

**«SPIRIT OF PLACE» AS AN INTANGIBLE FACTOR INFLUENCING SPATIAL PLANNING**

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**Abstract.** The article explores the role of the «spirit of place» as an intangible factor in organizing urban spatial planning. It examines the significance of cultural heritage and national identity in shaping urban landscapes, describing how they foster a sense of belonging and attachment to a place. A method is proposed for integrating these factors into the urban planning process, enabling the creation of more sustainable and attractive urban spaces that resonate with historical and cultural contexts.

The concepts of «city spirit», «spiritual comfort», and «architectural code» are analyzed in detail, highlighting their features and interconnections. The «spirit of place» is considered a key element that shapes the unique identity of a location, influencing people's emotional perception and behavior. The importance of considering historical, cultural, religious, and social aspects in the formation of the architectural environment is emphasized.

Special attention is given to intangible aspects such as cultural heritage, traditions, folklore, and spirituality, which need to be integrated into urban planning decisions. This is particularly relevant in the context of post-war city reconstruction, where human needs, social cohesion, and the preservation of national identity should be prioritized.

Methods for using the «spirit of place» to create or transform architectural environments that consider the needs of different population groups and promote the preservation of cultural uniqueness are also proposed. An analysis of contemporary studies reveals the necessity of developing clear recommendations for implementing innovative solutions that take into account the ecological, socio-economic, political-legal, historical, and cultural characteristics of Ukrainian cities. Equally important is the creation of approaches for involving the public in the process of urban space transformation and modeling practical applications of the «spirit of place» concept in architectural design. Integrating these approaches will allow for the creation of comfortable urban spaces with high aesthetic and cultural value, contributing to the formation of a positive city ensemble and enhancing the quality of life for residents. The research emphasizes the importance of preserving historical memory, which will foster a deep sense of national belonging among the Ukrainian people.

The article proposes approaches that can form the basis for creating effective urban development strategies, taking into account the cultural and historical aspects that define the uniqueness of each place.

**Keywords:** «spirit of place», intangible factors, spatial planning, urban environment, architecture planning, national identity, spiritual comfort, «architectural code».

**Introduction.** Spirituality is an integral part of human life that creates a sense of comfort, higher meaning, and the eternity of existence. The spiritual aspect of cities is often overlooked by both society and architects, yet it plays a significant role in creating impressions of the urban ensemble, its «face». Cities should be designed to be spiritually comfortable. To achieve this, spiritual criteria such as faith, culture, mentality, etc., need to be included in architectural and urban planning decisions, especially in the context of modern challenges. The historical and cultural context of a city plays a crucial role in forming its spiritual identity. Understanding the collective consciousness and traditions of the people is key to fostering the spiritual enrichment of the

architectural environment [1].

Intangible elements such as cultural heritage, history, traditions, folklore, spirituality, etc., need to be taken into account in urban planning decisions. This is especially relevant in the reconstruction of cities after the war, where human needs and social factors should be prioritized, preserving the memory of history, culture, and national identity for future generations over mere physical infrastructure [2].

Understanding the historical and national contexts of architectural and urban development is crucial for preserving the integrity and unity of ethnic cultures. This involves considering the importance of large-scale regional cultural characteristics to support the preservation of cultural identity [3].

The key idea of the article is the integration of historical and cultural aspects, particularly the factor of the «spirit of place», into urban planning processes, which can significantly improve the quality of life for residents, fostering the development of nationally distinctive urban environments. This will not only enhance the aesthetic value of cities but also create a deeper sense of national belonging and identity among the Ukrainian people.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The impact of the «spirit of place» on the development, construction, and transformation of the architectural environment is indirectly and, rarely, directly examined in the studies of contemporary domestic and foreign scholars. In the direction of the social and economic aspects of urban development, researchers such as Gabriel M., Kosmyi M., and Gabriel T. [1] consider spiritual comfort and the «spirit of the city» as an urban phenomenon that emphasizes the importance of social aspects of urban environment development. In their works, Gabriel M., Gabriel M., and Forkutsa L. [2] study the formation of the spatial planning knowledge base in Ukraine, which is important for improving the efficiency of urban territory management. Kosmyi M. [4] also analyzes the semiotic nature of the spatial structure of the modern city, which allows understanding the influence of symbolic and communicative aspects on the perception of the urban environment.

