

QUARTER MODERNIZATION OF CONSTRUCTION RESIDENTIAL "NEW PRAGA" IN WARSAW - RISKS AND POSSIBILITIES

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Abstract

The district "New Praga" is located on the right-bank of Warsaw in North Praga which is one of the oldest districts of the city. The citizens of this district, where an analyzed building quarter is located, are people with a lower social status than the rest of Warsaw's population, who benefit from the social assistance (30%); moreover, there are a large number of crimes and high unemployment among young people in this area. These data show how difficult is to modernize this area because the improvement of a construction tissue is not enough to fully help the local community. Financial resources are needed to increase the level of education that allows finding new jobs and improves the quality of life. Afterwards, the modernization of tenements should be taken care for.

Keywords: modernization of building quarter, tenement, cultural landscape

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of sustainable development issues of "urban renewal" or "regeneration" are particularly important in shaping of the development potential. One of the conditions for maintaining the identity of the city is to protect its cultural heritage. In the context of spatial development it is the protection of the old urban and architectural structures that shape our surroundings and affect its perception [6, 11]. *Unfortunately, all too often,*

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"instead of dealing with urban development stimulation, we try to only compensate for the effects of their intrinsic growth", which causes the "disappearing of traditional image of the city" [3]. Concern for the preservation of the historic urban fabric is the responsibility of conservators, urban planners preparing spatial development plans, architects designing buildings and all those associated with the development of the city. Given the need and the necessity to protect cultural identity of cities, in European countries, as well as in Poland, one have taken a number of comprehensive, interdisciplinary activities often called "regeneration" including improving of the urban composition, removing objects colliding with the historical system and addition of new objects teams in harmony with the existing ones [10]. Slightly narrower range of meaning is the concept of modernization, understood as the restoration of the technical condition of the building or group of buildings, including new features to enhance its useful value [8]. Taking modernization actions in a right time allows you to extend the life of objects and prevents them from demolition [2]. The object of the research is neglected residential complex, situated on the right bank Warsaw, in the historic region area of the so-called "New Praga"³. The aim is to analyze the possibility of regeneration of the area. Accepted methods of work are of analytical - conclusion character. The study includes a performance of detailed studies and analyzes that will be the basis for drawing conclusions regarding the formation of new buildings and giving new areas new features. The study also included a technical condition of some houses, which are under conservation protection.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF HISTORICAL AREA "NEW PRAGA"

Warsaw is divided into two parts, where a part of the right bank is, in the minds of the inhabitants, worse and dangerous. Praga is still undervalued in terms of cultural heritage, and yet it is a special district, which "is an authentic record of the former face of the city, which tragically died in 1944 and was never rebuilt" [5]. The historic district of so-called The New Praga was founded in the late nineteenth century, as a typical, poor working-class district. Its advantage was

³ This area, attached to Warsaw in 1891, naming it "New Praga" in contrast to the "old", which received city rights in 1648, and was incorporated into Warsaw in 1791. Both the historical regions of "New" and "Old" Praga, are the administrative district of North Praga. These names exist today.

its proximity to the train station of Petersburg and cheap lands⁴ [12]. The carried out inventory research of "New Praga" showed that most of the buildings located on the site is in a bad technical state (32%) of which up to 18% of that is not suitable for use [9].

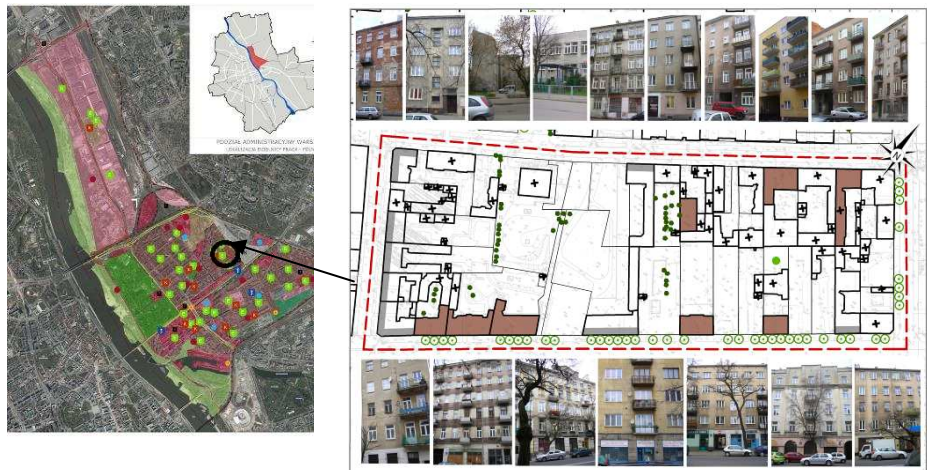


Fig. 1. Quarter building between the streets: Śródkowa, Stalowa, Strzelecka, Szwedzka. Valorisation of land (brown colour-conservation protected objects, gray- valuable front facades, "+" buildings in poor condition, with no cultural values, to be demolished, green colour-existing trees. Source: [9]

