Kamien Pomorski – Health Resort on the Waterfront –
Transformations of the Public Space of the Town after 1945’

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Abstract. Diversity of urban structures in Europe has its sources in cultural distinctness of different regions, in different pace of their development over millennia. Methods of designing towns in subsequent urbanisation periods differed. Nevertheless, frequently older structures were adapted to new needs. The question concerning the ideal of the European city remains open - is impossible to define one dominating spatial model encountered everywhere, despite attempts of ancient powers (Imperium Romanum), and by 20th -century totalitarian systems. The latter largely contributed to interruption of continuity of cities’ historical development, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Warfare and scale of destruction of the spatial/social structure in many cities in 1939-1945 were unprecedented in the European history. Examples of metropolises practically wiped off from the face of the earth, like Warsaw or Dresden, are common knowledge. This fate was shared by many other towns, especially in the Polish-German borderland. Their reconstruction after the war caused complete transformation of their urban/social structure. The study focuses on Kamień Pomorski, situated on a headland at Kamiński Lake, separated from the Baltic Sea by Wolin island. Before the war it was one of the nicest port towns in Pomerania, with history reaching back to the early Polish state and the clash of Slavic, Scandinavian, and German influences. The town, an episcopal see, bloomed in the medieval and modern times under the Pomeranian, Brandenburgian, and German rule. At the end of the WWII the centre was ruined over several days. Some religious and secular buildings survived. Traditional economic foundations of the local population, moulded for centuries, and the corresponding port structure, were nearly completely destroyed. Almost complete replacement of the local community, not fully grasping the local spatial, natural and landscape conditions, was connected with introduction of centrally planned socialist economy. The town changed its character, despite maintaining and developing some of its previous functions (e.g. health resort). Kamień Pomorski was reconstructed in forms not corresponding to traditional ones (prefabricated blocks of flats), although respecting previous transport/urban layout, which is an advantage. There were attempts to restore the most important preserved monuments –cathedral, town hall, several sections of city walls. In time these efforts brought the expected effect. In recent years several investments were implemented, referring to historical spatial layouts, following the rules of retroversion and revealing some relics. The port function was restored – predominantly as a recreational yacht and water sports marina, popular in high season. Some waterfront boulevards were renovated. Promenades are being built, the spa park is to be revitalised. To conclude, it should be stated that improvement of public spaces is observable in Kamień Pomorski, just like in its green areas and waterfront edge. Renovations of pre-war tenements and villas and growing abundance of services activating the public domain cannot be disregarded. It seems that despite enormous war destructions, which changed the appearance of the town forever, after many decades Kamień Pomorski has become vivid again.
1. Introduction
The city is a natural habitat for contemporary man [1], and in the periods of history it remained an emanation of civilisation development of territories surrounding it. The European city, evolving for several thousand years now, has never developed one common spatial model, which seems to be its advantage and distinguishing feature [2,3]. Some researchers, however, attempt to create certain typological models regarding individual consecutive urbanisation periods [4]. Sources of diversity of urban structures can be detected most of all in the cultural distinctness of different regions of the continent, even those located close to each other, as well as in the diversified pace of their development over millennia. Due to a rather limited space and the growing population density [4], most often older structures were, and still are, adapted to new needs. The question on the European city [3] remains an open one, as it is impossible to determine one pattern followed everywhere at a given time; even despite attempts made by ancient powers, as well as by the 20th-century totalitarian systems.

The latter largely contributed to breaking the continuity of the historical development of numerous cities, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Warfare and the unparalleled scale of destruction of the spatial as well as social structure in many towns and cities in the years 1939-1945 was unprecedented in the history of Europe 1. Examples of metropolises which were practically wiped out, such as Warsaw or Dresden, are a common knowledge [5]. This fate, however, was shared by many other towns and cities, particularly in the Polish-German borderland. Their reconstruction after the war entailed not only a complete transformation of their urban, but also social structure. One of examples of such towns is Kamień Pomorski, a small but once significant town of medieval origins, which over centuries of its existence changed its national affinity several times.

