

THESES

**THE CHANGE OF OPEN SPACE FUNCTIONS
IN THE EUROPEAN URBAN RENEWAL**

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Name: **PhD School of Landscape Architecture
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ANTECEDENTS OF THE WORK AND THE APPOINTED PURPOSES

*“The outside space became a daily problem of our life,
as the worth of classical, historic urban design is disappearing
in the shadow of the present tendency of urbanisation. (...)
We are at a loss alike occurrence, which has no historical living pictures.”
(Tamás Meggyesi)*

Reconstruction of urban areas is almost as old as urban development. A given period has always criticised the previous ages' memorials, and was always ready to change its existing physical environment, if it was not suitable for the given social needs. In these days urban areas have umpteenth problems. A couple of centuries ago the appearance and spreading of modern means of transport, while nowadays the expanding development of the information and communication system force open the evolved urban structure of the age. The continually spreading cities, in the purpose of extending the attraction of the inner city, are accomplishing intensive open space development and renewal. The earlier, often below valued urban open spaces are enjoying a “Renaissance”, generally supported (at Budapest, too) by many state, mayor and private investments. In this process, the (urban) landscape design plays a more and more important part world wide, and this fact is the justification of its professional treatment.

The aims of my dissertation:

- Creation of consistent ideology indispensable for the research and comparative analysis,
- Development of a perspicuous and usable urban open space typology,
- Survey of the European urban design and green area design practice in the last centuries,
- Presentation of theory and practical levels of given periods in the European urban renewal,
- Drawing conclusion to define the role of urban open spaces at a given historical time, and also in its urban renewal,
- Presentation of the a-like contexts between political and economical situations, and in partner professions' current activities regarding urban open spaces.
- Drafting nominations and suggestions regarding the possible role of urban renewal for each types of open space in the future (Budapest).

RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHOD

“Exactly the experience of the mid-century’s urban renewal of Paris, London, Berlin and Vienna drew the attention of politicians being ambitious of the development of Budapest, that without an overall urban plan and conscious state urban policy it’s not worth to even start the work”
(Gábor Gyáni)

The necessary ideology and open space typology was developed in conformity with the conventional research methods on the basis of professional literature. I have analysed eleven different descriptions of the concept of *urban open space*, and ten different conceptions for the description of urban renewal. For the creation of open space typology I used seven literary sources, all together I used seventy-nine open space elements.

The main point of the historical research methodology was the survey of the last two hundred years divided into seven separated and thematic periods, each in the same structural construction: analysing the prevailing theories and activities in the two parallel developing professional fields’ (urban design, urban green spaces). In the light of all these periods first the typical European urban renewal projects were presented, and then the main events of the Budapest development. Through the presentation of the European practice I have analysed the primary living picture of the Budapest urban renewal, that is the London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna urban development, and I only digressed from these cities, when the urban renewal of another European city played a determinant role in that period.

The periods in order:

- The time of the establishment of industrial cities, from the time of the English industrial revolution to the European revolutions (1800-1848)
- The period of the “traditional” urban renewal, from the European revolutions to the First World War (1848-1914),
- The modern movement’s urban renewal plans, from the start of the garden city movement to the outbreak of the Second World War (1898 – 1939),
- Urban renewal in the dictatorships of the 20th century, dictatorships of Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union and the “Eastern European” communist dictatorships (1922 – 1956),
- Modern urban renewals after the Second World War, Western Europe from the London Metropolitan Plan to the end of the 1960’s; socialist countries from 1956 to the democratic transition (1943 - 1990),
- The issue of the “gentle” urban renewal, Western Europe from the end of the 1960’s; the socialist countries from the beginning of 1980’s, (1968-),
- The urban renewal of the present age.

