

Visual Integrity of Historic Urban Landscapes

Hero Expert Workshop, Vilnius, 9.-11. May 2010



Edited by Nils Scheffler, Lead Expert of the HerO network, May 2010



VISUAL INTEGRITY

THEMATIC REPORT ABOUT SAFEGUARDING VISUAL INTEGRITY OF HISTORIC URBAN AREAS IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT BASED ON THE HERO EXPERT WORKSHOP IN VILNIUS, 9.-11.MAY 2010

Table of Contents

The Hero network	3
Introduction	
<i>Nils Scheffler, Lead Expert of the HerO network</i>	4
The visual integrity of historic urban landscapes	
<i>Dennis Rodwell, Architect-Planner, Scotland, United Kingdom</i>	5
Evaluation of the visual integrity in Vilnius	
<i>Gediminas Rutkauskas, Director of Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency</i>	8
Integration of new developments in the Old Town of Vilnius	
<i>Rūta Matonienė, Head of Development and Planning Division, Urban Development Department, Vilnius</i> ..	10
Vilnius City Development and Methods to protect townscape and visual identity	
<i>Mindaugas Pakalnis, Head architect of the Municipal Enterprise "Vilniaus Planas"</i>	14

THE HERO NETWORK

3

The URBACT II Thematic Network HerO - Heritage as Opportunity Sustainable Management Strategies for Vital Historic Urban Landscapes

The Vienna Memorandum on “World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture - Managing the Historic Urban Landscape” (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2005) states that the historic urban landscape cannot be merely seen as an accumulation of significant monuments but rather needs to be considered as a living organism and vital living space for its inhabitants.

However, the rapidly changing basic conditions of modern times pose a big challenge on the management of many historic urban areas, which can no longer be handled by traditional mono-sectoral policies. The imbalance of progress and the preservation of the historic urban fabric often results in either economic stagnancy or the loss of cultural heritage values and with it the loss of identity.

In this context, the URBACT II Thematic Network HerO aims to develop integrated and innovative management strategies and urban development policies to facilitate the right balance between the preservation of built cultural heritage and the sustainable, future-proof socio-economic development of historic urban landscapes and to strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of the old town area. Thereby emphasis will be placed on managing conflicting usage interests and capitalising the potential of cultural heritage assets for economic, social and cultural activities.

HerO Partner Cities are: Regensburg (Germany, Lead Partner), Graz (Austria), Naples (Italy), Vilnius (Lithuania), Sighișoara (Romania), Liverpool (United Kingdom), Lublin (Poland), Poitiers (France) and Valletta (Malta).

The project will be carried out in close co-operation with EAHTR - The European Association of Historic Towns and Regions.

The European Commission has awarded HerO the “Fast Track Label”, a specific instrument of the Regions for Economic Change initiative which aims to get the cities and the Managing Authorities of the European cohesion policy's Operational Programme working together to enhance the impact exchange activities have on local policies.

Contact

Lead Partner: City of Regensburg
Matthias Ripp (ripp.matthias@regensburg.de)
World Heritage Co-ordinator of the City of Regensburg and HerO Project Co-ordinator

Barbara Bühler (buehler.barbara@regensburg.de)
HerO Project Manager

Klaus Grepmeier (grepmeier.klaus@regensburg.de)
European Officer of the City of Regensburg

Lead Expert
URBAN EXPERT
Nils Scheffler (scheffler@urbanexpert.net)

Subscribe for the HerO newsletter:
hero@regensburg.de

Further information on the project:
www.urbact.eu/hero



INTRODUCTION

Nils Scheffler, Lead Expert of the HerO network

What does 'Visual Integrity' mean and why is its preservation of importance?

The term "Visual integrity" refers to the wholeness and intactness of the historic urban fabric and landscape. In particular it is about:

- The physical safeguarding and restoring of the (protected) historic fabric (monuments, historic buildings, open space);
- The preservation and re-establishment of view perspectives, silhouettes, townscape characteristics and panoramas;
- The preservation and reconstitution of visual relationships to the surrounding landscape.

Thus, the 'Visual integrity' is of high importance for safeguarding tangible cultural heritage values of historic urban landscapes as it affects the overall aesthetic impression of the historic area, its unhindered perceivability and its dominating effect from a distance.

