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## **MANAGING ‘ORDINARY HERITAGE’ IN POLAND: ŁÓDŹ AND ITS POST-INDUSTRIAL LEGACY**

**Abstract:** It could be argued that cultural heritage in Poland, like in other post-socialist countries, is losing its importance due to modernisation, and that its preservation is in conflict with new investment. The situation is caused by several factors. Firstly, free use of private property is often more valued than the care for historical landscapes, which could be attributed to the consequences of the economic crisis. Secondly, there are legal shortcomings in spatial planning and heritage conservation systems. Thirdly, cooperation among politicians, urban planners and heritage protection officers is not efficient.

Since the transition period of the 1990s, historic relics have been exposed to multiple threats. The following case study of Łódź illustrates the general need for a change of approach towards cultural legacy management, especially in reference to more common heritage elements which are not under hard protection.

**Key words:** cultural heritage, post-industrial legacy, Łódź

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In 2004 the ‘European Landscape Convention’ (2000), which aimed at the multi-faceted management of cultural landscape, was ratified in Poland. This event was a part of a much wider process of the growing awareness of the influence that land development quality and cultural legacy have on our lives. It has been noticed and discussed by Polish academics and practitioners – anthropologists, architects, ethnographers, conservators, geographers, planners and sociologists who deal with culture and land management (Murzyn-Kupisz and Purchla, 2007; Ossowicz and Zipser, 2008, etc.). The idea that cultural heritage could be included in the process of improving the quality of life and transformed into a stimulus for socio-economic

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development is becoming very popular (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2013). On the one hand it is strongly determined by external factors which are common for other countries, i.e. economic factors (Salah El-Dien Ouf, 2008; Schlanger and Aitchison, 2010), switching over to sustainability (Loulanski and Loulanski, 2011; Rudnicka, 2010) or European and global integration processes (van Gorp and Renes, 2007; Chiu *et al.*, 2011). On the other hand, however, it depends strongly on national cultural specificity. Outstanding sites are universally appreciated, which is disadvantageous for the less prominent legacy. Another problem is that for many ordinary citizens the quality of tangible heritage surrounding them is under-prioritised. Monuments are perceived as icons that are disconnected from the surrounding space.

The objective of this article is to present and discuss the evolution of approaches towards cultural heritage in Poland since the middle of the 20th century, as well as to assess how the changes in the spatial planning system and the system of heritage protection respond to this evolution, especially in reference to more common and therefore less appreciated elements of legacy – the ‘ordinary heritage’.

The term ‘heritage of the ordinary’ or ‘ordinary heritage’ was used by Dallen (2014) to address objects and places created by ‘ordinary people of the society’ – schools, barns, fences, jails, industrial sites, etc. The term corresponds with French ‘everyday’s heritage’ – ‘le patrimoine du quotidien’ (Geppert and Lorenzi, 2013), which means heritage available every day and generally considered not valuable enough to deserve protection, being ‘the background for our lives’ (Kupidura, 2013). After many decades of undervaluing ordinary heritage in Poland, the process of rediscovering its values has recently begun. However, it develops gradually rather than in a revolutionary way.

The underestimation of ordinary, non-exclusive and unlucrative elements of heritage is attributed to three main factors. First of all, there is the discriminatory policy, for which people in positions of power are responsible. The attitude toward heritage depends therefore on the number of people for whom it is relevant, the current political situation and dominant ideology, such as being uncomfortable with some elements of history. Secondly, such heritage, despite being present more or less everywhere, is particularly common in less developed countries, in which financial possibilities for cultural legacy preservation are limited. Huge heritage resources and insufficient public funds eventually lead to a clearly selective conservation policy. The third factor causing disregard for some elements of cultural heritage is their age. It is suggested that ordinary heritage should make room for more modern and ‘graceful’ objects that would stimulate further development (Dallen, 2014).

Poland, in which all the mentioned factors have been at play, is a perfect arena for analysing how ordinary heritage is managed in time of growing social awareness, but also in time of permanent economic uncertainty. The general considerations in this field are exemplified by a case study of Łódź. For this city, post-industrial legacy has become a distinguishing mark at the supranational level, however,

at the same time it remains one of the biggest and still unsolved problems for municipal authorities, conservators and urban planners.

The paper presents the results of field inventories, as well as a review of legal acts, scientific literature and press reports related to past and contemporary heritage management. Issues tackled in the article were also discussed with the incumbent heritage conservator for Łódź region. The interview with the conservator was held in January 2015.

