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Public and private spaces – in transformation Case of Valletta



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There is no public space without private space. Its form, use and meaning define the framework for public spaces. However, public spaces have a task for being accessible for everybody for 24 hours. In order to support urban conditions which find their qualities in clearly readable syntheses of values of form and of use, material and immaterial factors of public / private spaces have to be considered multi-disciplinarily. This kind of consideration also has to give respect to ongoing social and economic processes which respond to the existing urban conditions in terms of a resource for socio-economic welfare and also as a product of socio-economic impacts. Resource and product together build the bases for processes of guiding urban transformation. Such processes cannot do without concepts for spatial transformation on one side and for branding ideas about spatial transformation on the other. Both ways of setting up concepts need to be synthesized for the benefit of qualifying space for people.

The double character of urban spaces: resource and product

Space has a double character as:

- a cultural resource, to be protected and continuously renewed in order to adopt its conditions for use to the needs of society and of the economy
- a socio-economic product, to be sold on the markets of property ownership forming and branding the location conditions for living and for the economy

“Resource”- structural conditions for social (re)-production

- Space is a living environment for the individual and the communal experience of everyday life - housing, working, spending time - and is of socio-economic importance, in addition to its material value.
- Relative to the abstract global worlds of systems (because of the capitalism of late-industrial influences and the counterbalances of the „social state“) space carries an essential importance for re-locating global functions into local conditions.
- Space offers opportunities for interconnecting communication, services and the exchange of goods. This refers to different dimensions and serves to support and establish local economies.
- As a living environment, space carries and fulfils tasks of guaranteeing welfare. The living unit (guaranteed as a minimum right of existence, besides education, health and the right of property ownership by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany) becomes, for more and more people, a starting point for activities which also serves to support them in earning their livelihood.
- Space expresses in a specific way, the demands of time and of society. These are, in principle, determined by an increasing individualisation causing needs for communication.

The appropriateness of spaces for transformation is significant, by virtue of the three meanings of space distinguished by Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1991), which bring together worlds of systems and people. These criteria help co-ordinating





changes through individual images (“representational spaces”) or through politics (“spaces of representation”) with the structural factors of everyday life (“spatial practices”).

“Product”- the result of the “production of space”

- Space is the outcome of competition about location within and among towns, cities and regions .
- Space is the expression of the social and economic demands for land use (Spatial practices).
- Space is the expression of social ideas about the spatial organisation of functions through concepts (Representations of spaces).
- Space is a counterbalance, an expression of the unfulfilled desires of users and their images, as yet unmet within the rational framework of the economy and which might become realised through occupying space, as far as is possible, within the framework of the prevailing economic conditions (Representational spaces).
- Space has been dominated by the separation of functions since the prosperity of industrial development (c 1910 in Europe). As part of the „functional city“, it is reaching its limits of growth-oriented logic; the logic of the late capitalistic economy, which has determined that space has left fragmented pockets, where it re-receives importance for mixed use and for binding people to place.
- Activities of interconnection at and between locations support urban renewal, in terms of fulfilling time-related demands of the economy.

- Activities of urban renewal serve to create socio-spatial identities through realising processes of transformation; these processes open up comprehensive tasks of socio-spatial and economic guidance.

Social meaning and the inter-linked relationship between substance and people, reflect the tension between a “resource” for embedding social processes and economic functions, and of a “product” of social importance and economic influences, from the fields of production and product diffusion. In particular, the tension makes a “space of interconnection” become the co-ordinating point for processes of urban renewal - be it through initiatives of users, through market-influences or through the political guidance of such influences.

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The resource side is related to the tremendous potential to reuse inner area niches for new and small-spatial local economies which already do and still can be increased in enriching the employment market, the attraction for tourists and the variety of use and form for inhabitants and users. Enriching the mixture of use contributes to settling an economic basis for maintaining the land prices in mixed used areas also affordable for residences and small hotels. It would enhance night life, if shops and internet cafes would be opened without time limits. It would, this way, enhance cultural life to be generated on a solid basis for strengthening social and economic life.

