The revitalisation of old factories area on the chosen example from Lodz

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Abstract. Lodz (Łódź) is one of the major urban centres in Poland - and a city of unique historical and cultural heritage. The city is continuously changing and developing, respecting its identity and tradition or declaring that. The article aims to present field and case studies of three examples of the revitalisation of neglected areas in Lodz. These post-industrial spaces lost their functions in the last decade of the XXth century. These three projects in different parts of the city with other characteristics and ownership situations represent three different approaches to revitalising historical objects and adjusting them to new functions. Given cases are compelling examples of the various methods used to post-industrial heritage protection and conservation activities and the outcome of those entirely different strategies. As it seems the private entrepreneur has reached the best result in raising activities at the neglected old factory plot but at the same time while placing the responsibility of the space on its new users. Simultaneously, the public financed project oversight by towns authorities introduce the most changes to the historical tissue and seems not to reach its goals as far as a revitalisation of the area is concerned. In this light, the last project joining both private and public funds and introducing a new design solution with extreme care for historical tissue seems to reach the goals of both at a satisfactory level. The examples show how different strategies for cities to redeveloped their image and function work in Mid-European post-communism countries realities and how other types of public life participants embrace this heritage.

1. Introduction
Lodz (Łódź) is one of the major urban centres in Poland - and a city of unique historical and cultural inheritance. Lodz is continuously changing and developing, respecting, however, its identity and tradition. Its dynamic development started in the second half of the 19th century. It became the textile industry's centre with hundreds of factories situated even in the city centre around Piotrkowska Street. Most of the factories were still running after the First and the Second World Wars until the transformation in 1989. From that moment, the industry in the city began to collapse, and many factories were closed. The vast majority of industrial buildings turn into ruin. Many of them were irretrievably lost, but historical and aesthetic values began to be seen in industrial buildings over time. They have become an essential part of Lodz's cultural heritage and become why the first ideas of how to save these degraded parts of the city emerged. The post-industrial areas in Lodz's centre turned out to be so attractive that private investors and city council decided to revitalise and transform them from industrial regions into shopping, entertainment or cultural centres. This process gained momentum when Poland acceded to the European Union, the cohesion policy funds increased. The first significant project, which became an impulse for further activities, was the revitalisation of the former factory of I.K. Poznanski. The story about Manufaktura is very well known and described [1].
In this article, we want to focus on other examples of revitalisation areas in Lodz, which are not so well known but very interesting in different aspects. These are three projects in different parts of the city with other characteristics and ownership situation. They are interesting for the approach used to post-industrial heritage protection and conservation activities. The first is a former electric plant near Kilinski Street, called EC1 Lodz – City of Culture. The second example is an area next to Tymieniecki Street with three storehouse buildings of Scheibler's enterprise, called Art_Inkubator. Third, and the last one, is the former Ramisch Factory near Piotrkowska Street, called Off Piotrkowska. Three different stories are showing various degrees of interference in the existing building structure. In the EC1 area, there was a considerable change in the visual characteristics of the complex through a contemporary solid architectural design. In the Art-Incubator, this interference is minimal and almost invisible at first glance. From the conservator's point of view, it is the most coherent and well-made complex, confirmed by the award of the General Conservator of Monuments. Off Piotrkowska owes its uniqueness to minimal interference in the entire structure, which is not the result of the presupposed concept, but the ownership and financial situation.

2. EC1 Lodz – City of Culture
The history of the EC1 complex dates back to May of 1906, when the works on the first commercial power plant began. Despite a few obstacles (results had to be postponed several times due to the strikes) first part was finished and working by the summer of 1907. From this period comes the secession building - so-called Machine Hall – and although two expansions (in 1908 and 1912-1913) still preserved in more or less its original form. Build in the same period, the adjacent building was almost completely demolished, apart of some reminiscences of walls used as parts of the modern, 21st-century expansion of the building.

![Figure 1. EC1 Lodz- City of Culture complex aerial view from the north side. Source P. Zagula](image)

The next major expansion of the power plan is dated back to the late '20s of the 20th century. In 1929, the plant's area was enlarged by the adjacent plot (previously Otton Goldammer's factory and foundry) to create a complex of the "new Headquarters" buildings. The complex consists of characteristic buildings build in modernism style and construction of riveted steel frame and masonry infill walls and a cooling tower overlooking the whole complex.

In 1943 a fire swept through the power plant, destroying the roof of the secession building and damaging some infrastructure.

After the Second World War the complex, along with other power plants exiting in the city, was transformed into Combined Heat and Power Plant Complex. In 1960 all of those facilities became one
government-owned enterprise, and at the same time, for the first time, the power and heat plant located on Targowa Street is referred to as EC1. Due to the further development of the energy and heating system of the town, the role of EC1 as a critical element of the energy grid had slowly decreased. Finally, in the year 2000, after a little less than one hundred years in use, the plant was closed. In the year 2003, the plot and all the infrastructure of the previous power plant EC1 become the town own property [2].

