Urban Space Innovation – “10+” Principles through Designing the New Image of the Existing Shopping Mall in Csepel, Hungary

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Abstract. The first part of the paper is about to introduce the principles of “placemaking” as an innovation and important tool of the cities in the 21st century. The process helps designers to transform the spaces of “nobody” to a community-based space for supporting the connection among humans. The second part of the paper shows the process of the used principles by the author for designing the new image of the existing shopping mall in Csepel, Hungary. This work was selected as one of the best design ideas for renewing the existing underutilized space.

1. Introduction - Advantages of the good public spaces

According to the holistic approach, if a community is designed around automobiles and transportation, we have to face more traffic as a result, but if we design the same community around spaces and other people, we get better spaces and connections among people [1].

Nevertheless, generally, public spaces are “indifferent” or “neutral” spaces in the working process of cities. The local governments, which possess these areas are limited with energy and budget, and mostly deal with local zonings, which many times are the only tools to influence the conditions of public spaces through parameters for the adjacent walls along the edges of public spaces.

However, a good public space makes us happier. Hence, the spaces, which attract more people, are in close connection with business; having more people means more profit, which improves the local economy, therefore the income through taxes results in a higher budget regarding a nation (GDP) [2].

The comfortable, health and welfare sites – official term; "Wellbeing places", popular consumer social spaces, which are considered as an important factor of the economy (more of the local economy). The elements of the attractive public space design are more often neglected in the Hungarian city development system, and the barriers of the public and private areas are rather strict, which means all of the actors take cars as only a possession. The thinking should be changed with using innovative ideas and collaboration among local people. However, current trends urge us, and the stake is so high. Earlier, creating a strong economy was the attraction of new residents, citizens for the cities, but it has changed; creating higher quality of life is going to be more important and when it is achieved, it can attract new jobs and residents [3].
2. Urban space innovation – “10+” principles
The development of settlements should be based on a new world paradigm, which is adapted to fit the standards of today, the life of the "post-modern" settlements. The "Parks without borders - Making It Happen" program proposes a new alternative "place" or "placemaking" to cities [3]. Dr Juan Clos, the director of the United Nations Habitat, one of the leaders of the program, says that a better future of cities cannot be imagined without activating people.

Through the process, whole communities have to be mobilized. The aim is to create ownership and shared values besides allowing the local wisdom and common sense. The positive outcome can be enormous and quick. According to the group of Project for Public Spaces (PPS) the good public space design (“Place” and “Placemaking”) concept is based on several factors, which together can determine the quality of these places: urban equity, community engagement, local economies, public health, historic preservation, transportation+land use, local food systems, climate change/sustainability, arts+culture, architecture+design. Fred Kent, the founder and president, is a leading authority on revitalizing city spaces and one of the foremost thinkers in liveability, smart growth and the future of cities, which have experienced many big changes.

Figure 1 shows the vital Bryant Park after its refurbishment

Inclusive, healthy, sustainable cities can be established around the network of good public spaces, so spacemaking has an important role. These places are easier to integrate into the city fabric, and local people are more likely to use them, if they are made with a community-driven perspective (social capital), and have an impact on the economic development (place capital).

According to Fred Kent, there is a mystic principle for having good public spaces, so-called “power of 10+" [04]. He says that a city or region-is interesting and visited, if it can provide at least 10 major destinations, or on another scale, a destination can be interesting, if it has 10 or more places, and finally, a place has 10 or more activity options, and if these activities can work in synergy. One of his examples for this principle is New York (city) – Manhattan (destination) - Bryant park (place, as ‘figure 1’) which was only an underused (home of homelessness) green place till its renovation, and now it can offer a lot of activities, which make the place the most used public space in Manhattan, New York (Figure 1).

