

Picture 2: Vienna; the model of parking by area (source: Vienna 1995, 121)

Picture 3: Vienna; renewal of the whole block of buildings on Odeongasse with added green surfaces, maintained courtyards and calmed traffic (source: Vienna 1995, 32)

Picture 4: Strasbourg; comprehensive approach in the plan of Strasbourg: new organisation of traffic, parallelly run and well thought out design of squares, parks, embankments (top); expansion and »greening« of tram lines (middle); segregation of traffic for private cars meant that new surfaces were gained for pedestrians; Kleber Square with an area of 2,8 hectares, formerly cluttered with cars, became the central area of the pedestrian zone (bottom) (source: CTS 1994)

Picture 5: Strasbourg; trams connect the pedestrian zone where they drive at lower speeds (left); cyclists can take their bicycles with them on the trams and leave them at parking places, some of which are guarded, near the tram stations where bicycles can also be rented (top); commodity in transport also means easy access, low entry trams have a special shelf for carriages and bicycles (right) (source: CTS 1994)

Picture 6: Freiburg; rehabilitation of the historical town core

Picture 7: Freiburg; design of pedestrian surfaces (squares, roads, courtyards): interesting paving, street furniture, wells, greenery

Picture 8: Freiburg; connecting the historical town core with the green hinterland with pedestrian bridges

Picture 9: Ljubljana, model of decentralised settlement concentration in the urban area – potential sites for neighbourhoods with concentration centres tied to the long-term development of suburban public transport – suburban and urban buses, suburban and urban tramways (source of traffic scheme: PNZ, 1995)

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Renewal of built structures in contemporary urban management

(new directions and the reality in Slovenia)

1. Introduction

Negative changes, tightly connected to relations within the society and its operation are manifested even in the living environment of variously sized settlements. In the analysis titled The environment in Slovenia it is stated that more than half the national population live in urban areas (50,5 %) and that »these are the most polluted ecosystems, whereby the pollution of air, water and soil is highest« (Velkavrh, 1999). Because of the evidently degraded living conditions in cities, towns and even smaller settlements, in some cases reaching alarming extents, the international community has formulated special suggestions for the development of cities and other settlements (Istanbul declaration and Agenda Habitat, adopted at the 2. UN conference on human settlements, Istanbul, 14th July 1996). They were formulated according to adopted principles about the comprehensive spatial reality and responsible sustainable development.

In the design guidelines, future – sustainable – planning of the living environment is oriented towards improvement of the existing condition. Settlement expansion is supported only after redevelopment of the existing built structures is successfully completed.

With these new directives, renewal in all its specific types, from the renewal of cultural heritage to renewal of all, even new built structures (integral, comprehensive protection of built heritage) and the rehabilitation of degraded urban areas (reconstruction of poorly used space), has become an indelible, often even most important part of contemporary urban design of settlements.

2. New directions and management of the living environment in Slovenia

Renewal as the starting point in spatial management

2.1 Normative and value basis

Normative basis

New international guidelines, coined »new« although they are older than a decade, have been integrated as general articles in various Slovenian normative documents dealing with various aspects of spatial management, development or the living environment. They are: the Constitution, laws and by-laws (Law on spatial management, Law on development of settlements and other spatial development acts, Building law, Law on environmental protection, Law on the protection of cultural heritage etc.), planning and development acts (national spatial plan, municipal – local plans, various planning documents), but also ratified international agreements, treaties and other documents.

The main goal is to prevent the condition of generally spontaneous and most often unplanned development of our settlements. The other goal is to align development with international guidelines thus achieving a higher quality. Recently the chapters of the long-term and mid-term national spatial plans dealing with settlement development were changed and elaborated. To refresh the natures of the changes, article 2 of the ordinance with the mentioned amendments states (Official bulletin, No. 11/99): »Settlement should be directed into the building areas of settlements, redefined according to the by-law on the contents and methodology for preparing expert guidelines and spatial components of municipal (local) planning acts. In settlement management, all available building plots in the settlement have to be used by active renewal of the existing building stock, reconstruction of degraded urban areas and activating inadequately used building plots. Only in rare cases can settlements expand outwards, if development within the compact settlement isn't possible or would significantly diminish the quality of living conditions. In areas where dispersed settlements are the identity pattern, building areas shouldn't be defined. The autochthonous settlement pattern should be preserved. Functional and morphological densening and encirclement should reconstruct existing dispersed settlement that degrades the environment and doesn't follow autochthonous settlement patterns.

