

Urban Heritage Conservation in the Second Half of the 20th Century: from Monuments' Restoration to Sustainable Development

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Abstract—The following article describes evolution of approaches in urban heritage conservation in the second half of the 20th–beginning of the 21st century. Recognition of the complexity and diversity of cultural heritage has changed our understanding of the conservation goals and approaches, especially in the sphere of historic cities. During the last 50 years, such new concepts as Integrated Conservation, People-Centered Approach, Active Conservation, Living Heritage, Historic Urban Landscape and Sustainable Development emerged. With all the differences of content interpretation, they are united by the idea of fundamental changeability of the historic urban environment and the need for such an approach to its conservation, which would create conditions for further development. The main way to achieve it is the active inclusion of cultural heritage in the socio-economic life of the city as one of the resources of its sustainability, which requires adequate legal and economic measures.

Keywords—urban heritage; historic city; Integrated Conservation; People-centered Approach; Active Conservation; Living Heritage; Historic Urban Landscape; sustainable development

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the second half of the 20th century, the concept of cultural heritage has gradually expanded, including not only architectural monuments, but also the system of their interaction with each other, their settings, surroundings, local communities, both tangible and intangible elements. Recognition of the complexity and diversity of the phenomenon caused significant changes in the conservation practice, especially in the sphere of historic cities. Newly emerging concepts (Integrated Conservation, People-Centered Approach, Active Conservation, Living Heritage, Historic Urban Landscape and Sustainable Development) did not replace each other but do co-exist, enrich and complement each other, forming a universal approach.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE “INTEGRATED” APPROACH

According to the Venice Charter 1964 [1], “urban or rural setting” was defined as an example of “historic monument”. Its conservation should follow the same principles as the restoration of a single building, and it

should be aimed at maximum possible preservation of the historical appearance, including all multi-temporal layers. Reconstruction was defined as exceptional measure. Any other interference in the monument was recognized unacceptable.

The discrepancy between the strict requirements of the Venice Charter and the problems of urban heritage became obvious during the post-war reconstruction of Europe and worsened during the period of large-scale construction works that engulfed the world in the 60s-70s of 20th century. In 1968, UNESCO adopted “Recommendation concerning the Preservation of Cultural Property Endangered by Public or Private Works” [2]. This paper addressed “archaeological and historic or scientific sites, structures or other”, including “historic quarters in urban or rural built-up areas”. They were defined as complex objects embracing not only monuments, but their “settings”, “association” and “character”. To protect them, a list of activities was developed, which is one of the earliest examples of comprehensive approach to cultural heritage. It included following measures:

- Legislation initiatives;
- Administrative measures;
- Educational activities;
- Procedures to encourage preservation of cultural properties;
- Penalties for the destruction of cultural properties;
- Repair works;
- Financial measures including tax credits, loans and subsidies historic building owners;
- “Zoning” or establishment of special zones regulating works on monuments (“the imposition of controls on the degree to which historically or artistically important structures can be renovated”) and new buildings (“the type and design of new structures which can be introduced”), as well as their surrounding areas and setting. The Recommendation 1968 emphasized necessity of such measures for

historic districts where they were supposed to become a basis for any urban construction works.

The idea of correspondence between city master plans and heritage conservation was developed in the European Charter of the Architectural Heritage, signed in Amsterdam in 1975 [3]. It states that not only prominent architectural monuments should be protected but also ordinary, "lesser" buildings as they create the real atmosphere of old towns and traditional villages. For their preservation, the method of "integrated conservation" was proposed, considering conservation as an integral part of the development projects and master plans. Conservation was determined as a broader concept which was not limited to "physical" restoration of monuments, but also included their rehabilitation. This principle has become widespread all around the world.

Restoration of the Assumption monastery at the town-island of Sviyazhsk, Russia, 1997-2008 ("Fig. 1") led to the revitalization of the urban environment, including renovation of the infrastructure, museum opening and construction of a tourist center and new dam, that connected town with the mainland. The same impact had the conservation of the medieval cathedral in Tournai, Belgium, which caused great improvements of the built environment in the neighborhood areas. [4].



Fig. 1. The town-island of Sviyazhsk, Russia, with the restored assumption monastery and the newly constructed dam.

III. HERITAGE CONSERVATION AS A DRIVER OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The impossibility of carrying out such complex projects exclusively at the expense of the state led to the awareness of the need for citizens' involvement in the conservation of historic cities. As a result, the concept of People-Centered Approach appeared. Its main idea is to engage local communities at different stages of work with monuments. The experience of the Netherlands with lots of examples of "bottom conservation" proves success and productivity of the approach. Restored on the initiative and at the expense of citizens Schieblock building in Rotterdam (2009-2014) or Prodent factory in Amersfoort (2013-now) have become a kind of centers of attraction, contributing to the consolidation of society and the renewal of the urban environment [5].



