

**Regeneration of urban areas -
with a focus on public spaces**

Theses of the PhD paper

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Doctoral School: **Landscape Architecture and
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Field: **Agricultural Technology**

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The applicant met the requirement of the PhD regulations of the Corvinus University of Budapest and the theses are accepted for the defence process.

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1. Aims of the research

Through the example of Budapest the paper examines the toolkit of regenerating urban areas. The research focuses on the transitional areas within the city, since in the case of Budapest (as in many other cities) the redevelopment of these areas is a significant challenge and also an opportunity for the city. In the research – according to the profile of the doctoral school – I draw significant attention on open space related intervention, such as greenspace strategies and municipal public space regeneration projects.

I am testing six hypotheses in the paper which are presented together with the theses in this summary.

2. Research method and data

In order to answer the questions raised the paper utilises more research methods. In the chapter 2.2. quantitative and qualitative interviews are used, in the chapter 2.3. primary resources (planning documents) and quantitative interviews are used, while in the chapter 2.4. the analysis of primary resources is supported again with qualitative interviews.

1st research unit: The tool kit of the regeneration of transitional urban areas

In the research about the regeneration of transitional urban areas I interviewed experts with extensive knowledge of the urban planning processes in Budapest, the legal and economic background of urban regeneration. When choosing the interviewees I also took into consideration, that they should represent a wider spectrum of

stakeholders of regeneration. Amongst them governmental officials (Ministry of Interior Affairs, Government Office of Budapest), municipal chief architects, managers of urban development companies are representing the views of the central and local governments. The property development industry is represented by the managers of some of the major property development companies. The views of the planning profession is presented by managers of landscape design and urban planning offices.

2nd research unit: Open space regeneration strategies in Budapest

In the chapter 1.2. I present some institutional models of urbanism. Using these models in the chapter 2.3. I analyse three open space regeneration strategy focusing on four key issues of the planning process by examining the planning documents and also supported with quantitative interviews.

3rd research unit: Function enhancement rehabilitation projects

Assessing the function enhancement project financed by the CHOP 2007. 5.5.2/B fund, the study the planning documents is supported by qualitative interviews with the managers of companies responsible for the management of the project, or with members involved in the project management from the municipality departments. At this part of the research I focus not just on the achievements of the project but also on the structure of the project management.

3. Results and theses

<p>1. hypothesis</p>	<p><i>Hungarian urbanism has arrived to a period of changing its paradigms. Instead of the previous positivist approaches, post positivistic approaches dominate after the first decade of the 21st century.</i></p>
<p>1. thesis</p>	<p>Proving the post positivist change of planning paradigm.</p> <p>Hungarian urbanism is approaching a period of changing its paradigms. Besides the positivist methods, post positivistic planning approaches also emerge from the first decade of the 21st century.</p>

The research has not proved that Hungarian urbanism reached a period of change its paradigm. In the interviews the public participation was mentioned several times as a tool which helps urban regeneration. Reaching of social consensus also was indicated as an important tool. But there were also sceptical opinions mentioned referring the post-positivistic tools of reaching consensus and public participation. The indifference of the stakeholders, the difficulties of reaching a consensus were the two most often mentioned obstacles. There were opinions which rejected the participation of the greater public, arguing that “the doctor does not ask the patient how to do the surgery”.

The examined strategic papers albeit in varying scale, post-positivist methods were present. In the process of making the strategies the public involvement – which would have indicated the prevailing of post positivist methods – was only formal. However there are some projects recommended by these strategies which incorporate the tool of public involvement and partnership.

Initiatives towards public involvement were not general in the function enhancement regeneration projects studied in the third research unit it. However we can find an example of real public participation in the 9th district's project through the involvement of the 'Civilians for the Palace District' organisation.

2. hypo- thesis	<i>The settlement development strategies are the pivotal tools of urban development.</i>
2. thesis	Proving the significance of development strategies. The settlement development strategies are the most important pivotal tools of urban development.

