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DEVELOPMENT OF THE LARGEST RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT OF LVIV – SYKHIV

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Received: February 17, 2015/ Revised: April 14, 2015/ Accepted: May 29, 2015

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Abstract. The article describes the peculiarities of formation of the largest socialistic residential district, Sykhiv of Lviv. The text reviews the transformational processes that had been taking place in Sykhiv during the contextual shifts of the last few decades.

Key words: large panel housing estate, residential district, micro district, urban transformation.

1. Introduction

In 2009, three years after the 750th anniversary of the founding of Lviv, the city of historic significance – the suburban village of Sykhiv celebrated its 600th anniversary. The biggest contemporary district of Lviv has been named after this village. All that is left now is its name, which is remembered today as the symbol of communist urban planning in Ukraine.

In 2001, Sykhiv with its 146,847 residents officially became an administrative district of Lviv. To date, the district is the largest large-panel housing estate in Lviv initially founded in 1970 as a workers' settlement for 12,000 people. Nonetheless, every fifth resident of Lviv lives in Sykhiv today and identifies him- or herself with this area. The district became an antipode to the historical city.

2. The Experimental

The aim of the article is to trace transformational processes that took place in Sykhiv during the three main periods of its contemporary formation:

- (1) The reorganization of the suburban villages in the 1960's;
- (2) The construction of the Soviet industrial hub and the emergence of a new workers' settlement in the 1970's and 1980's;
- (3) The transformation resulting from annexation of Sykhiv, together with Lviv, upon the declaration of Ukrainian independence.

3. The Results and Discussion

3.1. The Soviet Era

When Soviet Union annexed Lviv in July 1944, the Soviet government planned to turn the city into an industrial center. The first post-war master plan of the city, that reflected the principles of Stalin's classic urban planning, was developed in 1949.

The master plan of Lviv of 1956 makes a clear distinction between urban space and industrial zones. The initial plan was to construct a large housing estate with an area of 192.2 hectares in the southern part of the city. Subsequently, a new residential district of Sykhiv was built [4].

In 1958, it was made a decision was made to construct the three residential micro districts in three stages with a total living area of 521.200 square meters. With the standard of 9 square meters of living space per person, it was possible to settle 58.000 workers. The social and cultural facilities, as well as primary health care institutions and greenery areas, were also envisaged. This master plan became unsustainable after a few years, due to the unexpectedly rapid population growth. Ultimately, in 1966 it was adjusted to reach an estimated population of 700.000 people [5].

The city planning policy at that time aimed at the comprehensive development of new areas. This meant that industrial areas and housing estates for workers of the industrial enterprises had to develop simultaneously. The industrial zone began to form more quickly and an industrial ring was established around the future residential area. A shortage of manpower arose because of the rapid industrial development in the 1970s. Each day, 120,000 workers commuted to the industrial hub of Sykhiv, which created serious traffic problems. So, 390 hectares of housing estate were constructed in a two-phase construction project in order to ease these difficulties.



Fig. 1. Conceptual scheme of Sykhiv, 1970th, Yaroslav Novakivs'kyy, Zenoviy Pidlisnyy, Alla Petrova, Petro Krupa, Vitaliy Dubyna and others. (©Alina Petrova). A – main community center of Sykhiv, B – forest park Zubra, M-11 – M-23 – micro districts of housing estate of Sykhiv, 1-6 – enterprises of south industrial hub

The residential district was divided into four planning zones, with a T-shaped intersection of main roads at the center. The planning zones were divided into twelve smaller areas, known as the micro districts. At the heart of this area, a community center was to be built. Formally, it was to fulfill 6 functions: trade, health care, public services, administration, education, culture, sport, and hotel accommodation. Each micro district was planned for 7-10 thousand inhabitants. The first public services buildings formed the center of the micro districts. Each micro district had a kindergarten and almost every micro district had a school. Based on individual projects, certain important public buildings were also allowed to be built. Courtyards were established as the main recreational areas and an advanced network of pedestrian alleys and boulevards was developed to create all the necessary links between the different functions in the housing estate of Sykhiv. Schools, kindergartens, trade and public services were placed along the boulevards. Shopping centers and fourteen-story residential buildings were located at the crossroads of pedestrian boulevards and main roads.