Fig. 2. Restoration of the "Casas de las Columnas" in Lima, Peru, by the people living in it.

In world practice, such cases are rather exceptions, and community engagement requires significant efforts on the part of the state or non-profit organizations. The most effective in this direction are courses on traditional building materials and techniques. In 2010 in Lima, Peru, the NGO "Centro de Investigación, Documentación y Asesoría Poblacional" with the help of the municipality organized compulsory training for the inhabitants of the city iconic building "Casas de las Columnas", as it was social housing. At the end of the programme 53 families who lived there took direct part in restoring the building. [6].

The implementation of such courses allows not only to restore historic monuments by the residents, but also to increase peoples' awareness and, consequently, the value of heritage, as well as to ensure continuity in the conservation of the historic urban environment.

The importance of monuments integration into the contemporary life formed the basis of the concepts of Living Heritage and Active Conservation, which have become widespread since the early 2000s. They are distinguished by the idea that the city is a "living" structure, main feature of which is the ability to accumulate multi — temporal components and change in accordance with the needs of society. Donovan Rypkema called this ability "sense of evolution": "... living cities will neither be frozen in time as museum relics nor look like they were built yesterday. The physical fabric of a city should reflect its functional, cultural, aesthetic, and historical evolution". [7] Conservation is understood as a way to bring new life and adapt historic areas to existing conditions by the means of revitalization and rehabilitation. The implementation of such approaches (Strijp R, Eindhoven, Netherlands, 2006-2009; New Holland, St. Petersburg, Russia 2011-present) involves a large number of activities with the participation of local citizens, which improve the quality of the urban environment and increase business activity ("Fig. 3"). In both cases: redevelopment of the Strijp R, Netherlands, or New Holland, Russia, conservation of the built heritage was not either the main goal, or the first step. They started with the numerous events to attract locals and to collect data about people's needs and

demands which became the framework for the future projects.



Fig. 3. Kite Weekend in New Holland, St Petersburg, Russia, 2012.

Understanding heritage as a resource for socio-economic development accessible to all population groups is one of the key principles of the Historical Urban Landscape (HUL) concept adopted by UNESCO in 2011. The proposed program of six steps summarizes the previous experience of historic cities' conservation and includes:

- Comprehensive surveys and mapping of the city's natural, cultural and human resources;
- Participatory planning and stakeholder consultations on what values to protect for transmission to future generations and to determine the attributes that carry these values;
- Assessment of the vulnerability of these attributes to socio-economic risks and impacts of climate change;
- Integration of urban heritage values and their vulnerability status into a wider framework of city development, which shall provide indications of areas of heritage sensitivity that require for paying careful attention to planning, design and implementation of development projects.
- Conservation and development plans.
- Establishment of the appropriate partnerships and local management frameworks for each of the identified projects for conservation and development, as well as to develop mechanisms for the coordination of the various activities between different actors, both public and private. [8] [9]

This program involves the implementation of activities in various fields (social, economic, environmental, etc.), which largely corresponds to the concept of "Sustainable Development", gaining world-wide recognition in recent years. It was formed as a result of understanding the city as a complex system, all elements of which are interrelated and inseparable from each other. In view of our limited abilities and the need to respect the interests of future generations, all available resources, including heritage, must be used as efficiently as possible and contribute to the well-being of the society as a whole.

Renovation of Nizamuddin West, Delhi, India, 2007-2016, by Aga Khan Foundation, besides monuments conservation included works on construction of the public sanitary accommodation, waste disposal, training courses for children and women, medical assistance and legal support of the locals. All these complementary caused urban regeneration and guaranteed sustainability of the built heritage [10].

IV. CONCLUSION

The effectiveness demonstrated by this approach both in terms of conservation of the historic urban environment and improving the socio-economic situation (Herculano development program, Italy, 2001-present; Renovation of Nizamuddin West, Delhi, India, 2007-2016), led to the recognition of the importance of cultural heritage for the city at the international level and its inclusion into the UN program for the sustainable development of human settlements until 2030, "We commit ourselves to the sustainable leveraging of natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, in cities and human settlements, as appropriate, through integrated urban and territorial policies and adequate investments at the national, subnational and local levels, to safeguard and promote cultural infrastructures and sites, museums, indigenous cultures and languages, as well as traditional knowledge and the arts, highlighting the role that these play in rehabilitating and revitalizing urban areas and in strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship" [11].

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