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CRACOW OF THE FUTURE – WILL IT BE A CITY WHERE EVERYBODY WOULD LIKE TO LIVE?

CZY KRAKÓW PRZYSZŁOŚCI BĘDZIE MIASTEM, W KTÓRYM KAŻDY CHCIAŁBY MIESZKAĆ?

Abstract

We are surrounded by architecture on an everyday basis, we all encounter it; therefore, we should make sure it is useful, beautiful, and harmonious. Architecture is created for man, for people, for society. For this reason, it has to exhibit appropriate practical and artistic values. It should create a beautiful, harmonious space. It is imperative to provide residents with good contact with nature in the urban living environment, and attractive public spaces of an urban character. Architecture created lately in Cracow consists of new city landmarks, as well as of growing number of residential developments of different scale, which has been built in vacant (sometimes green) areas. Are they all fulfilling the needs of the contemporary society? Over recent years, the attitudes and awareness of Cracow residents have changed, most of all in the subject of the cleanness of air, noise, and ecology. Today, we all wish to live in a city which is healthy, hence the efforts to make sure that both contemporary architecture and public transport are ecological and do not emit pollution and noise. Is this possible to achieve in a city in which the planning policy is dependent on the insufficient legal documents (study of development, instead of master plan)? The examples presented in this paper shows that, at least in Cracow, the situation is slowly changing for better.

Keywords: new architectural investments in Cracow, the future of the city, landmarks, residential estates, urban growth

Streszczenie

Architektura otacza nas na co dzień, wszyscy się z nią spotykamy, zatem powinniśmy dbać o to, aby była użyteczna piękna i harmonijna. Architektura jest tworzona dla człowieka, dla ludzi, dla społeczeństwa. I wobec tego musi mieć odpowiednie walory użytkowe oraz artystyczne. Powinna tworzyć piękną, harmonijną przestrzeń. Niezbędne jest zapewnienie mieszkańcom dobrego kontaktu z naturą w miejskim środowisku życia oraz atrakcyjnych przestrzeni publicznych o miejskim klimacie. W ostatnich latach przede wszystkim zmienia się podejście i świadomość mieszkańców Krakowa, gdy chodzi o czystość powietrza, hałas, sprawy ekologii. Dziś wszyscy chcemy żyć w mieście, które jest zdrowe. Dlatego widać dążenia do tego, żeby zarówno współczesna zabudowa, jak i komunikacja w mieście były ekologiczne, nie emitowały zanieczyszczeń ani hałasu.

Słowa kluczowe: nowe inwestycje w Krakowie, przyszłość miasta, osiedla mieszkaniowe, rozrost miasta

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1. Introduction

Why does quality of architecture more and more frequently attract the attention of not only specialists but also entire societies? Architecture decides about the space in which we live, it creates – particularly in towns and cities – the living environment. Cities are a natural living environment of contemporary man. We are surrounded by architecture, it is impossible for us not to see it. If one is not interested in art, one does not have to go to an exhibition of paintings or sculptures, or to a concert, or one can just turn off the radio if one does not intend to listen to music – although, of course, one may be missing out in choosing to avoid such things. But we encounter architecture every single day; it is a part of an open exhibition, available incessantly, and everybody who gets around the city is surrounded by it; this is why everybody should make efforts in order to make the space around them beautiful, harmonious, and capable of providing comfortable living conditions.

Invariably, Cracow attracts with the output of its material culture – unique monuments of architecture, as well as the equally unique, historic urban layout of the Old Town, surrounded by the green ring of Planty Park – the urban complex of the city centre along with the Royal Castle on Wawel hill, Kazimierz and Stradom which were entered on the first UNESCO World Heritage List in 1978. With great interest tourists also visit the old part of Nowa Huta. The oldest historic part of the town of Nowa Huta¹ constitutes a legibly defined urban complex, referring to baroque multiaxial compositions, ahead of the contemporary concepts of New Urbanism by several decades. This urban complex has regained recognition as a good urban living environment, with a large number of lines of greenery along wide streets and inside urban blocks, and a good ‘human’ scale of development.