The product side needs to define and to work on the image and the recognition of values of the peninsula relative to the surroundings, of the old



city relative to Floriana, of quarters within both parts of the cities, this way, of a differentiated system of public spaces, of entrances to and of exits from the peninsula, - built form and open spaces as well as water- and land-side considered comprehensively.

The weighing between both the sides needs preparing for a continuous process of realizing and of implementing the role which has been given to the city by its creation (“perpetual contemporariness”). It needs to consider more clearly readable and better usable connections between Floriana and Valetta and a new interpretation of an old characteristic of Maltese urban structures: The “smooth flow” of urban conditions “without feeling of crossing the edge” ... (s. Ania Safranzka, Valetta studio, Spatial theatre – hierarchy of public spaces in Valetta). It also needs a clear political position for the preservation of those individual buildings and elements of built form and open spaces within the systems of private and public spaces which have to be preserved as well as equally courageous frame-concepts for opening up to innovative and new ways of using and forming the two parts of the peninsula. The question about the historical heritage, especially in Valetta, is bound to the two principles of built form, building rows, and built form, being isolated – f.i. the lone standing tower (which is typical for the original buildings of fortification, see Gozo) or the Baroque public building, either lone standing or being framed by the arrangement of rows.. It might be reasonable to re-interpret both these types: tower and row ... and coordinate them by new concepts of open spaces.

Late industrial “urban transformation”

In order to guide urban transformation for the benefit of people (instead of re-production systems), we have to define and to settle the conditions for these changes by giving respect to replacing obsolete patterns of evaluation and of guidance: Modernization processes only are supposed to restrict the ongoing changes to a mainly repetitive and therefore finite differentiation of its branches, but do not generate any new material and immaterial patterns which are needed to overcome the bottlenecks and damages of changing industrial times within their contexts of more or less (in)stable social and economic situations. The existing profiles need to be translated into new profiles changing the demand and the supply side structurally by giving respect to existing material and immaterial opportunities.

New conditions on the employment markets and resulting new life-styles as well as an increase of poverty build the global demand-side. This finds its reflection in local demands for counter-balancing the generated socio-economic uncertainties for individuals, families and, this way, also for communities.

The supply side shows respectively a global and a local to regional appearance. The more the global networks of systems of insurances of the capital markets loose their solidity for most of the members of our societies, the more the individual depends on local to regional networks carrying the welfare for everyday life by common activities. The area, the neighbourhood are the relevant units to establish and to experience such networks. This way, territory gains an increasing importance for binding people to place. This way, spaces





are the material to change the supply-side of urban changes locally. This way, places are of social and equally of economic importance – as the land markets indicate by showing those areas being successfully occupied and continuously in demand which offer a combination of three basic qualities on private land:

- Usability
- Legibility
- Changeability

These qualities have been proven to be indicators for urban renewal and for small- to big spatial investment into private property ownership in Europe, especially in the former suburban surroundings of pre-industrially founded cores in towns.

The reason for their demand is: they build up the conditions for integrating working uses into living environments without disturbing the overall character of a living area and for the benefit of protecting the individual or common uses of private land on each plot. Openings in between built form even increase the demand because they link private to private and private to public land in locally specific ways and serve for interconnection in terms of communication, exchange of services and meanings.

Spatial elements being appropriate for urban transformation are distinguished following:

- „Public spaces“ are the spaces of the streets and are characterised by the ‘staying’ qualities of such open spaces. Their continuous permeability to public access is a major characteristic for elements primarily connecting to “private spaces”.
- „Private spaces“ are spaces of built form and of other land use on private land. Built form and other land uses are understood as primarily space-building elements framing „public spaces“.
- „Public“ and „private“ spaces are, by definition, barely distinguishable from each other. Connections flow, relative to the permeability of views and of through-paths. The spatial form in between (separation and/or connection) defines which character spaces have, either for the protection of private uses or for public access.
- „Built“ and „lived“ spaces are the expression of the material conditions of space on the one hand, and of the social experience of possible perception and occupation on the other, within the complementary structure of „public“ and „private“ spaces in time and place.

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Urban transformation in the cities of Valetta and Floriana has basically proved to survive long periods of time without losing its overall attraction for use and renewal.