2. Contemporary urbanisation of the territory of Poland
According to the latest demographic data, as many as 67% Polish households are located in towns and cities 2, which suggests that the majority of ca. 38.5 million Polish citizens 3 inhabit urbanised areas. Amongst the total number of towns and cities, 923, only in 5 biggest ones the population exceeds 500,000, and only in the capital city, Warsaw, it goes beyond 1 million 4. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) of many cities, not only the biggest ones, go far beyond their administrative limits and cover many areas that constitute rural communes in formal terms, which is confirmed by numerous researchers [4,6,7]. In this respect the global tendencies find their confirmation in Poland, too. Many urban centres form metropolitan areas satisfying the criteria of an agglomeration or a conurbation 5. Many of them experience the phenomenon of the urban sprawl [7,8,9], which has a negative effect on spatial structures of cities themselves as well as their nearest surroundings [10]. Thus, the actual populations of ‘urban’ areas are much higher than suggested by statistical data as they include inhabitants of suburban villages, who work in nearby cities every day or who use facilities offered by them in any other way 6.

1Although, if we consider the social conditions only, some medieval epidemics (e.g. Black Death in the 14th century) would certainly beat the World War II in terms of the share of town inhabitants who lost their lives.
2Data according to the Polish Central Statistical Office - http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/infrastruktura-komunalna-nieruchomosci/nieruchomosci-budynki-infrastruktura-komunalna/gospodarka-mieszkaniowa-w-2016-r,-7,12.html; access on 28 Dec. 2017.
3Data from July 2017- http://stat.gov.pl/podstawowe-dane; this number should be increased by nearly 2 million refugees from Ukraine and other former Soviet republics, who found their place of residence (and work!) predominantly in towns and cities.
4Other big cities are, in order: Cracow, Łódź, Wrocław, and Poznań.
5The oldest, Poland’s biggest, and most often described in scientific sources example is the Upper Silesian conurbation in the today’s Province of Silesia, which consists of the total of 19 towns and cities with the capital of the region in Katowice (total population: over 2.1m); but also spatial models of many smaller centres in Poland demonstrate similar tendencies.
6Naturally, it is supported by the motorisation of the society and the condition of roads, still trying to keep up with Western European standards; in recent years, after nearly 20 years of stagnation, the condition of public transport.
Nevertheless, Poland is predominantly a country of small towns (up to 10,000 inhabitants – 504 towns) and mid-size towns (up to 100,000 inhabitants – 393 towns). Small towns are inhabited by nearly 13% of the total population of the country. However, it not demographic considerations, but historical, cultural, and compositional conditions that decide about their relatively high position [11]. Some Polish smaller and bigger towns, irrespective of their sizes, fulfil administrative functions of county capitals, which are often centres of economic and educational activities, as well as seats of social welfare and healthcare institutions addressed to a specific area. A vast majority of such towns, particularly in the north and west of Poland, are surrounded by extensive rural areas, as well as natural lands, commercially established or covered with protection7. Picturesque location of some of such towns or their centuries-long history may additionally enrich their tourist offer. Thanks to health improving qualities, some of them have been recognised as health resorts and spas [12,13]. Kamięń Pomorski, a town covered with the study presented herein, satisfies all these conditions8.

3. Kamięń Pomorski – outline of the town’s history
Kamięń Pomorski is situated on a headland at Kamięński Lagoon on the Dziwna river, separated from the open Baltic Sea by the island of Wolin. Before the war it was one of the most beautiful port towns in Western Pomerania, the history of which reaches back to the dawn of the Polish statehood and the clash of Slavic, Scandinavian, and Germanic influences. A fortified fishing and port settlement of the tribe of Wolinians, dating back to the turn of the 9th century, in time transformed into a burgh which served as a ducal seat. The 12th century saw a rapid development of the town, connected with the mission of Christianisation undertaken upon the initiative of the Polish king, Bolesław Wrymouth, by bishop Otto of Bamberg, which reached Pomerania in 1124⁹. When Danish invaders destroyed the nearby Wolin¹⁰ around 1170, the seat of the Catholic diocese¹¹ established during this mission was moved to Kamięń Pomorski in 1176. The position of Kamięń Pomorski was confirmed by city rights granted to the town according to the Lübeck law in 1274 [14,15]. The economic boom of the town, the bishop’s seat and ducal residence, in the Middle Ages and in the early modern period was connected most of all with the Pomeranian rule¹², and then with Brandenburg, Prussian, and German authority. Kamięń Pomorski was, and still remains, one of stopovers on the pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostela [16]. Undoubtedly, the role of one of smaller ports, but economically bound with the Hanseatic League, fulfilled by the town for a long time, had a significant effect on its social [17] and spatial structure¹³.

