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DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR THE URBAN INTERPRETATION OF COURTYARD SPACES IN HISTORIC CITIES: DESIGN AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

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Abstract. The shift in the urban paradigm during the 20th century led to a significant reconsideration of the living space of city residents. The principles of the modernist worldview, which acquired the nature of a universal urban design strategy in the Athens Charter of 1931, initiated a negative attitude towards the block development that had prevailed before. The courtyard spaces inherent in it started to be perceived as insufficient, and their original concept as places of recreation and social interaction was redefined. As a result, the internal environments of blocks were spontaneously used by residents for various purposes, leading to their degradation and chaos. This was particularly relevant to Ukrainian cities, where the population of historic centres was densifying, with an increased impact on all types of spaces.

The crisis of modernist urban design and the expansion of postmodern values have returned attention to historical heritage as an auxiliary source of shaping and removed the intensity of the confrontation between the 'contemporary' modernist worldview and the 'historical' one. Subsequently, urban concepts have absorbed many ideas related to the environmental discourse, inclusiveness, barrier-free accessibility, pedestrian accessibility, and density. All of this has significantly changed the understanding of approaches and principles of interpretation of historic urban spaces, including residential courtyards.

The article considers promising urban design strategies that can be used for the contemporary interpretation of courtyard environments, primarily focused on design and social aspects. This is due to the methodological structure, which is based on a dual understanding of the priorities of this process. On the one hand, courtyard spaces are perceived as places of recreation and greening, and on the other hand, as environments for socialising and community bonding.

In this regard, four urban design strategies have been identified that may form the basis of certain areas of urban design in the future: a) functional universalisation; b) spatial diversification; c) communicative adaptability; d) variable accessibility. The first strategy refers to the integration of courtyard spaces into measures to introduce walkability and optimal density. In this case, we are dealing with introducing a number of functions into courtyard spaces that were typical of external street areas, but aimed at the nearest residents. The second strategy is aimed at returning to the ideology of green oases and recreational areas, with further expansion of spatial elements through vertical development. The strategy of communicative adaptability is related to the development of courtyards as places of gathering and solidarity of the resident's community. The last strategy is related to the proposal to provide access to the courtyards to external visitors at certain times.

Key words: urban design strategies, urban studies, courtyard spaces, public spaces, design, inclusiveness, adaptability, urban greening,

Introduction. Contemporary urban studies pay considerable attention to the issues of density [1] and sustainability [2] on the one hand, and the preservation of cultural heritage and the authenticity of the historical environment [3] on the other hand. These two priorities sometimes contradict each other, which requires the search for new, more comprehensive approaches to the interpretation of the modern urban environment. In this regard, courtyard spaces of residential buildings are an important object of theoretical reflection and practical experiments. This is due to the fact that in territorial and spatial terms they are not exploited territory reservoirs which allow providing a

number of qualities necessary for the modern city to the areas of historic buildings.

The main areas of involvement and transformation of these spaces are increasing the amount of greenery, promoting social cohesion, ensuring the concept of a city of short distances, and supporting cultural diversity. In addition, courtyard spaces interpreted by design means in a certain way become an element of additional valorisation and acquisition of symbolic capital by a city. Therefore, the theoretical task is to outline the concept of harmonisation and reconciliation of different approaches and requirements related to the involvement of the significant potential of the internal spaces of residential blocks of historic buildings, providing them with inclusive and adaptive qualities with maximum preservation of the authentic material substance and memorability of the place.

Analysis of sources and publications. The problem of interpreting courtyard spaces has been the subject of a number of studies that have examined both micro and macro aspects of this topic. For example, in the article by R. Gupta and M. Joshi 'Courtyard: A Look at the Relevance of Courtyard Space in Contemporary Houses' the potential of using courtyard areas in terms of their energy efficiency, in particular, heat conservation [4] is analysed. This area of thinking is specific to contemporary urban vision and opens up new possibilities for interpreting these fragments of urban fabric, although having a long history, in the context of which we can mention the article by M. Taleghani and M. Tenpierik 'Environmental Impact of Courtyards' [5]. Among the more voluminous works, we can mention books by D. Kaiser 'Courtyards: Intimate Outdoor Spaces' [6], D. Zhang 'Courtyard Housing and Cultural Sustainability: Theory, Practice and Product' [7], etc.