Selected for testing residential quarter, within the streets: Śródkowa - Strzelecka - Szwedzka - Stalowa, with a surface of about 4,2 ha (Fig. 1) is located in the area of conservation protection. Breaking up the area initiated Władysław Pachulski, who since 1911, has started to build the complex of townhouses with apartments for rent for workers. The complex consisted of front buildings and outbuildings, and small industrial - craft facilities. In the middle of the quarter was a marketplace. In addition to the buildings, the identity of the place prove shrines in the courtyards and ancient trees with woodcuts which are a local manifestation of folk art (Fig. 2). The area in the vast majority belongs to the metropolitan city of Warsaw, only 6 plots were recovered by the pre-war owners. In the north-east and south-west dominate pre-war houses with courtyards "wells", the remaining buildings are post-war addition (Fig. 1).

⁴ This area was parceled out in about 1861 from the Targówek farm. It was limited from the south-east by the railway line of the St. Petersburg and the tsar fort with huge barracks at Esplandowa street (currently November 11th).

3. OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS OF "NEW PRAGA" AREA

Region of the historic area "Nowa Praga" is well connected to the city center (subway stop "Szwedzka" is planned in here), has service facilities, recreational facilities (e.g. land on the Vistula river), but the potential of this area is not fully exploited. By preserving the old parcel grid and peripheral building of streets with shops on the ground floors, it creates the impression of 'urban', however, for it to be a "*city full of life*" buildings must be combined with the quality, in the form of good urban space" [4]. Townhouses which before World War II were private property, became "Bierut Decree" and were taken from their rightful owners and converted into the so-called public housing, currently not having a high aesthetic and commercial value, due to the high degree of degradation. Low rents that tenants paid, made it impossible to carry out the necessary repairs. Lack of funds for modernization work means that the area is "dying", which may soon lead to the disappearance of Praga's cultural landscape. In the study area, most of the buildings are in poor technical condition. In the old buildings of "Pachulski" (Stalowa street 41, Strzelecka street 26, Fig. 2), there are numerous imperfections (Fig. 2 c ÷ f). Due to the pre-failure state of structural elements, it can be concluded that there is a danger here of "life and property" of people who live here [13].

During the first parceling of "New Praga" region, the development of this area was stimulated by low land prices, today the situation has reversed. For over the 60 years of the postwar building use the technical value has been lower than the area on which it is located. Estate are subjected to the claims of the heirs of the pre-war owners who do not wish, however, to take over the buildings with tenants, trying to enforce replacement housing for them from the city authorities, and then sell the land to developers who will definitely strip the existing development and build in modern "suites".



a



b



c

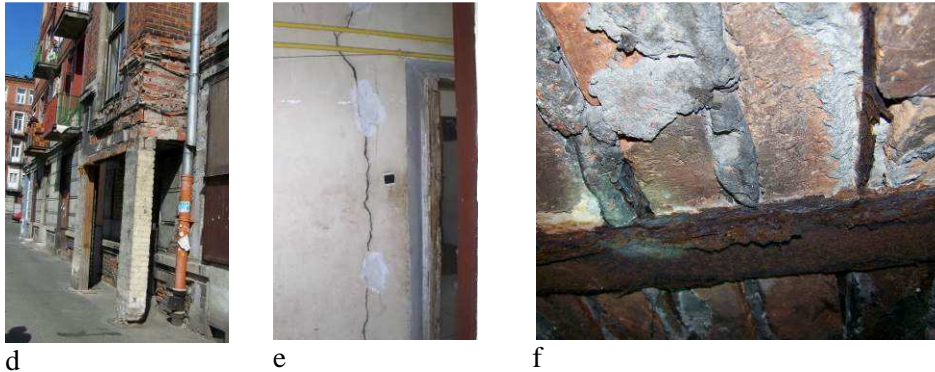


Fig. 2. Townhouses of Pachulski, 2a-view from the backyard, 2b - woodcuts on existing trees, 2c-wall defects in the facade from the Stalowa street, 2d-damaged exterior pillars, 2e-strong scratch of structural walls, 2f- corrosion of the steel beams of the basement floor. Source: photo by A. Majewska, 2011