In competition with cheaper offers of land and better access for cars, concentrated functions at different locations within the urban region have pulled some economic forces, especially night life, out of the cities of Valetta and Floriana. This seems to be a problem only for those observers who purely want to consume the city and do not see the potential for a healthy city to renew its forces for daytime activities.

The speculation, going on, especially in Valetta, has been hindering urban

renewal on one side. However, it has also to be looked at as fortunately hindering an urban renewal which might have copied global tendencies of serial building production and would have destroyed the uniqueness of the whole ensemble of the city without giving responsive answers to the – hopefully – everlasting question, how to maintain Valetta contemporary. The change of land values is almost as important to the quality of urban transformation as the arrangement of built form and open spaces is, working together:

The system of public and of private spaces is to be maintained as a sculpture of fortification, rows of built form and integrated or isolated individual public buildings working together closely with the topography. It has also to be maintained as a structure for orientation and collective memory.

- The primary elements of the system are clearly structured by the main axis in the middle of Valetta, the “foot” –and “head” locations of western gate with Bus-Terminal and eastern rock with Fort St Elmo, the shore area with more or less open spaces and access to the waterside, and the connecting streets which cross the whole city orthogonally and link water-side to water-side. Those areas which contrast almost private activities to public spaces, like in the area of the former fish- and slave market, are the areas which contrast commercial-global to local spaces. It has to be emphasized that especially these areas represent the locally specific characters of individual locations coinciding with the interests of inhabitants and small business owners as well as also with the more demanding, individual tourists. They should only very sensitively, if at all, be turned into more expensive land value. The whole primary system should be worked on following the strategy to low down the land prices in order to enrich the uses by more variety of uses and by less concentration of retail.

- Secondary elements within the system of public/private spaces are lying in between the watersides and with different expression to the two sides of the main axis. They differ relative to the conditions of the locations: sea-view, car-access, substance of built form, inhabitants, renewal activities, adjacent private or public open spaces. The locations differ relative to the half-public or semi-private characters of streets, stairs and plateaus which reflect units of use, spatial practices of social groups as well as traditions to occupy space for outdoor activities. The secondary system is the potential for urban changes. Intervention should be encouraged where either big damages of the building substance and/or big potentials for new infillings of built form and open spaces offer a challenge in combination with using the advantages of sea-view and topography for the benefit of also improving the system of private and public open spaces. Herewith, the potential for urban transformation can contribute to “perpetual contemporariness” by increasing the quality of and the conditions for outdoor staying on private ground which is as public as people gather. Opening the density of built form this way, a new structure of “built” and “lived” spaces will be generated providing for affordable mixed used activities in inner areas.

“Screens for privacy”?

The global reality of urban conditions has been and still is, since the beginning of serial production in building construction, increasingly determined by reducing private spaces onto “capsules” of individual life, very often either vertically piled up into the air or horizontally added spreading out onto land. Their connection



with the environments is more and more cellularly ruled by networks and cells of information technology. The surrounding of the “capsules” carries mainly functions, an exchange of public and private worlds is hardly to be called materialized in locally specific ways. Spaces are increasingly restricted – concerning form and usability – to special functions and are, in the original meaning of the term of “space”, meaning room for occupancy of different kind, hardly perceivable. Yona Friedman points to “Screens for privacy” (2002, Paris) which are remaining elements having to fulfil basic human needs on a minimal material basis.

A vision for new urban landscapes arises currently and takes serious influence on the demand side. Periods of restricting private life to either minimised “boxes” in high-rise, vertically piling up, pre-fabricated buildings or the subsequent opposite offer in terms of low-rise “houses”, mostly horizontally added and giving immediate access to open spaces, are increasingly replaced on the demand side by individually located, spatially well integrated buildings within urban edge-landscape.

However, herewith, still the one side of the poles dominates: privacy of the individual plot determines the character of the area, if public spaces are either purely functional transit zones between generously laid out big plot-units, or are minimised in between bordering privacies which dominate the whole area in an anonymous ways of a chaotic variety of competing forms and uses and contributing to a loss of complementary characteristics. Anthony Giddens points to the importance of “locally founded, with importance for the place organized connections, for which the place has not been transformed yet by space-time linkages with increased distance”... (1996, p. 130)

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Establishing new spaces within a system of secondary public spaces to be generated as a new layer in between the existing primary elements of public spaces will contribute to “locally founded, with importance for the place organized connections”.