The main elements of the new housing estate of Sykhiv were the groups of elongated, large-panel, eight-story buildings. Architects from the National Institute of Urban Design DIPROMIST improved the planning and constructional characteristics of standard projects. They added connecting passages on a ground level. Furthermore, they aimed to create a local identity and distinguish it from the typical Ukrainian housing estates. Active usage of colors became a main visual feature of the estate. Fourteen-story buildings, constructed with silicate brick based on individual projects, became the vertical accents of the estate [7].

Considering the political propaganda and technologies that were used for Soviet promotion, the aesthetics and the cultural heritage of a new Sykhiv housing estate architecture were perhaps even more lyrically praised than an ancient part of the city of Lviv.



Fig. 2. Photo of Sykhiv model, 1975 (©Alina Petrova)

3.2. The Post-Soviet Era

In 1993, a new master plan of Lviv was completed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The process of the of a private property restoration began. This meant the drastic changes in urban planning, as the state no longer had the monopoly of ownership. The industrial situation changed dramatically. During the Soviet Era, large industrial enterprises were the backbone of the socialist planned economy, while small enterprises played only a secondary part. When the independence of Ukraine was proclaimed, large industrial enterprises found themselves in a crisis and smaller enterprises began mushrooming. Today, there are 21 industrial enterprises, 373 trade institutions, 8 restaurants and 109 cafés in Sykhiv.

A new master plan, named Lviv-2025, was approved in September 2010. It aims at the creation of the three specialized sub-centers of the city. They include commercial and business blocks, a sports sub-center on the base of stadium constructed for Football European Championship 2012, and a western sub-center of wholesale and retail. The proximity to the stadium served as a catalyst for further development of Sykhiv infrastructure.

Some significant changes of Sykhiv are evident: apartments on the ground floors of residential buildings along the main roads have been converted into shops and offices, the former Soviet apartments were transformed according to European standards. These changes enhanced the quality of life.

Several brick houses and a youth housing complex were also built in the existing micro districts as the result of available space, but also as the result of the amended service regulations of kindergartens and schools. At the beginning of the Sykhiv planning process, kindergartens had to provide 65 places per 1,000 inhabitants. Today, this number has declined to 30 places.

When the independence of Ukraine was proclaimed, the housing estate of Sykhiv began to struggle against its own cliché as a purely dormitory district. Despite the fact that its name appears in the statistics of the most disadvantaged housing estates in Ukraine and despite the stereotypical perception of residential areas with prefabricated housing, Sykhiv increasingly consolidates and identifies itself as a valuable urban formation integrated into the architectural and social life of the whole city.



Fig. 3. Micro district №22 of Sykhiv (©Natalia Mysak, 2013)

In contrast to other districts, residents of Sykhiv have formed a strong community and have resolved nearly all issues together. The self-governing non-governmental organization of Sykhiv was created even before the official founding of the Lviv Administrative District of Sykhiv. The NGO was founded by a group of residents, community leaders and religious institutional agents, who worked towards rapid growth of the district in all spheres, including cultural, religious and political ones.

Nowadays, Sykhiv is the fastest growing administrative district of Lviv. The City municipality and the district representatives are planning to increase the number of cultural events and leisure activities for young people and to construct architectural accents.

Based on Soviet ideology of urban planning, Sykhiv was expected to become a perfect Soviet settlement. Its public institutions and partially urban structure were to provide ideological reeducation of social groups in the communist spirit [1]. On a city-planning level, this goal was manifested through the enlargement of open public architectural spaces, with capacities for large mass meeting. The appropriate location of a community center would have emphasized the importance of such public institutions, such as the administrative party apparatus and the Palace of Pioneers.

The Soviet Union faced a deep economic and ideological crisis in the second half of the 1980s. As a result, the complex of a general community center was never built, leaving a large square in the center of the housing estate vacant until 1993.

