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**REVITALIZATION OF HISTORIC WORKERS' ESTATES
AS AN INSTRUMENT OF ACHIEVING SPATIAL
AND SOCIAL COHESION OF CITY
– THE CASE STUDY OF KSIĘŻY MŁYN IN LODZ**

Abstract: Historical workers' estate of Księży Młyn post-industrial complex is one of the areas in Lodz of particular importance for city in terms of its identity and cultural heritage, but at the same time one of problematic degraded areas, requiring revitalization. For many years the question of regeneration of this historic ensemble has been broadly discussed topic in professional circles. Certain steps have been undertaken by local authorities towards the goal of regeneration of this area but did not bring up meaningful improvements. In 2012 the Municipality of Lodz adopted the *Integrated Program of Revitalization of Księży Młyn*. The main aim of the *Program* is to improve the quality of life of inhabitants in terms of physical conditions of the built environment, as well as to fight the social exclusion. The way of creating the *Program* seems to have significance for increasing the level of social cohesion by implementation of different forms of participation in revitalization process and introduction of social projects. A bottom-up approach was used to produce functional and spatial revitalization concept serving achievement of spatial and social cohesion of the city.

Key words: Revitalization of post-industrial structures, social cohesion, social participation, spatial cohesion.

Introduction

The history of Lodz since the moment of including it into the group of industrial towns in 1821, was strongly related to the development of textile industry. During the period of dynamic growth of the city, especially in the second half of the 19th century, within the borders of the city and peripheral railway line, emerged numerous industrial complexes. Some of them, as Księży Młyn ensemble, represented the leading social and town planning thoughts of their times, being the outstanding examples of industrial patronage estates. Transformation period in Poland after 1989 brought up the dramatic collapse of leading industrial function of Lodz. As the result of pressure of market economy, big