RESULTS

Regarding each analyzed periods in the analyzed questions the results are the following:

In European cities urban renewal during the industrial revolution caused several social problems which without any direct interventions became more and more difficult to deal with. In London the so called „squares”, the precursors of the modern urban green spaces appeared in the urban structure. In this period, the importance of green space revealed mainly in serving of transport and supply of the claim, but the demand for public urban green spaces appeared too. Although plans belonging to a future level were born (they seemed more like a vision) which managed construction and natural elements, open spaces in systematic organization. **In the first part of the 19th century the question of urban open spaces was far from being an important or central issue in the urban policy and development.**

In this period the damage caused by heavy urbanisation lead to poor, unhealthy urban environmental conditions, all over in the European cities. On the basis of the former examples of the classical 16-17th century and baroque urban reconstructions, monumental avenues and boulevards were incorporated into the original urban structure. By the end of the period, Budapest hadn't fallen behind Europe's development tendencies. Open spaces played more important role in the urban renewal projects, and at the same time the claim for urban green area development has won a civil right. **In this sixty-six years' long period, huge developments could be reached in the field of urban open spaces – both on decision and design level. These results are well to be measured by the realisation of urban structural plans and carefully built urban open spaces.**

From the beginning of the 20th century, the social and public health questions became more important in urban renewals. With the modernism of architecture, new and modern building technologies and development methods appeared, and urban planning has also created numerous fantastic ideas in order to solve the social and structural problems of cities. Though most of these ideas remained only urban utopias, they proved to be very impressive for a long time. Owing to the First World War and its dreadful consequences this period was far from being the golden age for public parks. But the fact, that green areas appear in the form of statistic indexes in the modern green structure plans, made this period very special for the profession, too. To reach this result, both the social importance of open areas had to be recognized and the social needs for urban green areas had to analysed on a scientific level. **It was the very period, when giving up the earlier supplemental position, urban open spaces and green areas became equal urban planning elements in urban development, and they were able to act as necessary factors in the construction process.**

The communist and fascist dictators of the 20th century used similar urban development methods and techniques for renovation and renewal. They ignored the modern movements' natural science approach, and defined all development on the basis of ideology. The new building methods produced more green areas, but the open spaces did not have priority in the overall urban design. Although green area supply on normative proportions and modern green space design principles were occasionally adopted, they were not widely used in

practice. **In their urban renewals, the urban open spaces were subordinated to the ideologies and the gigantic buildings, so they became simple urban elements with no original social content at all.**

After the Second World War the tremendous lack of flats generated an intensive urban development, which helped the modern building technologies and construction methods to spread. The war damage throughout the European cities produced the opportunity for the realisation of new urban planning ideas even in the historic parts of the cities. As a result of the construction of blocks of flats and high rise buildings, the size of the built-up ground floor area reduced. The design of the “new type” green area elements caused many problems due to the change of traditional street and space systems. The practice of normative planning became generally accepted both in urban planning and green area design, though construction was slow in many places and maintenance was kept on a low standard. **Through modern urban renewal, the quality and quantity of urban open spaces, as criteria for the quality of a new city, played a more accentuated part.**

By the 1960's, the negative consequences of the industrial development after the Second World War became obvious. Modernism was rejected in urban development, while history and monuments of past periods became favoured. The period rehabilitated the traditional urban fabric. Urban streets and squares have been rescued from the heavy traffic flow in special urban areas and new public open spaces were given the urban residents for recreational use. Landscape architects took into consideration the important elements of environmental protection when preparing complex systematic plans. Even ecology became part of the planning process. Through the block rehabilitation, many courtyard wings have been demolished and numerous inner (pocket) gardens developed. **In the process of urban renewal, the extended urban open spaces played an important role, parallel with solving the main problems of urban traffic flow and parking.**

Nowadays the typical urban process is the so called de-urbanisation which means also the appearance of re-urbanisation at the same time. Urban development prefers dense urban fabric with close, urban building-up system in practice, but understands the necessity of urban expansion in theory. Public places are the very places where urban community can meet, so their development and renewal should contribute to the quality of life in general, and even to valorise urban places from an economical and financial point of view. Environment protection and landscape architecture became indispensable and important in urban development. Green area system plans are complex plans, which solve the urban problems with using multiple ecological methods. **In urban renewal, urban open spaces play appreciated, important role, even as the main element and starting point for further developments.**

NEW SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS (THESES)

Thesis 1.

