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## ARCHITECTURE OF COMMERCIAL GALLERIES AS AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE “MORE ATTRACTIVE REALITY”

Architecture of shopping malls is based on structure of shopping streets in old town. In some sense it is a creation with false expression. It is a building, with shopping streets inside. These objects have a closed form like big halls. The research topic is spatial structure of shopping malls. The goal is to examine the similarity between the spatial structure of shopping malls and the urban structures of European cities. The article presents the results of comparative analysis which show that in shopping malls design inspiration with these forms are used.

**Keywords:** shopping streets, shopping malls, downtown

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Architecture of shopping malls is based on structure of shopping streets in old town. In some sense it is a creation with false expression. It is a building, but with shopping streets inside. These objects have a closed form and facades without windows, like a big halls. Despite the attractive colors and materials, facades are not pedestrian-friendly, because walls without windows reduce sense of security. Storefronts are inside. Glamor, shiny materials, lighting creates the space in which the user feels exceptionally. This flash and richness attracts to the interior. It gives sense of being in a “better reality”. Shopping malls respond to many daily needs. By definition, they are a service and commercial complex. Their advantage is wide range of shops and services grouped in one place. They can be attractors and objects that improve the city’s image. However, they can also affect the city negatively. The adverse impact of shopping malls on local trade on downtown streets is

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known. This is a competition that is hard to win. As a result, downtown pedestrian area depopulate and die out. There are various reasons for the depopulation of downtown, but the negative impact of shopping malls cannot be ignored. There are some kind of shopping malls which can be attractors. For example Stary Browar in Poznań, is an object that increases the attractiveness of the city. In side, it has plenty functional surprises such as art galleries, which is attractive for tourist and inhabitants. In the same time it is open for the surrounding. The nearby park is a recreational space that combines seamlessly with the interior. That causes pedestrian traffic from various directions of the city center towards shopping gallery. Unfortunately, in most cases, shopping malls pose a threat to nearby street trade, appropriating customers. So the question arises, why is this happening? Are shopping malls the perfect cities in the city? Or maybe kitsch, insincerity of form, consumerism, a substitute for urban passages with better climatic conditions.

## **2. SITUATION IN THE CITY CENTER – DEACTIVATING FACTORS**

The problem of depopulation of downtown and deserted streets is a process observed in European cities for many years. Many of them have implemented recovery programs that have improved and stopped the outflow of users from downtown. Many mechanisms cause the deactivation process. In general, this is due to rising rents, for a relatively low level of comfort living in downtown. Lack of security, lack of recreational areas, polluted air, noise, dirt, poor housing conditions intensify the negative image of a downtown apartment. The original assumptions cease to meet the needs and functional requirements of the modern community. Such dissonance, generally referred to as bad conditions, causes a lack of a sense of identity with the district. Consequently, the districts are becoming empty and deteriorating. Such dormant areas require modernization and transformation into structures better suited to the current needs of the community [Bonenberg 2007: 11, 21]. This situation results in the migration of young families to peripheral districts. In their place appear commercial tenants, i.e. banks and offices, who are able to cover very high rental costs. This phenomenon causes downtown empty and deserted after 6 pm. There are no residents, park or small shops users. Another mechanism causing outflow of people is moving universities and campuses outside the city center. Young people it is an important group of users, willingly using public spaces. They are an social group, co-creating the atmosphere and downtown life. Another factor indirectly affecting the ravaging of downtown is the appearance of shopping malls. These objects in an optimistic version were to be attractors in urban space. As a symbol of the city could be another attraction not only for residents, but also for tourists. That in consequence could generate pedestrian traffic. However, more

often they attract and appropriate users from neighboring districts. The form itself, usually without display windows outside the building, creates not enough connections between the interior and the surroundings. The object turns its back to the street and to the district. Parking spaces in the object prevent the building from coupling with the urban tissue. As a rule, there is no spatial scenario of experience that pedestrians could feel while approaching the gallery. There is no gradation of tension by the increase of visual stimuli during the way to the object. Users are appropriated, dragged inside, without any communication with the external space. There is a lack of cooperation between the downtown organism and the machine, which is the shopping mall. The city's development – an expression of the identity and aspirations of all its inhabitants – cannot be based on the primacy of market profitability and ad hoc fashion. The value of a work of architecture is not determined by its scale, spatial scale, durability of building materials or the genius of their creators, but the quality of the harmony of the forms and the content attributed to them – the adequacy of the idea and means of expression [Rabiej 2008: 147].