has improved, as well. Obviously, these changes do not happen evenly on the entire territory of Poland, but they demonstrate certain differences in each of the 16 provinces.

⁷Landscape Parks or National Parks, which are the basic methods of protecting natural heritage in Poland.
⁸The town is the seat of the county, as well as an urban-rural commune of Kamięń Pomorski. Population: ca. 8800 (in 2016), in the years 2002-2016 it dropped by 3.4% - data after Polish Central Statistical Office: http://www.polskawliczbach.pl/Kamien_Pomorski ; http://www.kamienpomorski.pl/ ; access on 08 Feb. 2018.
⁹The name of the town in the early sources is ‘civitas ducis Camina’; other versions that occur in the sources as ‘Chamin’ or ‘Camyn’, but since the 13th century the form ‘Camin’ became common.
¹⁰According to some legends (e.g. according to Adam of Bremen), the town is the legendary Vineta (also known as Jomsborg), a powerful city inhabited by Slavs, Vikings, and Greeks - http://jomsborg-vineta.com; access on 10 Jul. 2017.
¹¹Today, after the administrative reform of the Catholic Church in Poland of 2004, Kamięń Pomorski still remains one of two capitals of the Szczecin-Kamięń Pomorski Diocese - http://www.szczecin.kuria.pl; access on 09 Feb. 2018.
¹²Since the 11th to the 17th century the town belonged to the Duchy of Pomerania with its capital in Szczecin, a part of the German Reich, ruled by the House of Griffins and maintaining at the time changeable feudal relations with the Polish Republic and Brandenburg.
¹³Ever since the Middle Ages there were numerous associations of towns, the so-called hansas. The core of the best known one – German Hansa – were ca. 70 towns, predominantly North German and Baltic ones, but also towns that where far from the sea, such as e.g. Magdeburg, Cracow, or Wrocław. Besides economic relations, it resulted in certain similarities in the spatial structure of these urban centres, which had come into being.
The circular spatial layout formed in the Middle Ages, which when the town was granted the city rights according to the Lübeck law obtained a more orthogonal layout of the market square and the grid of geometricised streets, was recognisable for many centuries, despite the obvious replacement of some of the architectural tissue. The historical urban layout with a centrally located market square and a port was surrounded with a moat and town walls and linked with a separately formed fortified settlement near the John the Baptist Cathedral (the so-called ‘cathedral settlement’). Such views of the town date back to the 16th and 17th century\textsuperscript{14}, and besides a busy port and a compact structure of burghers’ bolted houses one can find and identify here the most important dominants of the town centre – the cathedral, the town hall, Our Lady and St. Nicolas churches\textsuperscript{15}, and most of all the Wolin Gate from 1308\textsuperscript{16}.

The 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries saw the expansion of the town towards the south and south-east, which was partially connected also with discovering its spa qualities\textsuperscript{17}. A railway line was introduced. Guesthouses, sanatoria, and the Natural Therapy Centre were erected, new administrative and public utility facilities were built (a court house, a post office, a school) [21].

Public spaces, moulded over centuries, had the layout and typology that were traditional for towns in this part of Europe. They fulfilled representational and practical functions, concentrating everyday and festive activities of town residents and visitors (merchants, pilgrims, and later on patients). The main public spaces of Kamięń Pomorski before 1945 were the market square, the cathedral square, the port quay, and winding streets, which got subsequently accompanied by a park, arranged on the hill around St. Nicolas church (Figure 1).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1.jpg}
\caption{Aerial photograph of the town before 1945; [22]}
\end{figure}

predominantly due to facilitated flow of ideas and trends, and not any imposed rules. In this respect we should mention considerable economic and political independence from the central authority, enjoyed by European cities in the Middle Ages, which they lost only due to the emergence of large colonial powers in the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} century [18]. In many of them, especially the ones degraded by warfare and the 20\textsuperscript{th}-century industry, this part of their identity is often evoked in the process of their revitalisation [19,20].