3. New image of the existing shopping mall in Csepel, Hungary
The aforementioned “Power of 10+” principle was established in one of our new projects. The preliminary ideas followed the principles of the proposed steps regarding the design of the public spaces with New Generation nature by the concept of “Placemaking”. Our approach prefers people-based
design, well-connected areas, a new brand and maximizing the number of possible functions to attract more and more people. And the race between cities are more acute. Ivan Bofarull, in his article noted that “urbanisation” as one of the most important element for the success of the cities [05].

Csepel, one of the quarters of Budapest, has the most diverse area of the capital, having urban, suburban, rural, waterfront, and industrial parts, but its public spaces are neglected thanks to the rapid industrialization. The city invited architects to make a proposal to provide a new identity and design for the existing shopping mall (called U1 and U2 shopping malls) along Kossuth Lajos Street. Nowadays, the buildings have old („retro”) features together with living functions, block of flats area as the legacy of the socialism, which was created in the same period with technology of the 80’s. Due to the organization of public transport and the environment of these buildings, the area works as a hub, tens of thousands of Csepel people come here every day.

The issue of urban development requires strategic thinking. It includes self-sustainable mechanisms, strengthening self-organization and financing of the cities, collectively [05]. The intention of the local municipality was to recompose and involve these areas into the community life of Csepel. The new design had to represent the character of downtown in Csepel (the character has been a key issue to be solved) and this architectural symbol serves both the locals and the crowds of people, who pass through Csepel. The design started with the assessment of the existing space usage. The spatial organization of the existing buildings is extremely outdated. The commercial and service units are facing towards the Kossuth Lajos Street (main thoroughfares), which results only openings at one side, meanwhile the area closes the other three directions off. Theses facades do not provide community zones and social interactions, and even worse, they working as "empty spaces".

![Figure 2](image)

**Figure 2** shows the old condition of the existing shopping mall in the centre of Csepel. Photo by Google street view

Under the significant roof, the stores fall apart due to modifications, extensions (different structures, colours and materials). The fragmented units have a sense of space and atmosphere like a bazaar, or chaos (Figure 2).

The given areas and surfaces of the shopping mall are much underused. The outside hallways of the shops, and mostly the flat roof surfaces works as "lost space", meanwhile, the roof areas provide a view for nearly 300 housing units, but the current design does not deal with this issue, as well.
The concept of the redesign is based on the “power of 10+”, which we designed through four steps; (01) renewal of the arrangement of shops with having more open spaces, (02) refurbishment of community spaces – tube system, (03) using lost spaces - roof garden, and (04) creating an iconic symbol - contemporary fine art sculpture: Giraffe. The existing problems are transformed from disadvantages to advantages. The basic ideas emerged from maximizing the space usage with outdoor open spaces for social interaction and provide a very unique design for buildings to be the real center of the area.

**Step 01** - Renewal of the arrangement of the shops to have more open spaces - "islands" design. The existing big and small units are planned to be redesigned as "islands", surrounded by pedestrian flow, which can be accessed from all sides, but keeps the smallest possible floor area and interior design changes (Figure 3.). The new "islands" are given a uniform appearance; the new glass portals and single sign-boards can create the same visual appearance for the whole.

![Figure 3](image_url)

**Figure 3** shows the concept of focusing on creating more public areas and installing a pipe system, which provides more facilities for the shopping mall.

**Step 02:** Refurbishment of community spaces – tube system (Figures 4-5)

The identity or spirit of public spaces, surrounded by "islands" and streets, required complex thinking. We were looking for significant local characteristics, which can be integrated in the local community. According to our research the main characteristic feature in Csepel was the former Csepel industry, where the buildings were connected by a pipe system (supplies) in the air, and the bikes of Csepel, which have a unique metal frame.