The quantitative survey presenting 15 tools of urban intervention concluded that the urban development strategies and vision statements are the most effective tools of regenerating transitional urban areas. The second most effective tool was to create an organisation responsible for coordinating the regeneration and the fourth was the redevelopment of public spaces according to the findings of the survey.

The research also pointed out that a document with "Strategy" in its title on its own does not help the urban regeneration process. The interviewees stated out that the municipalities in many cases regard the Integrated Urban Strategies merely as a compulsory pre requisite to access governmental funding and not as a useful tool of urban development. There are significant differences in effectiveness between the three open space development strategies presented in the second research unit. The cause of this is presented in the third thesis.

**3.
hypo-
thesis**

The open space regeneration projects act as significant catalysts of urban renewal.

The research has neither proved or disproved that the regeneration of urban open spaces are significant tools which stimulate revitalisation of an urban area. The traffic calming and greenspace enhancement projects were indicated in the interviews as intervention which usually increase the value of a given neighbourhood, however the effect of this is often not direct and often difficult to measure.

Amongst the studied projects funded by the Central Hungary Operative Programme (CHOP) 2007.-5.5.2/B budgeted for '*Function enhancement rehabilitation, integrated urban regeneration program for Budapest, redevelopment of district centres*' there were more which by focusing on regeneration of public spaces were hoping to encourage further investment at and around the location (ie. 5th district *Heart of Budapest*, 4th district *Main square*, 7th district *Street of culture*). The results of the projects so far don't prove that these aims have been achieved. On the contrary, some sub project which were designed to get private investors directly involved has failed. The reason of this, as the interviewees pointed out was the economic recession of 2008, which had it hardest hit on the property development industry. Some minor successes on encouraging private investment were indicated in two projects, where renovation of existing retail premises occurred since the completion of public space redevelopment.

However because of the enduring effects of the recession of 2008 the findings of the research are not sufficient to disprove the hypothesis, and to form an antithesis. The significant slowing down of the real

estate development industry does not allow to draw such conclusions in comparison with other locations of Budapest after only one or two years following the completion of the project.

<p>4. hypo- thesis</p>	<p><i>The effectiveness of urban regeneration open space development strategies depend on whether there is an existing, or a new organisation responsible for the realisation of the set goals. an organisation</i></p>
<p>3. thesis</p>	<p>Describing the significance of urban regeneration organisations.</p> <p>The guarantee of the reaching of the aims set in an urban development strategy or a complex regeneration programme is an organisation responsible for the realisation. The strategy has to be created according to the structure, the tools and the values of this organisation.</p>

The finding of the second research unit on open space strategies suggest, that the broad programmes set in strategic plans can be effectively achieved only if there is a management organisation which's task is to achieve step by step the goals set in the document, to convert the programs into smaller, gradually realisable projects. Amongst the studied open space strategies it was the AngelGREEN Strategy where the Environmental Management Non Profit Ltd. responsible for the greenspace management of the 13th district cooperated intensively in the production of the document. In the case of Margit Island Strategy the employees involved in the management duties of the island participated in the creating of the SWOT analysis of the document. In the case of Pro Verde! created for the request of the municipality of Budapest, the expert team worked with great

independence, not paying significant attention on the organisational structure how the strategy might be realised. The success rate of the document was found to be in accordance with the intensity of the cooperation with the management organisation.

The findings of the interviews also support the thesis. More interviewee suggested the creation of a planning and management organisation responsible for the coordination of Budapest’s urban regeneration.

In the case of the CHOP programmes the management of the complex projects, with the exemption of the 16th district, were coordinated by companies with ‘urban development’, ‘development’, ‘property development’, ‘rehabilitation’ in their names. According to the interviews these companies, which were separated from the municipality formed a more effective, more flexible and faster reacting body than the departments of the municipalities would have formed. In the case of the 16th district the management organisation was formed within the framework of the district council.