4. THE POSSIBILITY OF REVITALIZATION ACTIVITIES

In order to address the revitalization, one created "Micro-program of revitalization activities of North Praga district in the Capital City of Warsaw" for 2005-2013 [14]. Among the 20-oriented tasks, 6 applied to bordering areas with the quarter selected for testing, but none of them covered the area. The proposed tasks are of selective nature, and their distribution does not provide an opportunity for a radical improvement in the standard of living in the area. This is due to, among other things, the fact that the area is too large area. It would be advisable to divide North Praga district into smaller, consistent characteristically areas (including the historical development stages), which were to cover specific tasks containing spatial and social goals. The condition of complex actions is also to draw up local plan ⁵, and to preserve the whole plan of urban historic "New Praga". District authorities should take wider actions, not only renewal of only one building (e.g. Stalowa 2 street), but the entire common area. The potential of this area could be the modernization of housing for the purpose of social housing for rent, for middle-class people and the creation of financial assistance programs for young marriages (students), which will prevent the problems faced by the whole North Praga - 'aging' population. One must note that support for revitalization activities should be the cultural landscape, the local traditions, customs, folklore, innovation and creativity of people [1]. Valuable is that the people living in this area, yet not

⁵ Local Development Plan was submitted in 2011, but it is not adopted.

very affluent, create a specific, unique community of "former Praga", which still retains its individuality of moral and topographic nature.⁶ [7].



Fig. 3 An example of the concept of modernization of the building quarter of "New Praga", general area of building: approx. 80 thousand square metres, 950 flats, building intensity - 2 Source [9]

An example of the concept of modernization of the quarter (Fig. 3) suggests: maintaining and a general renovation of houses under conservation protection, the entire reconstruction with replacement of the structure (ceilings, walls), preserving valuable front facade, new building additions while maintaining sizes and old parcel divisions. In order to activate this area, one proposed new public spaces, recreational-relaxing areas, reconstruction of the former "Pachulski Bazaar", in the form of a two-floored exhibition hall (lower level-stalls and butchery, higher-commercial boutiques and culture service areas), the internal construction of a pedestrian passage, attractive development of residential backyards (internal). Communications services would provide pedestrian - driving passages, available through vehicular gates, and parkings were located in the basement of the newly designed buildings and under the main square of the bazaar (approx. 950 places).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Former urban complexes that formed the pre-war urban fabric are material cultural heritage, and in the era of sustainable development should be of particular concern on the part of their owners and users, as well as the public.

⁶ Specific climate of this district was recorded in his newspaper columns by Stefan Wiechecki (Wiech), who lived here in the house No. 1 on the corner of Stalowa and Inzynierska streets.

The presented here threats and opportunities of building quarter in the area of the so-called "New Praga," can also be applied to other historic areas. With the proposed solutions, in the tested quarter, increase the intensity of the building (from 1.5 to 2.0); one will build 1000 (new and improved) flats with modern standards. Development will cover industrial and degraded sites (currently it is approx. 30% of the area). The whole area will be enriched by a new public space and basic and regional services, which will create new jobs. The modernization of historic buildings and reconstruction of buildings in poor condition (leaving the facade); will preserve the cultural landscape and identity of this historic area. One of the major problems of the modernization is the financial resources that could be obtained from the European Union, which in one of its objectives mentions the creation of conditions for sustainable development of the whole its territory.

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MODERNIZACJA KWARTAŁU ZABUDOWY MIESZKANIOWEJ „NOWEJ PRAGI” W WARSZAWIE, ZAGROŻENIA I MOŻLIWOŚCI

Streszczenie

Rejon „Nowa Praga” usytuowany jest na Pradze Północ, która jest jedną z najstarszych dzielnic miasta. Mieszkańcy tego rejonu, w którym usytuowany jest analizowany kwartał zabudowy, to osoby często o niższym statusie społecznym niż reszta ludności stolicy. Często są to enklawy biedy, bezrobocia i przestępczości. Teren ten jest trudny do modernizacji, ponieważ poprawa tkanki budowlanej, to nie wszystko, aby w pełni pomóc społeczności lokalnej. Potrzebne są środki finansowe również na działania społeczne, które umożliwią mieszkańcom na poprawę jakości życia. W artykule przedstawiono propozycję modernizacji wybranego kwartału zabudowy, co wymaga interdyscyplinarnego podejścia do danego zagadnienia.

Słowa kluczowe: modernizacja kwartału zabudowy, kamienica, krajobraz kulturowy

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