The *open space* is a comparatively new expression in the domestic professional language, based on German and English standards because of a professional necessity. The professional expectations have changed very much in the past years, while the nomenclature stayed the same in the planning process. The present expressions of urban and landscape planning are not able to express exactly the professional tasks, objects, aims and issues. **I have appointed that according to the common international usage (*espaces urbaine, urban landscape, städtische Freiräume*) and meaning of the expression, we should use it in a context of urban open space so as to be conform with the international trends.** Analysing previously written scientific definitions, I created my own definition: „ *urban open space is the non constructed urban space („empty urban”) formed with landscape architectural elements, for people to use*”.

I was looking for a context with general meaning to describe the intervention in an organic urban space. Nomenclature differences comprise accent differences, occasionally preconception judgements and labelling, too: it's not expedient to judge the newly developed urban or urban parts. **Analysing the open space' role conversion, it's not the intervention's quality which is determinative but its fact: so it's necessary to create a standard designation of post-activities for research.** After the analysis of usage concepts, I determined that the most prolific expression is *renewal*. Under urban renewal, all complex urban development interventional elements, which in a pre-constructed area, are there to establish and supply the expectation and needs of the period.

Thesis 2.

In the last few decades, several open space typology were published – with different purpose, system and approach methods - in domestic and international professional literature. **It was confirmed, that through a detailed analysis of completed typologies and viewing all research materials and results and also taking the local “colour” into consideration, we can create an enumeration of urban open spaces which covers all professional needs both for scientific and practical use.** I created an all-inclusive urban open space typology, in which 47 elements can be found in 7 generally defined groups. The purpose of the typology development was to select and create the less collective contexts and the most obvious classifications. The open space groups in my application are the following: public parks, urban streets and squares, institutional open spaces, thematic urban open spaces, private gardens, open spaces connected to built-up areas and waterfronts. From these contexts there are two, namely the “thematic open spaces” and the “open spaces connected to built-up areas” are the special, own results and creations for the development of open space theory and typology.

Thesis 3.

In my dissertation I researched the changing role of urban open space in the last two-hundred years of European urban renewal. I confirmed that this very topic of urban renewal has never been researched in so many words before. Through historic analysis it was clearly confirmed that the success and strength of urban renewal process is hidden in the right and balanced relations and co-operation of urban design, planning, architecture and

landscape architecture, and also civil engineering. **I confirmed that urban open space rehabilitation is a very complex creative process, where the good standard and steady quality can be proved only with the synthesis and co-operation of all adjacent professional fields together with their special approach, mentality and way of thinking.**

I confirmed, that the good quality of urban open space renewal process in Budapest is essential, and it is important for the capital – in conjunction with the districts – not only to designate the urban open spaces for renewal but also to control the expectations of planning. On the bases of the analyses it is clear, that urban open spaces, similarly to buildings, are integral components of urban structure and fabric and even of the urban landscape and aesthetic value. Therefore all interventions or renewal of urban open space should not just be looked at from a technical point of view, but they need a detailed planning and design system, similarly to the buildings. **I confirmed, that the present unregulated situation can be improved only with the establishment of a new open space planning and design regulation and process, which exactly records and presents all the consequences of development from urban structural, architecture, and landscape architecture point of view.**

Thesis 4.

With the thematic analysis of the historic urban periods it was confirmed, that the actual theory and practice of interventions into urban structure tightly depended on the given period's theory and practice of urban planning and landscape design and also its political and economical situation. **I confirmed that in the last two hundred years of urban renewal, the role of urban open spaces have changed several times; although they don't show continual and dynamic growth in all categories, but in the theory and practice of interventions they acquired an even determinative importance.**

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

The question of urban public parks affect the whole city, as they can invoke the strongest opinions from the public and profession alike. Their structure, state, and social relevance to the fabric of life are important elements of the image of any European capital, therefore the reconsideration of their reconstruction from an urban and landscape architecture aspect is a pressing issue. According to neighbourhood public parks professional decisions should be backed by a strong social control at all levels of the planning process. The landscape architecture aspects should play an important role in planning and design from the general and regulation urban plan to the detailed plan level, so as to guarantee the special landscape architectural quality, similarly to the traditional requirements of architecture design process. In the course of open space and green area renewal of housing estates – alike to physical and social rehabilitation – not only the possibility and sources of direct intervention should be raised, but also the professional and economical settings of maintenance and sustainability have to be taken into consideration.

