4. How to plan

Planning the environment for children should be carried out with children in mind, meaning that fundamental differences between the needs, affinities and behaviour of children and adults should be taken into consideration. These differences also require criteria and measures unlike these prevailing today in planning and management of public open areas in the city. Planning criteria are currently all too often subordinated to land uses that are expanding today in urban space from various reasons (motorized traffic and parking facilities, restaurant and pub gardens). As a result, other uses are more or less successfully pushed aside. Fundamental concepts of a „children friendly approach" to urban open areas planning should include multifunctionality, increased possibilities for land use conversion and active participation and involvement of children in shaping the environment.

Some of the concrete suggestions:

- the possibility of changing – from simple moving of chairs to grafitti – adds an identity feeling to places;
- revitalization of nearby available informal areas such as courtyards, natural or close-to-nature areas in the city hinterland and their connection with the city;
- the improvement of connections between individual areas and interconnection of different types of open areas (traffic limitation, improvement of pedestrian zones and biking routes, establishment and expansion of green connections, building of bridges or underpasses for crossing obstacles);
- improved possibility of access where – apart from physical access – visual and symbolic access is also important (presence of signs indicating who is and who is not welcome in certain environment).

The improvement of open urban areas for children in terms of functional adaptations and equipping of new areas would in most cases mean higher quality also for other groups of users (the youth, families and the elderly)(3). Adaptation to changing needs and multifunctionality require extremely careful consideration of the compatibility of various uses. One of the most important criteria that needs to be taken into consideration is the safety criterium having at least two aspects in this context:

- The violence of individuals or groups towards other users is usually a consequence of appropriation of a public area. Sometimes smaller groups appropriate only a part of a territory or a time-based division is agreed on. Problems occur when freedom of one group becomes a threat to another due to the conflict of interest between groups and when violence is used to limit the access.
- Safety and accessibility of streets, pedestrian zones and city squares for children require certain traffic limitations. If individual parked cars can sometimes even be included in a game (hiding), continuous lines of parked cars make streets more dangerous due to reduced visibility. Noise and accident hazards also limit the possibilities for playing on pavements along busy streets and in their vicinity(4).

Mojca Golobič, Landscape architect, Urban Planning Institute, Ljubljana

Notes

1 Hart (1979) quotes for groups of reasons that make places attractive to children:
- the playing role;
- the social role (because someone lives there or because something is happening there);
- the commercial role (because something can be obtained there);
- aesthetic role (because it looks like that).

Younger children (pre-school and first grades) mention „commercial" and „social" roles more frequently, while the functional and sometimes – though much rarely – also „aesthetic" role are emphasized by older children. Natural sites, hiding places and places with a good view are popular, while among the elements various forms of water and forest (although mostly forbidden), trees and fences prevail. The contact with nature has a special role in the child's world. Children find nature the most interesting when they can establish active relationship with it and when it is an integral component of their environment.

2 An interview about free time and playing habits of children in the city (how much, when, where and with whom they play, what are the criteria for chosing their playing place) and about their needs and desires. The interview included children and parents at the Tivoli playground, forth grade schoolchildren (10 – 11 years old) at one of elementary schools in the Center as well as their parents and teachers.

3 This was also confirmed in the interview (Golobič 96) where the same answers (well managed open – above all green – areas and a higher level of traffic safety) were the most common when people were asked about the general quality of the living environment and about measures that would make the city more children friendly.

4 Roads with traffic density of over 600 vehicles per day are too dangerous and too noisy for any form of playing to take place. If the number exceedes 200 vehicles per hour, pavements along a road and its vicinity are unsuitable for playing as well. Apart from traffic density, the speed is also important – it has to be limited to 30-40 km/h and possibly assured with speed barriers (Grosse-Bachle et al., 1993).

