings.

Design – the notion that recently has been used frequently means creative activity aiming at creating the aesthetic environment. It is popular not only in arts but it also applies to the urban public space (Saj, 2012). Within the space understood in that way, the devices and installations are designed for set places determining their identity. Those activities are not limited to just and only creating the street furniture (waste bins, pots, benches, etc.) but also to homogenous system of town identification, educational paths, markings, places devoted to specific subjects, e.g. educational playground where physical experiments can be conducted. The spectrum of possibilities within the public space is unusually extensive. The designer, establishing cooperation with the investor acts according to the top-down set principles concerning the choice of materials or techniques.

The design of the new approach to undeveloped space at Grzybowski Square in Warsaw by Joanna Rajkowska is one of the examples of creative influencing the environment. In the small park with a pond rarely frequented by nearby residents seats have been positioned in the central part. As a consequence, the place became increasingly often frequented by residents. This situation shows how space can be given new character and how the public can be encouraged to use it quickly and using not excessively complex means (Sikorska-Kwasieborska, Kwasieborski, 2012).

Small architecture that has the character of detail defines the scale and articulation of urban space. As a consequence of creative matching and combining, choice of materials, shape, texture and size, the place can be given a different character and its quality can be improved. The elements of small architecture using which the space can be changed quickly include: waste bins, benches, lighting or fountains, small retaining walls, arbours, fences, monuments, etc. That architecture should be functional. It must satisfy the utility needs and it must satisfy the safety standards. Formerly used traditional materials are currently complemented or replaced by newer solutions such as coloured concrete, washed concrete with addition of aggregates or round gravel, glass, plastic and metal. Concrete available today in different textures, colours, shapes and patterns is a popular surfacing material. Metal in mat, perforated rusty, shining, smooth or coloured finish is also a highly appreciated material. All those elements are components of the design in small architecture (Zachariasz, 2011).

Other activities allow changing public space thanks to artistic creations resulting from nonstandard perception of the surrounding.

Public art – is considered the expression of art practiced in the public domain, available to a smaller group of recipients. Public art encompasses the design together with the elements designed by an individual artist or a group of artists. Renovation of urban space is one of its superior functions. It creates not only the aesthetic issues but also the social ones. The paradigm has been developed that public art should be *site – specific*. Elements such as the material, colour and size of the work must be adjusted to

the surrounding landscape. Inherence to the location usually refers to the local history and the future of the location. Artistic activity has immense potential to refer to the location giving it the original character. Nevertheless, not all artistic creations remain forever in the public space. Some of them possess ephemeral nature (Freino, 2009).

Public art plays fundamental role in co-creating elements of urban space aiming at showing their unusual character. People representing different disciplines (artists, architects, urban planners, landscape architects) participate in it. At the same time it creates unique components of urban and landscape interiors and it participates in creating the place thanks to a wide range of interactions between the work of arts and space. The system of participation in creation gives the best outcomes when the following components represented in figure 1 participate in it.

Works of arts in urban environment may assume different forms. They include, among others, sculptures, photographs, paintings, multimedia and performance. They can be presented permanently, temporarily or incidentally. In some towns documents supporting the idea of arts in urban space exist, e.g. „Five Year Public Art. Plan 2008-2013”. Thanks to the programmes of financing, works of arts are chosen every year according to the competition procedure. The winning project gets a subsidy for implementation of its concept that should be characterised not only by creativity and conceptualism but also choice of size, form and materials to be resistant to atmospheric conditions and to fit the environment (Zachariasz, 2011).

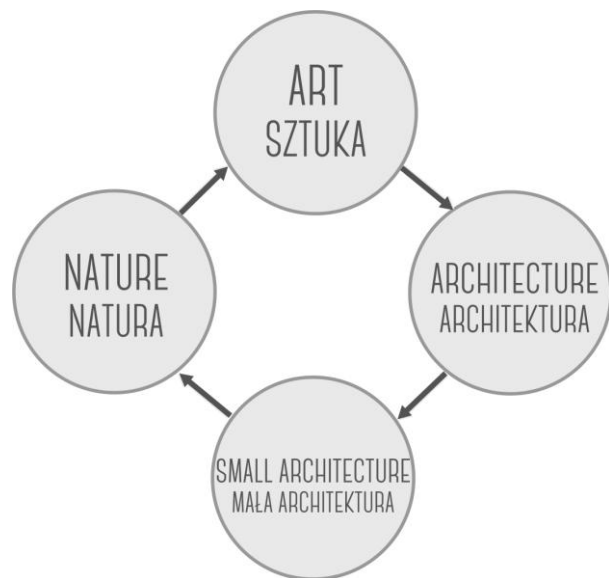


Fig. 1. Proces współtworzenia miejsca.
Ryc. 1. Process of co-creating a place.

