



REVITALIZATION OF VACANT INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS HELFRICH SZABOLCS

DLA-DISSERTATION – ABSTRACT AND STATEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Large rust belts and brown zones have come to exist in Hungary, too, due to deindustrialization. These areas have been causing serious problems for decades now; however, their hidden potential must not stay locked.

My thesis is dealing with the revitalization of abandoned industrial buildings, with a primary focus on the relation between the building and its environment. I have studied how rational and emotional aspects have an impact on designer decisions during revitalization processes and how both the close and broad environment affects the design progress.

I systematized the mentioned recycled buildings (realized example projects) according to their architectural behavior. I was interested in the building character alteration: whether it does change—if so, why—and whether it is really meant to change or not. What designer attitudes can be discovered, can the underlying decision mechanism be uncovered?

I came to a conclusion that the analysis of this aspect can answer some – at first hidden – questions.

I set up five categories, I called them behaviors. The behaviors are the projections of the self-concept of the community in question. The behaviors reveal the cultural specification of a district, a part of a city, a region. During the revitalization processes, the more culturally stratified

an area is, the less important preserving the existing material content is – and vice versa.

We should make serious compromises when concentrating on the visual traits of the past (observable 'stamp', easily legible symbolic meaning) and considering them as a primary value. No matter how obvious this behavior is in case of a monument, in case of unprotected buildings the role of the elevations is often overrated.

With higher level, more abstract thinking we can reach—in every sense—a more conscious result, however, the historical continuity is more difficult to be obviously reflected.

With an architect's point of view I think that building recycling with analytic thinking and conscious decisions can be an alternative to greenfield investments. For that, however, we should admit that revitalization is not an economical must and not solely about the past, but is an opportunity to reach a more conscious and—in a good sense—a more modest future.

STATEMENTS

Statement 1:

The overall changing, even the complete transformation of the elevation character doesn't always break the historical continuity; the bond is more complex, more than just visible.

Statement 2:

The behaviors observed during the realized revitalizations are the projections of the self-concept of the area, region in question.

In this process the architect (besides the Client) is the member of the group who possess both decision making and tool to express a collective self-concept. The projection of the self-concept ('Where am I? Who am I?'), the behavior reveals the cultural specification of the area, region.

Statement 3:

In case of not protected buildings, the more culturally stratified an area is, the less important the existing material content is (to preserve material, structure)—and vice versa. The less culturally stratified an area is, the more the

material content is favored—equally in case of unprotected buildings.

Statement 4 :

Categorization can work as an indicator. It can point out the flaws and values of a certain area, region, it can help the conceptual decision making of the place.

The sole existing of the first category ('in-living') in a certain place shows that the revitalization of the place cannot start off by itself, spontaneously, due to the lack of thoughtful, comprehensive concept in addition to the complex and extended pile of problems.

The second category ('using, utilizing') shows that the area is slowly coming to life, its role in the city texture is changing, it implies a slow renovation, 'clarification'.

The third category ('respect') shows that the 'cleaning' process is proceeding, maybe even accelerated, but it hasn't been finished. A comprehensive, secure vision is missing, the presence of the original character is essential to strengthen identity.

The fourth category ('reinterpretation, metamorphosis') implies advanced reforming processes, when the primary aim is more than to strengthen identity, since there is a comprehensive concept.

The fifth category ('quote') means places where reforming with the frame of the existing state would result in underutilization. In places like this the material content is an obstacle; it is the conversation that has become more important.