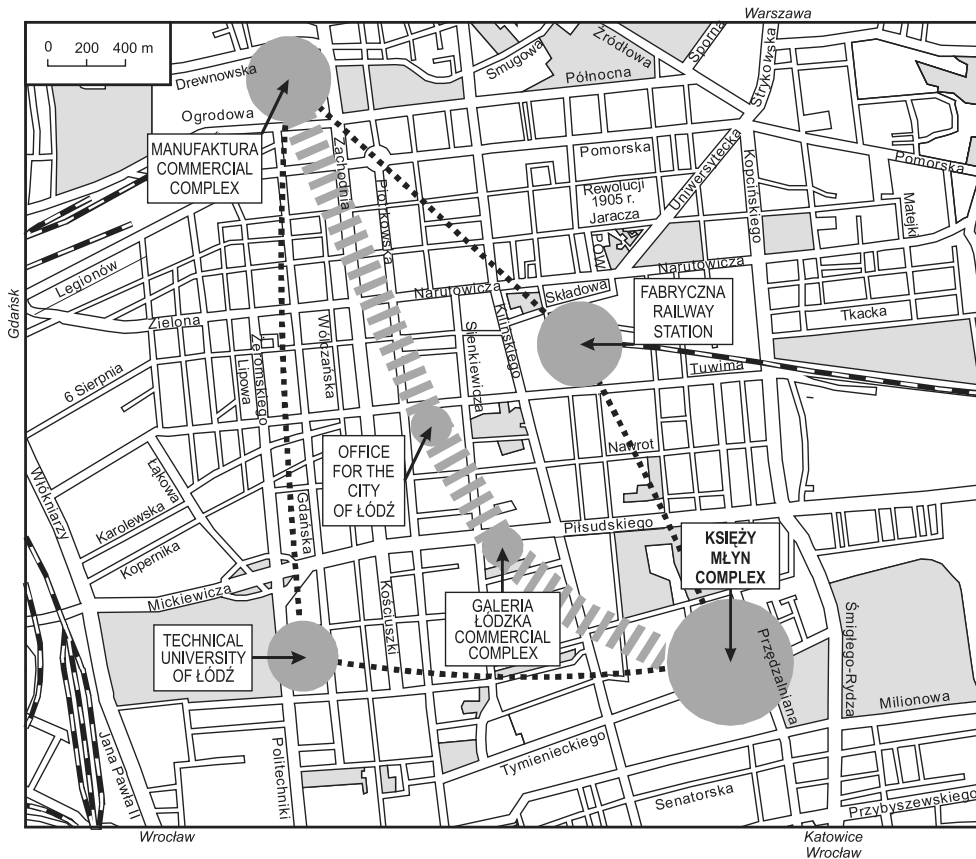


Figure 1. Potential functional and spatial connections (some of which are existing, other planned) of Księży Młyn complex and other important elements of urban structure in Lodz central area

Source: [Drawing by A. Wosiak 2013]

textile plants had ceased their production, within them *Uniontex Cotton Industry Plant*, operating during the socialistic times in the material stocks of former Księży Młyn industrial complex. Built structures abandoned by industry – industrial buildings as well as workers' houses – already physically neglected during the post-war period, gradually worsened their material and social condition within the following years.

At present, historic post-industrial structures dispersed in the downtown of Lodz, and the character of spatial and functional structure of the city with vast areas of previous 'industrial empires', are significant vehicles of its identity and important assets in planning future development. But they often constitute also a 'troublesome heritage' regarding complicated and overlying technical, conservator's and social problems, difficult to solve in satisfying way in all aspects. The need for revitalization

of such areas is on the one hand motivated by necessity to use them as city's potential, and on the other the strive for achieving the social and spatial balance and cohesion within the city, which is endangered by exclusion of such areas from current civilization growth. The localization of Księży Młyn complex at the background of other important elements of Lodz downtown shows that it should become one of the crucial nodes of its spatial and functional structure (Fig. 1).

1. History

Between 15th and 19th centuries manufacturing activities within the area of later Księży Młyn were mainly linked with milling. In the initial period of industrialization of Lodz, in 1824 a new colony for cotton manufacturers called 'Łódka' was established along the banks of Jasień River. Cotton and weaving mills localized here created a so-called *riverside industrial area* of Księży Młyn [Uchwala... 2012]. In 1852 this area was bought by industrialist Karol Scheibler, and this date is marking the start of creating of his textile empire in Lodz. He built first industrial buildings and houses for workers at Wodny Rynek in 1850s and 1860s, and his own house, rebuilt afterwards as the palace, in 1865 [Puś, Pytlas 1979]. The most dynamic period of development of Scheibler's textile enterprise was between 1865 and 1880, and within this period a huge, 207 meters long building of cotton mill at Tymienieckiego Street (then: Emilii Street) was constructed. To the south