A significant number of studies are devoted to the design and architecture of courtyard spaces in particular cities and cultural and historical contexts. Examples of such works are articles by A. Erarslan 'A Comparative Analysis on the Spatial Organisation of the Traditional Courtyard House with Iwan in Southeastern Anatolia' [8], M. Masullo et al. 'Historical Cloisters and Courtyards as Quiet Areas' [9], T. Adebara 'Private Open Space as a Reflection of Culture: the Example of Traditional Courtyard Houses in Nigeria' [10], etc.

Based on the analysis of the sources, we can dwell upon two fundamental approaches to covering the topic under consideration. The first of them is related to the historical retrospective of the phenomenon of courtyard spaces, when the object of study is the regularities of composition, structure, and functional use. The second deals with the changing nature of courtyards and the possibility of their adaptation to the requirements of contemporary urban studies.

The **purpose** of the article is to outline the design and social aspects of urban design strategies for the urban interpretation of courtyard spaces in historic cities based on the analysis of sources and methods used.

Research objectives. In accordance with the purpose, a number of research objectives have been defined to determine the transformative and adaptive capabilities of courtyard spaces in areas of historic buildings. First and foremost, an important issue is to determine the basic values of the spatial organisation of urban areas; on the one hand, they must meet the criteria for the quality of living in a contemporary city, and on the other hand, perceive the material heritage as a valuable authentic material that needs to be preserved and maintained. In the future, this should lead to the emergence of a theoretically grounded strategy, or a number of strategies for the contemporary interpretation of courtyard spaces, as well as examples of their adaptation to specific urban spaces. Particular emphasis is placed on the design and social aspects, as the former make it possible to address many of the above interpretive challenges in a relatively flexible and affordable manner, while the latter link them to the concepts of solidarity and cohesion among urban residents with the aim of creating a more competitive and friendly living environment.

The materials and methodology of the research are a combination of the following two approaches: a) a study of the current state of courtyards and their use by residents enabling to establish the needs of the latter and their expectations regarding the spatial content of the living space closest to them; b) a study of the character of the urban environment that has developed in areas of historical buildings with authentic courtyard spaces.

The main material. Since the emergence of postmodernism, the issue of the urban approach to the organisation of historic centres has become more complex and problematic due to the coincidence

of many factors influencing their functional content. Historic centres have become magnets for tourism, business and government, as well as for living, which has significantly marked them out in comparison to other urban areas. While in the period of late modernism there was a tendency to settle in suburban private houses, later, due to high transport and time costs, the high-density concept grew in popularity [1]. All of this has led to the fact that historic centres and areas of premodern block development began to bear a heavy functional load, which has led to the emergence of a complex set of problems and requires the search for new approaches at both theoretical and practical levels. Additionally, it is worth highlighting that they should take into account not only the need to preserve valuable architectural heritage, but also find ways to ensure the quality of life in these areas that meets current urban values, such as those stated in the European Union strategies [11].

A study of the current state of forty courtyards in Lviv and their use by residents revealed a complex symbiosis of functions that spontaneously emerged as a result of the following factors: a) the location of retail and service establishments on the ground floors, which functionally try to expand into the courtyards (storage facilities, unloading ramps, etc.); b) the location of equipment serving the household needs of residents (drying clothes, stroller storage, etc.); c) improvised and amateur elements of improving the aesthetic level of the space by the residents themselves (installation of tables, benches, sculptures, flower beds, bicycle parking, etc.); d) improvised methods of ensuring private security (fences, grates, etc.). These most common functions are complemented by others related to the legacy of population densification during the Soviet period and the emergence of more apartments with smaller area. In addition, the study revealed a predominantly significant level of deterioration of the construction material, which requires revitalisation efforts [12].