PUBLIC SPACE OF THE TOWN OF MALBORK

The town of Malbork is situated in south-eastern part of Pomorskie voivodship on the Nogat River at the distance of 60 km from the city of Gdańsk that is the capital of the voivodship (*Lokalny Program Rewitalizacji...*, 2007).

Malbork occupies the area of 17.16 km² and it belongs to one of the communes within Malbork County. The town is almost entirely surrounded by the area of the Commune of Malbork and from the south, on a small stretch of the Commune of Stare Pole (Masiota et al., 2010).

The studies covered the area of the entire town; however, for analysis the green areas were chosen differing in location, development and use of space such as:

- Green area at Andersa Street (Piaski I estate);
- Park at 3 Maja Square (near the military unit 1128 Malbork);

- Park at Ciepła and Łąkowa Streets (next to the factory of fans NYBORG – MAWENT S.A.);
- Area located along Kościuszki Street to the border with Jurand Channel, area by the CCC and vicinity of the fountain.

For the purpose of increasing legibility of equipping the space with elements of small architecture, i.e. “furnishing” it, the town was divided into 4 zones (fig. 2):

1. **Historical zone** – covering the area around the Teutonic Castle, limited from the west by the Nogat River and estates Old Town and Centre, Rodła Avenue from the south and from north-east by railway tracks;
2. **Urban zone I** – occupying the area of town bordering to the north with Rodła Avenue encompassing the estates of Town Centre and extending to the estates Południe and Czwartaki;
3. **Urban zone II** – except the above-indicated estates it covers the areas of estates Słupecka, Wielbark, Moczar, Międzytorza, Osiedle Kolorowe, MTBS, garden lots located near the railway tracks, estates Piaski I and II, Rakowiec along the length of Wojska Polskiego Avenue (the south-eastern part of the town) and Kałdowo estate situated on the Nogat River (north-western part);
4. **Park and recreation zone** – covering the area of the Municipal Park, garden lots neighbouring the Nogat River from the west and north and Piaski I estate situated in the east of the town.

The existing equipment in the zones identified within the space of Malbork represents diversified technical conditions.

Elements of small architecture look the least attractive in the area situated in the north-eastern part of town (behind the railway tracks) in Piaski I estate near Wojska Polskiego Avenue that occupies 1 ha. That area fulfils the function of a connection to the further part of the town and the nearby garden lots. In its north-western parts benches, table for table tennis and a basket for basketball can be found. The remaining part of the square is not developed. Replacement of the entire equipment and enrichment of the existing function are proposed in this case.

The area situated near the town centre is the second area of lower aesthetics. To the south, it is limited by the area of Military Unit No. 1128 in Malbork, to the west by 17 Maja Street, to the east by Jagiellońska Street and to the north by Grunwaldzka Street. A Soviet self-propelled gun ISU-122 from the World War II period tactical number 1010, left to commemorate the liberators of the town on the 20th anniversary of liberation is standing in the centre of the park (photo 1). The park area is 1.14 ha. It is used by residents from the vicinity. The status of the surface and elements of small architecture is highly neglected. In 2011, 28 lighting poles were installed together with new power installation. Replacement of the surface, benches, waste bins and new planting of plants while maintaining the existing arrangement is recommended.