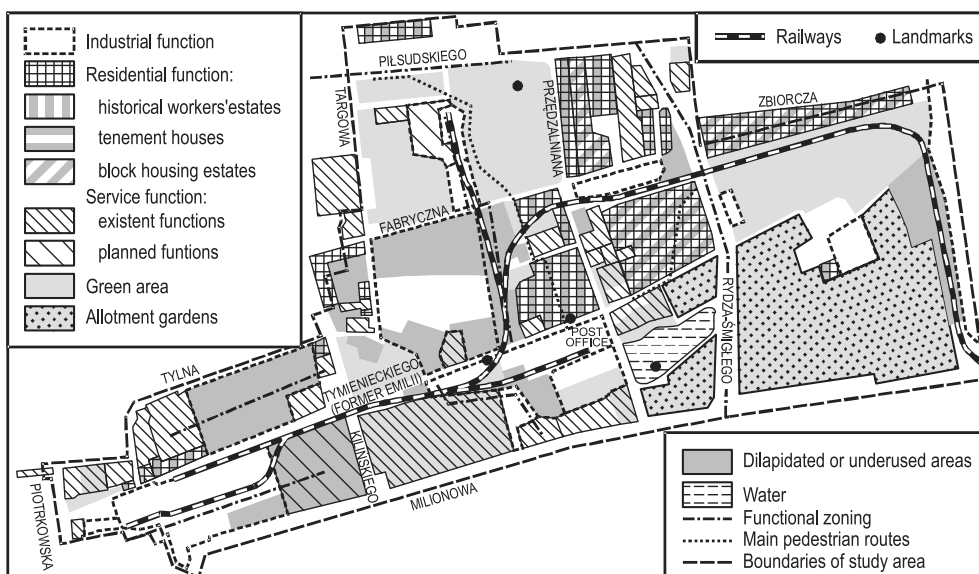


Figure 2. Functional zoning of Księży Młyn post-industrial complex in 2001

Source: [Drawing by A. Wosiak 2013 on the basis of Pawłowski *et al.* 2001].

another five-storey cotton mill was erected in 1878, industrial gas-work was started-up, and railway track linking industrial area to the Fabryczna Railway [Puś 1987].

In 1873 construction of housing estate for workers was initiated at the northern side of Tymienieckiego Street, opposite to the cotton mill building. In the first stage 18 'modules' (each of them consisting of residential house and auxiliary building), arranged in 3 rows of 6 houses each, were built on the plot of 400 to 175 meters, situated in the northern-west corner of Tymienieckiego and Przędzalniana streets' crossing. The whole estate is spatially strongly bound to the cotton mill building: main compositional axis which goes between western and middle row of houses is 200 meters long wide alley, linking main entrance of the cotton mill with school at Księży Młyn Street. In the second stage till 1887, another 7 'modules' were erected at Przędzalniana and Fabryczna streets, to the north of buildings constructed in the first stage.

The whole area of workers' estate at Księży Młyn, together with industrial plant and villa of Edward Herbst (in those days director of the plant) constitute the three-fold industrial-residential ensemble [Salm, Walczak 2008], which is a part of the whole Księży Młyn complex and is legally protected. But it is necessary to mention, that already in 1970s the complex had lost its integrity, cut across by the great traffic artery of Pilsudskiego/Mickiewicza Avenue, which cut off its northern part, with earliest workers' buildings at Wodny Rynek, from the central and southern part (Fig. 2).

2. Spatial and functional structure of estate and characteristics of the built structure

The historic workers' estate of Księży Młyn consists in the whole of 25 buildings, situated along the main alley and at Przędzalniana and Fabryczna streets (Photos.



Photo 1. Historic workers' estate at Księży Młyn – western elevation of houses at Przędzalniana Street

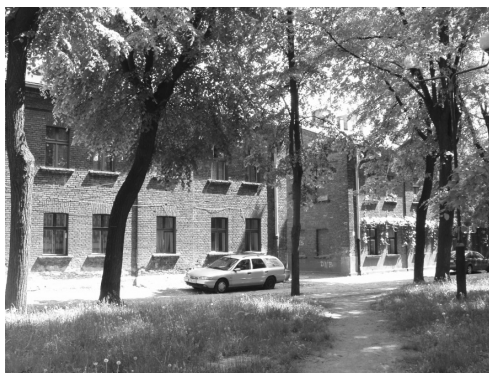


Photo 2. Residential workers' houses in the main alley

Source: Wojnarowska, 2011 (Photos. 1-3)

1 and 2). Integral part of the built structure constitute also auxiliary buildings made of brick (Photo 3). The whole estate covers the area of 5,7 ha. All buildings are traditionally constructed of brick and wood, and are two-storey, plus partially used attic [Salm, Walczak 2008]. Original workers' flats were very small, having only one room of about 25 square meters, or sometimes two rooms of 40 square meters both, and sanitation utilities located in auxiliary buildings. Nowadays, some originally small flats



Photo 3. Auxilliary buildings at Księży Młyn

were merged to create bigger apartments, and have sanitation utilities within the flat. But there are still some flats with no kitchen, no toilet or bathroom. Flats do not have central heating, local heating facilities are outdated, usually coal stoves. Buildings in the most retained their original functions – in spite of post office located in one of buildings at Księży Młyn Street No 1, and art gallery at Fabryczna Street No 19a.