The reconstruction of numerous public open spaces in the last period concentrated called the attention to the lack of planning regulations in case of urban streets and squares, or urban open spaces. The lack of regulations needs the urgent development of a new planning contrivance (“urban open space plan for authorisation”, and “complex impact assessment study”). Only these new plans are able to exactly record and present the consequences interventions into the urban structure, into the architecture and landscape architecture aspects and conditions. The capital - in conjunction with the districts – has to designate those urban open spaces, which need urgent renewal and control the planning process and the planning warrants.

In the establishment of financial background for development, the PPP construction should be favoured. The investors (business, office or real estate owners) have real influence on the development process while the local government being responsible for the renewal is also ready to support the reconstruction together with the investors as financial partners.

The various, mainly public institutions in areas of urban renewal are able to play an important role in the process, as long as their open spaces are also reconstructed and even on a high level and with great expectations. The ideal reconstruction are very important in case of educational and public cultural institutions, where the young generations spend most of their time. In these cases it is necessary to require also from private investors the establishment of modern, high quality open spaces in the commercial and entertainment institutes.

In the interest of development of domestic open space culture, we have to change with the agreement of the Chamber of Architects the present practice of planning and idea tenders, where, in most common situations, the program, the requirements and the financial aspects of open spaces and green areas even do not appear. In most cases there is not a single landscape architect in the jury of various urban plans or designs of open spaces. Therefore the aspects of landscape architecture are not considered on their merits.

In the competition among world cities, through the establishment of urban “products”, the purpose is to attract tourists and multinational companies (and employees). For example thematic parks are based on attractions, programs events, and often show huge events and spectacles. With the plans for Budapest, we need to consider all successful European examples. Our outstanding possibilities for development are the education (knowledge centres), the thermal water, the arts (film industry, music, etc.), and even gastronomy. These projects could give rise to an opportunity for a development (campus, research base, bath, visiting studio areas). As these plans are professional tasks, landscape architecture should use this opportunity to show its importance in all areas of urbanisation.

As private gardens are equivalent parts of urban open space system, their establishment and quality are also important to the public, too. At the moment local government may assist to the building, establishment and maintenance costs and process with financial tenders. But this is not the suitable support, but the general culture and the living quality have to be cultivated. Schools and public institutes shall have to lead the way with the education of environmental issues and environmental culture.

In the course of re-urbanisation, say the environmental rehabilitation of densely built-up city centre, the main tools of quality and quantity development are just the new types of urban open spaces. Therefore one of the main tasks of urban renewal is the reconstruction and development of open spaces. Urban open spaces are one of the main possibilities and tools to make attractive these densely built-up residential areas and to solicit people to move back into the inner city. In the future renewal of Budapest, construction and open space systems – where the interim open space dominates - should be planned with a united point of view at the same time.

The connection between Budapest and the Danube has plenty of unused opportunities. Similarly to the situation of urban public parks, the articulation to the river and its wharf is a key element both in the landscape and in the life of urban residents. The relationship of people to water influence the whole city image. Besides the developed inner parts of Budapest there are many rehabilitation tasks of brown fields laying in the northern and southern former industrial areas along the Danube. Budapest has to renew itself, and the great investments create new possibilities for the renewal of existing urban ideas and ruling urban development methods. The renewal of the city is a huge task, which need huge and new and perspective ideas. It has to learn to communicate with the residents, with its own possibilities. It is time to learn to manage the urban renewal process with perspective, real, valuable results both in the urban environment and the communities.

CATALOG OF OWN PUBLICATIONS REGARDING THIS DISSERTATION'S TOPICS

Periodical articles:

Non IF periodical article:

BALOGH, P.I. (2003) The Change of Function of Open Spaces in the History of European Urban Renewals –
TÁJÉPÍTÉSZET, 2003/2

BALOGH, P.I., VÁNDOR, K. (2003) Open Space Rehabilitation in the Budapest, Belső-Ferencváros Area –
TÁJÉPÍTÉSZET, 2003/2

BALOGH, P.I., GERGELY A. (2002) Possibility of Development of Budapest Belső-Ferencváros for the
Bakáts Square Tender - „*TÁJÉPÍTÉSZET*” 2002/4

BALOGH, P.I., SÁNDOR T. (2001) Budapest, Erzsébet Square – Born of a Public Park –
„*TÁJÉPÍTÉSZET*” 2001/3