\textsuperscript{14}It is visible e.g. on the Great Map of the Duchy of Pomerania (\textit{Grosse Lubinsche Karte}) developed in 1610-1618 upon the commission of the Prince of Szczecin, Phillip II, the copy of which is kept in the Museum of Central Pomerania in the Ślupsk Castle - http://www.muzeum.slupsk.pl/; access on 09 Feb. 2018

\textsuperscript{15}On the hill above the town at the time.

\textsuperscript{16}Which today houses a very willingly visited private Stone Museum http://kamienpomorski.sokolowski-muzea.pl; access on 10 Oct. 2017.

\textsuperscript{17}In 1876, quite accidentally, brine sources where discovered; in time mud from the nearby peat bogs started to be used, as well.
During the World War II, 60% of the urban structure of Kamień Pomorski was destroyed. Actions of withdrawing German troops in March 1945 proved to be particularly disastrous for the historical architectural substance of the town. As a result of cruisers’ fire, the centre of the town and a part of its medieval fortifications got completely ruined in just several days [23]. Very few religious and secular buildings survived, albeit severely damaged. Traditional economic foundations for the town residents’ life, and most of all the port infrastructure connected with them, were nearly completely destroyed, and so were all the urban public spaces defined by architecture and greenery.

4. Post-war reconstruction of the town centre urban structure
When the World War II ended, Poland found itself within new borders, remaining under the Soviet influence, since 1952 as the People’s Republic of Poland. It lost nearly a half of its pre-war territory, with such significant cities for the Polish history and culture as Lviv, Grodno, or Vilnius, to the Soviet Union, which actually controlled the entire country since 1945 [24]. As ‘a compensation’ it got German borderlands in the north and west. Although in different periods of history they had been in the Polish hands now and then, for centuries they had been developing under the rule of German-speaking countries. It also entailed forced replacements of people. Most people of German descent were moved from these lands to the heart of Germany, less frequently to Austria. They were replaced by repatriates from the territories of the Second Polish Republic taken over by the Soviet Union, and then in several waves also by Ukrainians inhabiting the eastern borderland of Poland. This led to a nearly complete exchange of the social structure in many towns and cities. At the same time, it has to be taken into account that the majority of the newcomers had been driven out from their houses and apartments, in which (as they must have thought) they had managed to survive the nightmare of the war and the six years of occupation, and then transported in cattle wagons hundreds of kilometres west. There they were told to reconstruct destroyed formerly German cities, towns, and villages, quite foreign to them in terms of culture. Numerous architectural and conservation studies devoted to the post-war reconstruction of cities in the west of Poland [25], seem to somewhat marginalise this extremely important social issue.

Kamień Pomorski was one of the towns destroyed at the end of the warfare where repatriates mostly from the Vilnius Region where brought. They didn’t fully understand the local spatial, natural, and landscape conditions. Neither were they able to get engaged in professions that had been characteristic for the town (such as e.g. fishing, boat building). This change was combined with the implementation of the centrally planned socialist economy. As a result, despite the fact that some of the pre-war functions of the town, including most of all those of a health resort, were maintained, it completely changed its character, and its initially devastated public spaces started to serve different purposes (Figures 2,3).

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18The change of the territory was implemented under the Yalta agreements from December 1943 and the Potsdam agreements from August 1945, concluded by the USSR and the Western allies. The territories incorporated under these legal acts, dubbed ‘the regained territories’ by the propaganda, are as follows: Free City of Danzig, Pomerania, Masuria, Kashubia, parts of Kuyavia and Warmia, and most of all the entire Lower Silesia and the western part of Upper Silesia [23]. However, in the areas near the border with German Democratic Republic there were Soviet garrisons stationing as late as in the 1990s, and numerous towns and cities, even beyond purely military settlements, were nearly completely inaccessible to Poles for a certain time. A good example in this respect is the historically Polish town of Legnica, the urban structure of which was considerably devastated by the Red Army in the 1950s and 1960s in search of ‘German treasures’.