There is quite a lot of good contemporary architecture in other parts of Cracow; it has already begun to evoke interest and attract attention, some of the examples have become new landmarks of the city. Certainly, we should not be ashamed of our new architecture, we have many edifices that are truly of a high level.

2. Contemporary examples of housing estates in Cracow

The promotion of good examples of contemporary architecture well serves the broadly understood artistic and cultural education of society. Through promotion, we can contribute to making our city a better place, to making our space better arranged and more friendly. It is particularly worth demonstrating good models in the field of housing – regrettably, it still stirs certain fears and is far from perfect. In contemporary times, housing estates – usually ‘developer estates’ – have emerged. These estates were built by the private sector of the construction market. Although their architecture is usually much more interesting than before² and the forms of buildings exhibit interesting aesthetic, technical and material-related solutions, the estates often do not satisfy the requirements relating to usability,

¹ Nowa Huta was built just after the Second World War as ‘model socialist city’, satellite to the ‘reactionist’ Cracow. Since the early 1960s one of the districts of Cracow. Cf. [2, 13].

² During the times of central planned economy and prefabricated housing estates, until the late 1980s.

they do not provide a suitable living environment. The area of building plots is used to the maximum extent due to the investors' target of obtaining the best economic effect possible. The development is often too dense, leaving no social spaces necessary for recreation and rest purposes. Such housing estates lack fundamental elements that should accompany houses for residential purposes – kindergartens, schools, basic services³. Hence, this is an area where social input in urban design is most necessary; inhabitants of *the Smart City* that Cracow wishes to be, should be able to influence the way in which their living environment is formed. Cracow residents, like the inhabitants of most contemporary cities, seek a friendly residential environment. They dream about apartments filled with sunlight, furnished with large terraces and balconies, opening up onto green areas and making good connections with nature. Flora and recreation greenery of a variety of different heights is necessary most of all in places of residence. Here, a huge role is played by a proper design and by equipping emerging housing estates with sufficient greenery. Residents of such housing complexes should have access to commonly used spaces addressed to a determined group of the local community, which would enable them to rest in contact with nature every single day, furnished with playgrounds for children. Nearby, there should be easily accessible park greenery, arranged for a larger housing cluster, where one could rest, jog, do sports.

Undoubtedly, such a housing estate has been recently built. It is rather small development enclave – four urban villas-located at 14–20 Czartoryska street, winners of the first award in the competition organised by 'Dziennik Polski' daily in Cracow entitled 'Cracow – My Home' in 2016⁴ in the category 'Multi-family Housing Complexes'. Put into use in May 2015, these four-floor buildings, inspired by modernist architecture of the interwar Cracow [2, 19], altogether hold 26 air-conditioned apartments with floor areas from 37 m² to 209 m². Each of the buildings is equipped with lifts, and the basements hold an underground garage with 44 parking spaces for each of the buildings⁵. Elevations have been finished with natural limestone and plaster. Large glass expanses of windows and doors leading to balconies and spacious terraces on the top floors are open towards the surrounding greenery. The complex is situated by Dębnicki Park, and its residents can additionally use a large garden with an irrigation system that makes use of rainwater collected in underground containers; most probably, many inhabitants of Cracow would like to live there. This complex of residential buildings, surrounded by one-family houses, fits in with neighbouring buildings in terms of scale, inscribing itself in the local context in a perfect way. The feature which is worth promoting is the creation of a desirable quality of housing environment, with space of shared use – a spacious garden, allowing children and adult residents to rest and enjoy active forms of recreation. This small complex is fenced, just like all the villas in the area, thanks to which it forms a safe, shared, semi-private space for its residents; and with this solution, it also inscribes itself in the local context.

³ The insufficient planning policies are especially visible here, just like in other big cities in Poland.

⁴ The author was one of the jurors of this competition and the entire paper is built partly on his reflections after this event.

⁵ Designers of the housing complex of the total floor area of 2,826 m² are Ludomir Książek and architects from LJK Architekci; the author of the final design is BAZUKASTUDIO, and architectural details were entrusted to Dominik Dousa (DUO Design), *Dziennik Polski*, 'Mój dom' supplement, 19 May 2016, p. 6.