Regarding spatial organization and planning, Gabriel M. and Dobrovolska M. [5] study the concepts of revival and spatial development of Ukraine and its regions, which are important for the strategic planning of urban space transformation. Approaches to spatial planning are also analyzed by Petrakovska O. and Mykhailova M. [6], Gabriel M., Dobrovolska M., Dobrovolska M., and Forkutsa L. [7], providing an understanding of the evolution, current state of this field, and the implementation of planning solutions. Gabriel M., Kosmyi M., and Gabriel M. [8] also consider the intangible contexts in the concept of the «smart» city, which is important for understanding the integration of new technologies in urban planning.

Another important aspect of the «spirit of place» concerns the transformation of urban space and cultural landscape. In particular, the studies of Hladka A. [9], Parneta M. [10], Silnyk O., and Solovii L. [11] explore the transformations of the cultural landscape, the influence of landscape-spatial factors on the formation of the media architecture and urban spaces, and analyze the formation of residential areas. These studies provide an understanding of the general trends of changes in Ukrainian cities, the impact of external factors on the perception of the urban environment, and the historical aspects of urban space development. The analysis of the achievements and development of architectural and urban construction heritage objects of Ukraine, which is important for considering the historical context during the transformation of urban centers, conducted by Balaniuk Y. [12] and the work of Buravchenko S. [13], dedicated to scenario models of the perception of architectural objects in pedestrian spaces, which is important for understanding human interaction with the urban environment, deserve special attention.

Based on the analysis of recent research and publications, it would be appropriate to form definitions of the following concepts: «spirit of the city», spiritual comfort, «architectural code», «spirit of place».

The «spirit of the city» is an intangible factor that defines the identity and character of a city, influencing how residents and visitors feel the urban life, history, and culture of the city [1].

Spiritual comfort is a feeling of inner peace, safety, and well-being that people experience in the urban environment, provided it is properly formed, reflected in local customs, traditions, and other regional characteristics [1].

The «architectural code» can be considered a semiotic system that conveys meaning through design, which may include local ornaments, architectural and design elements unique to this area, and the planning of urban spaces that may also vary depending on the historical-geographical region. It reflects the relationship between the built environment and the cultural identity of the city, influencing how the population perceives and interacts with the surrounding environment. The «architectural code» refers to a set of principles that govern the design and construction of urban spaces. It encompasses various aspects, including aesthetics, functionality, spiritual, and historical-cultural significance of buildings in the city [4].

Modern research suggests that the issue of the «spirit of place» requires separate consideration and more thorough research, as it leaves room for the following tasks:

- developing specific recommendations for implementing innovative solutions, considering the social, economic, historical, and cultural characteristics of Ukrainian cities;
- developing mechanisms for public involvement in the process of urban space transformation;
- developing recommendations for using intangible factors, particularly the «spirit of place», for constructing the architectural environment.

**Objective and Tasks.** The aim of the article is to deepen the understanding of the «spirit of place», the influence of cultural and historical factors on its formation, and its impact on the development of new urban strategies that ensure the harmonious integration of historical-cultural and nationalist ideas into modern concepts of architectural environment construction. According to the aim, the following objectives are addressed:

- to define the «spirit of place» as an intangible factor in architecture;
- to determine which category of intangible factors the «spirit of place» belongs to;
- to analyze the main factors influencing the «spirit of place»;
- to develop recommendations for using the «spirit of place» in the construction of the architectural environment.

**Materials and Research Methodology.** In this article, to comprehensively analyze the concept of the «spirit of place», the factors influencing it, and to define its areas of influence, the following scientific research methods were used:

- the systematic review method involved reviewing existing studies and publications on the topic of the «spirit of place», spiritual comfort, «architectural code», and other related concepts presented in modern scientific works;
- the categorization and classification method was used to classify the «spirit of place» as an intangible factor and to analyze it in the context of various categories of intangible factors;
- the contextual analysis method was applied to examine the «spirit of place» in different contexts, including «smart» cities, cultural landscapes, historical development of cities, national identity, etc.;
- the deductive method was used to draw conclusions about the specifics of the «spirit of place» and its impact on spatial planning, based on general theoretical provisions about intangible factors;
- the synthesis method allowed integrating various aspects of the «spirit of place» to create recommendations for its use in architecture and urban planning.