New dispersed settlement is prohibited, except for agricultural uses and supplementary activities of farms, following the restructuring of agriculture in the accession process needed to enable competitiveness on the European market within the framework of the European Union. It is however necessary to assure the preservation of the cultural landscape and maintain the population in the countryside.«

Value basis

The value basis for formulating guidelines that can be beneficial in planning the development of settlements are all available data and material in which, following principles of sustainability, renewal and rehabilitation have special value. Under certain conditions (protections of cultural heritage, integral protection of built heritage, reuse of building sites) they are given precedence over new development.

Among the most important value basis are international documents prepared by the United Nations, Council of Europe, European Union and other international bodies (Action programme of the UN – Agenda 21, Fifth EU action programme (Towards Sustainability), Decisions taken at the 2. UN conference on human settlements – Habitat II (Agenda Habitat, Declaration of the World conference of cities and local governments) and obligations from international and bilateral agreements.

Important value based guidelines are also numerous research, debates and studies carried out in Slovenia, all of which were oriented towards improving the system, methodology and spatial planning solutions for urban development and management at various levels (Various authors: Studies and papers in the field of spatial planning on the national level.¹ Ljubljana: Office for physical planning, Ministry of environment and space, 1999) and all material dealing with urban management from the environmental aspect, where diminishment of quality of living was proven, also expressed in damaged and polluted natural resources, but also visual degradation of built structures (the latter was dealt with by many authors: The city and urbanisation, volume: Harmoni-

sed and sustainable, No. 3/1999, Ljubljana, Council of the Republic of Slovenia for environmental protection, 1999).

We can conclude that in Slovenia in the last decade numerous research and other material was prepared to establish value based or normative (legislative) management of settlements, most of them are on line with contemporary international guidelines of sustainable development and their »contents« are of high quality. Definitions of problems, concepts, design guidelines, analyses (reasons and consequences), strategies (mastering phenomena, protection) and the proposed solutions, visions, measures etc., are often innovative even outside Slovenia (for example the Programme concept for the settlement Štanjel, authors: Likar, D. and Koželj, J., commissioned by the Regional Centre for the Environment for Central and Eastern Europe).

2.2 Respect for design guidelines (the role and significance of renewal) in real management of the living environment

Unfortunately high quality normative documents and a myriad of other value based material, that describe circumstances and propose numerous solutions or directives on how to attain the envisioned goals of settlement development, all at various levels of creative imagination, aren't reflected in reality. The introductory portrait of the present state is maintaining its image; moves towards an improved state of settlement management cannot be discerned.

Spatial development of settlements isn't directed into repeated use of already settled land, rehabilitation and recycling of existing structures and also repeated and rationalised use of poorly used space (degraded urban areas, Koželj, 1998). Contrary to all established normative and value based documents, it is still mostly directed to green sites with dispersed growth on virgin land. Most new, contemporary urban extensions and architectural forms still aren't in harmony with existing identity and/or design features of living environments, although these features are according to guidelines of sustainable development, the mainstay of new criteria for measuring quality in architecture. Compared to other artistic fields, architecture has to pay respect to »context«, no building stands alone, but always in a neighbourhood, either with nature or with other buildings (Košir, Ljubljana, 1991). The estimated value of a building is therefore a product of two analyses: first, the building as an independent object and second, the building in space.

Because of the described urban design and architectural developments that don't take into consideration the context of the already existing living environment, even architectural and urban design heritage are being devalued. They should however, as a special national cultural value, nevertheless be preserved, maintained and renewed under specific conditions (Law on the protection of cultural heritage).

From the modest description of the condition we can understand, that in Slovenia sustainable management of the living environment that includes renewal and rehabilitation in multi-layered roles, is more often than not, only declarative. Although stated in conventions, laws, ordinances and other documents, actions in practice never reach the real environments. Renewal and rehabilitation as a concept or activity are still narrowly oriented towards the protection of individual monuments.