In order to prepare a real integration of new elements of space with existing elements, the question about the kind of bridging between private and public spaces has to be considered thoroughly. An increase of open and not ceiled spaces would also improve the energy and waste systems within the cities.

Piled up “capsules” will not contribute to the demanded improvement of the overall system of coordinating built form and open spaces in a way which will establish more private open spaces on private ground. The importance lies on behalf of ecological reasons on “ground”. Balconies or terraces can complete but not replace an opening up of the existing densely built structure. The classical global mistakes of urban area modernization by establishing “flowing spaces” in combination with optimising the land use by high-rise buildings (1960ies to 1980ies in Western and Eastern Europe, America, Asia ...) should be avoided. The question is all about the right definitions of “screens” or “membranes” in between private and public by maintaining the land prices low for the benefit of increasing the values of form and use in the long-term perspective.

The impact of evolutionary processes

As the forces of concentrated governmental and economic power have become diffused by processes of global competition, the individual has to fulfil needs for survival on different levels of social and economic conditions. The individual acts, causing streams of effects onto the environment and, this way, on the bases for social and economic re-production.

Also, there are no longer any personalities to be addresses to as “masters” of guiding urban changes locally. The local authorities who might be considered as being responsive to the urban environments are trying to do their best in weighing public and private interests for the benefit of keeping investors attracted and not to cause too many damages to local values. However, there is confusion about the appropriate ways of adapting to people’s needs. Perspectives for comprehensive participation, fulfilling existing standards of modernization and, this way, only extending obsolete patterns of spatial practices and images, might be confused with the more sustainable values of self-organised processes and irregular forms of land occupation in former public space, i.e. nature, which have to be re-discovered and to be considered as valid alternatives for late industrial forms of urbanizing urban edges. These forms are more valid elements within a differentiated system of public spaces to be qualified locally than the standardization for aims of functions has destroyed in terms of a loss of vernacular values of nature, landscape and urbanized areas during the last decades. The well known problem of such tendencies is that modernization processes ignore the culturally, economically and socially still relevant diversities of urban landscapes.

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Emigration from inner urban areas onto the outskirts has become evident for a concentration/ specialization of a range of periodical demands (night life, specific offers of retail, specific offers for tourism, housing). However, there is also a shift to the contrary, especially for specific age groups and for people with specific interest in staying in inner areas, may be only temporarily. Such tendencies and interests have to be traced and encouraged. New life styles might occur in combination with offers for occupying land under convenient and therefore affordable conditions of branding and selling the land –to be established. De-centralized processes of urbanization have to be encouraged at individual locations within Valetta and Floriana. This way, both the cities are regarded in a new way as part of the regional system of locations to be vitalized.

Spatial patterns and routines in behaviour

As evolutionary processes are and will be the carrying forces of our economies, people living and working in and around our cities are the ones to be regarded. There are two general types of behaviour, distinguished sociologically, one called “milieu-type”, characterized by Jörg Dürrschmidt, and one called “habitus-type”, characterized by Pierre Bourdieu. Following, the two types will be introduced in order to settle a basic frame-work for understanding the influence of people on space.





- The milieu-type is defending his/her individual habits as a self-standing, capital-market related person against outer influences and can this way, easily survive in metropolitan conditions, f.i. in high-rise, piled up capsules of privacy, where nobody demands his opening up for an exchange of routines or for communication. He/ she keeps up his/her habits as long as he/she is not forced to open up and to adopt different ways of behaviour, f.i. because of personal or economic reasons. In case of doubt he/she moves away to other locations of living without having to risk any bindings.
- The habitus-type is used to open up and communicate with different kinds of behaviour without risking his/her identity with roots in strong cultural traditions. Therefore he/ she carries a skill which can easily be invested into local economies and other fields where intensive communication is basic ground for survival. He/she is normally living and working in mixed use urban areas, often at the edges of urban conditions, likes to use space in order to cultivate social rules of origin within wider ethnic circles, personal or family relationships and is, this way, culturally and spatially much stronger bound to place.

