

The silhouette of the East side of the Jelgava city

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Abstract. The present article analyses the importance of silhouette, and the object of the research is the silhouette of the East side of the Jelgava city. The analysed territory has experienced cardinal landscape transformations, which have outlined new sights, massifs and formations in the city silhouette. The research applies a comparative method by comparing the silhouette of the Jelgava city East side and the silhouette of the Bauska city West side. In order to obtain qualitative information, several surveys were carried out to obtain the society's opinions as regards the territory under analysis. The aim of the research was to obtain new finding and society's opinion about the integration of the modern solutions into an urban environment that transforms the silhouette of the city.

Key words: silhouette, landscape space, sights.

Introduction

Our attention in the landscape composition will be paid on the object because of its form. Relation among the elements creating the form could be so ordinary, so obvious, so easy to understand, that we instantly like the object set in such way like single separate quiddity. Or else its form is directly that we have known for very long, therefore, it can take our interest, because we are used to see it and because it has more associations in our minds. Relative force with the help of which different composition object will draw attention, relative interest and lasting of the interest, observer will feel inside, is very important aspect in every planning. Since spatial compositions are bigger and it is possible less to perceive viewpoints, as well brain memory abilities are more significant in the achievement of the total composition effect. The same is referable to the style and characteristics, as well as to the unity and perfection of emotional effect. Landscape composition can create pleasure even if it creates wider view angle than it could be included in figurative unit. There could be three – dimension unit, plan organization and rise that can be renewed in mind from the different viewpoint memories possibly created from different location viewpoints [2, 92–93]. In every particular situation the image of the building and surrounding outdoor territory is very important to the courtyard. Perceiving spatial environment, forms and proportions of subjects have big importance as visual images through mediation of that we get information both about the essence and correlations

of these subjects, and space type, measures, proportions [4, 74–94]. Information that reflects surrounding architectonically organized environment and objective qualities of its separate forms not only gives necessary knowledge that helps to orientate in increasing variety of spatial forms, but rather substantially affects our emotions either [3, 120–121]. From the informative point of view the most characteristic, easy perceived features are silhouette and plastic formation. Silhouette is recited by artificially created spatial form projecting with natural landscape or sky background. In turn, the features of plastic formation more clearly come to the light in inhomogeneity and dynamics of the spatial structure, as well as in the lights and darks game of surfaces. Therefore, in the dominant form of environment perception – in movement – silhouette and plastic formation are the most capacious and emotionally the most active information parts [1, 105]. In general cases common spatial construction originality depends on the silhouette of spatial system (lines) – vertical culmination of the composition, on the planning (horizontal mass composition) and on the plastic formation referring both to the form (form system) in common, and its separate elements [3, 44]. Consequently, the present article analysed the importance of the silhouette of this spatial system, and distinguishes society's opinions as regards the performed transformation processes in the analysed Jelgava city territory.

Materials and Methods

The research was carried out during the period from the beginning of the year 2013 until March. To establish the present situation, a comparative method was applied in order to obtain qualitative visual examples of the historical and present day photographs. The comparative method was applied

to analyse the silhouettes of two cities – Bauska and Jelgava. The location of the analysed territories is illustrated in the Figures 1 and 2. In the process of research, the photos were taken of the Northern side of the Bauska city and of the East side of the Jelgava city, because today these territories introduce

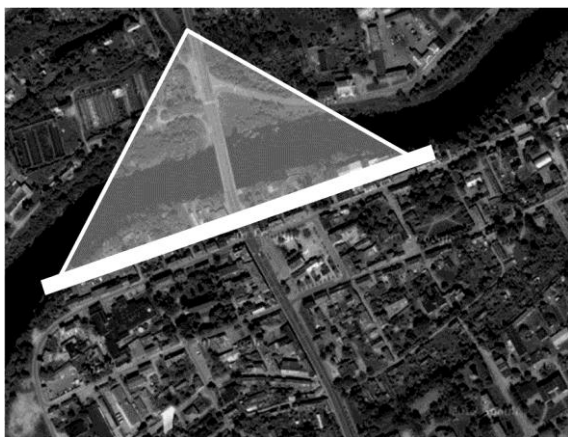


Fig. 1. The West side sight lines approaching the city of Bauska
[Source: construction by author, 2013].