### **3. SHOPPING MALLS IS IT A BETTER REALITY?**

A shopping gallery created in the city center, open to the surroundings (being a project that takes into account the penetration of the interior with the urban space), can be an attractor and an element activating urban streets. Shopping galleries with a form closing to the surroundings or those emerging in the peripheral districts, distract users originally walking around downtown. The distance between home and downtown is too long. Building a gallery on the periphery is an understandable process, resulting from the needs of the inhabitants of an increasingly growing city. In such a district, nearby large-scale shopping mall, there is a lack of social and public spaces. Pedestrian traffic doesn't exist. A huge parking lot is created in front of the building and the distances are designed for a car traffic. This is a very common situation in newly developing districts, arising in communes bordering the city. The core system of village is disturbed. It is not developed in accordance with sustainable development. In this case, there is also no coupling between the existing settlement and the shopping mall. The lack of access, by road with values and scale designed for pedestrians, does not discourage users. The world inside shopping mall is so attractive, that they just accepted it and “decided” always use a car.

The spatial structure of shopping malls is based on the model of downtown streets (...) in its individual threads we find paraphrases of cozy city streets, squares, green squares, gardens with fountains. However, it turns out that all roads lead to shops here, and the colorful arcades contain only the facades of boutique windows [Rabiej 2008: 149]. Because shopping malls are closed buildings, climat-

ic conditions, cleanliness and security are definitely better than outside. This is a feature that attracts users. In this regard, it is an improved space compared to traditional shopping streets. Creating shopping malls in downtown, without proposing a program for neighboring streets, deprives them of their original function – shopping streets. As a consequence, the prototype in the form of urban passages is gradually deactivated. Why does copy is more attractive? The advantages of shopping centers is certainly climate comfort. Roofing, protection against rain, snow, wind, sun. Air conditioning ensures warmth in winter and cool in summer. There is no annoying car and street traffic, and consequently no exhaust gas and less noise. The weaknesses of these objects include the unnoticeable presence of greenery. Daylight is limited, as well as access to the fresh air.

Good communication with the various city districts can be guaranteed in both cases. The proximity of a car park is crucial, which is always guaranteed in the case of shopping malls. The length of urban passages and passages in shopping malls is similar. However, they differ in commercial and service offer and its density. The combination of commercial offers in shopping malls is the result of market and user needs analyzes. While in urban passages, it is the result of the property owner's decision, and thus of chance. Adaptation to the needs of the elderly and disabled is an important element provided in commercial facilities, but not always in urban space. Thinking about street furniture is visible in both types of space. In galleries, these compositions are cleaner, often more attractive, but shaped mainly to rest between purchases. In the downtown they are “more selfless”, also shaped in terms of social needs. Sometimes these spaces are dirty and shaded. In return, you can stay in a space with a view of the greenery or interesting architecture. It is possible to experience the charms and disadvantages of weather conditions. The resident has the opportunity of taking animals with him, which is not possible with shopping malls. Small architecture in urban spaces is arranged to stimulate the building of neighborhood and social relations [Gehl 2013]. Festivals and artistic events are organized in both types of space. A sense of security is easier to achieve in a shopping mall because it is a closed facility with security supervision. Monitoring and lighting are used in both types of space. Another advantage of shopping malls is the high level of quality of interior finishing and cleanliness. Unified visual information system, no flashy advertising signs, attractive lighting have a positive impact on the perception of the surrounding space.