Jesenko HORVAT

Tihomir JUKIĆ

Planning and/or Project Approach to Organising Public City Space: several examples of squares in Croatia

1. Introduction

In the second half of the 20th century public urban space is undergoing a significant change. The functionalistic planning approach has contributed to a gradual loss and neglect of the most important values of urban space: the street, the square and the park; actually new terms, such as „pedestrian areas" and „green areas" are emerging. These surround „singularly" placed buildings in the form of „dots" or „sticks" that define neither the street, nor the square or the park. These are ar-

eas that are basically undetermined in terms of organisation and utility. In these inarticulate areas resting places and fragments of children's playgrounds are discreetly hidden. The city has gradually lost its basic functional and structural elements, as well as places that are intended for meetings and events. However, not for long. A new approach to reconstruction and new development of the city strives to revive and reaffirm traditional structural elements – the street, the square and the park, while at the same time making a distinction between public and private spaces. It is these elements that are of utmost importance for the further development of our cities. Developing urban space consists of numerous rules and it is difficult to find the method and means to do this in „the best possible way" and also to find the particularities that will define a certain space.[1]

The second half of the 20th century is characterised by formless/shapeless squares of large proportions, i.e. by modern squares that are basically not remembered by its users. Squares in bigger trade centres or squares connected to so called centres of power, i.e. those in front of important administrative and governmental buildings (Brasilia, Canberra, etc.) are an exception. The end of the 20th century is characterised by squares whose organisation has an increasing effect on the experience of space. According to Reinborn/Koch [2], these are squares that resemble amusement parks or props of a particular play, while the „plazas" and „piacetas" are becoming a reflection of the square culture and are increasingly beginning to resemble gaudy shop-windows.

The aesthetic and visual quality of city space is to be found in the details of the structure. Two basic elements of this structure, namely the street and the square, differ only in the dimensions of their developed covers, the character of their functions and movement. It is presumed that the square was the first form of defining city space when houses were grouped around a common area. It was created in order to have better control over this inner space, as well as better possibilities of protection from the outer space. Later this form of yard-square is to undertake a symbolic role, so it is used to form a number of cult places such as agora, forum, monastery yard, etc.

From antiquity to the present day squares have been the centres of events, meeting places, trading places and places of representation and are one of the major elements with regard to shaping a city and forming its structure. In some periods of the city's history they were created as a programmed project with a task to incite the structure's growth (let us just remind ourselves of Mansard"s square Vendome whose cover was initially defined by „planned „ fronts without houses). It seems that organising open city space has become a planning topic again in the last twenty years. The affirmation was gradual and developed together with the processes of rediscovering urban planning. Today, however, it is dangerously turning into the zone of project exclusiveness, gradually loosing the urban component of definition.

2. Factors of Organising Public City Areas

The authors of this text, faced with the problem regarding the organisation of public city areas (where it is difficult to distinguish between the plan and project level of the task), undertook practical, concrete exercises, studying typologically differing squares. The projects had reached different levels of treatment, while the level of the solutions' adaptability ranged from very daring offers to almost discreet ones. In this article an attempt is made to recapitulate this practical experience, by determining the basic elements of these projects. A systems approach to factors forming opinions have selectively determined the level of their influence on final decisions.

Some of these factors: traffic, function, structure, style, socio-cultural characteristics or planning direction in particular exercises proved to be of key importance, some remained neutral while others were completely unimportant.

Traffic

In the broadest sense of the word traffic is ipso facto a determinant of city space. Its propulsivity, dynamics and experiences define the square as a transit area, as a spot of urban refraction of directions and convergence of different interests.

Automobile traffic as a logical consequence of urban development has transformed the square as a historic category only in the direction of more clear differentiation between the area for automobiles from the one for pedestrians. The propulsive sense of the area has not changed significantly. However, more significant changes have occurred with the organisation of public transport. By tying tram and bus-stops to urban inclusions, by becoming a place of transit, stopping and transfer, the city square has provoked a number of functional changes.

No matter how imminent traffic is to the square itself, even when it is lowered exclusively to the pedestrian dimension, it is sometimes the determining factor of new organisation, and sometimes it is a completely neutral category that is fundamentally neither in favour, nor against a particular solution.

Function

Monofunctionalism, polyfunctionalism or afunctionalism determine the logical unity of space, whether it concerns clear differentiated purposes in construction of the perimeter, or functional and sometimes only manifestative characteristics of „empty" surface of the square. Constancy of a particular purpose (in this case we usually refer to a market or a fair), changability or occasionality, harmony with cycles of urban life, between day and night, working day and holiday, summer and winter, are factors that determine a square as a recognisable mark of a city or town. Correspondingly, since the area of a square always reflects public interest, control is necessary over the process of transformation that often disfigures the functional planimetry of space because of pressing individual interests.

It is particularly important to pay attention to functional spilling from the perimeter to the surface, and vice versa, as well as to an ever increasing mingling of spatial categories such as open and closed, that are lately become particularly pronounced in the catering sector.

