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Implementing a human-centred block-based urban planning method in the Ukrainian context: The case of Kharkiv

Abstract. The relevance of this study is determined by the need to adapt human-centered, block-based urban planning approaches to the Ukrainian urban planning context shaped by post-Soviet spatial development patterns and the challenges of post-war urban recovery. The aim of the article was to identify the specific features of implementing K. Pålsson's human-centred block-based urban planning method within Ukrainian architectural and urban planning practice. The research combined a theoretical analysis of the method's origins and components in the European urban tradition with an experimental workshop-based test conducted on a post-industrial site in Kharkiv. The results demonstrated the overall applicability of the method to the Ukrainian context. The most successfully reproduced principles included the urban block structure, continuous street frontage, human scale, and the integration of green structure, while the balance between private and public space was generally understood but implemented with varying degrees of consistency. Mixed-use development and the organisation of streets and squares were implemented partially. The most challenging principles were spatial sequences, the hierarchy of public spaces, and the reduction of the role of freestanding buildings. The study indicated that the method requires not direct transfer, but staged adaptation to local professional traditions, regulatory conditions, and the socio-spatial context. The findings also showed that the workshop functioned not only as an educational format, but as an empirical test of the method's operability in the Ukrainian context. The practical value of the study lies in the potential application of its results in educational workshops, territorial redevelopment projects, and the development of method guidelines for Ukrainian communities

Keywords: urban morphology; urban blocks; participatory planning; workshop-based experiment; post-Soviet urban context

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary urban planning, a clear shift can be observed from technocratic models towards human-centred approaches, where priorities increasingly focus on the quality of everyday space, human scale, spatial accessibility, social integration, and user participation in shaping the urban environment. In this context, the concept of the humane city, or human-centred urbanism, gains particular significance as an alternative to approaches that primarily assess urban development through transport efficiency, density, or economic indicators. Normatively, this trend aligns with global sustainable development frameworks, which emphasise the need for inclusive, safe, and resilient cities, as well as with contemporary approaches to people-centred urban development (United Nations, 2015).

Recent studies confirm the growing need for operational tools for human-centred planning. Evidence from Barcelona provided by K. Pérez *et al.* (2025) suggests that superblock models can improve perceived well-being, reduce noise exposure, and enhance social interaction, although the effects depend on the local context of implementation. D. Rojas-Rueda *et al.* (2024) emphasised that within the 15-minute city discourse, proximity to basic services and reduced car dependency positively affect health and social interaction; however, these approaches do not automatically eliminate the risks of inequality and spatial exclusion. At the same time, Z. Allam *et al.* (2024) point out that the rapid policy uptake of these approaches is outpacing their scientific operationalisation and validation across different contexts.

Another important direction of research concerns the preservation of urban identity, the role of the historic urban landscape, and the continuity of morphological structures. M. Ripp *et al.* (2025) demonstrate that the integration of heritage into contemporary planning can enhance the sustainability of urban development and environmental quality, provided it is implemented through intersectoral and participatory approaches. However, a study by J. Gregorowicz-Kipszak *et al.* (2024) shows that mixed-use development, active ground floors, and accessibility do not emerge automatically from block-based urban form but depend on broader socio-economic and regulatory conditions.

Particular attention should be paid to studies addressing the procedural dimension of human-centred planning. A review by J. Pearson *et al.* (2025) demonstrates that participation, co-design, and placemaking produce tangible outcomes only when supported by well-structured, repeatable, and carefully organised procedures, rather than functioning as a formal act of stakeholder involvement. This is especially important for research that seeks to evaluate not only the declarative value of a given approach but also its practical operability.

For Ukraine, this issue acquires additional relevance due to the post-Soviet inertia of professional thinking, the need to reconsider models of residential development, and the challenges of post-war urban recovery. Under these conditions, particular importance is attached to the study

of methodologies capable of integrating morphological coherence, human scale, mixed use, a balance between public and private spaces, and user participation in planning processes. One such methodology is the approach developed by K. Pålsson (2023; 2025), which is grounded in human-centred, block-based logic of urban organisation.

Despite the substantial body of contemporary research, the implementation of specific human-centred methodologies of block-based design in post-Soviet conditions, particularly in the Ukrainian context, remains insufficiently explored in academic literature. There is also a lack of research on how such methodologies can be tested through experimental participatory formats and how the results of such testing can be interpreted through the lens of local professional thinking, regulatory frameworks, and urban realities.

The aim of the study was to identify the specific features of implementing Karsten K. Pålsson's method in contemporary Ukrainian architectural practice. The objectives of the study are: to determine the origins and components of K. Pålsson's method within European urban planning; to analyse the reproduction of K. Pålsson's principles in the work of Ukrainian architects during the experimental workshop; to interpret the results of the experimental projects in the context of adapting the method to contemporary Ukrainian practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Contemporary academic literature relevant to the research topic forms several interrelated directions. The first concerns human-centred models of urban development, in which the humaneness of the environment is associated with accessibility, everyday use of space, health, and social interaction. M. Nieuwenhuijsen *et al.* (2024) argue that the superblock model can improve environmental conditions, liveability, health, and well-being through traffic reduction, increased green space, and support for active mobility and social interaction; however, its outcomes depend on the scale and context of implementation. A. Wandl & B. Hausleitner (2021) further show that the level of mixed use depends on the morphology of dispersed urban territories and requires coordination of planning decisions across different urban scales, rather than merely the local "addition of functions". I.A. Tănase & C.M. Povian (2025) identify a gap between geographical proximity and the actual possibility of accessing services due to existing route and environmental barriers, emphasising that "proximity" does not equate to "accessibility", particularly for vulnerable population groups.