#### 4. SURVEY

Author conducted a study of 22 shopping malls in the Poznań agglomeration. The aim was, to support the assumption that the internal layout of shopping malls is similar to the street grid of a downtown in the center of European cities. A com-

parative analysis of the space of shopping galleries and types of structures of downtown of European cities, which have developed over the centuries, showed significant similarities. Shapes of medieval settlements, modeled on the assumptions of Benedictine monasteries, to this day determine the spatial order of many European cities [Rabiej 2008: 147]. The layout of the internal structure of shopping malls in terms of space is similar to the structure of the streets of the old city in European cities. During the research, in shopping malls interiors, there were four characteristic dominant types of spatial layouts found. Linear, oval, castrum and mixed type.

- a) Linear – is an elongated system, it is characterized by grouping of premises along one communication route from point A to point B.
- b) Oval – is the type in which commercial premises are grouped around the loop, on its outer and inner sides. This loop can be a circle, an oval, an eight, etc. It is a closed circuit.
- c) Castrum – checkerboard type is a system based on a grid of communication lines crossing at right angles, often forming squares.
- d) Mixed system is any combination consisting of a combination of the types above.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Studies have shown that the internal layout of shopping centers built in the Poznań agglomeration is modeled on the urban layouts of old European city buildings. The principles of forming public urban interiors and situating services, developed during the historical development of cities, are a permanent basis for creating space for contacts and social activities [Marx-Kozakiewicz 2008]. Positive patterns have been taken over and implemented into the gallery space. During walking or shopping there, you can get the impression that you are on a shopping street. By basing the design on solid foundations, inspiring by urban tissue created during centuries, you can get a spatial skeleton with great potential. Because downtown is a cluster of culturally most valuable public spaces, i.e. streets, squares, avenues, boulevards, parks, are a model for contemporary solutions [Chmielewski 2001]. The use of this well-known and well working spatial system, allows many fans to win over each other. Using universal patterns, which are the canvas of urban planning, shopping malls are immediately becoming a space accepted by most users. Of course, the charm and atmosphere of historical layers cannot be copied. In return, shopping facilities offer a wide range of amenities. It is certainly an attempt to create a more attractive reality.

Contemporary architecture mapping in the cultural landscape of our cities – Downtown bazaars “pretend”: galleries, salons, concert halls, gardens and even tem-

ples – but in essence define the ideal of the city based on the primacy of market profitability, immediate fashion and fun worship [Rabiej 2008]. And this is not enough to become a reality with universal and universal values. A desirable scenario during the design and regeneration of downtown should combine the advantages of downtown with the advantages of shopping malls. A characteristic thing common to all optional, recreational and social activities is that they occur only when the external conditions are good for stopping and moving, when there is a maximum of benefits and a minimum of adverse things physically, psychologically and socially, and when in every respect it's nice to be in the surrounding environment [Gehl 2013]. The coexistence of both types of space is natural. Adverse effects can be leveled out while respecting the coexistence rules. Galleries should open up to their surroundings, their interior should make connections with the outside, creating an extension of urban passages, maintaining the genius loci (Latin-spirit of the place). Shopping streets could be enriched with mechanisms used in shopping malls.

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**ARCHITEKTURA GALERII HANDLOWYCH JAKO PRÓBA TWORZENIA  
„ATRAKCYJNIEJSZEJ RZECZYWISTOŚCI”**

**Streszczenie**

Architektura galerii handlowych budowanych na wzór pasaży miejskich jest w pewnym sensie tworem o fałszywym wyrazie. Jest to budynek o formie zamkniętej niczym wielkie hale z ulicami handlowymi we wnętrzu. Tematem badań jest układ przestrzenny galerii handlowych, a celem – zbadanie podobieństwa między układem przestrzennym galerii handlowych a strukturami urbanistycznymi miast europejskich. W artykule przedstawiono wyniki analizy porównawczej, które wykazują, że w projektowaniu galerii wykorzystuje się inspirację tymi formami.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ulice handlowe, galerie handlowe, śródmieście