Urbanising rural or suburban conditions means to be aware of bringing together the right combination of people with places. The "habitus-type" is appropriate to settle the ground for urbanizing any area, the "milieu-type" is only able to use it at a later stage for a passage of time and use.

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The two types of behaviour represent different users in Valetta and find both ideal conditions for living and working in Valetta.

Whereas the milieu-type, as the "modern incomer", will be pleased to "incapsulate" in one of the small units of flats, f.i. with roof terrace not to be looked into from the neighbouring sides, the habitus-type – as the original resident – will continue to occupy the old and new groundfloor areas with private and public open spaces. This type of behaviour has to be encouraged in order to increase the success of local economies and of locally specific culture, to be brought up and carried by people who live and work in this area. This type coincides very well with the milieu-type who might be welcome as the economically demanded "individual tourist" in the region.

Preparing intervention

Research and design are increasingly looked at professionally as one and the same core of the "making professions" (architecture, urban design, urban planning, landscape design). As the "making professions" are in the process of being discussed for maturing as a "science", aspects of the human sciences – which are not only related to analyses of existing conditions, like in sociology, but take into consideration the needs for providing appropriate frameworks for better conditions of life and living as well as working environments. In order to achieve ideas about such frameworks, as a basic orientation for all urban policies, including branding, existing and possibly to be achieved values of use and their syntheses with values of form have to be looked for regionally and locally, following the above described vision for a differentiated "urban landscapes" with clearly established divisions/connections between private

and public spaces, protecting equally both the sides from disturbances and connecting them locally.

- However, science as well as typological distinctions of social behaviour and Information Technology simulations of evolutionary processes cannot replace the needs for open frameworks which provide openness for future processes which cannot be identified in advance. The most important basis for guiding such processes is the local discourse that has to be started on the basis of local activities, possibly including further impulses from professionals while taking the outlined vision through different tests of its validity for implementation - in order to come collectively finally to more mature concepts for locations and peninsula. This means to apply the existing knowledge and to develop it collectively throughout processes of initiating, discussing, selling and guiding urban changes.

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The spatial intervention cannot be done successfully without intervening into mental realities of perceiving the city locally and regionally. The public discourse to be initiated in Valetta has to face different fears of users, inhabitants and professionals as well as politicians to loose instead of winning potential. These fears are a big impediment on the way to urban transformation. Indeed, the current stage of speculation is a sign of a thorough break in the awareness about and also in the economic realization itself of the potential for changes from a severe stagnation to another flow of contemporariness for late industrial demands. Despite the fact that Valetta is conditioned by heat and Mediterranean climate, narrowness of private spaces and restriction of access to private open spaces is not any longer a valid option for people to demand. However, herewith, demand and supply side have obviously to be generated simultaneously in order to make the process of interest in land value swing again. Therefore, branding has to bridge the gaps in between mental/ spatial/ economic stagnation and a collectively carried vision which has decided to go for structural changes instead of keeping fearfully to renovation.

Branding is necessarily related to the image of the whole peninsula as well as to individual locations. In order to integrate the images for the individual locations into the overall vision, all levels of branding have to respond to each other

- counterbalancing weaknesses of obsolete patterns of built form for living and working and their consequences in investment (speculation, danger of destroying culturally valid characteristics of semi-private space ...),
- strengthening natural and man-made potentials (topography, view connections, sun-shade-conditions, public buildings, nodes, system of public-private spaces, waterside-access)

Master-principles need to prepare for translating these strategic aspects into spatial framework-concepts which can be implemented over time by counterbalancing included conflicts of urban policy, tradition, economy and people's beliefs and fears. They need to respond to re-thinking

- the regional urban structure, topography and landscape,
- the local urban spaces, their hierarchies/ heterarchies and systems of spaces, representations of spaces and representational spaces.

Four major principles have been found by the 9 graduate students in architecture who worked parallel to the landscape architecture students. They are described in a sequence, showing their overall relevance for late industrial urban transformation by comprehensive structural changes which do not restrict themselves to renovation, alteration or modernization, however give the necessary respect to preservation as far as collectively defined.

1. Major Principle: Change the overall systems of the flows of energy, water and waste for the benefit of the environment and of the economy.