<p>5. hypo-thesis</p>	<p><i>The rehabilitation of open spaces was a dominant part of the district centre rehabilitation projects near transitional areas of the city.</i></p>
<p>4. thesis</p>	<p>Proving the significance of open space regeneration</p> <p>The rehabilitation of open spaces was a dominant part of then studied district centre rehabilitation projects near transitional areas of the city.</p>

The EU funding provided by the CHOP 2007. 5.5.2/B project allowed rehabilitation both of buildings (renewal, extension, building, heritage protection) and of open spaces (public space renewal, heritage protection, transport reorganisation). Out of the five projects studied in the third research units in the case of four the major part of the project budget was spent on the public space revitalisation. The ‘Street of culture’ in the 7th district was the only case, where building rehabilitation related projects formed the major part of the budget. So we can conclude, that in the majority of the studied function enhancement projects the rehabilitation of public spaces was the main goal of the municipality.

<p>6. hypothesis</p>	<p><i>According to the intentions of the government the function enhancement project of the CHOP contributed to the creation of organisations responsible for the integrated urban management.</i></p>
<p>5. thesis</p>	<p>Presenting the failure in setting up urban management organisations.</p> <p>Despite the intentions of the government the function enhancement project of the CHOP did not contributed to the creation of organisations responsible for the integrated urban management.</p>

It is not possible to reform municipal management structures with providing project funds. The municipalities had created the management companies which were compulsory prerequisites of the application of the CHOP 2007. 5.5.2/B project funds. However only four of these companies were really responsible for the project management, and three were liquidated soon after the project completion. The two remaining companies became responsible only

for administrative project management and they are not as complex urban regeneration companies. Studying the structure of the project management it was clear, that the political decision makers were keen to keep control over the operative project management decision making. It was only in the case of RÉV8 regeneration company, where the operative decision were made within the companies under professional, and not political control. The control of politicians over the project decision making was clearly present in the projects.

Following the completion of the projects the majority of the municipalities decided to incorporate the duty of developments into council owned companies with maintenance responsibilities. In the case of Sashalom (16th district) the development projects were and stayed managed by project teams created form the municipality departments.

<p>6. thesis</p>	<p>Describing the difference in opinions between the studied groups of professionals.</p> <p>We can find characteristic differences between the different groups of professionals involved in the survey regarding which type of intervention could be the most effective. The knowledge of this differences can contribute to the more effective cooperation between these professional groups in order to make the 'new urban alliance' work.</p>
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The Toledo Declaration recommends to form a 'new urban alliance' with the involvement of the stakeholders of the urban regeneration process. The findings of the research draws attention what are

similarities and differences between the possible members of this new alliance regarding the effectiveness of the tools of urban regeneration of transitional urban areas. We can draw the conclusion, that if we divide the interventions into groups of shaping/regulating/stimulating/capacity building, the governmental officials, the municipal chief architects and the urban planners suggest that firstly the tools of shaping and secondly the tools of capacity building are the most effective. The managers of development companies and landscape designers suggest that the firstly the tools of shaping and then the stimulating are the most effective. Real estate developers suggest, that first are the tools of stimulating followed by the tools of shaping the development environment. The in depth interviews described in more details the differences but also the similarities between the groups of stakeholders. This can form a starting ground to form an alliance between these groups in order to achieve the regeneration of transitional urban areas.

	Interviewed groups of professionals					
Type of intervention	Governmental officials	Chief architects	Managers of development companies	Landscape designers	Urban planners	Property developers
Shaping	3,00	2,75	3,00	3,20	3,40	1,75
Regulating	0,89	1,33	0,83	1,20	0,73	-0,17
Stimulating	1,74	1,03	2,33	2,19	1,52	1,91
Capacity building	2,00	2,50	1,50	1,50	2,00	1,63

<p>7. thesis</p>	<p>The need of renewing the toolkit of regenerating transitional urban areas.</p> <p>The tool kit of regenerating transitional urban areas in Hungary has to be renewed. The emphasis should be shifted form regulating (urban zoning plans) to shaping (strategic planning and management).</p>
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The conclusion of the interviews on how to regenerate transitional urban areas in Budapest was that tfrom the four types of governmental interventions the tools of shaping the development environment are the most effective, and the tools of regulating are the least effective ones. Between the six groups of professionals, the urban zoning plans were marked by the urban planners, those whose job is the creating of these plans, as the one as least effective. It was also an important finding of the research, that the majority of the interviewees suggested that the stimulation (state and municipality run constructions, development funds) is not the most effective way of regenerating transitional urban areas.