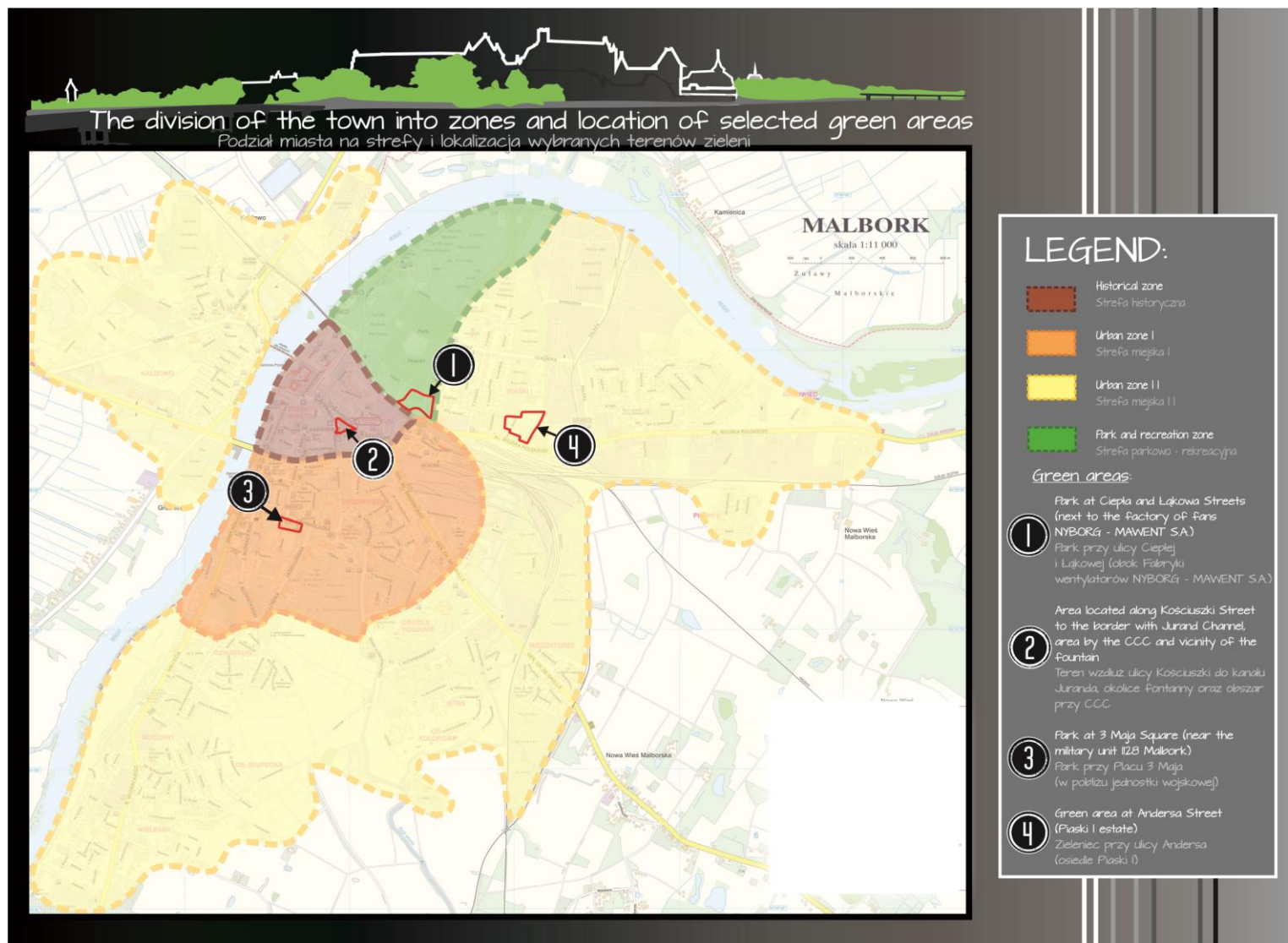


Fig. 2. The division of the town into zones and location of selected green areas.

Ryc. 2. Podział miasta na strefy i lokalizacja wybranych terenów zieleni.



Photo 1. Park near 3 Maja Square in urban zone I.
Fot. 1. Park przy placu 3 Maja w strefie miejskiej I.



Photo 2. Park near Ciepła and Łąkowa Streets in park – recreation zone.
Fot. 2. Park przy ulicach Ciepłej i Łąkowej w strefie parkowo-rekreacyjnej.



Photo 3. A square in the town centre in historical zone.
Fot. 3. Plac w centrum miasta w strefie historycznej.



Photo 4. The actual furniture of urban space in the centre of Malbork.
Fot. 4. Istniejące wyposażenie przestrzeni miejskiej w centrum Malborka.

Another area is situated in south-eastern part of the Municipal Park. It has the area of 0.78 ha (photo 2). To the north it borders Łąkowa Street and to the east Ciepła Street. In its western part it neighbours the former hippotherapy centre for children with motor system disabilities. The southern part of the park stretches to the railway viaduct and tracks. A playground is situated in the central part of it. The technical condition of its elements is far from satisfactory. Also the status of small architecture and surfacing should be modernised. The park was established in 1911 when the area for the park was purchased thanks to the town councillor Otto Halb.

The area situated in the town centre in the vicinity of the Teutonic Castle on the axis of Kościuszki Street leading to the railway station looks the best. It has the area of 0.95 ha. Following refurbishment in 2008, it is the place of daily meetings for residents and a place of rest for tourists. The fountain is the main attraction (photo 3). In the evening it ravishes with its illumination and streams of water ejected to the music background at defined hours. Moreover, numerous elements of small architecture have been positioned there (photo 4). There is also a monument to Kazimierz Jagiellończyk there made of bronze and positioned there in the autumn of 2012. The current equipment in that zone could remain in its current form and it can be complemented with proposals presented for that fragment of the space.