3. Contemporary days of Księży Młyn: a troublesome heritage

Current situation of Księży Młyn complex reflects the change in attitude to post-industrial heritage, and represents multifold technical and social problems, which should be taken under consideration while undertaking revitalization process. In socialistic era, until 1980s, the 19th century industrial structures, even of great architectural value, were perceived as worthless in aesthetic aspect, sub-standard in physical terms as residential premises, and also politically improper as the remains of capitalistic times, so they fell into technical and social degradation. The recognition of value of post-industrial buildings in Poland mainly came along with political and socio-economic changes after 1989, and was also facilitated by decline of textile production in historic industrial stocks. These buildings, which were exploited after Second World War as the used-up, unattractive places to carry on industrial activities, afterwards often earned – completely unexpected earlier – interest and admiration. In Lodz up to now 48 post-industrial complexes and single objects were adopted for new functions and redeveloped. Some of them – as 'Manufaktura' commercial and cultural complex – gained an international fame, as interesting example of regeneration of post-industrial areas.

But there are still numerous buildings and zones which are dilapidated, which seriously endanger spatial and social cohesion of the city. After 1989, certain efforts were undertaken to introduce new functions and give a start-up to the regeneration process

of Księży Młyn area. They were of different character, but in result they led in fact to disintegration of the complex as a whole. It was probably inevitable, because of the enormous size of the former industrial area, which was impossible to be redeveloped as a one project led by one investor. The westernmost part at Tymienieckiego Street was adapted to serve the goals of Special Economic Zone (SEZ). The huge cotton mill at the crossing of Tymienieckiego and Przędzalniana streets was bought by Australian developer and transformed into residential function – so-called *lofts* – with accompanying services. There were also smaller adaptations for new functions, as previous fire station building redeveloped to the offices and apartment by private owner, as well as some auxiliary buildings for services, offices and gastronomy. Some of industrial buildings have been left unused, and gradually worsened their technical condition, at present actually turning into ruins. Industrial railway line was dismantled by scrap-metal collectors, and only an empty stripe of land is marking now its previous localization. Historic workers' estate at Tymienieckiego Street was inhabited all the time, but buildings and their surroundings were lacking renovations, offering very low living standard.

In 1995-1998 the Municipality of Lodz undertaken first attempts to start revitalization process of this area. The program was entitled *Revitalization of historical industrial and residential complex of Księży Młyn*. There was planned that local authorities would renovate one residential building and sell it to private owners, preferably representing so-called *free professions* or artistic circles. Then, step by step, consecutive houses would have been renovated and sold, till the point of achieving full regeneration of the whole complex. In fact, the project ended up by renovation of just one building, situated at Księży Młyn Street No. 2, because of the lack of parties interested in purchasing renovated flats.

During following years the discussion was held at different professional and institutional forums concerning the ideas for revitalization of Księży Młyn complex. First of all, conservators' opinions and expert assessments were prepared (Pawłowski *et al.*, 2001, Salm, Walczak 2008), it was also a leading subject of many conferences [Kaczmarek 2001, Markowski 2006], and other publications [Puś 1987; Kobojeck 1998; Kowalczyński 2008]. Municipalities adopted few resolutions concerning revitalization programs and local spatial development plan for this area. Local community was subjected to inquiries and social research, and gathered data were used to prepare *Social Revitalization Strategy for Lodz* in 2007 and *Revitalization Program for Historic Workers' Estates* in 2007.

The aim of one of the conferences, held in 2006 at the Faculty of Management of University of Lodz, was to work out a kind of *future development scenarios* for Księży Młyn complex. One of the strongly discussed issues was the topic of proposed functions and role, which this area should assume after the regeneration process. It was underlined, that the future set of functions should not only properly exploit the cultural and touristic values of the area, but also ensure its prosperous development and economic vitality.