19Brandenburg, Saxony, Prussia, Austria, and after 1918 Germany.

20In physical terms, as well as in terms of nationality, and – most importantly – religion and culture.

21In the eastern parts of the country it was most of all the Soviet occupation (since 17 September 1939 with a small break for German military actions in these areas in 1941-43).

22The most important cities in the ‘regained territories’ were Wroclaw, Szczecin, Opole, Gliwice, Gdański and Sopot (before the World War II – Free City of Danzig).

23Especially after 1959. [21,22].
It was tried to restore the former splendour of the most important preserved historical sites – the cathedral complex, the town hall, the churches, and several parts of the fortifications with the Wolin Gate, and the architectural and conservation measures were carried out very thoroughly. The problem was the devastated, practically non-existent urban tissue of the town centre, where when the rubble was removed only several tenements remained. Several concepts of the reconstruction of the town centre (within the perimeter of the former town walls) were submitted, and each of them tried to maintain the main axes and public spaces of the then non-existent spatial structure of the pre-war Kamień Pomorski, which should be recognised as a strength.

The first design of the town reconstruction was drawn up before 1959 under the supervision of W. Czerny and it assumed erecting three-floor terraced houses with gardens in the town centre [23]. Eventually, the centre was reconstructed, starting from the 1960s, over nearly twenty years, in architectural forms which did not correspond to the traditional ones at all [25]. Within the area of the former compact quarter development, a structure of a housing estate came into being [26], which in its parts facing the main traffic routes tried to respect the limits of the former quarters. Inside the structure, however, a loose composition of detached spot buildings and five-floor blocks of flats in a linear layout was erected, creating amorphous spaces. Thus, practically the entire area of the former town centre became accessible to the public, which was inconsistent with the local tradition and historical conditions. Nevertheless, due to the partial closing of the former quarters of development by means of the new blocks of flats (and several preserved tenements), today we can clearly distinguish between the social spaces of the housing estate dedicated to its residents [26] and the system of public spaces, partially connected with the road and street system, too.

The biggest change in the appearance of public spaces in Kamień Pomorski was a decision not to reconstruct one of the blocks located at the market square. The town centre is situated on a hill at a lagoon, and thanks to this measure a nearly natural amphitheatre was obtained, opening up towards the waterfront, crowned with a short pier [27]. The character of the market square was changed completely, and the historical town hall became visible from the waterfront, as well as from the open waters of Kamieński Lagoon (Figure 4). It is actually the only reference made to the first concept of reconstruction.

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24 In the Urban Planning Studio of the Gdańsk University of Technology [22]
25 4-6 floor large-panel blocks of flats. Sometimes, especially around the market square, they are furnished with dummy sloping roofs, arranged in a layout which does not correspond to the historical iconography or the former architectural and urban structure. The first residents moved in in 1962. Architectural designs of the buildings had been developed predominantly in Miastoprojekt Szczecin.
26 And today largely occupied by car parks, which has appeared over the last 25 years.
27 Completed in 1974 on the 700th anniversary of the town.
(by Prof. Czerny), which besides this element respected the pre-war dimensions and typology of the town structure. Regrettably, the entire ‘housing estate’, built in several stages, does not constitute a harmonious whole in urban terms. The post-war reconstruction seems to be chaotic and represent a low architectural value. This picture is not much improved by several reconstructed monuments. The centre lacks a clear urban composition with a hierarchical system of public spaces, which accounted for the fact why the Kamień Pomorski of the turn of the 20th century was a far cry from the charm of a pre-war little town.

![Figure 4](image1.png)

**Figure 4.** View of the market square facing the lagoon.

5. Contemporary transformations of public spaces in Kamień Pomorski

In recent years several investments have been implemented in the centre of the town, aiming to improve the quality of its public spaces. The best visible are the ones which aim to put the housing estate spaces in order - by planting new greenery, arranging playgrounds, or replacing surfaces of pavements and squares (Figures 5, 6, 7). More and more importance is attached to the aesthetics of the promenade running along the old town moat, with the view of the relics of the town wall, and – unfortunately – blocks of flats located behind them (Figure 8). Special care has been taken of the green areas in the vicinity of the cathedral28.