important sceneries upon approaching the city territory, as well as cultural and historical objects, and new transformation processes in the city of Jelgava. For a more thorough investigation, the silhouette transformation processes of these cities were also analysed over a longer period of time, and the corresponding historical photo-material were obtained from the National Digital Library of Latvia from the collection of the Letonica Project “Zudusi Latvija” and compared to the present day situation. In order to obtain qualitative information, a statistical data analysis (survey) for 133 people was carried out in the research. Out of them 103 were women, and 30 were men, and the average

Results and Discussion

The historical center of Bauska has evolved along the left bank of the *Mēmele* river and in the composition of its building there dominates an approximately three kilometers long network of parallel streets (*Rīga*, *Plūdoņa* and *Kalēju*) which within 200 m in width along the river forms the so-called backbone with street connections [6]. The research established by comparing the present day photographic material of the Bauska city to the historical photographs, the area has not experienced significant changes, see Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6. A narrow stretched area of approximately 400 m along the river with its side-branch is a picturesque natural base where in springs there may be observed the force of the river bed but in the summer its refreshment is enjoyable. The watercourse with flood-land meadow and slope of the old castle ruins creates recreationally rich landscape space which closes the western part of the town's historical center [6].

Conversely, a rapid attraction of investments by local governments of the Zemgale region over the last decade has contributed to the tendencies to renew and preserve the historical building parts of towns. It has enabled architects to seek new architectural artistic values and a functional balance



Fig. 2. The East side sight lines approaching the city of Jelgava
[Source: construction by author, 2013].

age of the respondent group was 29.5 years. The survey comprised 4 questions regarding the reconstructed territory in the city of Jelgava, which outlines the landscape spatial transformations in the city silhouette. To summarize the results, a monographic or descriptive method was applied, which was based on the findings and results obtained in the research from the group of respondents.

in the culturally historical part of the urban space. Looking at the implemented projects and development proposals, as well transformation processes of the historical part of the city, in the detailed plans there are developed criteria that determine the necessary to retain or not to retain the present green structure by analyzing its context in the building zone. The evaluation of the dendrological peculiarities of plantations in designs (width of tree branches, the root system, the nature of the canopy) is just as important as building height of the building, the tint of the facade paint, the compositional compatibility of the roof landscape in the street building. In the current volatile conditions of the economic and social processes, there is quite often simplified an important urban knowledge, giving priority to short-term businesses and tax attraction by the local government rather than the inputs of values in the perspective. The cultural and historical heritage is attributable not only to the preservation of individual objects but also to the totality of several elements-space, landscape, view lines, intellectual fulfillment, etc. It is also a greater responsibility of architects and landscape architects [6]. Consequently, the radical transformation processes of the East side silhouette



Fig. 3. View at the city of Bauska [Source: from the National Digital Library of Latvia from the collection of the Letonica Project “Zudusi Latvija”, <http://www.zudusilatvija.lv/objects/object/5662/>, the original is stored in the National Library of Latvia].



Fig. 6. View at the city of Bauska today [Source: photo by author, 2013].



Fig. 4. The greatest flood ever experienced in Bauska in 1928. Panorama of Bauska, The river *Mēmele*. Timber brought by the flood

[Source: from the National Digital Library of Latvia from the collection of the Letonica Project “Zudusi Latvija”, <http://www.zudusilatvija.lv/objects/object/13558/>, the original is stored in the National Library of Latvia].