Structure

By structure we understand spatial characteristics and sophistication of urban form. The fundamental elements of designing are: conception and disposition of the object, building parameters, sections and cross sections, arcades and colonnades, etc. Additional elements of a square are the following: vegetation and parks, fountains, pools, monuments, etc.

We will not go into greater detail to analyse the typology of space by geometry, convergence of directions of entry, openness or enclosedness, since these categories are so complex that they could be elaborated separately. C. Sitte and R. Krier have analysed several hundred squares. It is difficult to make a conclusion or determine a rule, according to which one would make a plan for a square successfully. The gathered examples show that there are no restrictions regarding their form, although some relations and forms are more frequent than others.[3] It is wrong to suppose that by increasing the dimensions of a square its monumentality also grows in our consciousness. This means that it primarily means a good proportion between the size of a square and the size of buildings. That is why we are mentioning all of these formal determinants as a common place of recognising visually or broadly perceived spatial characteristics.

To what extent a particular given structure will be the determinant, from what point will it continue to grow, where will it be changed, naturally determines the level of required spatial protection (protection parameters), but also a number of other pragmatic requirements that often become decisive.

Unfinished spatial inclusion enables a dangerous precedent that with interpolation of missing parts of the envelope often inadequate financial means for the empty space of a square are initialised. Thus the process changes into a tactical game concerning the implementation of a towns" policy or plan.

Style

The historical style layering and character of particular architecture in the system of experiencing the complementarity of a place create that fascinating urban amalgamate. Style determinants of a place are however not always entirely tied to style determinants of the perimeter, but can be sifted from the totality of spatial inclusion genesis and its definite affirmation as a public urban place. Complete perceptual harmony on one hand, and existence of dominants on the other, create the gap between which parameters for creative procedures of selecting new design expression can be found. The mentioned dominants can be expressed as unitary (marking) architecture, as well as the dominant historical style layer, determining the character of a place and its placement in time. Which layer will be the basis for creative procedure and what instruments will be used, depend on the authors decision. From methods of restoration, duplication or copying to methods of contrast with completely new elements, the width of free estimation is quite broad. However in each particular case it is important not to disturb the given equilibrium.

Social and cultural importance

The square is a complex urban element of city space and composition, and depending on its function, position, mode of treatment and traffic importance in the city, it also gains in social function.

Typological characterisation based on representation determines two large groups of historical squares: manifestative and utilitary. Rarely has the original mark of a square been preserved. Basically, every city public space today expresses marked ambivalence in which everyday manifestations of city life mix with the very representative ones. The level of expressiveness of a particular programme or substance of a particular square define its importance on a scale ranging from main to absolutely peripheral city space. Spatial distinction between public and private consists of numerous overriding areas of mixed influences and rights of use that are a very important factor of experiencing urban space and making social contacts by its citizens.[4]

In conformity with civilised democratic trends, even those clearly populist manifestations of life, use the square and all of its symbolic attributes (accents, monuments, sculptures, marked places of historic events) as a very appropriate spatial frame. It is right there, on the square that the authority presents its political programme, the people demonstrate, the ruler is taken from power. Every relevant historic moment is built into the area of happening by means of a new spatial symbol or it leaves only a mark in the historical memory. The planner-designer may arbitrate even about this.

Plans and perspectives

In the comprehensive process of spatial planning and also in the policy of managing city space the square is taken into consideration one way or another. The project approach therefore definitely follows the programme that has been drawn out in a plan of a higher level, meaning that it is also binding. However, in the process of giving space meaning, we are often in a position to reevaluate an abandoned idea or re-affirm a lost opportunity through a new project. The layering of urban planimetry gives us, as it had given those before us, a creative impulse in understanding and interpreting space. The multitude of superimposed ideas for a concrete area is a source of inspiration that demands self-control but also calls for an ethical approach to our common professional heritage that has not had the opportunity to be materialised.

3. Four Projects for Squares in Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina

Solving the problem of the **core of Klanjec** (a small town in Croatian Zagorje), particularly because of its heterogeneous, irregularly shaped cover and centrally located statue in the square, demanded a particularly subtle project approach. Particular attention was paid to the choice and establishment of ideal geometry of the square's area, to the choice of materials, finishing works with decent chromatic contrasts and a harmonious balance of original and new architectural elements.