Students' contributions

A new perspective for the establishment of environmentally friendly systems (Chalermchat Sungkasuban) has been set up showing and also proving by details that system thinking is urgently needed in order to prepare for late industrial changes in Valetta. The integration into urban conditions would have to be worked on.

2. Major Principle: Change the overall systems of public/private spaces for the benefit of offering more and better qualified systems of spaces relative to the opportunities of the topography.

Students' contributions

Two proposals offer definite positions pleading for an opening up of built spaces, risking to replace the existing built form partially over time. They represent the approach of turning the existing and obsolete spatial conditions into structurally new ones. The opening up of open spaces, spatially closely coordinated with built form on private ground is here the most relevant step to establish a differentiated perspective.

The idea of a "new primary structure of spaces" (Marco Gernt), as a layer of topography-adaptive built form and connected open spaces in between the remaining streets of the existing grid of primary public spaces dares to open up a comprehensive perspective for establishing a new structure for both private and public spaces for the whole peninsula in the long-term perspective. It is a symbol for late industrial transformation in Valetta. It emphasizes on "new and even older, more sustainable roots" of the urban fabric, indicating that a change of conditions of the structure of urban spaces and its "grain" in built form, including the systems of the flows of natural resources, like water and energy, might have to be reconsidered by renewing the structure, the infrastructure as well major parts of the elements of built form and open spaces. This is looked at as part of a long-term vision for implementation needing to give respect to considered factors of driving forces and their needs for working together for the benefit of public welfare (see structure of implementation factors). In order to guarantee the "perpetual contemporariness", this perspective would have to be equally enrolled from the two included sides, firstly from the side of developing private spaces on new private land, made available for new economic uses and new socially, economically and ecologically valid forms of architecture, secondly from the side of defining the connection/ separation between these spaces and the this way generated new public spaces.

Sub-Principles: A second primary system of public spaces complements the existing one by opening up new urban development on yet not accessible plots to be established over time. The new system operates as a framework for new syntheses of forms and uses, offering the opportunity for new, actively and passively operating built form and use of energies.

The idea of "horizontal spaces" (Mederbek Ahmetov) has its origins in considering the existing grammar of the urban spaces, their orders and their potential changes. The vision introduces a spatial reality of horizontal terraces which are supposed to offer opportunities for new spaces and new uses. It is mostly characterized by breaking through the existing density of built form and enriching it by more, wider and individually formed, therefore ideally unique new public spaces of different dimension. Herewith a consideration about transforming private spaces has been started and leaves the answer to small spatial interventions over time within the existing structure of the primary elements of public spaces however widening them up where there is a chance to do so "horizontally", i.e. by working with the topography for the benefit of gaining spaces for outdoor staying near to and in coordination with built form.

Sub-Principle: Existing public spaces need to be completed by new "horizontal" spaces to be established where the existing structure of private and public spaces allows intervention per plot or area.

As politically strong statements against holding up the overall density within existing frameworks of built form, these proposals have the innovative potential to work as starting points for systematic approaches to concepts and strategies for "turning old into new".

3. Major Principle: Change the quality of public places by frameworks for social- cultural activities enriching the vitality of urban life.

Students' contributions

Herewith different locations have been dealt with as important places for setting the tune for a "concert of public spaces" to be re-directed. The locations are central and key-places within the grid of public spaces alongside the main public axis through Floriana and Valetta. The concepts have their strengths and weaknesses in individual approaches to individual locations. They start working from the selected local point of view and relate this to the system of private/public spaces.

"Spatial theatre - hierarchy of public spaces in Valetta" (Ania Szafranska) relates to the western entrance of the main public axis though Valetta. The concept offers a densely knitted, clearly readable outline of a perspective for space and branding, is well illustrated and almost philosophical as a position about the needs of late industrial changes. The aim is "Selling tradition with new ideas by new sellers in endless spectacle ... to achieve total identification between structure and its potential users" – which can be useful for introducing a public discourse about urban transformation in Valetta and Floriana. It draws





conclusions relative to the systems of spaces and related comprehensively needs for de-central qualification in Valetta:

Sub-Principle: „Spatial theatre may appear in other locations or spread as a network of complementary, multilevel events.“

“Bus-Terminus in Valetta. Quality of Public Space” (Piotr Margiel) deals with the needs for quality in public spaces by regarding the major public place, bridging Valetta and Floriana. The work outlines small-spatially a new spatial structure by emphasising comprehensively on the needs for private as well as public uses in such a place. The proposal is an architectural answer to the needs of public space using the individual architectural element as a motif to be combined to an almost monumental structure leaving freedom for individual activities of movement and developing meaning:

Sub-Principle: Major public spaces need to allow interaction as well as privacy.