## **2. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ITS UNSTABLE PLACE IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

In Poland, cultural legacy has been shaped by a variety of social, political and economic processes that occurred throughout the country's turbulent history. The most significant changes in this area have been observed since the beginning of the last century. Firstly, severe war damages considerably reduced heritage resources. Then, a period of centrally planned economy modified the general attitude toward cultural legacy. At that time many historic objects were extensively used and often severely underinvested. This period was followed by socio-economic transition which began in 1989 and ended, at least symbolically, in 2004 along with Poland's accession to the European Union. Since the 1990s, when a period of economic uncertainty began, heritage is permanently threatened because of the pursuit of economic development.

### **2.1. The Evolving Perception of Cultural Heritage**

After the Second World War, dealing with cultural heritage was generally reduced to its preservation. It focused mainly on tangible legacy – historic monuments – and depended basically on legal and financial instruments (Helpa-Liszkowska, 2013). During that period, the majority of valuable objects remained national property, which – in practice – often meant nobody's property. The state was supposed to finance and maintain it. Centrally planned policy was implemented by conservators, who played an active role in heritage preservation (Böhm *et al.*, 2008; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2009).

Since Poland entered free market economy, the approach to cultural heritage has evolved considerably. Now it no longer aims at preserving selected historic monuments, as legacy is perceived as 'the way previous generations lived, [...] a history of places and people that lived in those places' (Helpa-Liszkowska, 2013, p. 8), 'not only tangible objects, but also our memory and identity' (Purchla, 2007, p. 44).

Today the meaning of heritage is no longer reduced to material objects that document the past and should serve us and the future generations in an unchanged condition. Contemporary heritage management is supposed to add new values. Like in other European countries, the gravity point is currently moving from preserving to adapting historic facilities, which means that it is emphasised that they are parts of contemporary landscapes (Szmygin, 2007; Böhm *et al.*, 2008).

Nowadays, apart from focusing on tangible and intangible heritage, the culture of land management is also perceived as a crucial element of Polish legacy. This approach is developing rather slowly, as there is still little awareness of the fact that culture and heritage are the key determinants of sustainable development, local identity and local democracy (Ratajski, 2011). It is also emphasized that without sufficient support of planning culture, assigning wide competences to heritage conservation may result in the reduction of institutional activity to safeguarding selected objects, criticising modern architectural solutions and eventually to economic stagnation. This lack of trust in new visions of adaptation seems to be the reaction against the unfavourable attitude toward traditional urban structures of the socialist reality (Billert, 2006).

## 2.2. Stakeholders and Legal Frames

Although the general approach towards cultural heritage has evidently changed since the end of the socialist period, it does not mean that heritage management keeps up with this change. One of the reasons for this situation is that adjusting the system of heritage protection to the new socio-economic reality has not been planned well and is not compatible with economic transformation and systemic reforms. As a result, there is an inclination to overestimate economy to the disadvantage of spatial, cultural and environmental issues (Korzeń, 2006).

In contemporary Poland cultural heritage issues are tackled by the General Monument Conservator who acts on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The lower level of management includes regional conservators who are supervised by the governors. Conservators and their offices implement protection programmes for monuments, document the state of heritage, prepare audits, supervise conservation and construction works on monuments, provide opinions regarding municipal planning documents, and popularise knowledge about cultural heritage.

Since the turn of the 20th century cultural landscape in Poland has been strongly affected by the reform of territorial government. The reform re-assigned substantial competences and wide autonomy in decision-making to local authorities. Apart from obligations in the field of land management that the legislator imposed on them, each governor may additionally entrust local authorities with some of his tasks regarding heritage. This happens on the basis of bilateral agreements.

As a result, the position of municipal conservator is designed to support regional conservators in their activities.

Public administration, planners and property owners are obliged to take into consideration the provisions of two basic laws – the ‘Act on Protection and Custody of Monuments’ (2003) and the ‘Act on Spatial Planning and Development’ (2003). According to the first document, exceptionally important objects or areas might be granted the title of monument of history, which determines its possible application for the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. However, such objects have to be included in the register of monuments first. The register is kept by regional conservator to ensure hard protection and it is applied mainly to tangible legacy. The register is supplemented by regional and municipal lists of monuments that are supervised by the conservator. They contain vital information about a wider range of historic objects. Such records do not impose hard protection, but they may enable some monuments to be added to the register in the future.