There were proposed various functions, taking the presumption that particular parts of complex can take on different function:

- 1) Residential function
- 2) Service function
- 3) Artistic and cultural function (Księży Młyn as *Culture and Art Valley*)
- 4) Touristic function
- 5) Congress and exhibition function

The economic efficiency was pointed out as the most important while discussing the future function of the area. It was stated that there is necessary to adopt the revitalization rules which introduce functions which would assure incomes enabling the maintenance of the whole historic complex. Another issue was the question of technical and sanitation possibilities of adaptation of historical building stocks (of previously industrial or residential character) for new function – service, residential, touristic or other.

Touristic and cultural functions were often mentioned as these, which could play particularly important role in revitalization, by creation of touristic attractions, use of already existing cultural utilities in this area (as Museum of Industrialist's Residential Interiors – in Herbst's villa, Museum of Cinematography – in Scheibler's villa, International Artists' Museum, Book Art Museum – in Grohman's villa, restaurants 'At Szwarzear' and 'At Industrialist', IKONA Gallery). There was also proposed to support new *small business* initiatives in revitalized area, like gift shops or gastronomic utilities for tourists. Residential function was always treated as basic for historical workers' estate, which reflected its historical authenticity. But regarding this issue, proposals were split into two main streams. The first one concerning the substantial increase of living standard in modernized housing stocks in revitalization process, which would lead to much higher rents or purchase costs, and as result to gentrification of the area. As the positive effect of such direction future economic self-sufficiency of the complex was pointed out, as inhabitants of higher social status and incomes would be able to assure the proper maintenance of renovated historical buildings. As the objection was indicated limited access to the area for tourists and other users – the lost of public character of the complex which would probably be gated with restricted entering. Another problem could be a possible collision of interests of inhabitants and owners, and users of cultural and touristic attractions which would be localized here. To reconcile the different activities within one area, of different groups of users who have different needs and priorities, always constitutes a substantial problem. This is already the case in some places of big touristic attractiveness, which stimulate private investors to locate their enterprises (as hotels, pensions, clubs, pubs, restaurants, shops *etc.*) or other utilities visited by numerous clients, which produce multifold nuisance for residents.

The second proposal regarding housing concerned more *soft* approach, which would enable the group of inhabitants who would like to stay in the estate after the renovation of the complex to afford it. Such proposal was formulated in the *Revitalization Program for Historical Workers' Estates*, which was adopted by the resolution

of the City Council in 2007. There was planned that three historical workers' estates in Lodz, including Księży Młyn, would be subjected to renovation within the frames of public-private co-operation process, and local authorities support inhabitants, who like to stay in regenerated area, by financial help in incurring higher rent costs.

During following years the situation changed and some part of discussion on functions of Księży Młyn complex has become pointless. Already in 2006, the biggest industrial building of the complex, the weaving mill, and the plot at Tymienieckiego Street, was sold to the private investor – Australian firm Opal Developments, which has started the adaptation of this building for luxurious apartments, constructed also new buildings, and named the whole estate 'At Scheiblers'. Due to this situation, the proposals of adaptation of post-industrial building for cultural, hotel, or congress and exhibition functions, have become irrelevant. In 2011 already unused building of previous school at Księży Młyn was bought by the Academy of Fine Arts in Lodz, with plans to customize it for needs of International Design Center. This event was the start for further steps aiming at formulation of new functional program and regeneration rules for historic workers' estate – on the basis of the planned new cultural function, being the part of so-called *creative sector*.

4. Towards the spatial cohesion of the city

As in other European countries, in Poland local authorities are in charge of undertaking revitalization efforts, so the scope of proposed and implemented revitalization projects is strongly related to their competences. Therefore, often the applied method to fight the poverty and social exclusion is provision of social infrastructure (educational and health facilities) and social services (e.g. care facilities). And, first of all, there are planned and undertaken steps leading to upgrading the crisis area in terms of its physical condition – as modernization of housing stock or improvement of quality of public spaces [Breckner, Bricocoli 2010]. The main point regarding the regeneration process should be also the concern about the future prosperity and economic self-sufficiency of revitalized area, which could be achieved and strengthened by means of creation of complex urban spaces, introduction of public spaces and mix of functions which promote interactions, avoiding social, cultural and economic homogeneity [Hamedinger 2010]. The regeneration process should contribute to sustainable development: urban regeneration to be sustainable should lead to achieving sustainability in its spatial aspects, as well as social cohesion and economic vitality [Hemphill *et al.* 2004].