**Main Material and Results.** *I. Categorization of the «Spirit of Place» as an Intangible Factor.* To categorize the «spirit of place» as an intangible factor, it is necessary to define it. The «spirit of place» is a narrower concept than the «spirit of the city». It is also an intangible aspect, but it defines the identity and character of a more specific location, which can be an individual object or a particular area. It is formed under the influence of history, culture, religion, etc. It is the factor that creates certain psycho-emotional connections between a person and a place, imposing appropriate behavior specific to that place and eliciting special emotions and internal experiences. There might be a misconception that the «spirit of place» is synonymous with the term «semantics in architecture», but there is a fundamental difference: the «spirit of place» and semantics in architecture, although related to the understanding and perception of the architectural environment, focus on different aspects. The first term concentrates on the cultural and spiritual context of the place, while the second on the symbolic and communicative functions of architectural forms.

Intangible factors include: mental-ethical, aesthetic-landscape, political-administrative (normative), historical-cultural, and religious-spiritual [14]. The question arises as to which of these categories the «spirit of place» best belongs to. Determining its category may depend on the context in which this concept is considered, as well as the characteristics of the locality and its historical development. This can lead to different perceptions and interpretations of the «spirit of place» depending on the cultural, social, and political conditions prevailing at a particular time.

It is advisable to consider the «spirit of place» in the context of each of these categories to determine to which one it belongs. Mental-ethical factors are the intangible embodiment of the existing needs of society. They are reflected in architecture through the patterns of placement of buildings, structures, transportation hubs, etc., in a city, oriented to the values and convenience of society at a particular time. Here, it is appropriate to mention the concept of a «smart» city, which is significantly influenced by mental-ethical factors [14]. The «spirit of place» is one of the key aspects in building «smart» cities, emphasizing the importance of cultural identity, national values, and unique features that define the «spirit of the city». In the development of a «smart» city, it is important to integrate this intangible factor along with technological achievements in science and technology. This ensures that city development focuses not only on efficiency and technology but also on improving quality of life and preserving historical and cultural heritage [8]. Integrating the «spirit of place» into «smart» city planning can justify efforts to achieve sustainable development. By prioritizing local values and contributions of folk creativity and inventiveness, cities can develop projects that address environmental issues while enhancing the overall quality of life for residents. This approach aligns with the idea of creating a comprehensive system that considers both material and intangible aspects of city life [8, 15]. Thus, the «spirit of place» embodies not very pronounced features of mental-ethical intangible factors.

In the concept of aesthetic-landscape intangible factors, the «spirit of place», as one of the main components of cultural landscapes, shapes the characteristics and nature of the urban environment. It is important to consider that the material essence of a cultural landscape is determined not only by landmarks with corresponding legal statuses but also by places and landmarks valued and associated by local residents with their histories and feelings [9]. The «spirit of place» influences the visual perception and emotional connection of people with their surroundings. It plays a significant role in creating a sense of belonging to a place and attracting tourists through the beauty of natural and urban landscapes. In the architectural composition of a city, the «spirit of place» intertwines with the concept of aesthetic and landscape intangible factors, influencing the overall well-being of the built environment. Understanding the «spirit of place» is crucial for creating meaningful and colorful spaces that resonate with people on a deep spiritual level [10, 14]. From this, it can be concluded that the «spirit of place» affects aesthetic-landscape intangible factors, raising doubts about whether it belongs to them.

The «spirit of place» cannot be attributed to the category of political-administrative intangible factors in architecture, as it is more of a cultural and emotional component influencing the perception of a place [6, 14]. Although political-administrative factors may indirectly influence the «spirit of place» through regulations and political strategies related to the preservation of historical-cultural heritage or the development of the urban environment, the «spirit of place» itself is unlikely to depend on such factors [13, 14]. On the contrary, it plays a significant role in forming these normative factors, dictating to the authorities through the voices of the population a list of places and objects that should have special statuses [7, 13, 14].

The concept of the «spirit of place» can be interpreted through religious and spiritual senses, as it encompasses the intangible essence and power believed to dwell in certain places, influencing people and their interactions in these places [14, 16]. In a religious and spiritual context, the spirit of place may be associated with sacred sites, pilgrimage places, or areas believed by locals to have mystical connections, where people feel something beyond physical sensations [14, 17]. The sacred significance of the «spirit of place» can be seen in how certain objects evoke feelings of awe, reverence, and veneration, prompting people to participate in cultural mysteries, traditions, etc., to connect with the spiritual force that fills these spaces. The religious-spiritual component of the «spirit of place» imbues architectural elements with meanings, influencing the activities of sacred spaces, temples, churches, mosques, or other sacred objects intended to improve people's spiritual state [14, 16]. Based on this, the

«spirit of place» can be considered a religious-spiritual intangible factor in architecture.