Apart from the register and listing of monuments, cultural parks are important elements in the cultural legacy preservation system. This tool is attributed to local authorities, but so far it has been used rather reluctantly. According to the data published by the National Heritage Board of Poland in November 2014, there were 26 such objects in the country. Cultural parks vary as far as their area is concerned, ranging from several to a few thousand hectares. To establish such a form, protection plan as well as local land development plan have to be passed. Those tasks require assigning additional budgetary funds, which seems to be a crucial dispiriting factor for the authorities.

The condition of heritage relies heavily on planners – their knowledge, skills and attitude – as well as on the possibilities and limitations that the Polish spatial planning system gives them. They should provide sufficient protection for the facilities included in the register of monuments and the municipal record of monuments. They do so upon elaborating statutory planning documents, deciding the location of public investments, and issuing building permits. In the statutory planning documents, which are key instruments in the whole planning system, zones of exceptional heritage protection are delimited, along with detailed obligations and prohibitions.

The three-tier spatial planning system in Poland consists of three levels – national, regional, and local. They ought to complement one another, forming together a complex land management system. The first two tiers aim to specify the guidelines for spatial development patterns as well as to secure implementation of national and regional sectoral policies. Crucial planning documents are passed locally and therefore are the most detailed. Those are: ‘the study of determinants and directions of land development’ and ‘the local land development plan’. The first one is obligatory, covers the whole municipality, but it is not an act of law. Its provisions are binding for ‘the local land development plan’. The latter document is voluntary, may cover only a small piece of municipal territory, and is considered an act of local law.

Although local planning is vital for assuring proper management of cultural heritage, land development plans in Poland are not sufficient at the moment. In 2013, only 8,950,984 hectares (28.6% of the total country area) were accounted for in the plans, while 2,411,772 hectares were still under consideration (Local Data Bank). However, it is not only the question of numbers. It is the structure of coverage that matters more. Some municipalities, usually rural ones in the eastern part of the country, are completely covered by land development plans, whereas others, often those with more intensive land use, have only fragmentary coverage. Lack of valid plans is crucial, because in case of their absence, building permits are issued on the basis of discretionary ad hoc and therefore defective procedures.

Another issue concerning the condition of Polish cultural landscape is planners' awareness of the far-reaching consequences their decisions have on the cultural landscape, their knowledge of the custody rules as well as the specificity of local heritage dealt with in local development plan. Reducing detailed analyses to vague planning inventories in order to cut the cost and time necessary for elaborating a planning document is seen as a serious shortcoming. In order to prevent individual interpretations, judgements or discretionary decisions, provisions in planning documents ought to be formulated more explicitly. On the other hand, planners criticise conservators for not articulating clearly their requests at the initial stage of elaborating planning documents (Welc-Jędrzejewska, 2008). To make the situation even more complicated, conservation officers complain, too. In their opinion the time provided by the legislator for giving opinions about provisions in planning documents is too short to make them sufficiently thorough.

### **2.3. Pressure in the Transition Period and at the Present Time**

At the beginning of the 1990s, a transition period between socialist and free market economy began in Poland. It was a time of decentralisation of public administration and restoring local governments. Revolutionary changes affected the recognition of private property as well. Private owners regained considerable freedom in their decision making. Furthermore, numerous claims for previously illegally appropriated possessions were enforced. This was accompanied by a reform of the spatial planning system. The 'Act on Spatial Planning...' (2003) imposed the expiration of municipal general land development plans and at the same time it did not oblige authorities to prepare new ones. The fact that only previous land development plans had the power to protect facilities included in the municipal record of monuments became a serious problem. After their expiration a curious race began, in which conservators tried to add endangered facilities to the register of monuments before the investors managed to demolish them. Losses due to the

expiration of general land development plans as well as the protracting administration procedures occurred more or less everywhere in the country.

As the cultural legacy protection system was becoming increasingly inefficient, regional conservation officers were assigned in 2003 the task of verifying the state of heritage facilities included in the register of monuments. This was supposed to reveal the amount and the structure of monuments according to their technical state and ownership form. The results of the project were rather disappointing. First of all, it turned out that reports from different regions were to a large extent incomparable, incomplete and there were some mistakes in calculations. Secondly, it was revealed that the state of Polish heritage was even worse than it had been expected, especially in the case of post-industrial monuments, wooden facilities, housing estates and properties that had previously been used by the State Agricultural Farms. Almost all curators indicated that the expiration of general land development plans considerably contributed to the decay of monuments. What is more, the reform unintentionally enabled introduction of estates that were not integrated with the historic development as well as undesired modernisation or demolition of valuable objects. Some of those problems were attributed to the unfavourable economic situation, lack of proper supervision over cultural heritage as well as insufficient enforcement of law. On the other hand, conservators observed a growing awareness of property owners, who were more willing and capable of proper application of institutional guidelines, and local authorities, who began to notice the potential of cultural heritage for future development of their municipalities (Report..., 2004).