3. Reasons for poor and environmentally careless management of the built environment (neglecting renewal as the rationale for spatial management)

All the reasons for existing poor management of the living environment in Slovenia cannot be mentioned. A very important fact is that modern development of the built environment, aligned to renewal and rehabilitation of existing structures is enforced with formal and value based documents. However documents aren't mutually harmonised, especially normative ones. Another important consideration is that they cannot muster adequate follow-up in implementation because of lacking supportive documents (by-laws, guidelines, experiments, models, manuals etc.), that would untangle general guidelines into useful elements of planning and technical documents.

In these circumstances the contents of present planning documentation, the basis for all development in built environments, although formally harmonised with higher level documents, are in fact outdated. New principles for comprehensive management of the built environment with renewal and rehabilitation as their rationale, that are already a part of the legislature and national plan, are integrated in implementation documents much too loosely and inadequate to real, particular circumstances. For example, integral (comprehensive) protection of the built heritage, which is a compulsory mechanism for the preservation of spatial landscape and cultural identification and the quality of the built environment are not a basic value conditioning development plans. Therefore urban planning information, that follows individual development applications, still includes general compulsory conditions, such as distances from plot borders, even if they cannot be achieved in reality (in many cases these conditions are contrary to prepared cultural protection opinions and other expertise).

4. Conclusion

The present condition of our space clearly shows that the establishment of a higher quality living environment where renewal and rehabilitation with all their described varieties and differences have a more important role isn't possible by using only general directives in value oriented or normative documents. Even these aren't mutually harmonised. Degradation of the living environment is increasing rapidly. Therefore we should immediately:

- harmonise certain parts of the existing legislature and achieve political and professional consensus on upgrading and improving the existing normative system, with a clearly defined value system;
- introduce incentives and limitations (professional, development, tax ...);
- begin to truly implement the normative system in spatial management (control, sanctions ...);
- draw out precise instructions, examples, ...
- prepare detailed and more binding, goal oriented documents concerning urban management (the framework of renewal and rehabilitation have to be integrated in urban

development strategies, integral protection plan, ...), that could (albeit in a pragmatic way) stop the present trend of urban management, growing anarchy (also including self-centred architects) and degradation of all urban environments.

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Note

¹ The publication titled: Studies and research in the field of spatial planning on the national level, published by the Office for physical planning, is designed as a manual. It allows faster insight into a large part of the research and expert work done in the last decade. Amongst the presented studies under the heading Settlement there are eighteen separate studies, enlightening the subject from different angles and proposing future development directions. If we add research carried out under the topic landscape architecture and infrastructure, also tied to the planning of settlements, we can ascertain that in Slovenia we have sufficient research material to devise new regulatory acts or redefine existing ones.

Pictures

Pictures 1, 2, 3

»The basic problem of Slovenska Street is its urbanism. It is a street without vision, where even the building lines don't work. The line towards the North is stopped by the horrific high rise SCT office block, the »black widow's« twin. Opposite it looms the Interexport high rise office block, the so called »Deadman's dick« with the notorious »showcases«. The Metalka building is somewhere in between, a lone hostage. As unimaginative as the rest. Everything is thrown in without order as on judgement day« (Damjan J. Ovsec: We know how to have the city. We don't know how to live with it, Delo, June, 7th 1997).

Poor quality living environments will be redesigned into higher quality environments only with comprehensive renewal of existing built structures.

Picture 4, 5, 6 and 7

An integral part of the planned development of the settlement Dolenje Jezero in Notranjska (pic. 4) and aligned to all international guidelines is comprehensive protection of built heritage. According to these protection and rehabilitation guidelines, the existing building fund should be maintained and renewed. It should also be functionally, technically and artistically upgraded (renewing the broken continuity of urban and building development). New development should be planned with respect to established qualities, i.e. permanently usable values of the existing, complemented with knowledge and demands of the present. A new residential building at the edge of the settlement was designed by architects Stane Mikuž and Marko Mušič abiding to these measures (pics. 5, 6, 7). It is a rare example in Slovenia of high quality architectural design in contemporary urban development and architectural design of small settlements.

Maps 1 and 2

Excerpts from the urban design workshop Škofija Loka (1999) and »expert guidelines« Jezersko (2000) for designing comprehensive renewal plans (spatial normative acts), that would explicitly integrate the protected settlement core with the settlement's wider development area.

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