The existing – given position of the statue was taken as the starting point of the project idea of an amphitheatrical square. The applied geometry of concentric circles gave a softness to the waving square's surface. At the same time neutralisation of the already existing irregularly shaped cover

was achieved and also its strong integration into the impressive totality of the square.

British Square in Zagreb was never a representative city square. In terms of traffic regulation it was formed as a widening at a junction of several traffic directions and their connection to the city traffic network. It is primarily a traffic and market square, with a bus terminal in its northern part and an open market in its southern part. Its cover is fully determined, but there is a possibility to replace a number of buildings of lesser architectural value by new ones, so as to satisfy all the needs for supplementary programmes of the market and the bus terminal which at present do not exist. The area of the square does not have a distinct historical style layer, but it is of significant socio-cultural importance to Zagreb. The proposed solution is based on the presumption of maintaining the green market and bus terminal with improved infrastructure facilities in the square.

The centre of Krašič (Žumberak hills), that is formed by two funnel-shaped squares with a dominant parish church, after a long standing devastation of the square, has been reduced to a provincial pseudopark area. Constructing a bypass creates a possibility of turning the centre into a pedestrian zone, reserved exclusively for the inhabitants and the growing number of pilgrims. The place intended for the statue of cardinal Alojzij Stepinac is on the „border" of the „church"/holy and the „worldly" part of the square, and has been distinctly marked.

The squares have been relieved of the low quality vegetation that had been planted in the recent past and are turned towards the church. By using materials of coarser texture and warm tones, and by a simple division of the surface with a memory of the former street, the request for a balance of a moderate level of representation with an obligation to preserve the character of the area and the morphology of the city has been achieved.

St. Jurij Square in Djurdjevac, an area with an undefined edge and lost proportions, without any attractive design or programme features, is unduly playing the role of the main town square. There is still enough space for new buildings to be constructed and the new programmes will give a strong impulse to town life. These will mark time through architectural expression and the buildings will also reduce the absolute proportions of the square. The concept has been built on the reinterpretation of traditional archetype elements of the old town of Djurdjevac (fort, tower, wall, moat/ditch, water, field...).

Square in Posušje (a small town in Bosnia and Hercegovina), has been created as a completely new square in a devastated area that was formally a park in front of the high school building and the Ministry of civil engineering. In reality it is possible to re-establish and maintain the park in the western part, while the eastern , completely degraded part, should become the main public area in Posušje by redesign. The regulation plan suggests the construction of a new, commercial/housing „town house", that would define the eastern edge of the square. The programmes on the ground floor would be in the square's function and turned towards it. The eastern part of the square would be reserved for open-air restaurants under a „pergola", the western for putting up representative forms (sculptures, fountains, etc), while the central, largest part of the square, would be for manifestations.

French Republic Square in Zagreb is mostly park area, while the representative pavilion for catering and commercial purposes is located in the northern part of the square. Its emblem attributes are part of the park architectural inventory, while the urban impostations are a result of legible urban continuity understood as building lines of surrounding streets. The assembly character (continuous and passing, modern and traditional) justify the use of contemporary construction materials: glass, high-value metals in combination with wood. The concept of square-park is based on the dominance of green surfaces and intensifying the rhythm of existing vegetation and pedestrian ties. The western undefined edge is determined by a new line of exhibition pavilions.

Central Square in Samobor, a well known Zagreb outing place, is determined by the following characteristics: traffic, that at present cannot be suspended; surrounding important features of the city (city council, parish church, market) and a distinct secession style layer. The structure of the area is completely determined, with regard to the edge of the square, the square itself is of distinctive socio-cultural importance for the city, since all events take place here. Special mention should be made to the „Samobor fašnik", an event that surpasses local importance. The square is of medieval spindle shape, while the river Gradna flows along its borders. The proposed paving emphasises its spindle shape, while the surface is dealt with minimalistically so that different events can be organised. A set of mobile and flexible street furniture is used, depending on the annual activities (carnival, days of wine, political meetings, religious holidays,...).