The study of the nature of the urban environment in areas of historic buildings with authentic courtyard spaces in such districts of Lviv as Pryvokzalna, Novyi Svit, and Levytskoho Street showed differences depending on the location within the urban area. In particular, in districts further away from the centre, the main neighbours are commercial establishments, parking spaces, playgrounds and small areas of greenery. In the areas that can be attributed to the city centre, additional neighbourhood facilities related to hospitality and tourism infrastructure emerge.

These and other findings make it possible to dwell upon about the following patterns. The first of them is the attempts of residents to address the functional necessities lacking in the external, public space, such as parking for various types of transport, access to recreation and leisure areas (including children's), etc. The second is the factor of convergence of different purposes due to the functional heterogeneity of the use of historic buildings. The third is related to the attempt to expand one's own private space at the expense of the courtyard space through the extension of balconies, stairwells, complex wall configurations, etc.

In view of this, we can speak of two approaches to the development of design strategies for the urban interpretation of courtyard spaces in historic cities. One of them is to interpolate spontaneous initiatives into municipal programmes and plans for the development of urban areas, and the other is to apply the principles of contemporary urban studies to the courtyard spaces of historic areas, regardless of individual initiatives of residents. Obviously, these two 'maximalist' suggestions should be synthesised into a balanced strategy or vision that is both progressive and adaptive.

The analytical and evidence-based materials obtained make it possible to outline four possible strategies that could become the basis for more detailed programmes of interpretation of courtyard spaces in the future. They are based on the values of financial optimisation and social cohesion. The first value consists in finding opportunities that will make the process of contemporary interpretation of courtyard spaces as cheap as possible and, therefore, affordable even in middle-income urban communities. In a practical sense, it is related to design, which is supposed to significantly replace costly structural and construction transformations. The second consists in the formation of a strategy for a new urban community that is more united and cohesive [13], which is expected to achieve better indicators of attractiveness and quality of life. In this sense, courtyard spaces should be redefined as environments of collaboration, communication and socialising.

The first potential strategy is functional universalisation, which follows from the results of the methods used within this study. It involves understanding courtyard spaces as reservoirs of space that are needed to bring traditional historic blocks in line with the values of the contemporary city, primarily quick access to a wide range of goods and services. The main target audience here is the actual residents of the building or buildings in question, but with the possibility of attracting a wider range of visitors. First of all, the implementation of this strategy can solve the problem of accessibility to service elements, parking for small-sized urban transport (electric scooters, bicycles, scooters, etc.), leisure areas, etc. The design aspects that should be taken into account here are to solve the problem of lack of actual space, as well as to develop spatial elements with a reasonable level of self-sufficiency in operation, which will allow for the efficient and long-term operation of the proposed facilities. The social aspect, which is related to the design aspect, is the organisation of a space of inclusive presence and equal access, which will prevent some residents from perceiving the courtyard space as more 'theirs' and other residents perceiving it as less 'theirs'.

The strategy of spatial diversification entails elevating the concept of joint presence and interaction within courtyard environments to a higher level by redefining these spaces as green oases and micro-landscape zones. This approach integrates ecological, social, and architectural dimensions, creating a multifaceted enhancement of the urban experience. From an ecological perspective, beyond the dendrological considerations-such as selecting and arranging plant species to optimize environmental benefits-the strategy emphasizes the design elements that facilitate vertical spatial expansion. This vertical development might include the introduction of green walls, rooftop gardens, and other forms of biophilic design, contributing to an enriched urban microclimate and enhancing biodiversity within the cityscape.

Moreover, the social dimension of spatial diversification transcends mere accessibility improvements. It fosters a cooperative ethos among residents, encouraging communal activities such as shared plant care, harvesting, and maintenance of these green spaces. This collective engagement not only strengthens social bonds but also embeds a sense of stewardship and responsibility towards the shared environment. Additionally, spatial diversification necessitates a thorough analysis of the existing courtyard environment to identify and address any functional deficits, ensuring that these spaces meet the diverse needs of the community.