In our concept, these tubes (or pipes) got a new interpretation; the community space furnished with a new tube system, hanging down from the ceiling by serving the places with functions: benches, flower boxes, climbing surfaces, stairs, humidity gates, lighting, etc. The system offers activities for the youth and the older generations: climbing and playground element for kids, relaxation zones (rest zone, reader zone) for elderly people.
The tube design makes the building recognizable and also memorable. People have developed a cognitive map for their locations, and these characteristics can easily be integrated into the sight of the restored building. The building will be a priority in terms of public transportation in the city center - many local people will adapt to it and consider the location as their meeting point. Compared to the monotony stemmed from the new loosened characteristics and the unique structure of the pipe system, (bench, bedroom, stairs, bicycle wheel, giraffe, etc) using its own characteristics with its individual items, the building can also be recognized from the distance.

**Step 03: Using the „lost spaces” - roof garden (Figures 6)**

The vibrant community space, as the counterpoint between the stores, is a smaller more intimate roof terrace designed for using the top of the existing shopping center. The proposed new green roof, the fifth facade of the two shopping mall units, provides a new aesthetic experience for the nearly 300 dwellings, which improves the local micro-climate and the established, gravel-covered "bays" mean to serve sustainability by means of collecting rainwater, and mounting solar cells into the green area. The roof terrace would give additional utility to a small, mobile catering unit or it would provide roof space for selling goods and services. The "disposable" design seasonally or periodically can be changed, which means that the outlook and atmosphere of the roof garden could be updated, thus making the top view lively and likeable.

**Figures 4. (left) and Figure 5 (right)** show the concept of focusing more on public spaces instead of private business regarding the transformation of the shopping mall in the center of Csepel.

**Step 04: Creating an iconic symbol - contemporary fine art sculpture: Giraffe (Figures 6-7)**

As our building is a counterpoint of the surroundings (one level unit surrounded by a 10-storey building) we searched for a key element to break the horizontal direction by using a strong vertical symbol.

**Figures 6. (left) and Figure 7 (right)** show the new roof garden and the symbol, the Giraffe, as the counterpoint of the one floor building surrounded by block of flats housings.
The idea derived from the verticality of Csepel factory where the skyline was conquered by chimneys. Finally, a public statue was used to add contemporary art through the green roof that can have an effect on the houses nearby, either. The relationship between humans and nature, and the idea to make a vertical counterpoint to the horizontal shopping centre, were resulted the used giraffe form. The animal symbol emphasizes the presence of animals, which is important in the urban tissue (that can be more effective by non-native animals), and can have an enormous effect on children, and indirectly people in all ages.

4. Results
Our proposal to refurbish the existing shopping area was selected as the second best project in the competition, and many of the design ideas will be implemented. According to the jury, the reason why our proposal was selected is that the plan focuses on the existing values, in tandem with creating a new real community space with providing many different activities for every generation. Our concept can offer various new forms of social interaction together with a much more opened and connected public space system, as well as it creates a brand new design by tube system and giraffe sculpture. This tube and giraffe can be a very important image of the created space, which people bear in mind (cognitive map). The reused, but previously “lost spaces”, extend the public areas, like the sides of the shopping area and the new green roof surface.

The designed new place helps the urban equity through accessing every generation of the society, meanwhile strengthening the local economies by offering new spaces for entrepreneurial. The new local garden and green surfaces make the surrounding healthier and improve the local climate in the concrete jungle. The used artistic and cultural elements focused on some important cultural heritage from the past, and can influence the locals with a very fresh architectural design. However, nothing would work properly, if it were not for the local society, or if they were not involved. In our plan, the community engagement realized the way of voting where the local residents could vote for the best design, which was calculated in the result.

5. Conclusions
The public space in cities needs more treatment. The most interactive spaces of cities have to be accommodated to serve the needs of people and transform to be a usable surface of communities. The design of these places should offer more and more activities in order to attract more people. The connection among citizens will depend on the quality of these places, and this is one of the basic elements of strengthening local communities and the power of civic engagement. Public spaces will have to be changed by the common wish of local communities, with a wide support that can result in live and useable spaces as the key factor of success in the cities of the future.

References
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