The concept of the «spirit of place» also has historical significance, as it intertwines with the evolution of architectural styles over years, decades, centuries, millennia. It reflects the cultural heritage and traditions of a specific place, preserving the memory of the rises and struggles of the people, which find their embodiment in the interiors, exteriors, and ensembles of the architectural environment. Artists and scientists have explored the «spirit of place» through various artistic artifacts, preserving the significance of historical and cultural elements in urban landscapes. It is important to understand the evolutions of architectural elements, urban infrastructure, and social-moral changes reflecting the historical context of the place. The «spirit of place» serves as a historical-cultural factor. This creates special emotional connections between people and a particular place, evoking feelings of anger, joy, calm, nostalgia, etc., reflecting cultural values, beliefs, traditions, personal experiences, etc., permeating that particular place. Artists and architects often draw inspiration from the cultural essence of the place to create meaningful designs [14, 16, 18]. Through the lens of historical and cultural factors, the «spirit of place» becomes a dynamic element that evolves with social changes, technological advancements, and urban transformations. It acts as a link between the past, present, and future, preserving the cultural heritage and historical memory of the place in its architectural environment [14, 17, 18]. In summary, the «spirit of place» belongs simultaneously to two categories of intangible factors: religious-spiritual and historical-cultural.

*II. Preconditions Forming the «Spirit of Place».* Several factors influencing the «spirit of place» can be identified:

- The historical component of the place, including its architectural evolution and historical heritage, significant events that occurred there, forms the basis of the «spirit of place». Understanding historical events and oral folklore, such as myths and legends, embedded in the architectural environment, has a colossal impact on the success of forming the «spirit of place» when building new or rethinking the previous architectural environment [1, 6, 14].

- The cultural component of the place, encompassing its inherent values, beliefs, and traditions, plays a significant role in forming the «spirit of place» [1, 13, 14, 16].

- Architectural styles and urban planning principles applied in different regions create various «spirits of places». Design elements, unique building materials and constructions, and specific spatial layouts reflect the cultural color of the locality, forming its spirit [1, 5, 11, 13, 14].

- Emotional connections people have with a place, influenced by personal experiences, memories, and interactions in the surrounding environment, create a unique «spirit of place». For someone, it might be their old school, for others their first workplace, where they finally gained independence from their parents, or perhaps a place associated with their worst memories [5, 19].

*III. Recommendations for Using the «Spirit of Place» in Building the Architectural Environment.* The following approach is proposed for utilizing the «spirit of place» in building the architectural environment:

- Begin by delving into the historical significance of the place where the architectural environment exists or is planned. This requires analyzing historical narratives, legends, local stories, architectural styles inherent to the place, and its historical-cultural landscape, to use elements imbued with the «spirit of place» [12, 18].

- After studying the historical-cultural picture, start integrating new cultural elements inherent to the place into the architectural environment to emphasize the cultural identity of the locality. It is crucial not to ignore symbols, ornaments, motifs, and other cultural features of the region to preserve or create a unique architectural environment where new traditions, customs, and values will continue to exist or emerge, contributing to a sense of belonging to a unique regional culture and tradition in such an architectural environment [9, 10, 12, 17].

- It is extremely important, when creating or rethinking the architectural environment, to preserve or create new emotional connections between people and the surrounding environment. Design elements that evoke positive emotions and memories, memorials to tragedies, victories, and significant events, buildings constructed in reinterpreted historical styles enhance the connection with the place, evoking a variety of emotions that will make people want to return there again and again [5, 6, 19].

– Do not forget about implementing sustainable development strategies aimed at preserving the natural environment, which will contribute to the preservation of the «spirit of place». Promote the use of environmentally friendly building materials, energy-efficient systems, and the creation of green spaces that harmoniously blend with the surrounding environment and contribute to ecology conservation [19].

– It is recommended to involve local communities in the architectural environment design process to ensure that their values, desires, and needs are reflected. Close collaboration with local residents, investors, and experts from various fields, including culture, history, and ethnography, will allow the creation or rethinking of the architectural environment so that it corresponds to the aspirations and color of the local population, fostering a sense of ownership and control over their land [5, 19].

– Lastly, apply adaptive reuse strategies for renovating and revitalizing existing structures while preserving their historical and cultural significance. Transforming old buildings into functional spaces that honor the historical-cultural heritage of the place, blending the past with the present, to create a dynamic architectural environment that tells the story and provides an insight into the unique culture of the locality [13].