Another critical strategy, which can be termed communicative adaptability, focuses on transforming courtyard environments into hubs of community cohesion, aligning with the principles of co-housing. This strategy advocates for a flexible framework of activities and interactions that are tailored to the specific needs and preferences of the residents. The overarching goal is to cultivate a culture of friendship and solidarity, which can be viewed as a form of social capital that enhances the overall attractiveness and livability of the urban area. By fostering a strong, supportive community, residents can collectively engage in initiatives aimed at improving housing and environmental conditions, effectively interact with municipal authorities, and advocate for their rights. This, in turn, can lead to a heightened sense of security, inclusiveness, and community identity. The design aspect of this strategy could involve creating communal spaces that memorialize the collective experiences and milestones of the community, thereby reinforcing the social fabric.

While intra-building communication is vital for fostering internal community cohesion, it is equally important to recognize the courtyard community as an integral part of the larger urban ecosystem. This brings us to the fourth strategy, which may be referred to as the strategy of changing accessibility. This strategy proposes the occasional transformation of courtyard spaces into public areas, thereby enhancing their multifunctionality and integrating them more fully into the urban fabric. By opening up these spaces to the public, the historic urban fabric can be endowed with the qualities necessary for a modern, vibrant city. This approach also offers the potential for municipal investment in the maintenance and enhancement of these courtyards, contributing to their revitalization. The design aspects associated with this strategy include the development of features that emphasize the historical and cultural significance of these spaces, such as memorials, plaques, or art installations that contribute to the site's memorability and attractiveness as a tourist

destination. Socially, this strategy facilitates the integration of the building community into the broader urban context, enabling them to participate in economic activities related to tourism and hospitality, and fostering a dynamic interaction between residents and the city's diverse population.

In addition to these strategies, there is a burgeoning potential associated with the development of immersive presence technologies. Although still in its nascent stages, these technologies offer the possibility of augmenting the physical environment of courtyard spaces, providing new avenues for social interaction and collective activities even in limited physical spaces. Immersive technologies could potentially mitigate the constraints of physical space, allowing for virtual expansions of these environments and enabling residents to engage in shared experiences that transcend the physical limitations of their surroundings. This could include virtual gardening, augmented reality tours, or digital communal gatherings, adding a layer of technological sophistication to the traditional concept of courtyard spaces. As these technologies evolve, they may offer innovative solutions for enhancing both the social and spatial dimensions of urban living in historic city centers. In a broader context, augmented reality technologies are likely to influence the rethinking of living environments at various levels [15], including the courtyard.

Promising avenues for future research encompass a detailed examination of the multifaceted communication dynamics that emerge within various functional combinations of courtyard space environments. A key area of interest involves investigating the nature and patterns of interactions that occur among different user groups-residents, tenants, employees of offices and shops, and occasional visitors-each of whom may utilize the space for distinct purposes. Understanding these communication patterns is crucial for identifying potential synergies or conflicts that arise when diverse actors share a common courtyard space.

Moreover, research should explore the role of design interventions in addressing the challenges posed by the simultaneous use of these environments by multiple stakeholders. This includes the development of strategies and design solutions that facilitate harmonious coexistence and enhance the functionality of the courtyard for all users. For instance, spatial zoning, adaptive furniture, and flexible layout configurations could be investigated as means to accommodate different activities and interactions within the same space without leading to congestion or territorial disputes.

In addition, an important aspect of future research should focus on identifying the various benefits that effective communication within these shared spaces can yield. These benefits may extend beyond mere functional coexistence and include the fostering of a sense of community, the enhancement of social capital, and the promotion of collaborative behaviors among users. For example, the interaction between residents and commercial tenants could lead to mutually beneficial arrangements, such as local businesses offering discounts to residents or organizing community events that increase foot traffic and customer loyalty. Similarly, the presence of office workers in the courtyard could contribute to a dynamic, vibrant atmosphere during working hours, which might otherwise be underutilized.