III. 1–3. The urban villas
Czarodziejskia St. 14–20
(photo by author)

What are the errors in designing an urban spatial environment referred to above connected with? An appropriate city development strategy, guaranteeing a logically consistent, functionally and spatially interrelated urban tissue, can be provided by local development plans, implementing the terms and conditions of the planning document 'Study on the Conditions and Directions of Development for the City of Cracow' [17]. Today, in 2016, the city is covered by the local development plans only in 50%. Undoubtedly, the progress in this respect is enormous, if we consider that in 2003, only 2% of the territory of the city had such a documents. Nevertheless, in many areas, buildings and entire housing estates are still erected under a decision on conditions for construction, which are established according to the principle of the so-called 'good neighbourhood'. This leaves a lot of room for irregularities, as such a procedure does not secure the continuity and cohesion of the development of the city with the adopted strategy. Regrettably, the law does not require the obtaining of a decision on the conditions for construction which would be consistent with the provisions of the quasi-legal document [17]. In the absence of the plan, all that comes into being is architecture itself, sometimes exhibiting very high architectural values, but houses are not accompanied by public spaces which are necessary for shaping of the living environment: parks, squares, playgrounds for children, buildings and yards related to services, as well as schools, kindergartens, healthcare services. There is a lack of properly organised access – very often, due to the separate ownership of construction plots, access roads are unnecessarily doubled, increasing the share of hardened surface and limiting the space for greenery, scarce as it already is.

Most of all, however, there is a lack of public transport that would secure access to housing estates. It could protect the urban environment against problems relating to individual car traffic. Cracow is considering plans to construct an underground metro system. Cracow, along with its suburban areas, is a centre with a population of one million, and additionally, it is visited by 10 million tourists every year – this constitutes a great burden on the public transport system. The underground is a collision-free and ecological means of transport, providing good and quick connections and the possibility of transporting large masses of passengers. If we do not have the necessary funds for such a system at the moment, we need to make sure that the development plans allow such an investment to be implemented in the future. The necessary reservation of land for the underground and the equipment that accompanies it can be guaranteed in local development plans consistent with the provisions of the document [17]. It would be also a good idea to repeat in Cracow the concept of architect Gil Peñalos, currently based in Canada, who for 16 years now has been proposing that in large cities (e.g. in Bogota), in order to protect city residents from car exhaust fumes, some streets should be closed to car traffic at least on Sundays between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and temporarily reserved for pedestrian traffic only⁶.

A problem in the development of suburban areas – besides the lack of public transport and the lack of public services and space – is the compatibility of any new development with the existing architecture, which is very often one-family buildings realised in a different scale; this is where glaring contrasts appear. Additionally, the city sprawls in an absolutely uncoordinated manner and its external limit is actually invisible⁷.

⁶ Also see concepts of Jan Gehl widely presented in his books and websites devoted to the issue.

⁷ Which refers to the problems of regional planning in Poland and is an interesting subject for another paper.

3. Problems of new developments within UNESCO protected city centre

In the city centre one of the most composed urban areas of Cracow, on the other hand, there are still missing parts in the urban tissue there are also degraded buildings, exhibiting very low technical and practical values, and often with no considerable architectural values, either. An example of such a situation is the corner of Straszewskiego and Józefa Piłsudskiego streets opposite Collegium Novum of Jagiellonian University, still undeveloped after the demolition of a two-floor building that used to house the 'Barcelona' bar. For the sake of harmony and spatial order, this place should be used in an appropriate way, furnished with architecture fulfilling a relevant function, having a relevant form and size consistent with its nearest surroundings. Another example of such a spatial situation is the undeveloped plot of land along the western side of Straszewskiego street at the intersection with Podzamcze street, at the foot of Wawel which has for years now been occupied by quasi-tourist services and kiosks selling beer and snacks – there are quite a lot of such places in Cracow.