The massive demolition of ordinary heritage was eventually blocked by the amendment to the 'The Act on Protection...' (2003) which was passed in 2010. According to the amendment, in order to reduce the negative effects of the insufficient land development plan coverage, conservation bodies gained the power to provide opinions on decisions on the location of public investments, permits for road investments, as well as decisions on terms of construction and land management (Mikciuk, 2010). Legislative improvements were overlapped by the side effects of the global economic crisis. As a result, destruction of less prominent post-industrial heritage reached its climax around 2008 and 2009 and from that time on the situation has calmed down.

### **3. POST-INDUSTRIAL LEGACY OF ŁÓDŹ**

To illustrate the threats to the heritage of the ordinary, Łódź was chosen as an example. It is the third biggest city in Poland, located in its centre. Although it formally became a town already in 1423, it long remained just a minor settlement



of farmers, tradesmen and craftsmen. In the middle of the 15th century it was inhabited only by 100 people. This number changed gradually during the next 50 years to 1,000. Due to the massive textile industrialisation, urban population increased over 623 times between 1820 and 1914, which was extraordinary even in comparison to British cities. At the same time territorial expansion of the city was strictly limited. This resulted in astonishing intensification of urban land use within the contemporary town centre (Koboжек and Pieleśiak, 2013). Residential facilities – tenement houses, villas and palaces – were located right next to old factories (fig. 1), which now occupy about 20% of the downtown area (Szygendowski, 2006).

Both world wars caused serious population losses and material devastation in Łódź. The latter was not, however, as severe as in other Polish cities. During the period of a centrally planned economy, despite the significant wear and tear of industrial fixed assets, textile production in the city was resumed on a massive scale, which happened without sufficient modernisation of 19th century buildings and infrastructure. The fall of the socialist economy brought new problems for the industrial heritage in Łódź, on a completely unexpected scale.

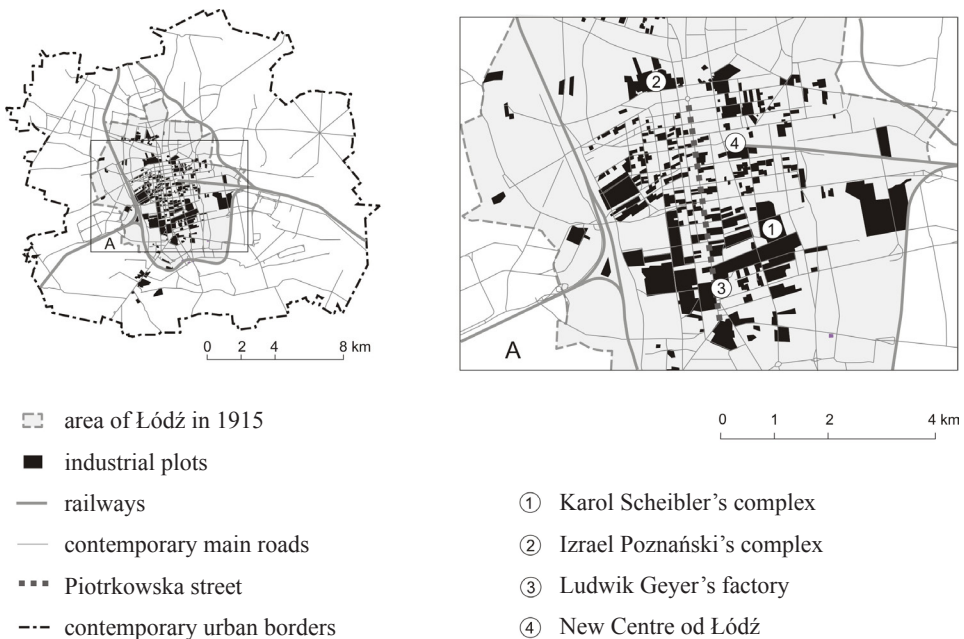


Fig. 1. Industrial areas in Łódź at the beginning of the 20th century and chosen contemporary developments

Source: elaboration based on 'Atlas Miasta Łodzi. Supplement' 2, 2012, chart no. LXIII



### **3.1. Socio-Economic Transition and Its Impact**

The transition from the centrally planned economy to market economy brought serious economic and social problems to the city. Having no economic reasons for further existence, large socialist enterprises closed down. Factories were deserted and the city faced enormous structural unemployment. The government focused on more strategic economic sectors, mostly on the collapsing mining in Silesia, so not much was done for Łódź. In this situation local authorities tried to fight the recession on their own. Attracting foreign investors seemed the best solution in that problematic situation, but this idea also triggered a discussion whether the authorities should let the enterprises implement their own ways of managing post-industrial heritage without too many formal requirements. This would make it easier to keep them operating in Łódź. The authorities could negotiate harder and require more, but they were at risk of losses for both the economic sector and the urban community.