● The built environment revitalization

After the first attempts towards the physical regeneration of the area, undertaken by local authorities in the half of 1990s, which led to the renovation of one build-

ing, no more planned and institutionally organized actions took place. Next steps concerning the physical renovation of buildings are implemented only now, on the basis of the *Integrated Revitalization Program for Księży Młyn* (2012).

In regard of planned physical regeneration the most important fact is the communal ownership – some buildings are exclusively owned by the City, in others it has a bigger share (from 65 to 90%). Significant factor is also a considerable number of already empty (not inhabited) apartments, which can be used as *rotation flats* for inhabitants moved temporarily from buildings under renovation or for services. Two first historical workers' houses will be renovated already this year (at Księży Młyn Street No. 4 and No. 6), the following in the years 2013 and 2014. There is planned that the regeneration activities will also concern the renovation of paving, planting, there will be also introduced new trees as well as the elements of urban furniture, like benches, lamps, bicycle stands, litter bins and directional signage, harmonious to the area.

For investments tasks planned within the first stage of the *Integrated Revitalization Program for Księży Młyn*, the sum of PLN 10 million was designated within the *Financial Prognosis for Lodz for the years 2012-2014*. There is planned to obtain further financial means for investment program from the Voivodship Environment Protection and Water Management Fund in Lodz [*Uchwała...* 2012].

● Revitalization of public space

Księży Młyn is situated at the eastern fringe of the downtown of Lodz. This area, which is one of the most valuable regarding its historical, town planning and identity potentials, is not adequately interwoven in the urban system of public space. One of the causes of such situation is lack – up to now – the program of public functions which would increase the attractiveness of this area for different groups of users, which would generate the streams of movement. The other reason is lack of spatial linkages between this area and city center, being partly the result of loss of some previous links due to the introduction of spatial barriers (like the transportation artery of Piłsudskiego/Mickiewicza avenues) and partly underdevelopment of such linkages in terms of pedestrian or vehicular transport.

Another important presumption regarding the revitalization of public space should be that of equal possibility to use it by persons and institutions of different income level. It should not – after the revitalization process – be exclusively dedicated only for groups of users of higher status [*Uchwała...* 2004].

● Functional inclusion

The *Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development of Lodz*, adopted in 2010, indicates the area of historical workers' estate at Księży Młyn as envisaged mainly for residential function, with services, recreation and green areas, sport utilities, as well as entrepreneurial and service activities, accepted on the condition of not colliding with basic residential function [*Uchwała...* 2010].

In the *Integrated Revitalization Program for Księży Młyn* of 2012, there was proposed residential function in all historic workers' buildings situated at Fabryczna Street No.19a and in all buildings at Księży Młyn Street (excluding No.2, where the touristic information office is planned). Buildings at Przędzalniana Street and Fabryczna Street No. 19 and No. 21 would have mixed function: services in the ground level and flats in the first floor and attic. Auxiliary buildings would partly preserve their historic function serving inhabitants, and some of them would be adopted for cultural and artistic functions (in relation to the International Design Center: artists workshops, exhibition areas, shops and services of artistic or cultural provenience). Other proposed functions were: hotel services, students' dormitories, shops and services for inhabitants. Public parking was planned at the unbuilt plot at Fabryczna Street No. 17a.

- **Accessibility and permeability**

Historically, industrial areas in cities usually constituted isolated areas within the urban structure. The isolation was both in terms of territorial accessibility (the gated area with acceptance of entrance for authorized persons only), and transportation network supply with regard only for needs of industrial activities (inadequate vehicular transport, public transport and pedestrian access). Therefore, one of the main goals of regeneration of post-industrial complexes is their inclusion into the urban fabric, creating new transportation linkages of different types. Concerning achieving the goals of sustainable development through the regeneration process the planned means should first of all take under consideration the solutions of sustainable transport: support public transport and access for pedestrians and cyclists. There should be also adequate care paid to the needs of disabled persons.