### **Conclusions:**

Summarizing the research, it is worth emphasizing that the «spirit of place» is an important aspect that belongs simultaneously to two categories of intangible factors: religious-spiritual and historical-cultural. It influences the formation of the architectural environment's identity. Using historical, cultural, religious, and aesthetic contexts in urban planning processes contributes to creating spiritually comfortable and nationally distinctive spaces.

The recommended approach to integrating an intangible factor like the «spirit of place» can create architectural environments that preserve and develop local customs, traditions, and other historical-cultural features of regions while meeting modern technological requirements, promoting social cohesion, and preserving and developing national ideas.

The research highlighted the importance and relevance of involving local communities in the processes of planning, designing, and constructing architectural spaces to preserve and popularize local colors, myths, legends, customs, and traditions, while not ignoring the needs and desires of modern individuals.

Using the «spirit of place» as an intangible factor in spatial planning is impossible without studying the locality's history, integrating new cultural elements into the historical-cultural concept of such a place, creating strong emotional ties between the local population and new concepts of rethought architectural environments, and implementing sustainable development strategies aimed at preserving and restoring ecology.

The appropriateness of renovation and revitalization when restoration is impossible or impractical to preserve unique architectural elements that embody the «spirit of place» has been emphasized.

Thus, considering the «spirit of place» is an integral part of the spatial planning process, allowing the creation of nation-oriented, ethnically distinctive cities with their «spirit of the city», unique features such as regional cuisines, unique architectural elements, traditions, and customs, attracting both residents and tourists.

Prospects for further research may focus on developing specific recommendations for implementing innovative solutions considering the social, economic, historical, and cultural characteristics of Ukrainian cities; developing mechanisms for involving the public in the process of urban space transformation; improving recommendations for using the «spirit of place» in building the architectural environment, and developing recommendations for using other intangible factors in constructing the architectural environment.

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## «ДУХ МІСЦЯ» ЯК НЕМАТЕРІАЛЬНИЙ ЧИННИК ВПЛИВУ НА ПРОСТОРОВЕ ПЛАНУВАННЯ

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**Анотація.** У статті досліджується роль «духу місця» як нематеріального чинника в організації просторового планування міського середовища. Розглядається значення культурного надбання та ідентичності народу у формуванні міських ландшафтів, описуючи, як вони сприяють виникненню відчуття приналежності та прив'язаності до місця. Пропонується спосіб інтеграції цих факторів у процес містобудування, що дозволяє створювати стійкіші та привабливіші міські простори, які резонують з історичним та культурним контекстом.

Детально аналізуються поняття «дух міста», «духовний комфорт» та «архітектурний код», виділяючи їх особливості та взаємозв'язки. «Дух місця» розглядається як ключовий елемент, що формує унікальну ідентичність локації, впливаючи на емоційне сприйняття та поведінку людей. Підкреслюється важливість врахування історичних, культурних, релігійних та соціальних аспектів при формуванні архітектурного середовища.

Особлива увага приділяється нематеріальним аспектам, таким як культурна спадщина, традиції, фольклор та духовність, які необхідно інтегрувати в містобудівні рішення. Це особливо актуально в контексті повоєнної реконструкції міст, де пріоритетом повинні бути людські потреби, соціальна згуртованість та збереження національної ідентичності.

Також запропоновані методи використання «духу місця» для створення чи трансформації архітектурного середовища, яке враховуватиме потреби різних груп населення та сприятиме збереженню культурної самобутності. Проведено аналіз сучасних досліджень в якому виявлено необхідність розробки чітких рекомендацій щодо впровадження інноваційних рішень, які будуть враховувати екологічні, соціально-економічні, політико-правові, історичні та культурні особливості українських міст. Також не менш важливим є створення підходів до залучення громадськості в процес трансформації міського простору та моделювання рішень щодо практичного застосування концепції «духу місця» в архітектурному проектуванні. Інтеграція цих підходів дозволить створити комфортні міські простори з високою естетичною та культурною цінністю, які сприятимуть формуванню позитивного ансамблю міста та підвищенню якості життя мешканців. Дослідження наголошує на важливості збереження історичної пам'яті, яка буде формувати в українського народу глибоке відчуття національної приналежності.

В статті запропоновані підходи, які можуть стати основою для створення ефективних стратегій міського розвитку та будуть враховувати культурні та історичні аспекти, що визначають унікальність кожного місця.

**Ключові слова:** «дух місця», нематеріальні чинники, просторове планування, архітектурне середовище, національна ідентичність, духовний комфорт, «архітектурний код».

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