Further it is of great significance for the identity of a place, which can strengthen the identification of the citizens and businesses with their town through civic pride, binding them emotionally. Further visual "intact" historic urban landscapes can serve to distinguish the city from other towns and regions in the global competition of attracting skilled people and investments by creating a distinct 'image'.

Within the HerO network the partners face similar challenges, preserving the visual integrity of their historic urban areas:

- Proper integration of new architecture and development projects, respecting the historic, spatial and townscape characteristics of its setting – good urban design (quality standards and their enforcement);
- Protection of visual key view perspectives, silhouettes, townscape characteristics and panoramas, which strongly contribute to the distinctiveness of the historic urban landscape;
- Proper integration of advertisement and commercial signs in public space, without harming the visual integrity of the historic urban landscape;
- Proper safeguarding of the historic fabric, in particular by inciting property owners to invest in their property, preserving the cultural heritage values and supporting the sustainable urban development.

Expert Workshop about 'Visual Integrity'

The HerO Expert Workshop in Vilnius (4th meeting of the HerO network) served the network partners to exchange experience dealing with these challenges in order to support the safeguarding of historic urban areas and their cultural heritage. Around 40 participants took part.

Vilnius has been a practical show case for the visual Integrity of Historic Urban Landscapes and the meeting provided a good insight for all network partners into dealing with the safeguarding of the visual integrity of historic urban areas in the context of the sustainable urban development.

Besides two walking tours to experience the Visual integrity of the Old Town "live", three presentations about that topic were given by the host city:

- Evaluation of the visual integrity in Vilnius,
- Integration of new developments in the Old Town of Vilnius,
- Vilnius City Development and Methods to protect townscape and visual identity.

The presentations were completed by a further presentation about "Visual integrity of historic urban landscapes" and lively discussion by the partners.

This report summarises the presentations about the 'Visual integrity', which also can be downloaded from the HerO website:

<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/cultural-heritage-city-development/hero/our-activities>.

Further 'Good-practice examples' about 'Visual integrity' can be found in the HerO Good-Practice Compilation: <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/cultural-heritage-city-development/hero/our-outputs>.

In the name of the Lead Partner, we would like to thank sincerely Gediminas Rutkauskas and Jurate Raugaliene and their organising team for hosting the 4th meeting and organising it so well. We are sure the participants will keep Vilnius in good memory and will return some day.

We thank all participants very much for their participation and look forward to our next meeting in Naples in November 2010 about the issue of mixed-uses in historic urban areas to continue our exchange of experience and cooperation.

THE VISUAL INTEGRITY OF HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPES

Dennis Rodwell, Architect-Planner, Scotland, United Kingdom

The Historic City and the Sustainable City

The Historic City may be considered a model for the Sustainable City as the characteristics of the sustainable City go along with the characteristics of historic cities:

Key Issues:

- Land: efficient use.
- Material and energy resources: renewable.
- Wastes: limitation and recycling.
- Environmental quality – including air quality.

Consensus:

- Compact, dense, mixed-use.
- Proximity: limit daily journeys.
- Prioritisation of walking and cycling.
- Polycentric development, expansion, and relationship to other cities.
- Historic cities considered as a material and socio-economic resource as well as a cultural one.
- Enhanced reason for their conservation and adaptive reuse.

As archetypal European historic city (pre-industrial) Rothenburg ob der Tauber can be taken. The town can be characterised through its identity – sense of place – human scale – mixed use – proximity – harmony. The city is clearly defined, compact, has few major buildings and a central market place and diffused artisan workshops. The communities are mixed, always socially, sometimes also by ethnic origin and religion. There is a balanced relationship to the locality – physically and ecologically – and a limited range of local constructional materials and craft skills.



© Dennis Rodwell

A 'Definition' of historic urban landscapes

The concept of historic urban landscapes seeks to convey the holistic understanding of inhabited historic cities:

- Tangible and intangible cultural heritage aspects;
- Related natural elements, both within and in their settings/surroundings.
- Thus: 'the combined works of nature and man'.

In February 2008, ICOMOS sought to define the concept as referring to:

"... the sensory perception of the urban system and its setting. A system of material components (urban layout, plot system, buildings, open spaces, trees, urban furniture, etc.) and the relationships among them, which are the result of a process, conditioned by social, economical, political and cultural constraints over time. The concept of [historic urban landscapes] contributes to link tangible and intangible heritage components and to assess and understand the town or urban area as a process rather than as an object."

This ICOMOS definition did not, however, mention natural elements.