Faced with economic crisis, growing unemployment and massive abandonment of industrial plots, local authorities implemented a policy of restraining spatial expansion of the city. It was aimed at re-use of inner-city brownfields instead of outside greenfield investments. This is why, for instance, a special economic zone was located in the centre of Łódź, embracing a part of 'Księży Młyn' – one of the city's most precious post-industrial complexes.

As it was a time of spatial planning reform, general land development plans expired. New plans were elaborated, which was very time consuming and costly. This resulted in their unsatisfactory territorial coverage. According to the Central Statistical Office, in 2009, which was 6 years after the reform of spatial planning was introduced, only 4.6% of Łódź was covered by valid land development plans. By 2013 this number had reached 6.2% (1824 hectares), but the demand indicated in the municipal study of conditions and directions of land development is 16 times greater.

At the beginning of the transition period, every now and then social organisations and media informed about demolition of yet another relic of the past, which sometimes happened despite its formal protection. This referred particularly to post-industrial facilities as they were located on spacious plots in the central part of the city, offering a high land rent. Factory buildings, manufacturers' villas and even a tram depot were demolished without previous consultation with the regional curator's office. Additionally, in some of those cases investors managed to obtain decisions from the municipal office, which allowed them to demolish buildings despite the fact that they were listed in the municipal monuments register.

The consequences could be seen immediately – 37 factories were demolished in Łódź between 2004 and 2009. More than a third of them had previously been protected by the monuments register (Szygendowski, 2006). This destruction was eventually blocked in 2010 by the implementation of the amendment to the 'Act on the Protection...' (2003).

### **3.2. Heritage Adaptation – Success or Failure?**

Various post-industrial buildings have been put to new uses in Łódź, among which there have been some noteworthy initiatives, for which higher education institutions were responsible. Both the University of Łódź and the Technical University of Łódź have adapted numerous old villas and factory buildings for scientific, teaching and administrative purposes. The main credit for that process goes to the latter institution, as its campus has been located in a district with many buildings that had previously been deserted by industry.

In spite of such changes in the historic landscape, many precious facilities still remain unused, which effectively contributes to their destruction. Such buildings are usually unprotected, so their fixtures and architectural details are systematically stolen. Sometimes such acts are believed to cause fires, which damages factories (Szygendowski and Walczak, 2009). From time to time property owners are brought before the court of justice, none of them, however, have been found guilty. The blame for causing fires is attributed to accidents or unidentified scrap metal collectors. It is difficult to convict anyone, also due to insufficient or too general conservator's documentation, as well as due to the quality of executive regulations, in which the meaning of 'securing' the monument (the owner's responsibility) has not been precisely defined (Chlebowski, 2003).

Among the most controversial examples of post-industrial areas reuse is 'Księży Młyn', which is a remnant of Karol Scheibler's textile empire. The contemporary functional structure, architectural form and technical infrastructure in this area are highly diverse and inconsistent. Over time, some of the buildings fell into disrepair, which was most visible in the case of abandoned buildings and underinvested residential facilities. At the same time entrepreneurs located new constructions among the historic development within the special economic zone. As a result, some of the new facilities are poorly integrated with the surrounding landscape as far as their architectural form is concerned (fig. 2). There also is strong contrast between the technical condition of buildings, e.g. between the housing unit for Schreiber's workers and the neighbouring spinning mill, in which luxurious loft apartments have been arranged.

Another problem was leaving this area to entrepreneurs. As a consequence, not enough public space was secured, which was the result of investors' lobbying. At the time of economic uncertainty, local authorities repeatedly changed the provisions in local spatial development plans according to the investors' requirements (Drzazga, 2006). Moreover, in Księży Młyn there were also cases of demolishing buildings despite their hard protection.



Fig. 2. Good and bad practices of fitting new investment into post-industrial areas in Łódź Special Economic Zone – Textorial Park (A) and Dakri Ltd. (B).