What definitely requires considerable work are the Vistula boulevards on both banks of the river. The river is a wonderful element of the city, a dissection which offers us the opportunity to admire the panorama of individual parts of Cracow from both sides of the river⁸. These areas should be occupied by beaches, there should be a lot of greenery, walking paths, cycle paths, and along the borders of such areas, there should be coffee shops, restaurants, art galleries, bookshops aimed for pedestrians using the boulevards, city residents and tourists, where they could stop by, get together, rest, or browse books. It would be a perfect place for every-day, easily accessible recreation, which – if properly arranged – would change the appearance of the city. The Vistula boulevards should become the prestigious public space of Cracow, with attractively arranged public spaces, where one could spend some time for pleasure, rest, or admiring the changing landscapes while taking a stroll.

4. New public use buildings devoted to culture in Cracow

Cracow is a city of culture⁹, which predominantly promotes historic sites. Despite numerous attempts to transfer the city centre to some other location, the Main Market Square in Cracow still constitutes the heart of the city, and this will probably never change. The enormous scale of the Market Square and the sites focused around it attract visitors like a magnet. This is the very place where, under the eastern surface of the market square along Cloth Hall in 2010, a new Historical Museum of the City of Cracow was opened. Designed

⁸ The importance of this space is very strongly underlined in the [17], mentioned above, and its inner-city part (between St. Norbert Monastery on Salwator and an artificial dam at Dąbie) is named as 'Innecity Vistula Park' with many strict rules for developing the future local plan, as well as future architectural development in the area (Cf. [17, p. 29–33]). Entire Vistula Valley within the administrative borders of the city of Cracow is provisioned to become one of the strategic projects of the City of Cracow in the very same legal document [17].

⁹ Which is one of the main elements of the strategy of the development of the city of Cracow, underlined in the abovementioned 'Zmiana Studium' [17].

by Prof. Andrzej Kadłuczka with the team from Studio Archecon¹⁰, this extremely attractive museum exhibits historic relics of the oldest times of our city from the 10th and 11th centuries, operating with contemporary architectural details. Metal and glass stairs and platforms, holographic and multimedia images demonstrate how the latest achievements in the field of technology and advanced construction materials can lead the viewer into the mysterious underground world of the distant past. The author of the design writes, “Descending to the basements of the Market Square in Cracow is... a psychological act of teleportation to the past. The educational dimension..., besides the direct public contact with the relics of the past, is the opportunity to pass the knowledge about Cracow, the life of its inhabitants, erected buildings and everyday items, activities and habits, work and play, in an attractive way” [10].

Until recently, one of the most attractive implemented designs of public utility buildings connected with culture was the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology. The architectural concept of the structure was developed by the famous Japanese architect, Arata Isozaki, who cooperated with Krzysztof Ingarten and JET Atelier¹¹. The facility, located opposite Wawel on the other bank of the Vistula river, is perfectly inscribed in this area of Cracow with its small scale and soft forms corresponding to the meander of the Vistula river and a wave on the water¹². In the main hall, an enormous glazed area opens towards the view of Wawel hill. After 15 years next new museum structures important for Cracow, although located far from the city centre, were put into use. These are: the Polish Aviation Museum, opened in 2010, located at a former airport, combining crude concrete with large panes of glass in its new form, and from a bird’s eye view, resembling a three-bladed aeroplane propeller¹³; the MOCAK Museum of Contemporary Art, which presents art from the last 20 years, located in the district of Podgórze, opened in 2011. The museum, which clearly reflects the fascination with Italian neo-rationalism, occupies six formerly existing industrial buildings of the old Schindler factory, with one additional edifice which distinctly refers to the existing forms and highlights the sawtooth roofs¹⁴.

Although the idea to build the Małopolska Garden of Arts was emerging as early as in 2002, it was only realised in 2012. Located very close to the historic city centre, it is hidden in the backstreet of Rajska. By shifting the body of the building made

¹⁰ The museum occupies a floor area of 6,000 m², with 4,000 m² of an archaeological reserve. Architectural design of the Underground Museum of the Main Market Square in Cracow: Andrzej Kadłuczka; graphic design of the exposition programme: Mieczysław Bielawski, Marcin Pietuch, Tomasz Salwierz; content-related development of the exposition programme: Cezary Buśko, Sławomir Dryja, Wojciech Głowa, Stanisław Sławiński; technology and multimedia: Agata Sitko and Tomasz Zalewski with the team of TRIAS.