The second direction is related to urban morphology, the preservation of identity, and the role of historically formed structures. K. Wang & K. Fouseki (2025) argue that the sustainable development of historic urban environments requires adaptive and context-sensitive strategies capable of reconciling the preservation of cultural continuity with contemporary transformations.





For the purposes of this study, this direction is particularly important, as it allows block-based development to be considered not merely as a spatial form, but as a historically and socially conditioned structure of the city. This is supported by Ukrainian academic discourse, in particular by Y.V. Idak (2006), who, using the example of Lviv, provides a detailed historical and typological substantiation of the urban block as an integral spatial system encompassing urban fabric morphology, spatial hierarchies, and the interaction between built form and the street-square structure of the city. This approach directly corresponds to the concept of *genius loci* – the “spirit of place” – which, in the works of K. Pålsson, is interpreted as the necessity of considering history, local character, and the spatial logic of the city in the course of its transformation. In this study, this provides grounds for considering block-based development not only as a morphological model but also as a tool for preserving and reinterpreting urban history and identity.

The third direction is constituted by studies focusing on the procedural dimension of human-centred planning. P. Wacnik *et al.* (2025), in a systematic review, demonstrate that the effectiveness of participatory design is determined not by the mere fact of involvement, but by the sequencing, repeatability, and quality of the applied techniques. G. Slingerland & N.B. Hansen (2025) argue that urban placemaking initiatives often fail to explicitly relate participatory mechanisms to intended outcomes, which makes their effects difficult to evaluate. In this sense, a participatory workshop can be interpreted not only as an educational or consultative format, but also as a means of empirically testing the operability of a planning methodology.

For Ukraine, these international discussions acquire an additional dimension due to post-Soviet planning inertia, a growing demand for block-based urban structures, and the post-war challenges of urban resilience. Within the Ukrainian context, particular importance is attached to studies that establish the local typological, historical, and practical foundations for researching block-based

development, including under conditions of wartime transformation. O.A. Kryzhantovska *et al.* (2020) substantiate the potential of high-density, low-rise block-based development as a comfortable model of the residential environment. I. Dreval (2022) emphasises the need for conceptual frameworks for the revival of Ukrainian cities in the post-war period and highlights the importance of an integrated urban vision for Kharkiv. D. Popovych (2023) proposes a methodology for the reconstruction of intra-block spaces within the historic urban fabric, focusing on shared improvement, greening, and the reinterpretation of courtyard spaces. T.M. Apatenko & O.S. Bezliubchenko (2024) systematise the advantages and disadvantages of block-based development, although they do not address its participatory and procedural aspects, whereas L. Shvets (2025), based on the case of Kharkiv, expands this discourse through the categories of housing policy, urban resilience, community participation, and the restoration of residential environments.

Thus, the literature review indicates that both international and Ukrainian studies provide a sufficient basis for examining block-based and human-centred development; however, they do not offer a comprehensive answer to the question of how a specific European methodology of block-based design can be implemented within the Ukrainian post-Soviet context. It is precisely this gap that determines the logic of the subsequent research.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted within a qualitative-interpretative research strategy with elements of an applied urban experiment. The logic of the study combines a theoretical analysis of human-centred approaches to urban planning in the European context of block-based urban development with an empirical examination of the possibilities for implementing K. Pålsson’s method in Ukrainian architectural and urban planning practice. The structural and logical model of the study is presented in Figure 1, while the workshop process is presented in Figure 2.

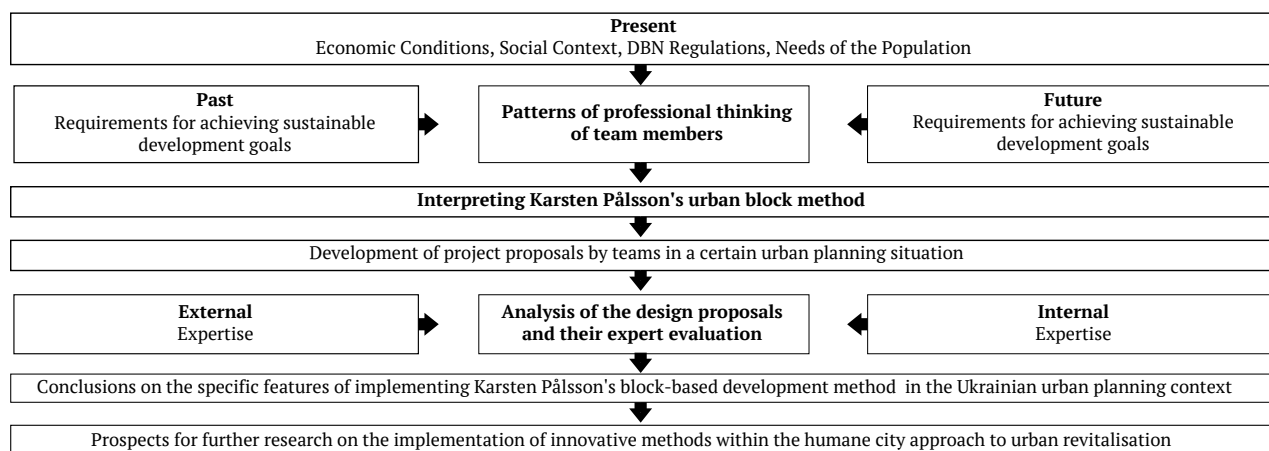


Figure 1. The structural and logical model of the study

Source: prepared by authors



Figure 2. The process of the Workshop (LUF, Lviv, 2025)