In 2007 the town received a master plan for the area between streets Kilińskiego, Tuwima, Narutowicza and Kopcińskiego designed by Rob Krier and assuming a vast redevelopment the city centre, including a cultural centre in the place of the old power plant EC1[3]. Although not much of the original concept of Robert Krier was kept in the process, in 2008, the City municipal authorities began to transform the area of EC1 to address the need of created in that time cultural institution of EC1 Lodz – City of Culture” (Figure 1).

Three independent, locally based architectural offices were responsible for the design. The leading designers were Mirosław Wiśniewski Urbanistyka I Architektura Sp. z o.o. and the master plan of the EC1 complex was created by Fronton architectural office. The project itself was developing general ideas from a competition organised by the city of Lodz held in 2007 [2].

**Figure 2.** EC1 Lodz- City of Culture complex aerial view from the east side on the New headquartes buildings. Source P. Zagula

Most of the buildings apart of the water processing building were under the Provincial Conservator of Monuments' supervision. None, however, had the status of the historical monument.

One of the critical guidelines for the design was a restoration of the original appearance of the buildings, the preservation of the original equipment and the spirit of the space. According to that idea, half of the inner room was preserved in its original state as a power plant's technical museum. In the other part, additional floor slabs, walls etc., were introduced to allow the proper design of exposition areas (Figure 2). As it was impossible to recreate all of the buildings, the newly build expansions were moderately placed in the peripheral regions of the complex and limited to a minimum – complementing the exhibition area or as social areas. The original form of the existing buildings was preserved and restored by the later added infrastructure's withdrawal. The only significant new structure is the part of the building erected on the foundation of the former heating building, which now is a part of the main entrance to the Conference Centre and the space for the Planetarium complex (Figure 3). Although solid recognition of the historical buildings, mainly in façade materials – bricks and steel, is visibly a new addition to the building [4].
3. Art_Inkubator

Art_Inkubator (Figure 4), which was a part of Scheibler's Empire, now is the centre for creative industries. It consists of three former warehouses. The one situated near Tymienieckiego St. is one of the first concrete buildings in Poland. The buildings were built between 1887-1910. They served the purpose of warehouses for finished and unfinished products. This is why they have such small windows – laying textile did not need light. Since the erection, the buildings have not been changed, so it was relatively easy to preserve their original character during revitalisation. It was the main idea - to keep as many unique elements as possible. For instance, new interiors have got the same one hundred years old floors or ironwork door.

Figure 3. EC1 Lodz- City of Culture complex new extension – Main entrance to conference center and Planetarium. Source P. Zagula

Figure 4. Inside of Art Incubator complex. Source: A. Zagula
In the process of revitalisation, the buildings remained untransformed with their original mass, facades and decorations. Even the surroundings stayed the same, preserving the elements of the initial functional and technological layout. Whenever possible, the original ironwork and joinery, and the floors made of cast-iron slabs, wood and bricks were preserved, as was the typical clear-span layout of the interiors (compliance with construction, safety and accessibility standards). These three buildings contain seven thousand square metres devoted to offices, galleries, workshops, conference and exhibition halls. The "A" Building is the core of the whole complex, as it has space that serves the Residents of Art_Inkubator and everyone who wants to use them for creative production. There are offices to rent, various workshops, conference halls, café with a co-working space. Buildings "B" and "C" are mainly multifunctional halls, which can be used for exhibitions, performances or concerts. A glazed foyer with a lift connects the building and creates space where meetings, banquets, or conferences can occur (Figure 7). The complex has been revitalised with great conservation care and is one of the most successful examples in Lodz of adaptation of post-industrial spaces to new functionalities[5] (Figure 5, 6).

Figure 5. Glass connection between buildings. Source: P. Zagula

Figure 6. Inside of Art Incubator complex. Source: A. Zagula
4. Off Piotkowska

The Off Piotkowska complex bases on two separate plots – numbered 138 and 140 Piotrkowska Street, and stretches to Sienkiewicza Street. This long and relatively narrow site is, of course, characteristic of the centre of Lodz. It was due to the requirements of weavers – first owners of most of the area – that influenced the shape of the land ownership division and is still visible after almost two hundred years of developing the city. The history of both plots at 138/140 Piotkowska Street dates back to the mid-'30s of the XIXth century. When on the power of the so-called Declaration Protocol, each parcel of land was given to weavers with an obligation to maintain a weaving manufactory. At this point, the development of both sites was quite similar. It consisted of a wooden house in front of Piotrkowska street, some wooden buildings in the front part of the land and a vast garden in the back. The actual development starts when the Ramish family bought both of the plots and created their cotton empire. According to the preserved documents from 1889 to 1898, more than fifteen different buildings build, including a two-stories high weaver factory building, three stories tall factory building, several storage buildings, an ambulatory and a canteen. In the '30s of the 20th century, the area reaches its final development.