¹¹ The Museum came into being upon the initiative of Andrzej Wajda, who was granted a prestigious movie award in Japan, Kyoto Prize, founded by the Inamori foundation, and he assigned this award to be part of the exposition of the collection of Feliks Jasiński in the Manggha Centre of Art. Additionally, the trade union of the Eastern Railway in Japan allocated one million dollars to support this investment.

¹² This wave is not only a reference made to the river that flows nearby but also a motif from a Japanese print which is one of the most valuable exhibits in Jasiński’s collection – it is presented inside the building.

¹³ The museum of the floor area of 4,000 m² was designed by a German-Polish team of architects, consisting of: Justus Pysall, Peter Ruge and Bartłomiej Kisielewski.

¹⁴ The authors of the design are the Italian architects Claudio Nardi and Leonardo Maria Proli; www.claudionardi.it



III. 4–5. Malopolski Garden of Art (photo by author)

of hundred-year-old brick, the architects wished to create an oasis of peace and quiet. It is a wonderful example of inscribing a new form into the historic urban tissue using modern materials. An openwork glass and metal umbrella roof invites pedestrians to go inside, where a theatre, a multimedia library, exhibition halls, and a coffee shop can be found. The external glass walls reflect the surrounding trees and tall grass like a mirror.

The building, hidden within in the rhythm of 19th-century tenements of Cracow, thanks to its small scale and interesting events, was accepted by city inhabitants right away. The crowning of the building with smooth inclinations, which according to its authors correspond to the roofs of the adjacent tenements, is definitely worthy of attention¹⁵.

Two important cultural venues, long anticipated by city inhabitants, were put into use in 2014. One of these the new seat of Cricoteka – Centre for Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor. Designed in 2006, this was the adaptation of a small 19th-century power plant, enveloping it in a bold simple form, continuing the concept of emballage, i.e. enveloping different everyday items in order to attract attention and discover their internal secrets¹⁶. Concrete posts support a huge form enveloped in openwork Corten steel sheets above the buildings of the power plant, making a reference to Kantor's drawing of a man carrying a table on his back. One of the authors of the building, Stanisław Deńko, explains this concept in the following way: "The Art Centre is a mirror – a reflection of the active part of the city at the bank of the Vistula, which becomes 'a prop' and in an abstract way participates in the pedestrians' awareness, even if they cannot see it directly from the street"¹⁷. In autumn 2014, residents of Cracow were also given the ICE Congress Centre, located at the intersection of Marii Konopnickiej and Monte Cassino streets. This is an enormous form, housing three large conference and theatre halls for 2100, 600 and 300 viewers, it opens towards the view of Wawel Castle and Skalka Church on the other side of the Vistula with its entire glazed wall of the three-storey foyer¹⁸. Over recent years Cracow – the city of culture and art – have opened few important museums. In May 2016, the laureate in the category of public utility buildings in the competition 'Cracow – My Home', organised for several years now by the 'Dziennik Polski' daily newspaper, was a small pavilion devoted to Józef Czapski at 12 Piłsudskiego street. Located in the complex of buildings of the Emeryk Hutten-Czapski Museum, the new pavilion attracts attention with a light, white wall with the painter's autograph, on which films and presentations can be displayed. The materials applied for the finish of this modest, minimalist architecture are Corian, metal, glass and concrete. In front of a cosy café, detached from the hustle and bustle of the street and opening towards a small backyard, there is a path paved with stone slabs and glass light balls of different sizes, freely arranged on the green grass¹⁹. Next museums are planned, soon a competition for the Museum of the People's Republic of Poland will be awarded; however, prior to this the municipal authorities should surely think of a new philharmonic hall. Cracow is Poland's only major city which does not have a genuine philharmonic hall. Certainly, a new philharmonic hall is what Cracow needs much more than two stadiums.

¹⁵ The building erected as a result of a competition designed by Krzysztof Ingarden and Jacek Ewý has won a number of prestigious awards.