Source: prepared by authors

The study consisted of three main stages. At the first stage, an analysis of academic publications, regulatory and conceptual documents, and professional materials related to human-centred planning, block-based development, urban morphology, participatory practices, and post-war urban recovery was conducted. At this stage, the methods of analysis, comparison, systematisation, and generalisation were applied, making it possible to identify the key principles of a humanistic approach to urban space formation, as well as to identify K. Pålsson's method as a distinct object of research.

The examination of the origins, components, and specific features of K. Pålsson's method, as well as its integration into the European urban planning context, has shown that the author builds this method upon the principles of the "organic" development of medieval European cities and classical urbanism, as presented in the works of Camillo Sitte, Kevin Lynch, and Gordon Cullen, as well as on the critique of modernist planning articulated in the works of Steen Eiler Rasmussen, Jane Jacobs, Christopher Alexander, Jan Gehl, and others. In this context, K. Pålsson's method is understood as a contemporary adaptation of the European tradition of the block-based city, grounded in the principles of human scale, pedestrian accessibility, street-and-square hierarchy, mixed use, the balance between private and public space, and the preservation of historical heritage.

This makes K. Pålsson's method comprehensible to Ukrainian architects familiar with international scientific and professional experience. It incorporates the majority of contemporary approaches to shaping the urban environment that have emerged in different European countries. For this reason, the method became the principal subject of the experimental part of the study. During the experiment, K. Pålsson's method was presented through K. Pålsson's own design projects, including urban regeneration schemes for the Svømmehals and Lindevang quarters, as well as projects of new urban development, such as Refshaleøen Øst and Lynetteholmen in Copenhagen (Fig. 3). This analysis demonstrates how the theoretical principles of the block-based city are implemented in contemporary European practice through the integration of morphological continuity, spatial coherence, resident participation, and adaptation to current urbanisation challenges. It also

provides a basis for comparing the European logic of the method with the specific features of its experimental application in the Ukrainian context.

The second stage of the research had an empirical character and consisted of conducting the workshop "Applying a Danish approach in master plans: Workshop for Ukrainian cities' chief architects", which took place in the summer of 2025. The experimental basis of the study was a training-design seminar during which participants tested the principles of K. Pålsson's method on a specific site in Kharkiv. Thirty-six participants took part in the workshop, including architects, chief architects of municipalities, urban managers, and representatives of territorial communities from different regions of Ukraine. The sample had a purposive expert character, as participants were selected from among professionals directly involved in residential environment formation and urban development. The participants were divided into six groups of six persons each.

All groups worked under identical conditions. For the task, participants were provided with drawings of the study area at a scale of 1:2000, sketching paper, and drafting materials. Prior to the practical work, participants attended an introductory lecture by K. Pålsson, in which the objectives of the workshop, the content of the task, and the key principles of the method, as presented in the manual "City design" (Pålsson, 2025), were outlined. The workshop was moderated by Liudmyla Shvets with the participation of Iryna Dreval. Each participant received a copy of the manual as supporting material. Some participants were already familiar with K. Pålsson's approach through his publications (Pålsson, 2023) or had participated in an earlier workshop (LUF 2024, Lviv).

The duration of the practical session was three hours, after which each group presented its own conceptual master plan proposal. The site selected for the experimental design was the territory of the former "Serp i Molot" industrial plant in Kharkiv. The selected urban planning situation is typical of many Ukrainian cities today. By the end of the twentieth century, a considerable number of industrial areas had lost their original functions and turned into vacant sites. However, their location within the intermediate urban zone, together with the presence of transport infrastructure and engineering networks, gives them significant





urban development potential. In accordance with the workshop task, the groups approached the site as a post-industrial reserve for urban development.

The site is located in the eastern part of the city, within an established industrial-residential zone, in proximity to major road infrastructure and railway networks. Its area is approximately 64 hectares. The site is bounded by major urban roads, the railway network, and the Nemyshlia River. The terrain is predominantly flat, the soils are technogenically altered, and green spaces are fragmented. From the perspective of the experiment, the main feature of the site is the absence of existing buildings and clearly defined natural constraints. This condition focuses attention on

external urban planning factors and significantly simplifies the application of K. Pålsson's methodological principles (Fig. 4). The urban planning model adopted for the organisation of the site was based on the provisions of the current Ukrainian State Building Regulations "Planning and Development of Territories" (DBN B.2.2-12:2019, 2019). According to this framework, the site corresponds to the classification of a residential "microdistrict", where pedestrian accessibility to everyday services is defined within a 500 m radius – clause 5.8 (DBN B.2.2-12:2019, 2019). Including a full range of local service facilities and density limits of 150-450 people/ha – clause 6.1.16, – the projected population is 20,000-25,000 residents.