Scheme 1: *Factors determining spatial characteristics and factors that determined the methodological (planning-project) approach (expressed by the level of definition)*

	traffic	func-tions	struc-ture	style layers	socio-cultu-ral im-portance	plans
Klanjec	little	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
British Sq.	very	yes	yes	little	very	very
Krašič	yes	very	little	little	very	very
Djurdjevac	no	yes	very	no	little	no
Posušje	no	yes	very	no	little	no
French Rep Sq.	no	no	no	little	yes	little
Samobor	yes	little	yes	very	very	yes

4. Conclusion

The organisation of a square is primarily a planning and urban planning task in which there is no place for formal aesthetisation. The methodological approach, defining a programme and determining the framework within which common creative principles should be placed, is specific for each particular task and is unrepeatable. Determining an approach means understanding spatial historical richness and its urban (functional and formal-design) genesis. Factors determining spatial characteristics are at the same time also

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factors that determine the methodological planning-project approach. Limiting the process to mere aesthetising would degrade space. However, lifting the standard of equipment is a necessity that should be undertaken continuously, whenever the need arises, but that is then a secondary problem, basically one of management rather than planning.

Mistakes that occur in the proposals concerning organisation of open city space are frequently the outcome of a planner's complacent and insatiable desire to distinctly mark the spatial intervention as an act of personal creativity. In these actions he arbitrarily decides about space, sometimes in such a way that even the indisputable principles are under question. However, creativity does not stem from the guaranteed right to personal self-promotion. In fact creativity is reflected in the expertness of studying a problem and establishing a good balance between the existing and the new, individual and common, making this task an urban planning challenge par excellence. Often this also means reducing the task to a minimal communal intervention or total retreat from the action

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Notes

1 Wienands distinguishes between two principles of design, i.e. the principle of comprehensiveness and the principle of expressiveness (from Reinborn / Koch, 1992:47). According to the principle of comprehensiveness „the whole is more than a sum of elements, that compose it". In urbanism it has a special significance. Grouping and adding of buildings on their own are not urbanism, although it is the most common mistake in urban planning.

2 Reinborn,D.;Koch, M. (1992), Entwurfstraining im Stadtebau, Kohl Hammer GmbH, Struttgart

3 Prince, D. (1980), Stadtebauliches Entwerfene – Band 1, Stuttgart

4 Reinborn,D.;Koch, M. (1992), Entwurfstraining im Stadtebau, Kohl Hammer GmbH, Struttgart

Illustrations

Picture 1: A. Mihanović square – Klanjec, 1996-1997 (realised phase I.)
authors (in alphabetical order):
mr.šc. Jesenko Horvat, dr.sc. Tihomir Jukić, Ksenija Petrić (consultant conservator)
Picture 2: British square – Zagreb, 1997 (competition proposal, 1. prize, under construction)
authors: mr.sc. Jesenko Horvat, dr.sc. Tihomir Jukić, Azra Suljić, Krunoslav Šmit
Picture 3: Cardinal A. Stepinac square – Krašić, 1997-1998 (executed)
authors: mr.sc. Jesenko Horvat, dr.sc. Tihomir Jukić, Biserka Bilušić-Dumbović (consultant conservator)
Picture 4: Square in Posušje, Federation Bosnia and Hercegovina, 1997 (idea proposal)
authors: mr.sc. Jesenko Horvat, dr.sc. Tihomir Jukić
Picture 5: St. George square – Đurđevac, 1998 (competition proposal, 1. prize)
authors: mr.sc. Jesenko Horvat, dr.sc. Tihomir Jukić, dr.sc. Srećko Pegan
Picture 6: French Republic square – Zagreb, 1998 (competition proposal, 2. prize)
authors: mr.sc. Jesenko Horvat, dr.sc. Tihomir Jukić
Picture 7: King Tomislav square – Samobor, 1999 (competition proposal, 3. prize)
authors: mr.sc. Jesenko Horvat, dr.sc. Tihomir Jukić

Soner SAHIN

A Floating Public Space: A surface for general use*

Why a floating public space?

It is useful to move public spaces from one place to another … but how?

By sea. The sea is the best mode; it is big, flat, empty and friendly.

So, open the box, pump in some air and the object is ready. It can be pulled around with a tug and put wherever wanted. By shifting the air inside, stretching and squeezing, it can be adapted to any place.

The most important thing is to find a suitable place, a place where a town really needs a public surface, new or extended … the rest remains on its users.

The first station of the floating public surface is Venice. The city can use the surface for different purposes. Possible uses of the surface are shown. The identity of the new space will be gained by use.

Soner Sahin, architect, Technical University Istanbul, Turkey

Note:

The proposal for a floating public surface was carried out at the the urban design workshop Flows 98, in Rovinj, Izola and Venice, 15.-25. July 1998.