¹⁶ The complex is located at 2–4 Nadwiślańska Street, right behind the Vistula river in the district of Podgórze, the covered area is 1,640 m², designers: IQ2 Konsorcjum – Moon Studio – Sławomir Zieliński, Piotr Nawara, Agnieszka Szultk and Stanisław Deńko – Wizja.

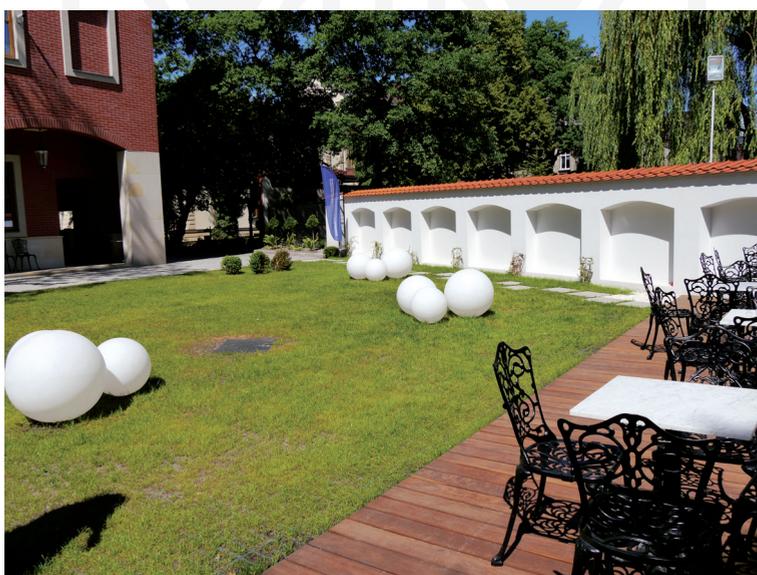
¹⁷ architektura.muratorplus.pl/kolekcja-architektury/nowa-siedziba-cricoteki-i-muzeum-tadeusza-kantora-w-krakowie_3718.html (access: 09/2016).

¹⁸ The authors of the design (competition in 2007) are Krzysztof Ingarden and Jacek Ewý with Japanese consultants Arata Isozaki & Associate from Tokyo.

¹⁹ Authors of the design of a small museum with a floor area of 610 m²: Danuta Fredowicz and Andrzej Gliwiński, *Dziennik Polski*, 'Mój dom' supplement, 19 May 2016, p. 7.



III. 6–8. 'Cricoteka' – Tadeusz Kantor Art Documentation Centre (photo by author)



III. 9–10. Emeryk Hutten – Czapski Museum (photo by author)

5. Summary

There are a lot of renovation works currently in progress in Cracow and these revitalisation activities are completely different from those carried out years ago, when only elevations were painted anew if the First Secretary of the Communist Party or some other political activist was to visit the city. Today, thorough renovations, adaptations are conducted – many buildings are perfectly restored. In this way, the landscape of the city improves; obviously, these works are extremely costly. Some of them are supported by the Social Committee for the Renovation of Cracow Historical Monuments; nevertheless, usually around half of the costs must be incurred by the owners themselves. What is definitely needed is a system of encouraging owners of historical monuments to undertake revitalisation actions which would offer them specific benefits, e.g. tax exemptions, other types of subsidies, support from the city. While walking along the streets of Cracow, we can admire many renovated buildings; however, once in a while we encounter buildings with peeling plaster, which are in a poor technical condition and quite unattractive to look at. There are still vacant houses or abandoned post-industrial structures from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. In recent years, the area of a former slaughter house close to the city centre was converted into the Galeria Kazimierz shopping centre and the former brewery located in the vicinity of the Railway Station has become a new housing complex. Nevertheless, structures of the former Peterseim's factory²⁰ or the historical Salt Warehouse in Podgórze have still not lived to see their adaptation to new functions²¹.