5. Towards the social cohesion of the city

- **Social inclusion**

After close-up of industrial activity of textile plant *Uniontex*, many people working there and living at Księży Młyn were left unemployed. Therefore the social situation, which was not easy before, as people with higher social status had already migrated from here to find better place to settle down, became even worse after 1990. Bad maintenance of housing and surroundings have reflected poor economic status of inhabitants, and area even started to be perceived as unsafe: it has earned 'bad image' in general public opinion. This has created the situation, when almost nobody – besides local community – was encouraged to visit this area, or has the reason to come here because of the lack of functions addressed to the *outer* users.

So now, in the *Integrated Revitalization Program for Księży Młyn* (2012), there is proposed that certain promotion and economically and socially invigorating activi-

ties should be undertaken, along with actions aimed at improving touristic attractiveness [www.rewitalizacja.zabytki.lodz.pl, 10. 2012].

In 2008 and 2009 within the frames of the *Social Revitalization Program for Lodz*, the social research was conducted in the area of Księży Młyn, on the basis of which the diagnosis of social situation was formulated [*Spoleczna Strategia Rewitalizacji...* 2009]. The research was based on the inhabitants' survey. The poll results showed, that majority of inhabitants is in post-productive age (over 59/64 years), and more than a half of them are women (62.7%). Regarding the level of education, persons with grammar or college education level prevailed. The pensioners group counted 38.2% of the whole local community, unemployed persons 8.5%. The percentage of people taking part in vocational trainings during last 3 years was low (10.2%) and the level of social activity relating to the possibility of taking part in any kind of actions planned in regeneration process – even only declared – also very low. The most acute problem was indebtedness of inhabitants: of 442 flats more than the half (242) had unpaid rents for a long period of time. General indebt of all households in Księży Młyn reached in 2011 the sum of PLN 771 166 [*Uchwała...* 2012]. Therefore one of the proposals concerning social issues was to create the possibility for inhabitants to pay their debts by fulfilling certain jobs planned in the *Program*.

Besides, at the Księży Młyn Street No. 2 already operates *Social Integration Club*, which main activities comprise psychological therapeutic help, vocational advisory and trainings, odd jobs and probations offers. This institution plays also an important role as a consultation point regarding regeneration of the area, and local social integration point.

- **Social participation: involvement of local community and other actors**

Regeneration of residential areas is a complex issue, representing not only technical and conservatory challenges, but also a bundle of social challenges. All revitalization activities concern a vivid organism of local community, so there is no wonder, that the proposals regarding new functions, technical regeneration of housing and introduction of new elements of the built environment are becoming the matter of interest and sometimes strong emotions on the side of inhabitants, and require close co-operation between municipality and local community. Aware of this, in 2011 the President of Lodz appointed the *Revitalization Team of Księży Młyn*, which was a form of co-operation between municipality and other actors of revitalization of the area, including the representatives of local community. Inhabitants' opinions concerning proposed regeneration solutions were also obtained through polls, consultation meetings and written proposals *via* internet. Another innovative form of social participation were workshops for students of Technical University of Lodz Architecture and Town Planning and University of Lodz Spatial Economy, who worked-out functional and spatial concepts for Księży Młyn historical workers' estate. Awarded concepts were consulted with local community and