Source: I. Pielesiak 2013

The threats to Scheibler's legacy and the future existence of the whole complex have been the subject of discussion among planners, local community, municipal authorities and scientists for many years. There appeared, for instance, a controversial concept which assumed maintaining residential functions in former workers' houses which would practically mean transforming the eastern part of Księży Młyn into a gated community. Eventually, a general renewal of this area and transforming it partly into culture and art zone were agreed upon. Local authorities have initiated gradual modernisation of the residential facilities, which considerably improves the living standards and the aesthetics of this area.

In the opinion of NGOs members, who were actively involved in the discussion about the future of Księży Młyn, this complex should be included in the World Heritage List. First, however, the problem of shortcomings in the field of spatial planning has to be solved. At the moment only the area administered by the special economic zone is covered by a valid plan. For other areas such a document is still under preparation. Furthermore, there is a question whether the interference in the land development carried out up to now (e.g. loft apartments in the spinning mill or the general disintegration of the complex) will meet the UNESCO's requirements of integrity and authenticity.

One way or another, the renewal of Księży Młyn will take quite a different form from the flagship project of converting Israel Poznański's monumental textile factory into a shopping and entertainment centre, 'Manufaktura'. This huge complex covering about 27 hectares in the city centre contains a four-star hotel, a huge cinema, a theatre, an art gallery, numerous restaurants and shops, a spacious market square, and a vast parking area. This project has many supporters, who point out that if it had not been conducted, the abandoned factory buildings would have fallen into ruin. In their opinion 'Manufaktura' is now one of the most easily recognised landmarks of the city. It has also become an important element of urban public space. Its market place is exceptional, because despite the commercial character, it is accessible for everyone even at night – the area has not been fenced off. The whole project has undoubtedly contributed to the economic revival of this part of downtown area and the image of the city has – in public opinion – been improved. The visible evidence for this phenomenon is an increased number of people visiting the neighbouring Old Town Park, which several years ago was a place of ill repute.

On the other hand, as regards public opinion on the regeneration of Poznański's complex, the demolition of a number of historic buildings is strongly criticised. The controversial design and size of the new facilities, as well as their inadequate fitting in the post-industrial landscape are seen as a shortcoming, too (Szygendowski, 2006). In addition, the authorities were accused of too much submissiveness to the investor's demands. That resulted from the fact that the private investor began the renewal process, whereas usually it is local authorities who initiate such activities and plan them thoroughly in advance. 'Manufaktura' has become an iso-

lated island of commerce, clearly separated from its surroundings struggling with social and economic problems. Surprisingly, not even the neighbouring factory workers' houses were included in the renewal process (Drzazga, 2006). Eventually, this problem has been addressed and the workers' houses will undergo general modernisation.

Another objection to 'Manufaktura' concerns the structure of economic activities in the complex and its relation to the nearby Piotrkowska Street. The street used to be the most distinctive place in the city, famous for its exclusive boutiques, pubs and restaurants. It is believed that 'Manufaktura' systematically drains Piotrkowska Street, although it should be considered a crucial part of the post-industrial legacy of the city. Designed for the weavers of linen and cotton, Piotrkowska Street became the main structural connector between the oldest and the most dynamically developing industrial parts of the city. For a long time it performed the role of an enormous market square because planners of the rapidly growing city found no other location suitable for a large central place. The Old Town market square, which is located north of the street, was rebuilt in the period of the centrally planned economy and soon became deserted. In Łódź there are no wide boulevards along a river, because there is no big river. There are no medieval military objects or Renaissance palaces, either. Due to the lack of such characteristic sites, Piotrkowska Street remained a lively public space for many years.

In the transition period, more and more prestigious economic activities moved away from Piotrkowska Street and were replaced by shops for less wealthy customers. This happened even despite the strong support of urban planners, architects, artists and entrepreneurs, who cooperate to sustain the extraordinary character of this place. It is true that many restaurant and shop owners actually chose 'Manufaktura' instead of Piotrkowska Street, however, degradation of the street may also be attributed to other factors. One of them was the economic crisis of the 1990s and its general impact on the purchasing power of the society. Another reason was locating in 2002 a large shopping mall only 330 meters east of Piotrkowska Street.

The success of 'Manufaktura' encouraged other investors, who decided on commercial adaptation of post-industrial complexes. It seems that in this situation the textile legacy is likely to be preserved only fragmentarily. A few valuable historic complexes have already been demolished, even despite the joint efforts of the Conservator's Office and the local community. Investors' declarations that new buildings will contain partly preserved and partly reconstructed architectural elements from the destroyed factories is a dubious consolation.