In the interviews a great number of potentially effective shaping tools of regeneration were suggested. At the same time some possible ways of how to improve the effectiveness of regulating were also mentioned. These recommendations are presented in details in the paper.

4. Relevant publications of the author

Periodicals, chapters in books, conference papers:

1. Péter Gábor: *Analyzing quality of urban greenspace in the 13th district of Budapest*, Journal of Landscape Architecture and Garden Art, Vol. 18 pp 20-33, 2010. ISSN 1787-6613
2. Peter Gábor: *AngelGREEN: Green Network Development Strategy of the 13th district of Budapest*, Fábos Conference on Landscape and Greenway Planning 2010. pp 187-194. proceedings ISBN 978-963-503-411-6
3. Gábor Péter: *A városi reneszánsz felé: a városépítészet új paradigmái*, Falu Város Régió, Vol. 2001/8 pp 14-16, 2001. ISSN 1218-2613
4. Gábor Péter, Jombach Sándor, Ongjerth Richárd: *A biológiai aktivitás változása Budapesten és a Budapesti Agglomerációban 1990-2005 között*, 4D Tájépítészeti és kertművészeti folyóirat, Vol. 5 pp 20-27, 2007. ISSN 1787-6613
5. Gábor Péter: *Zöldhálózati és zöldfelületi stratégiák: Politikai kampánydokumentum vagy hasznos eszköz az élhető települési környezet megteremtésében?* in Élhető Települési Táj, Tudományos Közlemények és Értekezések, '4D' tájépítészeti és kertművészeti folyóirat különszám (szerk. Jámbor Imre, M. Szilágyi Kinga), BCE Budapest 2012. pp 175-191, ISBN 978-963-87922-4-2

Plans (profession specific products)

1. *AngyalZÖLD Stratégia felülvizsgálat 2011-2014 - Budapest XIII. kerületi Önkormányzat zöldhálózat fejlesztési*

- programterve* 2011. XIII. kerületi Környezetgazdálkodási Nkft., Zöldfa Stúdió Kft., vezető tervező: Gábor Péter
2. *Margitsziget Stratégiai Terve egyeztetési dokumentáció*, 2008. BFFH Környezetvédelmi Ügyosztály, Főkert Nzt., BFVT Kft., Főkert Tervezési Stúdió Kft., Zöldfa Stúdió Kft., vezető tervező: Bardóczi Sándor, Gábor Péter
 3. *AngyalZÖLD, Budapest 2008. Budapest XIII. kerületi Önkormányzat zöldfelület fejlesztési koncepciója és zöldhálózat fejlesztési programterve*
XIII. kerületi Környezetgazdálkodási Nkft, Zöldfácska Kft., vezető tervező: Gábor Péter
 4. *Margitsziget KSZT Környezeti Vizsgálata* 2009.
2/2005 kormányrendelet szerinti környezeti értékelés és vizsgálat
Partnerek: Budapest Főváros Önkormányzat, BFV Kft. vezető tervező: Bardóczi Sándor, Gábor Péter
 5. *Pro Verde! Budapest zöldfelületi rendszerének fejlesztési koncepciója és programja*, 2006. Budapest Főváros Önkormányzat, Környezetvédelmi Ügyosztály - Studio Metropolitana Kht. projektvezető: Ongjerth Richárd

Online publications

1. Gábor Péter: *Szabadtérépítészeti koncepció közösségi részvétellel Angyalföldön* Építészfórum 2011.,
<http://www.epiteszforum.hu/node/18096>
2. Gábor Péter: *London máképp csinálja2 – Londontól Budapestig*, Építészfórum 2009., <http://www.epiteszforum.hu/node/11896>
3. Gábor Péter: *London máképp csinálja1 – Olimpiai az East Enden*, Építészfórum 2009.,
<http://www.epiteszforum.hu/node/11860>