Furthermore, research could investigate the potential of courtyard space environments to serve as informal meeting spaces where spontaneous interactions between different user groups occur, leading to the exchange of ideas and the development of social networks. This aspect of communication could be particularly relevant in urban settings, where opportunities for such interactions may be limited due to the compartmentalization of residential, commercial, and professional spaces.

Finally, the exploration of how these communication dynamics and design interventions can be optimized to maximize the overall well-being of all users is another critical area of research. This could involve the application of environmental psychology principles to design spaces that are not only functional but also psychologically supportive, promoting relaxation, socialization, and a sense of belonging among users. In this context, the study of courtyard environments could contribute to broader discussions on the role of shared spaces in urban sustainability and community resilience, offering insights into how design can facilitate positive social outcomes in increasingly dense and diverse urban landscapes.

Conclusions:

The study of the condition and usage patterns of forty courtyards in Lviv city has uncovered a complex and organically developed symbiosis of functions within these spaces. This multifaceted functional integration has emerged spontaneously as a result of several key factors:

- a) The strategic location of retail and service establishments on the ground floors of buildings, which often seek to extend their operational footprint into the courtyard spaces, leading to the incorporation of elements such as storage facilities, unloading ramps, and ancillary spaces. This encroachment reflects the dynamic interaction between commercial activities and residential spaces, where the boundaries between public and private domains are frequently negotiated and redefined.
- b) The placement of equipment and installations that cater to the everyday household needs of residents, including facilities for drying clothes, storage for strollers, and other practical uses. These elements highlight the functional adaptability of courtyard spaces, which serve as essential extensions of domestic spaces, accommodating a range of utilitarian purposes that support daily life in urban environments.
- c) The presence of improvised and often amateur efforts by residents to enhance the aesthetic quality of the courtyard spaces. These include the installation of furniture such as tables and benches, decorative elements like sculptures and flower beds, and functional amenities such as bicycle parking. These resident-driven initiatives underscore the importance of individual and collective agency in shaping the environmental and social character of courtyard spaces, contributing to a sense of ownership and community identity.
- d) The adoption of improvised methods by residents to ensure private security within the courtyard spaces, including the installation of fences, grates, and other protective measures. These interventions reflect the dual role of courtyards as both shared communal spaces and zones where personal and property security concerns are addressed, illustrating the balance between openness and defensibility in urban residential settings.

Based on the findings of the study, four urban design strategies have been delineated and defined, each of which holds the potential to guide future urban design practices and policies:

- a) Functional Universalization: this strategy advocates for the integration of courtyard spaces into broader urban planning initiatives aimed at enhancing walkability and achieving optimal population density. By treating courtyards as integral components of the urban fabric, this approach seeks to maximize their utility and connectivity, facilitating more sustainable and livable urban environments. The concept of functional universalization envisions courtyards as multifunctional spaces that contribute to the overall accessibility and fluidity of the urban landscape.
- b) Spatial Diversification: this strategy focuses on reinvigorating the ideological concept of courtyards as green oases and recreational areas, while also promoting the vertical expansion of spatial elements. By incorporating vertical gardens, green walls, and other forms of vertical landscaping, this approach aims to enhance the ecological value and aesthetic appeal of courtyard spaces, transforming them into verdant sanctuaries within the urban core. Spatial diversification seeks to counteract the effects of urban densification by providing residents with accessible green spaces that support both environmental sustainability and human well-being.
- c) Communicative Adaptability: this strategy involves the introduction of functions into courtyard spaces that were traditionally associated with external street areas, but which are specifically designed to serve the immediate residential community. By reimagining courtyards as semi-public spaces that facilitate social interaction and community engagement, this approach emphasizes the role of courtyards as venues for local events, gatherings, and other forms of communal activity. Communicative adaptability aligns with the principles of co-housing and community-oriented urban design, fostering a sense of solidarity and collective identity among residents.
- d) Variable Accessibility: this strategy proposes a flexible approach to the accessibility of courtyards, allowing for controlled access by external visitors at designated times. By opening courtyards to the public on a limited basis, this approach seeks to balance the private needs of residents with the public interest in preserving and utilizing historic urban spaces. Variable

accessibility encourages the integration of courtyards into the broader urban experience, potentially enhancing their cultural and economic value while also ensuring that their primary function as residential spaces is maintained.