BALOGH, P.I. (2000) The Function of Urban Open Spaces in the Environment Rehabilitation –
„*TÁJÉPÍTÉSZET*” 2000/1

Other articles:

BALOGH, P.I. (2001) Stadtpark am Elisabethplatz – *Garten+Landschaft* 2001/12

BALOGH, P.I. (1998) Green in the City – Inner Gardens, *Szép Kertek* 1998/2

Conference Presentations:

In Hungarian (abstract)

The Change of Open Space Functions in the History of Big European Urban Renewals,

Presentation, *Lippay – Ormos - Vass Scientific Session, Budapest 2003 BUESPA*

Landscape architecture plan for the Nagyerdő Campus of the Debrecen University,

Poster lecture as partner author (*Ásztai, Bálint and Golda, János*), *Urban development –
Landscape Architecture Migrant exhibition, MUT Budapest 2003*

Environmental Rehabilitation of Open Areas in Historical Cities

Lecture, *Lippay Scientific Session, Budapest 2000*

The Role of Urban Spaces in the Environmental Rehabilitation

Lecture, „*Szabad tér*” *National Landscape Architecture Conference, Debrecen 2000*

Green Space Questions in the Rehabilitation of Historic Cities on Budapest's and Berlin's examples,

Poster lecture, with partner author (*Bogner, Zsuzsanna*) „*Szabad tér*” *Scientific Landscape
Architecture Conference, Debrecen 2000*

Environmental Rehabilitation of Historic Cities

Lecture, *Gardenning Days Garden Historical Conference, Budapest 2000 SZIU*

Rehabilitation of Several City Areas in Berlin

Lecture, *Lippay Scientific Session, Budapest 1998 UHFI*

Landscape architecture plan for Budapest, 1st. district, Fő utca Reconstruction

Poster lecture, *Lippay Scientific Session, Budapest 1996 UHFI*

Landscape Architecture Designs and Plans:

Hatvan Fő tér – authorization plan

(Palatium Kft., stúdió73), 2003

Sapientia EMTE Marosvásárhely Campus Landscape Architecture Plan for Authorisation

(Teampannon Kft., Plastica Stúdió, with partner landscape architects: Fekete, Albert and Szakács, Barnabás), 2003

Budapest, „Római Kert” Landscape Design of blocks of 80 Flats

(stúdió73), 2003

University of Debrecen, Life Science Institute and Library – Urban Plan and Landscape Design (*partners:*

Sándor Kertépítészeti Kft., stúdió73), 2003

Budapest Castle District, Szent György tér– Landscape Architectural Plan for the Demolished Wing of the old

Ministry of War – Construction and detailed Plan

(Artborétum Kft., TAAT Építész Műterem, stúdió73) 2002

Landscape Architectural Plan for the Salgótarján City Centre Reconstruction, authorisation plan

(Gerő és Szabó Kft., Studio Ars Loci Kft., SZIE KTT), 2002

Budapest City Centre, Landscape Architectural Reconstruction Plan for the Erzsébet Square Park

(partners: Firka Építész Stúdió, Sándor Kertépítészeti Kft. - Bánfalvi, Bikki, Sándor), 2002

Budapest Castle District, Szent György Square – Development of the Western Side of Remains Area

(TAAT Építész Műterem, stúdió73), 2001-2002

Budapest City Centre, Landscape Architectural Plan of Erzsébet Square, Cultural Centre and Park

(Firka Építész Stúdió, Sándor Kertépítészeti Kft. - Balogh, Bogner, Sándor, Sándor), 2000-2001

Competitions:

Budavár Kapuház, national open competition for ideal plans – purchased on a high value

(TAAT Építész Műterem, stúdió73), 2003

Szikszó City Main Square open space plan – national, open planning competition – purchased

(SZIE KTT – Almási, Balogh, Bodzás, Gergely), 2002

Salgótarján City centre – national open planning competition –second place, shared

(SZIE KTT – Almási, Balogh, Bodzás, Fekete), 2002

Budapest, Urban plan for Bakáts tér, national open planning competition –second place, shared

(SZIE KTT – Almási, Balogh, Bodzás, Gergely, Kuhn, Zajacz), 2001