There is common belief that the city embraces plenty of abandoned derelict factories, so demolishing a few buildings will not make any difference. In fact, given the number of post-industrial complexes included in the register and the records of historic monuments (in 2009 this was 24 and 91, respectively), Łódź is comparable to areas of weak industrial traditions. This, however, does not reflect



the true situation, but results from a very selective heritage restoration policy of the previous political and economic period (Szygendowski, 2006). The lack of detailed data about all valuable facilities (Moterski, 2011) directly leads to their systematic deterioration and irreversible loss.

The process of adapting post-industrial legacy of Łódź is fairly criticised for its incidental character and isolation from the surrounding areas. Planners point out that wider projects of urban renewal, combined with a comprehensive program aimed at improving natural conditions, would be a much better idea. This refers particularly to the area along two small downtown rivers – the Łódka River and the Jasień River, which determined the location of the 19th century factories. Among the arguments for general restoration of the natural environment and cultural heritage in the case of both the valleys are (Sierecka-Nowakowska, 2011):

- blurred spatial structure of the city – strengthening the structural stitches of both rivers would emphasize the orthogonal spatial pattern of land development in Łódź;
- the need to restore urban ecological corridors to improve the conditions for urban ventilation;
- the need to initiate a general process of transforming urban space.

These are very true arguments, however, the crucial question is whether the city will manage to pay for all those alterations. Łódź is still suffering from economic recession of the 1990s. The weak symptoms of urban recovery were stifled by the side effects of the recent global crisis. The city is shrinking – it is affected by depopulation processes (Lamprecht, 2014), growing impoverishment of the citizens and ageing. Its economy barely endures the competitiveness of other big Polish cities. In this situation the municipal budget was mainly used to solve the most urgent socio-economic problems. The need for far-sighted management of the cultural legacy has been therefore temporarily pushed aside for many years.

In this difficult situation, a new approach to the role of urban heritage and its relation to contemporary social and economic needs has emerged recently. It seems that the problem of insufficiently developed system of public spaces in Łódź as well as the lack of well-coordinated large scale legacy management might to some extent be solved by implementing the project of the New Centre of Łódź. This idea combines a huge reconstruction of the Łódź Fabryczna railway station – located at the heart of the city, 600 meters east of Piotrkowska Street – with spectacular transformation of its surroundings, including the first thermal power plant in the city.

In the transition period that part of the city considerably deteriorated, much of it was practically lifeless despite the favourable location. Now this unique post-industrial complex is being converted into a huge culture and business centre. The project is designed to bring the public space back to life and to renovate the neglected 19th century housing estates surrounding it. However, it required some

sacrifice of local heritage (Cysek, 2014), such as the demolition of a 19th century railway station which was included in the municipal record of monuments – to make place for a more functional, modern construction.

In October 2014, a long awaited 'Municipal Programme for Monuments Custody in Łódź' was passed. It is the first such document since the administrative reform of the 1990s, in which a change of attitude towards cultural heritage is clearly pronounced. It emphasises the necessity to abandon the old way of passive heritage preservation in favour of treating it as a vital stimulus for further development. The main objective indicated in the document is 'the renewal of the Big-City Zone, which at the moment is undergoing destructive spatial, social and economic processes' (p. 5). It is supposed to be achieved through preserving valuable facilities, social education and promotion, as well as active management of the municipal cultural heritage. As this is a recent document, the scope and scale of effects that might occur on its basis cannot be observed yet.

At the beginning of 2015 another success was noted. After 5 years of local authorities' endeavours, a number of places were granted the title of monument of history. They include former Geyer's factory with an open-air museum of wooden architecture and Reymont's park, Poznański's palace and spinning mill with a monumental fence, Scheibler's complex of residential and factory buildings and Źródłiska park, urban arrangement of Piotrkowska Street, and three old cemeteries. They are supposed to exemplify the multicultural industrial roots of the city. Undoubtedly it is a great step towards successful application for inclusion of industrial Łódź in the list of World Heritage Sites and a chance for changing the attitude towards less prominent industrial heritage of the city.