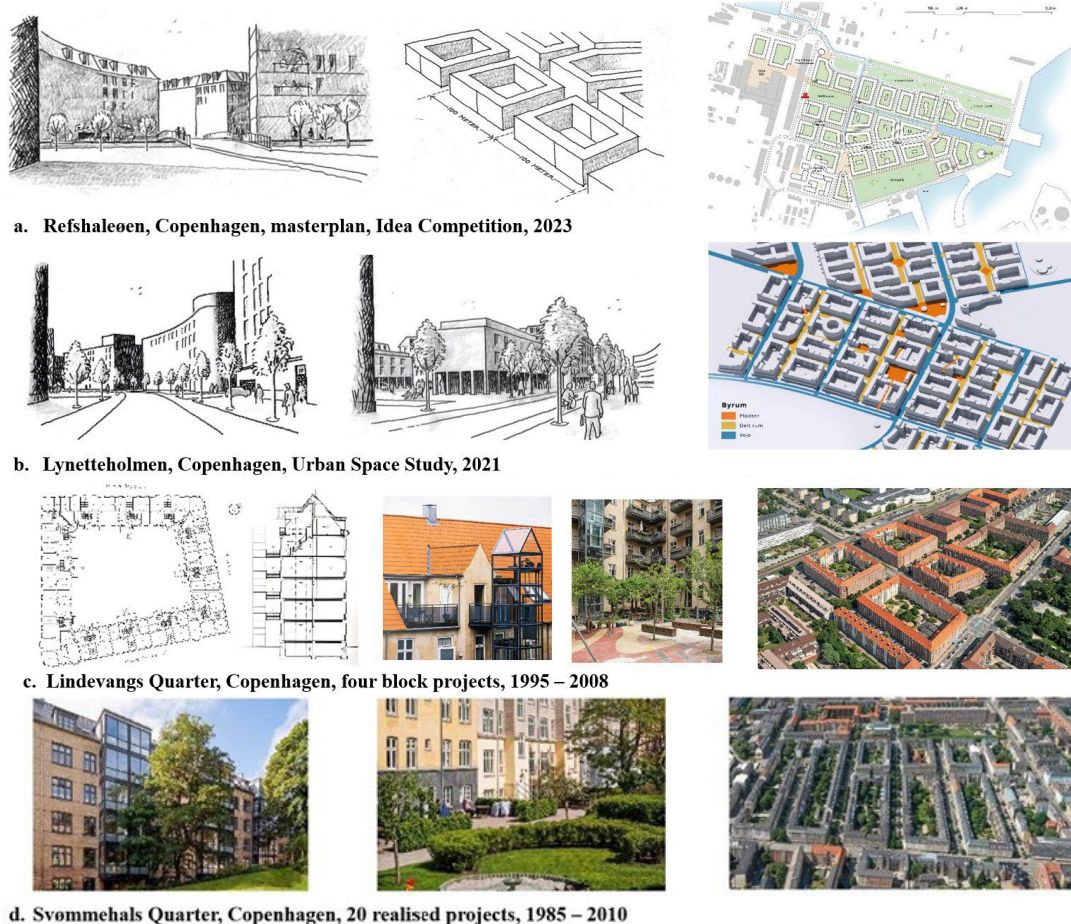


Figure 3. Project examples by K. Pålsson

Note: a – Refshaleøen. The masterplan design focuses on combining urban block design with quality spatial sequences and squares in a mix-use modern city area on a human scale. Principles: Cultural heritage, townhouses, streets and squares, private and public, mix-use city, spatial sequences, human scale and green structure; b – Lynetteholmen. Urban space Study for a planned new artificial island in Copenhagen to make room for more housing etc. Principles: Cultural heritage, townhouses, a basic structure of streets and squares, private and public areas, mixed city and human scale, as an alternative to proposed and high-rise building; c – Lindevangs. Transformation and modernisation of 1920s blocks with new bathrooms, kitchens, elevators/lifts, new housing area under the roofs and green yards, Principles: architectural unity and new green yards; d – Svømmehals. Transformation and modernisation of apartment of housing in 1900-blocks, illustrating the potentials and sustainability of urban block structures. Principles: maintaining/keeping architectural unity, improving housing quality by extensions with new kitchen- and bathrooms- towers, improving green yards and streets

Source: prepared by K. Pålsson (2023; 2025)