Fig. 7. A postcard, the alternative name: *Gruss aus Mitau, Die Aa-Brücke* [Source: from the National Digital Library of Latvia from the collection of the Letonica Project “Zudusi Latvija”, <http://www.zudusilatvija.lv/objects/object/9772/>, the original is stored in the National Library of Latvia].



Fig. 5. View at the city of Bauska today [Source: photo by author, 2013].



Fig. 8. View at the river Lielupe and the city from the East side [Source: photo by author, 2013].



Fig. 9. View across the Driksa river at the Holy Trinity Church Tower
[Source: photo by author, 2013].



Fig. 10. The former Upes street renamed as J. Cakste boulevard from 1989
[Source: from the National Digital Library of Latvia from the collection of the Letonica Project “Zudusi Latvija”, <http://www.zudusilatvija.lv/objects/object/10813/>, the original is stored in the National Library of Latvia].



Fig. 11. J. Cakste boulevard in autumn 2005
[Source: photo by author, 2005].

of the Jelgava city is clearly illustrated in Figures 7-13. When approaching the centre of Jelgava from the East side, the first significant natural barrier is the river Lielupe, which can be seen in its historical image in the Figure 7, but the corresponding image of the present day Lielupe river, which has significantly changed, can be observed in the Figure 8. Moving across the bridge of the Lielupe river and stepping onto the

Pasta sala Island, some more impressive changes of the sight appear, see Figure 9. Whereas; the Figures from 10-13 clearly illustrate the significant transformations of the J. Cakste boulevard. The images clearly illustrate the impressive, historical sight line transformations. The analysed territory was reborn in the 21st century in a brand new modern form.



Fig. 12. J. Cakste boulevard in the spring 2013 [Source: photo by author, 2013].



Fig. 13. The new visual image of the J. Cakste boulevard [Source: photo by author, 2013].

The part of the boulevard promenade will continue also down the existing Driksa bridge creating under the bridge the pedestrian zone with separate stairs. The bank slope will be made with a concrete support wall with railing. The basis of the architectonical constructive solution of the pedestrian bridge is the system of hanging shrouds at two support pilaster. It makes the bridges look visually light and attractive. At the opposite side of the bridge Pasta island is projected as the green recreative zone for public activities and peaceful walks. It is planned to create the sculpture garden, locations for children plays and activities by additionally propping the bank line of the island. At the bridge in the island a coffee house with small boat station and roof terrace above it where the sight lines to the river and the boulevard promenade will be seen. At present not only the street reconstruction project, but also the building of a new pedestrian bridge is realized. The bridge connects the town space with the green landscape space of the Pasta island and the new plantations with J. Cakste boulevard. The bridge is the continuation of the pedestrian zones of Driksa street (sorb lane plantations) to the Lielupe left bank. The walk and trade zone mentioned (250 m) in the span from Katolu to Akademijas street is to create a new architectonically expressive image of the town space. It is also referred to taking off the transport load in this space. But in part of pedestrian street from Akademijas street to J. Cakstes boulevard (150 m) or the connection at the bridge, reconstruction of the inner courtyard zone of hostels is to be realized. There a small square is necessary which would be compositionally as a green point at which the axis of urban space –the axis of the Driksas street pedestrian zone to which the side axis of Saint Trinity church would be connected [5]. Whereas, the Great Synagogue (1875-1879) cupola designed by the Latvian architect Oscar Alexander Johann Baar is illustrated in the Figure 15. The synagogue was destroyed in the summer of 1941, during the German occupation. The image illustrates a tower of the German Lutheran Holy Trinity Church (built in 1688) with an octagon belfry (1862). The Church was destroyed during the World War II, only the oldest part of the tower (covered with a pyramid-shaped roof) and the church gates have remained today. A bridge was built on the wall mounts with the Le Havre system lattice trusses across the Driksa river (80's of the 19th century). The next bridge over the Driksa river was built in 1937, none of these bridges have remained until today [7]. Consequently, the newly built bridge, presented in 2012, has significantly transformed the Driksa river and its neighbouring Pasta sala Island, where there are additional landscaping and construction processes still in process. The modern image of the Mitava bridge and the transformations carried out in the 21st century can be seen in Figures 14, 15 and 16.