The changing of the ideological emphasis was one of the most distinguished features of the transformation from Soviet Sykhiv to Sykhiv of independent Ukraine. After a period of atheism, it became possible to rebuild the churches and establish new religious communities. Sykhiv started an active religious life, which continues to grow today.

A general community center, which had to be located at the intersection of the main streets due to Soviet ideology, is now the religious center of the district. The largest church of Sykhiv was built there – the church of Nativity of the Holy Virgin, which became a symbol of a new life and identity of the district. The appearance of the church with its five golden domes is a vivid symbol of hope, a major landmark and a tourist attraction. The construction of the church was carried out under the project of Radoslaw Zhuk, a Canadian architect of Ukrainian origin, who won an international competition. It should be noted that the community actively participated in the construction process. The Monument to Pope John Paul II and a large park named after him are also located near the church.

The Catholic University and Seminary of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church were built in the administrative district of Sykhiv in 2005. The Evangelical house of prayer ‘Golgotha,’ one of the largest in the world, is also located here. Besides there are a number of sacred objects of other denominations. Altogether, there are 16 religious institutions of various faiths in the district.



Fig. 4. Phasing scheme of housing estate Sykhiv construction, 1979–2012. (©Bogdan Cherkes, Natalia Mysak)

The intensive development of the district, the rapid erection of new buildings and the formation of infrastructure are not typical for other similar prefabricated housing estates. Sykhiv requires new planning ideas to create the modern concept of development that would meet the urgent needs of the residents.

Under such circumstances, an international open competition for the best urban concept for a general community center was announced. Participants were tasked to resolve several problems, particularly to configure the central area along Chervona Kalyna Avenue, taking into account its future connection with the Lviv ring road. Participants were also expected to modernize transport and pedestrian links along the avenue, to create a multi-layer community center with an active use of underground space, and to provide the system of spaces of natural landscape areas interconnection.

Nine projects by participants from various countries (Ukraine, France, Poland, Sweden, and Greece) were presented for the competition. All the participants emphasized the importance of the place of the Soviet community center, where the church of Nativity of the Holy Virgin is now located [6].

According to the jury, the parallel principle of functional zoning proposed by the architectural firm Domorinthos was the most effective in this urban setting. This Greek architectural firm won the competition. According to the Greek project, a dividing strip of Chervona Kalyna Avenue should be broadened and filled with public buildings along the whole length, which totals approximately two miles. These constructions newly emphasized horizontal lines, which in combination with the existing vertical accents creates a contrast. The land around the Zubra river was to become an active recreation area and the community center was to provide basic services. Special attention was paid to improving transport infrastructure and its integration into the general transportation network of Lviv.

4. Conclusions

The Soviet panel housing estate of Sykhiv in Lviv with its nearly 50 years of design, construction and transformation has become one of the integral symbols of the city. This is the result of the activities of several generations of residents and architects. In an interview, one of Sykhiv architects, Vasy! Kamenshchuk, said, “Maybe someone does not like the political motives of the Soviet power, but the economic motives of district construction were very serious. A huge amount of housing was built in a very short time, and it will not be possible to repeat this project again. What is the service life of this housing estate? It is eternal in its existence and its capacity for transformation.”

Development of the district was often controversial (e.g. construction of big religious center on the square, which should become a representation of the communist ideology), but simultaneously it continuously consolidates as a holistic urban formation, being sensitive enough to the shifts and flexible enough to the new meanings and functions. Transformation proceeded both as a continuation of urban development and as its contraposition. Nevertheless, the district remains as an integral complex, which obtained features from the different contexts and has its own identity.

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РОЗВИТОК НАЙБІЛЬШОГО ЖИТЛОВОГО РАЙОНУ ЛЬВОВА – СИХІВ

Анотація. Описано особливості формування соціалістичного району масової житлової забудови “Сихів” у Львові. Розглянуто трансформаційні процеси, які відбулись у районі в умовах зміни контекстів.

Ключові слова: район масової житлової забудови, житловий район, мікрорайон, міська трансформація.