Large-panel multi-family residential buildings actually lose their technical capacity to survive²² – this has been evoking certain fears for some time now. Obviously, these buildings undergo diversified renovation measures; however, in wealthy countries there is a tendency to replace this urban substance with a new one, which offers better living conditions. Additionally, this provides an opportunity to introduce some more interesting architecture. Numerous housing complexes built using large-panel technologies are located a relatively small distance from the city centre and maintaining such blocks of flats in their original condition is not justified. We do need to remember, however, that such housing estates have their local communities which have formed certain relationships over years of living in close proximity. These people would have to be relocated. Residents should be given the opportunity to remain through successive replacement of such buildings with new ones.

²⁰ The buildings of the Imperial Royal Factory of Machines and Foundry located in the district of Grzegórzki date back to 1899–2005; they belonged to Marcin Peterseim, who produced agricultural equipment here. Before World War I, the plant had 200 workers and it was one of the then largest factories in Cracow. The buildings are included in the list of historical monuments of Cracow.

²¹ The building was erected in 1787 in Zabłocie at 8 Na Zjeździe street and it initially served as a warehouse of the Kazimierz port on the Vistula river for the salt excavated in Wieliczka, because at that time, one third of all salt sold in Poland was transported via rivers. Later on, up until the second half of the 19th century, the building housed army barracks, and today, after revitalisation, it is planned to house a museum of the district of Podgórze there.

²² Many books have been written on this issue. Some are devoted to the Cracovian examples, Cf. [8], which presents not only the wide scope of international research but also the proposals of the urban renewal of the three estates built in the Czyżyny district of Cracow (as a result of international student workshops tutored by the international team of the authors of the book).

It will be necessary to demolish large-panel concrete blocks of flats, because the time when they will be no longer capable of fulfilling relevant technical requirements is approaching. Such decisions should be made and such measures undertaken within the next twenty years. I am positive that an additional argument for such demolition would be our willingness to prevent the urban sprawl by reducing new territories devoted to housing investments as much as possible. New apartments can be built in the place of old blocks of flats within the city limits. I do think such decisions need to be made.

Recent years have seen a shift in the approach and awareness of city residents as far as the air condition, noise and ecology are concerned. Today, we all wish to live in a city which is healthy; therefore, efforts are directed at making traffic ecological, to make it stop emitting pollution and excessive noise, hence the efforts to develop public transport. Lyon has restored trolleybuses in the city, and thanks to considerable EU funds, incentives to use public transport have been introduced, alongside with discouragements – in the form of relevant fees – from using private cars. The future of cities lies in the development of cycle paths, because this is the most ecological means of transport, and at the same time, it is beneficial to residents' fitness, which is equally important. Greenery should be organised in cities in different available locations; it could especially be introduced in places where there are degraded structures and unused spaces. When designing and erecting office or public utility buildings, we should aim to protect the air, to not pollute it, and at the same time, to obtain energy from unconventional sources, causing no increase in the emission of greenhouse gases. There are many solutions of this kind in the world, they have also been emerging in Poland. We have to secure good living conditions for the future generations.

In compliance with the ecological approach to the process of shaping the city, this process should also be connected with limiting the expansion of the city to new territories. It is necessary to appropriately develop what is already urbanised and to protect areas which are not yet urbanised in order to prevent urban sprawl. If an area is built up once, it is difficult to regain its initial values later on.

I think that at this very moment, the ecological aspect is the most important for the development of cities. Nevertheless, there are different concepts in the world, e.g. ones that aim at the reduction of the emission of exhaust fumes from heavy transport connected with providing city residents with food. City farms are organised on roofs or even in multi-storey buildings where food can be produced and delivered to recipients without the need to transport it from distant places.

I believe architecture is the art and skill of shaping space for the needs of man. The duty of architecture is usefulness, and its inherent attribute is beauty. It is not true that beauty has died, as some people claim. We all desire beauty; one definitely prefers to have a park and flowers in front of their windows than chaos and degraded space. Beauty is necessary. This definition encompasses everything, as architecture is created for man, for people, for society; therefore, it needs to exhibit relevant practical and artistic values. It should create beautiful, harmonious space. The city is a natural living environment for contemporary man – this is why via revitalisation and investment projects relating to the transformation of urban built-up space are undertaken in new urban complexes connected with the territorial expansion of the city – we should aim for the return of the 'urbanism of the city'.

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