Within the framework of the undertaken studies, equipment of the identified areas within the urban space was proposed aiming at a uniform system of visual identification of the town. In all the zones, elements of small architecture were proposed referring to the zone character. Consequently, the looks of the town would be homogeneous. In equipping the selected fragments of space, those fragments were treated as interiors requiring furnishing based mainly on functional and aesthetic considerations as well as the needs of residents.

Urban Information System (SIM) is the system of visually, architectonically and structurally identical media providing information of urban nature. For the historical zone, the “furniture” of calm colours, made of light timber combined with graphite in colour pig-iron elements was chosen. Red brick referring to the castle walls should be the basic material of small architecture in the vicinity of the Teutonic Castle. In the park and recreation zone mainly wooden elements in two shades were proposed to diversify the urban landscape. The selected elements of small architecture are presented in figure 4.

Functionality and modernity as well as exceptional looks of small architecture were the priorities in urban zones I and II (fig. 5). For zone I, street furniture composed of steel, light wood with simple, geometric shapes was proposed. Benches that will light the area at night and that can be used as the additional attractor in the space are the component drawing interest. In zone II on the other hand, dark pig-iron and concrete elements and light colour of timber (in reference to the historical zone) appear. The whole was designed in the style of modernism.

It is worth noticing that some models of benches of modular design can be composed into different shapes. Hence, each space, in spite of using the same details, thanks to the creativity of supervisors and residents, can take a different character.

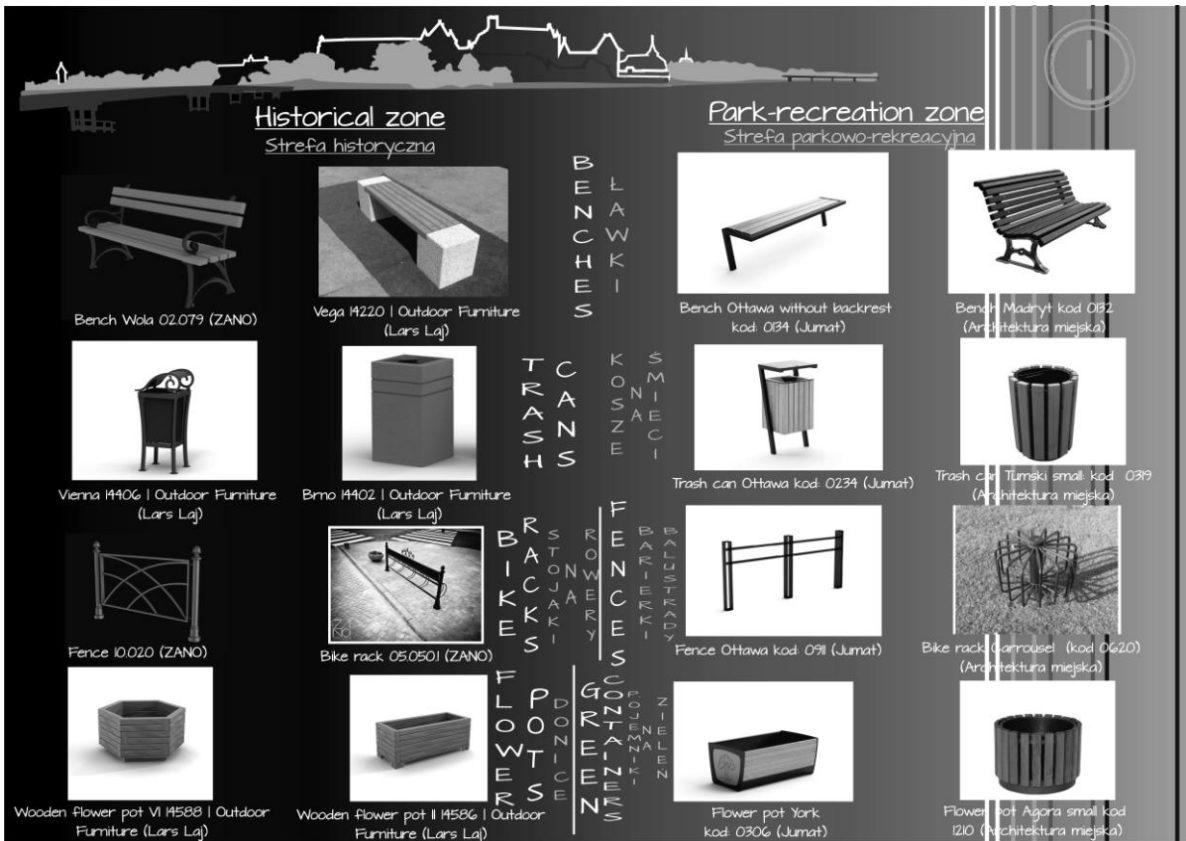


Fig. 3. The proposal of street furniture for historical zone and park-recreation zone.
Ryc. 3. Propozycja mebli miejskich dla strefy historycznej i parkowo-rekreacyjnej.