Fig. 14. A postcard, the alternative name: *Mitau, am Ufer des Drixe* [Source: from the National Digital Library of Latvia from the collection of the Letonica Project “Zudusi Latvija”, <http://www.zudusilatvija.lv/objects/object/18451/>, the original is stored in the National Library of Latvia].



Fig. 15. The new bridge looking from the J. Cakste boulevard [Source: photo by author, 2013].



Fig. 16. The bridge looking from the Pasta island [Source: photo by author, 2013].



Fig. 17. Mitava bridge [Source: photo by author, 2013].

Another important and interesting source of information for the research is the results obtained from a group of respondents. The group comprised 131 respondent, out of them 70 were women and 61 men; the average age was 40 years. Respondent answered six questions. The first four questions, the expressed opinions as regards the analysed territory in the city of Jelgava, exploitation possibilities, and landscape solutions are clearly illustrated in Table 1. Whereas; the last two questions of the research were composed in a free form and any one of the 131 respondents had the opportunity to widely express their opinion as regards the aspects they prefer and the issues they find problematic and unnecessary in the analysed Jelgava city territory. From the obtained data, the answers of 4 respondents were not useful, because they have not expressed their opinion on this subject matter. Consequently, the useful, qualitative, and informatively wide answers were obtained from the rest 127 questionnaires, altogether 254 different answers. The greater emphasis was placed on the fact that the handrails of the Mitava bridge are too unsafe for little children, see Figure 17.

Other respondents were not satisfied by the new concrete Driksa river embankment, the chosen landscape elements, the height of the bridge in comparison to the surrounding territory and other aspects that should be considered by the planners and designers of these territories. Respondents evaluate the area positively and are in general satisfied, but they emphasize the aspect that the territory could be slightly differently designed from the stylistic perspective, and they would prefer a lesser amount of concrete elements.

Conclusion

The integration of the modern solutions into an urban environment is a complicated process. The society is used to living in a certain, familiar environment. Therefore; whenever some kind of drastic transformations that affect not only the city silhouette but also the perception of the society about a certain territory are initiated, the most part of the society perceive these processes very critically and negatively. This fact was proven in the research process by the data obtained from the respondents. Consequently, it is necessary to involve a greater part of the society in such types of transformations by considering its opinion, because these are the people who live in this territory and will use the area and search for the most appropriate recreation possibilities for each individual. The facts established in the research and the opinions of the respondents as regards the analysed territory are also essential for any other researches on the transformation processes in the urban environment territory and its neighbourhood area.

TABLE 1
Summary of the obtained results from the research survey
[Source: counstruction by author, 2013]

No	Research question	Obt. results
1	Did you find the reconstruction of the J. Cakste boulevard to be necessary?	%
	Yes, certainly, some improvements were necessary;	78.9
	No, no improvement were necessary;	0
	It is hard to say, I practically do not visit this territory;	8.3
	It was necessary, but the reconstruction proposition could be slightly different.	12.8
2	Do you approve of such modern solutions in the urban environment?	%
	Yes, I approve;	84.2
	No, I don't approve;	3
	I partially approve, because I find that other territories of the Jelgava city should be developed instead of this;	7.5
	It is hard to say, I have not considered this.	5.3
3	Do you find the size of the Mitava bridge appropriate for the Driksa river embankment territory?	%
	Yes, it is perfect;	39.1
	No, I find it inappropriately massive and unsafe;	9.8
	No, it is inappropriate, the bridge was not necessary;	7.5
	The bridge is large and beautiful, but it could be slightly lower;	21.8
	Another solution should have been chosen;	11.3
	It is hard to say, I have not seen the territory yet.	10.5
4	Will you consider the Pasta sala Island for performing summer entertainment and walks when the territory is fully reconstructed?	%
	I will visit the area every time I plan my leisure time;	21.8
	I will visit the area only to see how the Pasta sala Island is transformed;	35.3
	I will not visit the area because I plan my free time outside the city territory;	4.5
	I will not visit the area because such places do not appeal to me;	0.8
	Pasta sala Island will now become one of my favourite, regularly visited territories for leisure and spending free time;	18.8
	Non of the above mentioned.	18.8