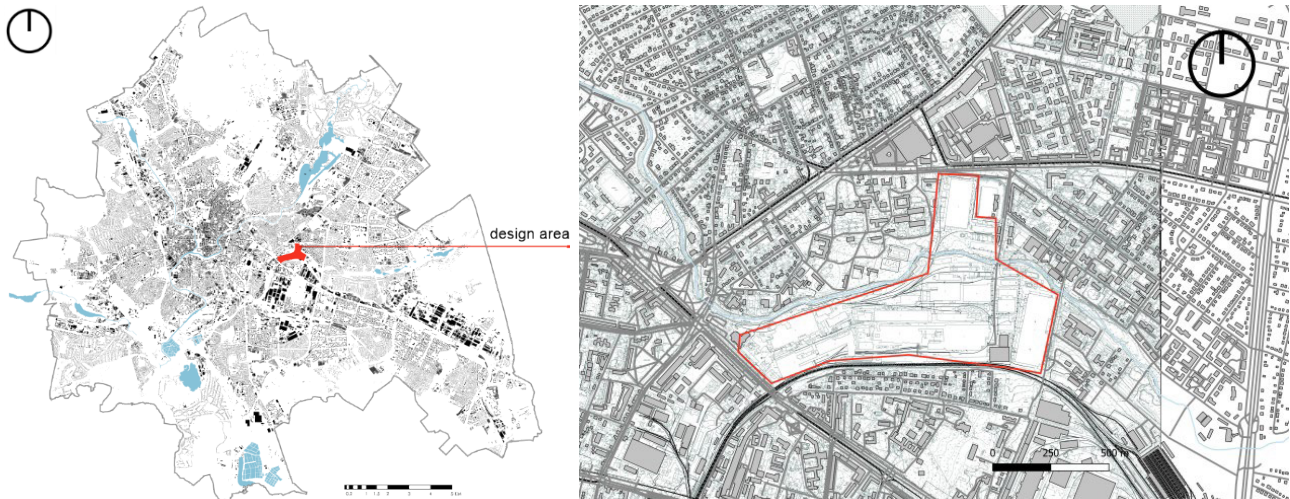


Figure 4. Urban planning conditions of the project site location

Note: a – design area in the city structure; b – design area in the district structure

Source: prepared by authors

At the third stage, the evaluation and interpretation of the workshop results were carried out. For this purpose, a comparative analysis of the conceptual proposals was conducted based on ten key principles of K. Pålsson's method: (1) cultural heritage and the urban block; (2) street-front development; (3) streets and squares; (4) the balance between private and public spaces; (5) mixed use; (6) human scale; (7) spatial sequences; (8) diversity; (9) architectural coherence; and (10) green structure.

The evaluation was performed from two perspectives: external and internal. The external assessment was based on expert comments provided by the author of the method regarding the degree to which its principles were reproduced in the participants' proposals. The internal assessment consisted of interpreting the results from the perspective of the Ukrainian professional environment, regulatory conditions, and historically formed patterns of design thinking. The design proposals were not evaluated according to predefined urban planning criteria, since the focus of the experiment was on the specific features of applying K. Pålsson's method in the course of solving design tasks within an urban situation characteristic of contemporary Ukraine. Accordingly, the study is limited to the analysis of K. Pålsson's method itself and the results of its application during the experiment. The proposed methodology enables the replication of the research process under comparable conditions, including a similar participant sample, an identical design task, a fixed set of evaluation principles, standardised workshop materials, and a dual framework for interpreting the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The experimental part of the study resulted in design proposals developed by six teams. These proposals reflected

the participants' understanding of both the specific characteristics of the site and the principles of K. Pålsson's method. The tasks related to the functional and spatial organisation of the microdistrict territory were successfully addressed and complied with normative requirements, which was largely due to the strong professional composition of the teams. At the same time, the proposals differed in terms of their structural and functional organisation (compact or fragmented), the degree of internal and external spatial connectivity, morphological characteristics (building height, density, and block size), and the organisation of public spaces, including landscaped areas (Fig. 5).

The analysis and evaluation of the proposals were conducted in the context of the defined aim and research methodology. Thus, the degree of implementation of the ten principles of K. Pålsson's method across the six workshop group proposals is presented in Table 1. Thus, the principles of K. Pålsson's method that were most successfully reproduced include the block-based structure, human scale, and the green organisation of the territory, while the principle of balancing private and public space was implemented to a lesser extent. Nearly all teams proposed residential blocks proportionate to the street and courtyard, as well as spatial solutions in which internal courtyards compensate for the public character of the street network. Some projects included active ground floors, commercial functions along selected main streets, and green pedestrian connections. The results obtained correlate with contemporary research by I. Avila-Palencia & J. Lutz (2024) and M. Bruno *et al.*, 2024 linking the humaneness of the urban environment to the combination of accessibility, social interaction, mixed use, and the quality of everyday space.