These strategies, when considered together, offer a comprehensive framework for the future development and management of courtyard environments in urban settings. By addressing the functional, ecological, social, and accessibility aspects of courtyards, these strategies provide a roadmap for enhancing the quality and sustainability of urban living, while also preserving the unique character and historical significance of these spaces.

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ARCHITECTURE

ПРОЄКТНІ СТРАТЕГІЇ УРБАНІСТИЧНОЇ ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЇ ДВОРОВИХ ПРОСТОРІВ ІСТОРИЧНИХ МІСТ: ДИЗАЙНЕРСЬКІ ТА СОЦІАЛЬНІ АСПЕКТИ

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Анотація. Зміна урбаністичної парадигми впродовж XX століття привела до суттєвого переосмислення життєвого простору мешканців міст. Принципи модерністського світогляду, які набули характеру універсальної проектної стратегії в Афінській хартії 1931 року, дали початок негативному ставленню до квартальної забудови, котра панувала до того. Дворові простори, котрі були їй властиві стали сприйматись як недостатні, а їх початкова концепція, як місця рекреації та спілкування зазнала переосмислення. Внаслідок цього, внутрішні середовища кварталів стали стихійно використовуватись мешканцями для різних потреб, що привело до їх хаотизації та деградації. Особливо це стосується міст України, де відбувався процес ущільнення населеності історичних центрів із збільшенням навантаження на всі типи просторів.

Криза модерністського проектування та поширення цінностей постмодерну повернули увагу до історичної спадщини, як допоміжного джерела формотворення і зняли гостроту протистояння між «сучасним» модерністським світоглядом та «історичним». В подальшому, урбаністичні концепції ввібрали в себе багато ідей, пов'язаних із екологічним дискурсом, інклюзивністю, безбер'єрністю, пішохідною доступністю та щільністю. Все це суттєво змінило розуміння підходів та принципів інтерпретації історичних міських просторів, в тому числі дворів житлової забудови.

У статті розглянуто перспективні проектні стратегії, котрі можуть бути використані для сучасного трактування дворових середовищ, передовсім зосереджених на дизайнерських та соціальних аспектах. Це пов'язано із методологічною структурою, котра виходить із двоякого розуміння пріоритетів даного процесу. З одного боку, дворові простори сприймаються як місця рекреації та озеленення, а з іншого – як середовища для комунікації та гуртування колективу мешканців.

В зв'язку із цим, виділено чотири проектні стратегії, котрі в майбутньому можуть лягти в основу окремих напрямків міського дизайну: а) функціональної універсалізації; б) просторової диверсифікації; в) комунікаційної адаптивності; г) мінливої доступності. Під першою стратегією розуміється інтеграція дворових просторів у заходи із впровадження короткої доступності та оптимальної щільності. У цьому випадку мова іде про внесенні у дворові простри ряду функцій, котрі були властиві зовнішнім вуличним ареалам, які, однак спрямовані на найближчих мешканців. Друга стратегія спрямована на повернення до ідеології зелених оаз та рекреаційних зон, з подальшим розширенням просторових елементів за рахунок вертикального розвитку. Стратегія комунікаційної адаптивності пов'язана з розвитком внутрішніх дворів як місць гуртування та солідаризації будинкового колективу. Остання стратегія пов'язана з пропозицією надавати в певний час доступ до внутрішніх дворів зовнішнім відвідувачам.

Ключові слова: проєктні стратегії, урбаністика, дворові простори, громадські простори, дизайн, інклюзивність, адаптивність, міське озеленення.

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