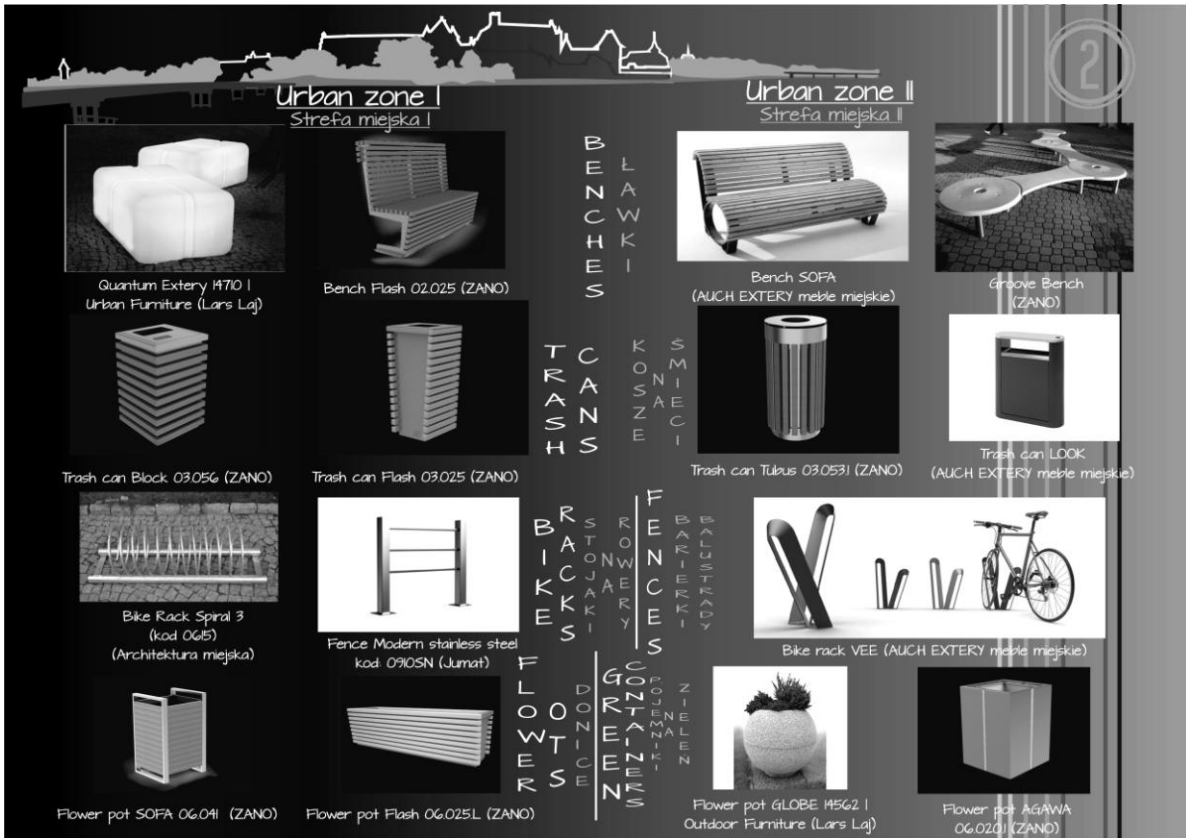


Fig. 4. The proposal of small architecture for town zones I and II.
Ryc. 4. Propozycja małej architektury dla stref miejskich I i II.

CONCLUSION

1. Aiming at preventing chaotic development of public space in a town one should aim at organising it by establishing and implementing a uniform visual identification system.
2. Improvement of the town aesthetics and creating optimal conditions for the residents should be the priority. Hence, it is important to identify places serving recreation as well as integration and interactions of the local community.
3. Thanks to the division of the town into zones, the clear vision of how to furnish selected elements and how to compose urban greenery is developed.
4. Elements of small architecture must be adjusted to the character of the identified zone (e.g. accompanying historical objects or urban parks) as they can be used to build the identity of the place.
5. Standardisation of the equipment for selected fragments of public space has positive influence on the urban landscape.
6. Organisation of public consultations for users and consequent implementation of the visual identification system assumptions as well as coordination of activities taken by entities responsible for greenery in the town should be the base for urban space development.

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