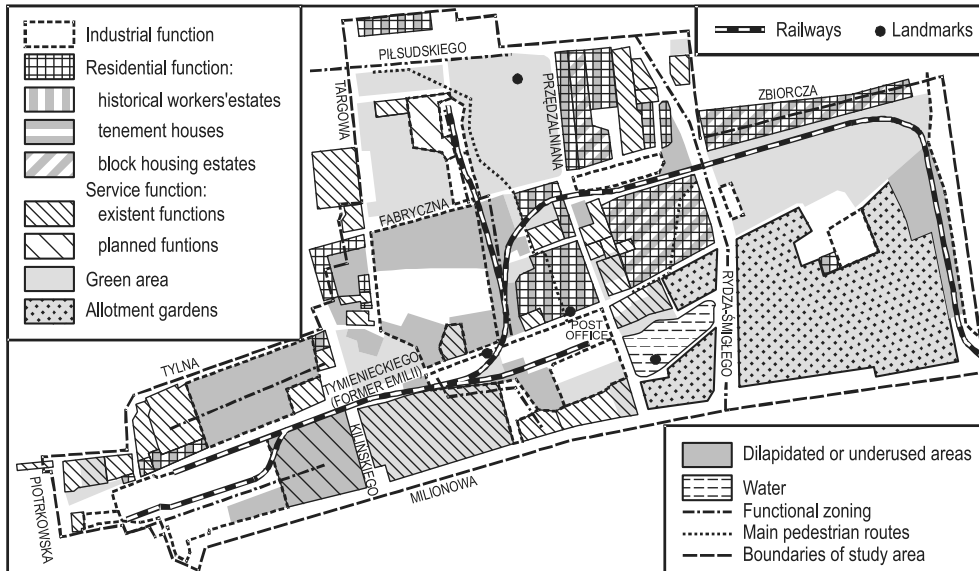


Figure 3. Spatial and functional concept of development of historical workers' housing estate at Księży Młyn

Source: [Drawing by Wosiak 2013, on the basis of the *Integrated Revitalization Program for Księży Młyn* 2012].

used to build the final functional and spatial concept in the *Integrated Revitalization Program for Księży Młyn* (Fig. 3).

The results of the examining of local community opinion showed that inhabitants support the priority goal which was adopted in the *Program: Improvement of quality of life of inhabitants through renovation of housing stocks, accordingly to the conservators' guidelines and introduction of new functions* (20 positive answers of 22). Also detailed goals of revitalization were approved by inhabitants – all respondents recognized as crucial the improvement of quality of public and semi-public space, including provision of elements of small architecture, green and recreational areas. Majority of inhabitants (20 positive answers of 22) supported also introduction of new cultural and artistic function, stressing the importance of improvement of image of the area in general opinion and increase of level of public safety. The one third of inhabitants has had negative opinion on introduction of hotel services and students' dormitories, which questions a future possibility to propose such functions within the estate.

Conclusions

One by one, consecutive historic post industrial buildings or even whole complexes after the regeneration create new, attractive image of Lodz as a city which

wants to transform the burden of the past into the asset of tomorrow. City is planning to put on the map of industrial heritage routes in Europe (ERIH) further elements of its historic post-industrial stocks, which after revitalization could create magnets for tourists. Revitalization of Księży Młyn post-industrial complex constitutes the next step for Lodz to achieve this goal, as well as to contribute to its spatial and social coherence with the whole city. This process will not be quick and easy to complete, but planned and already implemented technical and social projects and activities are streamlined to lead, while concluded, to the full regeneration of the area.

Some interesting proposals, which were elaborated during the students' workshops, and had not been taken into account in the final functional and spatial proposal of the *Integrated Revitalization Program for Księży Młyn*, probably would add-up to further strengthening of spatial and social cohesion of revitalized area with the city. These proposals aimed at the increase of attractiveness of the area for inhabitants and for visitors, by broadening of its cultural offer: there was proposed that the area devoted to the open-air artistic and cultural events should be organized to the north of the previous school building, enabling organization of exhibitions, concerts, or performances in the open-air theatre. It would be a magnet for visitors, not being at the same time arduous for inhabitants, as this area is separated from residential buildings by school and auxiliary buildings. Another idea was the pedestrian and cyclist route (using the stripe of land of historic not existing industrial railway line) which would increase the accessibility of the area. Both ideas probably should be taken under consideration in the future, as they would also improve the public safety, through introduction of development and function to currently unused areas, and increase the creative 'emanation' of new cultural and artistic functions of International Design Center.

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