The port function, much neglected after 1945, has been restored to a certain extent – this time as a recreational yacht marina, the centre of water sports, very popular in the high season. It occupies a considerable section of the waterfront, between the market square and Klasztorna street, which runs to the cathedral and the spa part of the town (Figure 9). Some of the waterfront boulevards have been renovated, a footbridge over the Karpinka Bay was built, linking the new marina with the Chopin housing estate located on the opposite side29. New promenades are being built, revitalisation of the spa park is planned with the support of the EU funds.

![Figures 5-7](image2.png)

**Figures 5-7.** Green squares in the centre as an element of the public spaces system in the town – 2016.

28 Which every summer for 54 years now is the venue of the International Festival of Organ and Chamber Music - http://www.kamienpomorski.pl; access on 17 February 2018.

29 A part of the town with the prevailing one-family architecture, experiencing a rapid growth over the last decade.
Like in many other towns and cities in the ‘regained territories’ (e.g. in Kolobrzeg or Elbląg), it was decided to reconstruct a fragment of the former spatial structure in contemporary albeit historicising forms, making references to historical structures according to the principle of retroversion. In small Kamień Pomorski the scale of such measures was similarly minor, and it referred to one quarter, once occupied by the convent of Dominican Fathers. It was situated in the direct vicinity of the cathedral, within the perimeter of the old fortifications of the so-called ‘cathedral settlement’. Design and construction works were coordinated with archaeological and conservation ones [27]. They resulted in a semi-open quarter consisting of several-floor buildings, corresponding with its scale and fragmentation to the structure of the former architecture of the pre-war Kamień Pomorski (Figure 10). In functional terms, it is a hybrid complex, with the prevailing residential function supported with service outlets on the ground floors, and it constitutes a closure of the frontage of Mickiewicza street. The corner building facing the cathedral square houses the Kamień Pomorski Land History Museum\(^{30}\), which also exhibits relics discovered while implementing this investment. The former silhouettes of buildings and the convent walls are marked on the floor of the museum, the square in front of it, as well as in a green recreational interior of the residential quarter. The architecture of the entire complex is maintained in the reticent historicising style, and sequences of the public and social spaces allow residents and tourists to get to know the history of the place (Figures 11, 12).

\(^{30}\) http://www.mhzk.eu; access on 15 Sep. 2017.
6. Conclusions

To conclude, it should be stated that during the research conducted in the years 2000-2017 an improvement in the quality of public spaces of Kamień Pomorski was observed, and it refers to green areas and the waterfront part of the town, as well. This phenomenon, combined with the modernisation of prefabricated blocks of flats, contributes to the improvement of the coherence of the urban composition of the entire layout. More and more frequent renovations of preserved pre-war tenements in the town centre or villas and guesthouses located a bit further are significant in this respect, too. The number of services stimulating the public domain is growing.

Kamień Pomorski is a town which offers specialist services characteristic for health resorts and tourist centres, relating also to sailing and water recreation. It entails specific types of public spaces – parks, green promenades, the marina, the pier, and the waterfronts. The investments implemented in the last decade, as well as the planned ones (revitalisation of the spa parks – on St. Nicolas hill and along Karpinka lake) are to strengthen this specialist offer. Even today, thanks to better arrangement of the promenade along the old moat and the completed modernisation of the amphitheatre near the market square a system of green public spaces was successfully created. Together with the market square with a new surface and broad, well-tended pavements along the main streets in the town centre, it integrates the biggest tourist attractions and the most important public utility buildings of the town with the waterfront promenade and the marina. Thanks to the construction of the footbridge over Karpinka, extremely popular amongst tourists and anglers, even further residential areas, so far not integrated with the centre, have become closer to the historical centre. It seems that despite enormous war destructions and not particularly successful chaotic reconstruction, which changed the appearance of Kamień Pomorski forever, after several decades of stagnation the town has become vivid again.

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