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Kopsavilkums. Raksts aptver pētījumu par pilsētas silueta transformāciju 21. gadsimtā, kur par pamatu tiek analizēts Jelgavas pilsētas siluets austrumu pusē. Pētījumā definētā teritorija piedzīvojusi kardinālus ainaviskās telpas transformācijas procesus, kas iezīmē jaunas skatu līnijas, apjomus un formas pilsētas siluetā. Pētījums veikts laika posmā 2013. gada sākuma līdz martam. Pētījumā esošās situācijas noteikšanai tika izmantota salīdzinošā metode, kur analizēti 2 pilsētu – Bauskas rietumu un Jelgavas austrumu puses siluets. Pētījuma procesā veiktas salīdzinošas fotofiksāciju analīzes, kur Jelgavas pilsētas DA puses siluets salīdzināts ar Bauskas pilsētas Z puses vēsturiskajiem skatiem, kādi šie silueti ir bijuši un kādas pārmaiņas piedzīvotas 21. gadsimtā. Pētījumā izmantotie vēsturiskie fotomateriāli iegūti no Latvijas Nacionālās bibliotēkas, digitālās bibliotēkas “Letonica” projekta “Zudusī Latvija” kolekcijas. Pētījuma procesā tika veikta statisko datu apstrāde (aptauja) 131 respondentam. Respondentu grupu veidoja Jelgavas pilsētas iedzīvotāji vecumā no 20–65 gadiem. Respondentu jautājumu klāsts ietvēra sešus jautājumus par rekonstruēto teritoriju Jelgavas pilsētā, kas tieši atrodas un iezīmē ainaviskās telpas izmaiņas pilsētas siluetā. Rezultātu apkopošanai un noteikšanai izmantota monogrāfiskā jeb aprakstošā metode, kas pamatojas uz pētījumā iegūtajām zinātniskajām atziņām un rezultātiem no respondentu grupas. Raksta mērķis, iegūt jaunas atziņas un sabiedrības viedokli par mūsdienīgu risinājumu integrēšanu pilsētvidē, kas izmaina pilsētas siluetu.

Mūsdienīgu risinājumu integrēšana pilsētvidē ir ļoti sarežģīts process. Sabiedrība ir pieradusi dzīvot kādā noteiktā un sev labi pārzināmā vidē. Tiklīdz tiek veiktas šīs kardinālās pārmaiņas, kas ietekmē ne tikai pilsētas siluetu, skatu punktus, apjomus u. c. aspektus, kā arī sabiedrības uztveri par kādām konkrētām teritorijām, tā vairākums šo procesu uztver ļoti kritiski, noraidoši un negatīvi. Šādu faktu pētījumā pārlicinoši pierādīja arī iegūtie dati no respondentiem. Līdz ar to šāda veida transformācijas procesos ir daudz vairāk jāiesaista sabiedrība. Nepieciešams daudz vairāk uz klausīt sabiedrības viedokli, jo tieši šī aktīvā daļa, kas dzīvo Jelgavas pilsētā ir tā, kas izmantos un meklēs sev atbilstošas atpūtas iespējas šajā pētījumā analizētajā teritorijā. Pētījumā konstatētie fakti un respondentu viedoklis par analizēto teritoriju Jelgavā ir vērtīgi ņemami un nozīmīgi arī citu turpmāku pētījumu veikšanai par transformācijas procesiem pilsētvides teritorijās un tās apkārtnē.