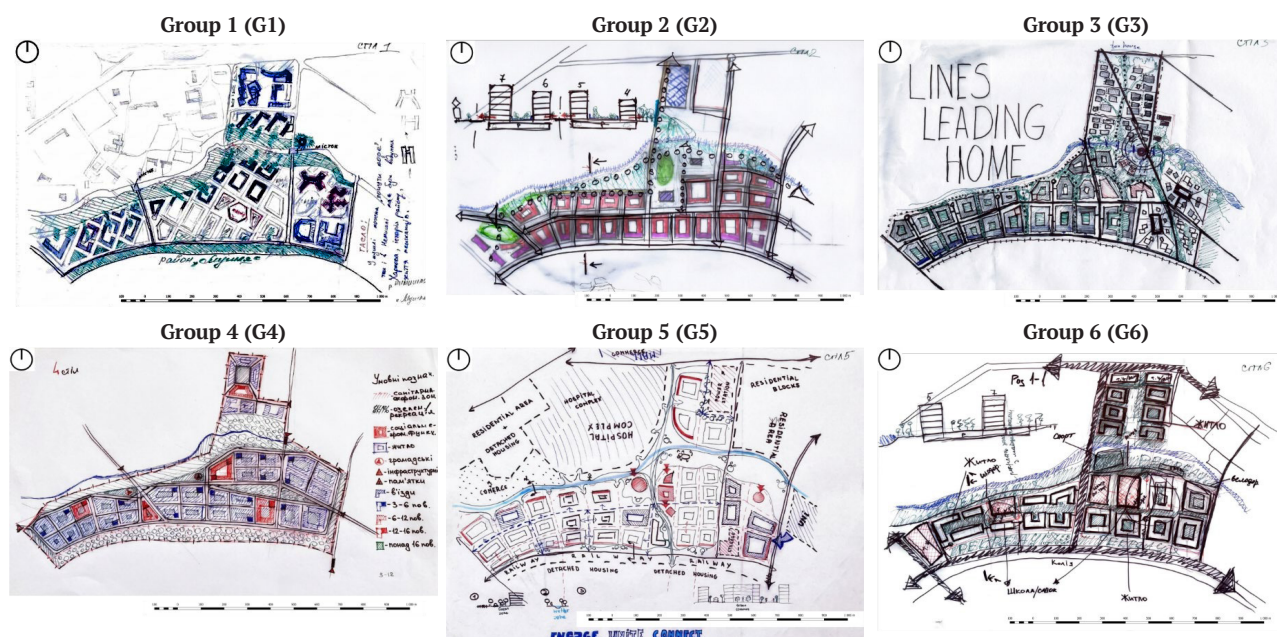


Figure 5. Conceptual proposals of the six workshop participant groups (LUF 2025, Lviv)

Note: Group 1 (G1) emphasises the orientation of residential streets toward the embankment, which serves as the main planning axis, as well as the creation of a compact service centre; Group 2 (G2) proposes an even distribution of urban blocks and service elements along an internal communication axis, combined with underground parking facilities; Group 3 (G3) suggests combining block-based development with traditional single-family housing and a compact public centre; Group 4 (G4) proposes a varied building height within the block-based structure and vertical accentuation of public service locations; Group 5 (G5) emphasises planning connections with the adjacent territory and an even distribution of blocks with integrated service elements; Group 6 (G6) proposes combining block-based development with residential complexes linked by an internal boulevard

Source: prepared authors based on workshop materials (LUF 2025, Lviv)

Table 1. Degree of implementation of the ten principles of K. Pålsson's method across six workshop group proposals

No.	Principle	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	General interpretation
1	Cultural heritage / urban block	±	+	+	+	+	±	Most groups adopted the urban block as the main planning unit; Groups 1 and 6 retained more open or detached-building logic in parts of the site
2	Street-forming building frontage ("townhouse" logic)	+	+	+	+	+	±	In most proposals, buildings form the street edge and are directly oriented toward the street
3	Streets and squares	±	±	±	±	±	±	Street grids were generally present, often close to the recommended 100 m module, but hierarchy of squares was not developed in any proposal
4	Balance of private and public spaces	+	±	±	±	±	±	All proposals worked with the courtyard/street distinction, but several blocks were too small or had unclear boundaries between public paths and private courtyards
5	The mixed-use city	±	+	±	±	+	±	Mixed use was declared in all proposals, but more clearly articulated in Groups 2 and 5
6	The human scale	+	+	+	±	+	+	Human scale was generally respected; Group 4 introduced corner towers that weakened this principle
7	Spatial sequences	-	-	-	-	-	-	Street layouts were mostly too linear and lacked sufficient variation, enclosure, and sequential spatial experience
8	Diversity	N/E	N/E	N/E	N/E	N/E	N/E	Social and typological diversity could not be fully assessed at workshop concept stage because it depends on later implementation
9	Architectural unity	N/E	N/E	N/E	±	N/E	N/E	Architectural unity could not yet be fully evaluated; Group 4 partially addressed it through a repeated corner motif
10	Green structure	+	+	+	+	+	+	Green courtyards, waterfront green zones, pedestrian links, and green corridors appeared in nearly all proposals

Legend: + = implemented clearly; ± = implemented partially; - = weakly implemented / not implemented; N/E = not evaluable at this stage.

Source: prepared by authors based on workshop materials (LUF 2025, Lviv)



At the same time, a number of principles were implemented only partially. None of the proposals fully articulated a hierarchy of squares and public open spaces, and in most cases the street network remained overly uniform, lacking sufficient variation and spatial articulation. Spatial sequences, which in K. Pålsson's method are intended to create a progression of experiences and visual diversity during movement, were weakly expressed. Some teams also retained a tendency towards the use of freestanding buildings or open compositions, which contradicts the logic of a coherent urban block. This suggests, as noted V.A. Lipianin & T.O. Milash (2018), that Ukrainian participants more readily perceive the structural basis of the block-based approach than its more complex compositional and experiential components. Particular attention should be given to the principle of mixed use. Although almost all teams declared a combination of residential, service, and commercial functions, the depth of elaboration of this aspect varied significantly. In most cases, mixed use remained at the level of a general functional concept rather than a spatially detailed scenario integrating different types of activity within the block. This finding is consistent with C. Crosas *et al.* (2024) studies, demonstrating that mixed use is not an automatic outcome of block-based development but depends on broader economic, transport, and social conditions.

The external expert assessment also revealed that the limited duration of the workshop significantly influenced the depth of implementation of certain principles. This partly explains the lack of detailed elaboration of squares and their hierarchy, the variability of street types, and more complex spatial relationships. However, these limitations do not diminish the analytical value of the experiment; rather, they indicate directions for further work. These include the need for multi-stage workshops, more detailed design of the urban block as a fundamental unit, a stronger focus on functional mixing, and targeted training in the principles of structuring systems of squares and public spaces. The results also indicate that the participatory workshop format performed not only an educational but also an analytical function. The work of mixed teams made it possible to identify which principles of the method are reproduced intuitively and which require specific explanation and methodological guidance. In this context, the workshop can be considered an empirical test of the method's operability in the Ukrainian context. This conclusion is consistent with A. Akbulut Basar (2024) and P. Ng *et al.* (2024) researches on participatory design, which emphasises that the value of participation lies in the procedurally organised collective development of solutions rather than in the nominal involvement of participants.