#### **4. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Problems of ordinary heritage in Łódź are both specific and typical. The city was severely affected by the economic crisis at the end of the 20th century. The towns in its hinterland grew rapidly during the 19th century industrialisation and afterwards were strongly hit by the economic recession, too. They experienced the same difficulties with abandoned and decaying industrial heritage, but on a proportionally smaller scale. Threats to cultural legacy, especially that of non-exceptional character, were to a large extent caused by the imperfect spatial planning system, transformation of the economic conditions and other nationwide factors that occur more or less everywhere in the country (Murzyn-Kupisz, 2007; Gubański, 2008, etc.). The only differences may concern the type of the heritage and local socio-economic specificity.



The contemporary condition of industrial heritage in Łódź evidently reflects the differences in values perception. The most prominent objects are adapted. Less lucrative factories are temporarily transformed, abandoned or become urban fallows (Szygendowski and Walczak, 2009). Public entities, such as museums and universities, perceive post-industrial objects as a crucial element of local identity and cultural continuity, an anchor for a collective memory. They adapt old factories and make them accessible for public. Some of such adaptations are underinvested, depending on the current budget of the public owner, but the basis for further existence of such heritage is generally secured. In the case of entrepreneurs, economic values prevail. Providing that an investor acknowledges historic values of a certain site, a combined adaptation is implemented. Part of the heritage is properly renovated, while the rest is transformed to maximize economic profit. In many cases private investors just make a pretence of appreciation for the values of the past, preserving only tiny elements of the former built environment. The most extreme transformation of this kind involves a complete demolition of valuable objects in order to gain spacious urban plots for new investment or land speculation. There are also owners who use cultural legacy temporarily. In such a case neither its economic potential nor cultural values are effectively utilized. And finally, if there is no demand for a property or enough funds for renovation, urban fallows remain. Such management contributes to losses in the material substance of historic buildings, considerably increasing the cost of their future regeneration.

The prevalence of fragmentary concepts for adaptation and renewal of the 19th century development in Łódź suggests that the city has not fully entered the phase of efficient heritage management. For a long time there have been deficiencies in effective cooperation between various stakeholders, although the conflict of their interests is illusory. Recently this problem seems to have been addressed by municipal authorities more seriously than it was up to now. Due to the fall of industry, apart from serious economic and social problems, authorities gained a unique opportunity to considerably reshape the spatial and economic structure of the city and therefore improve its image. Deeply thought over heritage management within the regained space, especially in the central part of the city, might become a major asset in its future development. There are, however, conditions to be fulfilled: urban legacy should be meticulously examined and evaluated by the conservator, the activity of different stakeholders must be coordinated and their objectives reconciled (local authorities, planners and institutions responsible for heritage conservation), proper care of public interest should be taken by local authorities, and last but not least, sufficient financing must be provided.

A solution for the ordinary heritage could be wider-scale provision of cultural parks, combined with widespread territorial marketing. So far no cultural park has been established in Łódź, although this form is flexible enough to reconcile different stakeholders' objectives. Cultural parks have the power to prevent degradation of heritage which does not mean museification and resignation from economic

growth. To make it a more sustainable development factor, Polish concept of cultural parks might adapt some assumptions from the American model. In the USA, the role of cultural park for the local community and the benefits it may bring to their sense of belonging, identity and social cohesion are strongly emphasized. Furthermore, the American approach is less bureaucratic and involves less institutional actors due to its usual bottom-up nature (González and Vázquez, 2014).

Finally, education on social responsibility for cultural legacy as well as the quality of space in general are urgently required. Depreciation of cultural heritage, especially that of the ordinary, seems to be the common problem for the post-socialist and post-Soviet countries. In general, the 19th and 20th-century built environment is seen there as unworthy monument protection (Novotny *et al.*, 2014) or even doomed to spatial reframing, isolation or elimination (Anheier and Isar, 2011; Balockaite, 2012). In the discussion on the future of cultural heritage, not only in Łódź but in the whole country, there are opinions that preserving old development slows down economic growth, makes cities look old fashioned and ought to be replaced with modern architecture. There is indeed a need for deciding which facilities should be unconditionally preserved, because keeping all forms of past development would petrify urban evolution (Zalasińska, 2008). Planners fear that in the long term the institutional reluctance to accept the change of cultural heritage status will lead to 'infertility' and irreversible degradation of older parts of cities, and, as a final result, to reducing the sources of capital which is necessary for further urban renewal (Billert, 2006). However, in pursuit of modernity and new development stimuli, cities cannot be mindlessly rejuvenated, because that would irreversibly destroy their spirit and bury their chances for individuality and integrity. Besides, this approach has already been applied, in the period of centrally planned economy. It has left the country with many adverse effects its citizens still have to cope with.

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