“Healthy mixture of spaces” for Fort St. Elmo, (Magda Bartosik), deals with the location on the other end of the main axis through Valetta. As an individual proposal for architecture as a framework for public uses (Art School), it offers an urban form completion of the rocky urban landscape. Questions about how much and which kind of quality of urban landscape, i.e. especially open spaces, to be generated there would have to be dealt with in more detail. The message is:

Sub-Principle: A unique location needs a rigorous architecture clearly respecting landscape and the historical heritage of urban form.

“Mallio Garden - Floriana” (Swapan Abayousouf) deals with a public place of major importance within the wider network of public spaces of the two adjacent cities, Valetta and Floriana. This place within the local surroundings is taken as an example for strengthening local offers of staying quality in order to attract complementing uses and users in Floriana. This way, evolutionary streams of de-central urbanization are responded locally to aiming to counterbalance them by bringing people back to inner urban areas. The concept for this public space, to be framed by a mixture of small-spatial uses, coincides with the already outlined perspectives of qualifying space:

Sub-Principle: Enrich the edges of this major public space, increase exchange between inside and outside, locally and regionally.

Finally two more works have developed very interesting perspectives for Valetta by considering the narrowness of spaces within the oldest part of the peninsula, responding to it by additional offers for spaces outside the land, basically on or over the waterside. The major principle carrying these ideas has been developed locally from the attraction of locations alongside the sea and generally from the experience that a spatial problem has to be resolved from its edges which offer immediate space for intervention and for setting up signs for future activities



4. Major Principle: Start inner area transformation in the long-term perspective from the immediately available outer area edges.

Students' Contributions

“From Object to Concept – Valettas Concert Hall” (Karol Gadecki) starts from the point of view that urban transformation in Valetta needs to start activity beginning at “the waterfront (and outside of the fortifications)” in order to allow renewal to move on from there into the city. The destination of a major public house, answering to the never-ended discussion about a new building for a theatre in Valetta, is taken as a new image branding the city, working like a “bulb”. As a public investment for a broad audience, it is supposed to provide the city with permanent profit base. With reference to examples from around the world, the selected location is looked at as being more than appropriate for creating the special atmosphere of a particular space to be even magnified by the reflectivity of the water and by the neighbouring yacht marina.

Sub-Principle: Shift the emphasis from the visual to the intellectual item, from the individual object to the wider concept.

“Loosen the dense urban structure” (Ewelina Frech) is related to “Re-adapting the sea-coast-line around the island”, and, this way, considering a perspective for an extension of urban uses by light elements of extendable structures on the surrounding water-side. This concept is clearly oriented on using the most valuable, least costly and also immediately available sites around the island in order to establish a complementary arrangement of uses and places which work as attractors of new urban life, strengthen the competitiveness of the old city within the region and increase the socio-economic interconnection between the main public axis and the shore-zone via the differentiated urban locations of the interim spaces.

Sub-Principle: Create strong attractors for intended interim connections by least needs of investment and by highest awards of benefit for the overall urban situation.

In all these concepts, branding can prepare the ground for such master-principles, however cannot replace them. Master-principles without a branding concept are not valid any longer because they miss the overall binding mental approach to the transformation of urban conditions which is irreplaceable by other means, because it has to mobilize the least social and economic forces for working together collectively on a building up a new urban reality starting from different locations.

Source - contents photos: Andrea Haase, 31. 3. 2006, 12.00 und 13.00. The pictures were taken on the way from the western part of the main axis through Valletta towards the eastern part (Fort St. Elmo) viewing into the orthogonally crossing side streets. They show the increasing occupation of public spaces through private uses (groundfloor zone, balconies).