To explain the selective perception of individual principles, a retrospective historical-comparative analysis of the development of block-based and microdistrict planning in Ukraine was also applied (Fig. 6). This made it possible to interpret the workshop results through the prism of three temporal horizons – past, present, and future – and to identify how the legacy of Soviet urban planning,

the current regulatory framework, and the orientation towards contemporary European approaches influence the adaptation of the method. To further specify this influence, the historical experience of residential development in Ukraine was analysed as a factor shaping contemporary professional thinking among architects. The analysis focuses on three stages in the development of residential urban areas: block-based development of the first half of the 20th century (Fig. 6a), residential development of the second half of the 20th century, including both early and late stages (Fig. 6b, 6c), and post-Soviet transformations of the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Fig. 6d). This approach reveals which planning techniques, spatial concepts, and regulatory frameworks have been retained in professional thinking and may influence the contemporary perception of block-based urban logic.



Figure 6. Historically formed types of residential development in Ukraine

Note: a – block-based development of the first half of the 20th century; b – microdistrict model of the second half of the 20th century (early stage); c – microdistrict model of the second half of the 20th century (late stage); d – post-Soviet transformations of the late 20th and early 21st centuries

Source: prepared by authors

The analysis showed that block-based development of the first half of the 20th century, despite the limitations of rigid functional organisation under conditions of suppressed social activity, established within professional culture an understanding of the street, square, block, and architectural ensemble as integral elements of the urban environment. In contrast, the model of the second half of the 20th century established a different spatial logic – large-scale open spaces, strict functional zoning, internal access roads, and the weakening of the role of the street as a social space.





In the post-Soviet period, this was further complemented by spontaneous transformations of ground floors, courtyards, and green areas, as well as by the predominance of a developer-driven logic focused on individual buildings or residential complexes over the logic of forming a coherent urban district. Consequently, the contemporary perception of the principles of block-based development according to K. Pålsson's method in Ukraine combines remnants of historical block-based experience from the totalitarian period, the inertia of modernist thinking, and new orientations associated with European human-centred approaches.

The interpretation of the results from an internal perspective demonstrates that the assimilation of the method's principles is largely determined by historically formed professional thinking. Principles related to the urban block, street network, courtyard, and human scale are grounded in the historical experience of Ukrainian urban planning and are therefore perceived relatively easily. In contrast, principles that require more complex spatial hierarchies, integrated scenario-based thinking, or a more flexible interpretation of streets and squares encounter the inertia of post-Soviet planning logic. This confirms that the adaptation of European human-centred approaches in Ukraine cannot be reduced to the simple transfer of formal design solutions. These results can be further explained through

the historically formed multilayered nature of professional thinking in Ukraine. Principles related to the urban block, street network, courtyard, and human scale partially draw on the experience of block-based development of the first half of the 20th century. At the same time, the weaker reproduction of the hierarchy of squares, spatial sequences, and more complex scenario-based forms of urban space organisation may be associated with the prolonged dominance of the model of the second half of the 20th century, within which the street and square lost their role as fully fledged socio-spatial structures.

Post-Soviet practices of both infill and large-scale object-based development have further reinforced the orientation towards individual buildings or residential complexes rather than the formation of a coherent urban district. To better understand these results, it is important to consider not only the participants' immediate design solutions, but also historically formed conceptions of the residential environment that continue to influence contemporary professional thinking. For this reason, the results of the experiment were additionally interpreted through the prism of the main stages in the development of residential construction in Ukraine. This makes it possible to relate individual principles of K. Pålsson's methodology to those spatial frameworks that potentially support or, conversely, complicate their perception and practical implementation (Table 2).

Table 2. Historical layers of professional thinking and their influence on the perception of K. Pålsson's principles in Ukraine

Historical stage	Dominant components of professional thinking	What potentially supports implementation	What potentially complicates implementation
Block-based development of the first half of the 20th century	Urban block, street, square, ensemble, clearly defined street frontage, as well as simplified models of everyday life and principles of microdistrict planning	Perception of the block as an integral spatial unit, human scale, and the role of the street within a spatial hierarchy of built form elements	Perception of the block as a factor of suppression of social activity, and the clear geometry of spaces as signs of totalitarianism
Models of residential development in the second half of the 20th century	Large-scale open spaces, rigid functional zoning, complex internal spatial structures, internal access roads, and the dominance of transport infrastructure, along with a reduced role of the residential street	Understanding of the residential environment as a complex system integrating development, services, and green spaces	False positive assessment of significant internal spaces, lack of a distinction between private and public spaces; insufficient understanding of the diversity of forms of public spaces
Post-Soviet transformations (late 20th – early 21st century)	Infill development of high density, residential complexes, commercialisation of ground floors, fragmented urban development, comfort-oriented and multifunctional housing environments	Organisation and partial preservation of transport infrastructure, functional mixing, increased attention to environmental quality, and differentiation between private and public spaces	Reinforces orientation to a separate object instead of preserving a holistic territory, contributes to the fragmentation of spaces and the dominance of developer logic
Future stage of post-war recovery based on new urbanism principles	Human-centeredness, resilience, spatial flexibility, multifunctionality, environmental sustainability	Supports the adaptation of block-based logic, public spaces, mixed use, participatory practices, and a more integrated approach to urban recovery	Inertia of previous models, regulatory constraints, lack of practical experience in implementing new approaches, and the risk of formal rather than substantive adoption of new urbanism principles

Source: prepared by authors



To summarise the workshop results, the principles of K. Pålsson's method were systematised according to the manner in which they were reproduced in the Ukrainian context. This interpretation makes it possible to identify

which principles were intuitively adopted by the participants, which were only partially implemented, and which require additional methodological support or could not be fully reproduced within the workshop format (Table 3).