Interestingly, the area adjacent to Piotrkowska Street was not built practically from the start – after the demolition of the two wooden buildings (in 1922). The opening was closed with a wall with two gates. Finally, the plots lost its primary usage in 1990 and the collapse of the textile industry in Lodz. From this point, it becomes a place for various small businesses and enterprises (including a night club and area for small food trucks). For many years the site was symbolical for the neglect of the City after the political transformation in the '90s. Lack of investors and, even more, important no general idea for the usage of the plot has resulted in two different facts: the devastation of the site and its somewhat wrong opinion on one hand and preservation of its original shape and genius loci.

In 2006 a new owner presented a plan of a complex alternation of the site. This was never executed due to the economic crisis. Thus the company decided to leave the space at its original state and allow it to be used by the creative sector. As other examples of this strategy have shown, the first wave of tenants – the innovative businesses - do not require unique infrastructure. At the same time, their undertakings tend to create a particular image of the space. In turn, this draws the attention of wealthy users and companies that try to comprehend this "off-culture" status to their business vision[6].

![Figure 7. Off-Piotrkowska little changes were introduced. Source A. Zagula](image)

On the other hand, these first users tended to preserve the space (Figure 7). Both due to the economic and the fact that they tend to recognise this space as exciting and worth keeping, however, if they do, usually the changes are temporary and of artistic origins, which draws attention to the place. In the case of Off Piotrkowska, this was a fundamental issue. The site perceived as not very interesting created a
problem for both business and conservation. From an enterprise point of view, not many investors were ready to deal with an object that would be of no-if-any business opportunity. There was a firm conviction that the back of the land has no higher value and that, in terms of space, it was the lack of the front building that was the main problem. The enormous interest created by different activities of the creative sector allowed to show the potential of existing building and space. This potential was proven by awards (both given by the citizens and specialist) and enabled extending the first period of transformation for a longer time than it was first assumed. In the next step, again, similar to world known cases, more conventional enterprises replaced most of these highly creative but very often temporary businesses. They would still recognise the space and counting on the newly born reputation, but at the same time were in more significant part relying on lasting income. Again those businesses were not interested in transforming the original structure, as long as it allowed a certain level of comfort for their clients and workers. So the change again used a lot of existing substance of the buildings or created a new value that added an exciting solution to the existing space (Figure 8). The final stage of transformation came with the erection of the utterly new office building on the south border of the plot. This was meant for companies that would like to be somehow connected to the "off-legend" but at the same time expect the most advanced solutions for their workflow. The new building does not follow any historical guidance. Instead introduces a high-tech and all-accepted solution well known from other office buildings of our times [7].

![Figure 8. Inside of Off Piotrkowska complex. Source: A. Zagula](image)

5. Conclusions
Resuming, the three examples described above represent three different models of conservation in economic terms, from strict government-owned to private enterprise. Although the three can be recognised as successful in terms of revitalisation, and what is more critical, rather well-conducted from the conservation point of view, they answer different needs and deferent goals. In all cases, the original structure was preserved, not always entirely intentionally, though.

The EC1 is City-owned, combining new with old, and the changes are very often highly integrated with the existing structure, and the new parts are distinguished. But never-than-less it is the outcome of meticulous design and execution. It is not always clear when the old ends and where the late starts, but particular attention to the interaction of both are visible. The changes were made to allow the new function to be introduced into the the former heat and power plant space. The aesthetically and historical aspect was both critical for the investment.

As for Art Incubator, the strategy was different, as it assumed from the start preservation of its original state and a slight adjustment of the function to existing space. It reuses the original substance
of the factory and just alters it to adjust to the safety requirements and modest improvement in communication between the buildings. In turn, the final space is both highly aesthetical and usable. The space genius loci are kept, and all of the conservation guidelines are met. In this case, success was recognised as less economical and more on the aesthetical aspect of the investment.

The last example – also highly recognised as two former – represent a completely different economic approach as this was the key to understand the process. One can say that the preservation of original substances of the building can be assigned to some extend to the unfortunate economic situation. Maintenance of the initial state is connected somewhat to the lack of intervention than the conservatory assumption of owners.

The three cases had raised a lot of attention and indeed developed the understanding of the conservation of former factory buildings in Lodz and Poland. They have also proved that rightly assumed design guidelines for such cases could lead to new solutions that enrich the enterprise's overall outcome and add to the global economic and social success of the neglected space. Although entirely different in ownership, those examples show that culture-led development can be profitable both for users, owners and artefacts of the historical development.

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