Table 3. Interpretation of the implementation of K. Pålsson's principles in the Ukrainian workshop context

Category	Principles	Interpretation in the Ukrainian context
Intuitively reproduced principles	Urban block; street-forming frontage; balance between private and public spaces; human scale; green structure	Correspond to a clear spatial logic and partially resonate with existing professional understandings of block-based development, street organisation, courtyard space, and low- to mid-rise residential form
Partially reproduced principles	Hierarchy of streets and squares; mixed-use development	Mostly implemented in a simplified form: street networks lack hierarchy, and public spaces lack typological diversity. Mixed use was often declared but remained schematic rather than spatially integrated at the block level
Principles requiring methodological support	Spatial sequences; reduction of freestanding buildings; architectural coherence; diversity	Require more developed compositional thinking, longer design time, and a clearer understanding of how urban form, ownership structure, architectural coordination, and lived experience interact in implementation
Principles limited by the workshop format	Diversity; architectural coherence	These aspects largely depend on later stages of the design process, including detailed development, ownership models, and architectural articulation, and therefore could not be fully tested within a short conceptual workshop

Source: prepared by authors

Thus, the results of the study confirm that K. Pålsson's method has the potential to be implemented in Ukrainian architectural and urban planning practice; however, its practical application requires adaptation to local professional, regulatory, and socio-spatial contexts. The fundamental morphological elements of the block-based city are reproduced most successfully, whereas more complex compositional, functional, and procedural components require additional methodological support. This constitutes the main contribution of the study to the ongoing discussion on the transferability of human-centered European approaches to the post-Soviet context of Ukraine.

CONCLUSIONS

The study has demonstrated that the tested block-based, human-centred planning method is generally understandable and suitable for initial application in the Ukrainian professional context. The Kharkiv workshop, focused on the post-industrial "Serp i Molot" site, showed that most participants were able to reproduce the core structural principles of the approach, including closed or semi-enclosed urban blocks, continuous street frontage, a regular street network, human scale, and the integration of green structure. This confirms that the basic morphological logic of block-based urban development is relatively accessible to Ukrainian architects and planners.

At the same time, the workshop revealed that more complex principles were implemented only partially. These include the hierarchy of squares and public spaces, the variability of the street network, spatial sequences, and the

deeper functional integration of activities within the block. The proposals also showed that the distinction between private and public space, although generally understood, was not equally developed across all groups. These results suggest that Ukrainian participants more readily adopt the structural basis of the method than its compositional, scenographic, and scenario-based dimensions. The findings also confirm that implementation in Ukraine should be understood not as a direct transfer of the method, but as its adaptation to local professional traditions, regulatory frameworks, and the legacy of Soviet planning. In this sense, the workshop functioned not only as an educational format but also as an empirical test of the method's operability in a Ukrainian urban context.

Overall, the tested approach can provide a valuable basis for more coherent and human-centred urban transformation in Ukraine, particularly in post-industrial redevelopment and post-war reconstruction. However, its practical application requires staged adaptation, further methodological support, and broader use of participatory, multi-stage design formats.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Впровадження людиноцентричного методу квартального міського планування в українському контексті: приклад Харкова

Анотація. Актуальність цього дослідження визначається необхідністю адаптації людиноцентричних підходів квартального міського планування до українського містобудівного контексту, сформованого пострадянськими моделями просторового розвитку та викликами повоєнного відновлення міст. Метою статті було визначення особливостей впровадження людиноцентричного методу квартального міського планування К. Полссона в українську архітектурну та містобудівну практику. Дослідження поєднувало теоретичний аналіз походження й складових цього методу в європейській містобудівній традиції з експериментальною апробацією у форматі воркшопу, проведеного на постіндустріальній території в Харкові. Результати засвідчили загальну придатність методу для українського контексту. Найуспішніше були відтворені такі принципи, як квартальна структура міста, безперервний фронт забудови вздовж вулиць, людський масштаб та інтеграція зеленої структури, тоді як баланс між приватним і публічним простором загалом був зрозумілий учасникам, але реалізовувався з різним ступенем послідовності. Змішане функціональне використання територій та організація вулиць і площ були реалізовані частково. Найскладнішими для впровадження виявилися принципи просторових послідовностей, ієрархії публічних просторів та зменшення ролі окремо розташованих будівель. Дослідження засвідчило, що цей метод потребує не прямого перенесення, а поетапної адаптації до місцевих професійних традицій, нормативних умов і соціально-просторового контексту. Отримані результати також показали, що воркшоп виконував не лише освітню функцію, а й був емпіричною перевіркою операційності методу в українському контексті. Практична цінність дослідження полягає в можливості застосування його результатів в освітніх воркшопах, проектах територіального редевелопменту та під час розроблення методичних рекомендацій для українських громад.

Ключові слова: міська морфологія; міські квартали; партисипативне планування; експеримент на основі воркшопу; пострадянський міський контекст