Challenges

The challenges historic cities have to face today are the dramatic demographic and socio-economic changes, which go along with the pace of change and high dynamics of development in these cities. Hitherto and generally, these forces have concentrated in the most sensitive historic parts of the cities – physically and culturally.

Examples are high rise and other out-of-scale buildings within and neighbouring historic city centres as well as iconic modern/contemporary architecture which bring to light the conflict of heritage conservation versus modernist urban planning and architecture. Examples are

- London: Westminster and Tower – high rise developments,
- Saint Petersburg: Marinsky Theatre and Gazprom tower,
- Liverpool: 'Fourth Grace'.

Also pressures for large-scale floor-space for public administration, commerce, retail and services and the forecast of doubling of international tourist numbers by 2020 ('cultural tourism' and Disneyland) is threatening fabric, grain, functionality, distinctiveness and urban landscapes of historic cities.

Historic cities have to devise new solutions for the historic parts of cities that enable them to function in harmony with their expanding forms and secure a sustainable future for them. This means to recognise, embrace and highlight the positive aspects of incremental change, including those that:

- secure continuity of traditional mixed use, small scale functionality, and
- through a focus on sustainability, respond to concerns about climate change.

Alternative Urban Planning Models: Conflict – versus – Harmony

The typical 'views' methodology to preserve the visual integrity by the single vista picture postcard approach is challenged as the historic urban landscapes represent a concept to be *experienced* rather than *observed*.

Also the 'Western model' for post-industrial cities ('The Garden City': Ebenezer Howard and 'The Modern Movement': Le Corbusier) is conflicting with the safeguarding of historic urban landscapes. The model has resulted in

- Urban dispersal and transport dependence;
- Concentration of volatile redevelopment pressures in sensitive historic centres;
- Loss of material fabric / socio-economic identity;
- Degradation of inner city neighbourhoods and socio-economic problems.

An alternative vision of complementary development is the approach of Gustavo Giovannoni (1873–1947). He pioneered a vision of mutually supportive, harmonious coexistence, emphasising the complementary qualities and opportunities (examples are Urbino and Siena).



Historic city

- compact; small scale urban grain; proximity
- vibrant, distinctive socio-economic role
- contextual homogeneity

Modern city:

- open, larger scale + limitless possibilities for expansion
- alternative dynamics
- absence of contextuality = freedom from design constraint

Contemporary interventions

The harmonious integration of new developments into the urban landscape of any historic city depends on two key factors:

- A strategic urban plan that prevents the concentration of high value redevelopment pressures in their most sensitive historic parts and their settings and
- strictly enforced build height controls.



Another important aspect is the implementation of 'good urban design'. Practical experience has shown that the enforcement of 'good urban design' through guidance, laws and regulations is not sufficient, as it requires more human resources than cities can normally justify, and is rarely recoverable in penalties.

The management plan for the City of Bath World Heritage Site demonstrates an alternative approach. It has the over-arching ambition to insinuate heritage values into every aspect of urban manage-

ment, and to harness citizens' sense of common ownership of a culture of excellence in which good practice in the historic environment becomes the norm. This, of course, is not easy, but as a workable way forward it has more prospects of success than any amount of enforcement. Amongst the most successful 'ambassadors' in this are young people. Inspire their enthusiasm and they will inspire their peers and elders.

Another 'Good example' is the Scottish Borders, which provides not prescriptive guidelines, but obliges the architect to think and justify his design by going through a process of analysis against checklists:

- The wider area, its context and features – including natural features.
- The local area, its context and features.
- The building and the features that are appropriate to its neighbours.
- What (positive) contribution will my design make?

The checklist ought to encourage 'the agreement to differ within a recognised tolerance of behaviour'. Key words and phrases are: 'relate', 'fit', 'work with existing features rather than against', 'consider the form, proportion and window design', 'seek inspiration from the best'.

Thus, official guidance towards 'good urban design' is necessary, but depending 'how' it is done, its result can range from total disregard to their surroundings up to the integration with the established architectural language, from using modern materials to facadism.

Key management issues

Key Management Issues today include:

- The role of historic cities/ quarters and their relationship to their modern counterparts: Harmonious coexistence, through strategic planning (two and three dimensional).
- Modern interventions: Harmonious integration, through mutual respect (scale and design).
- Scale and proximity of functions: prioritise: Small scale mixed use, through detailed planning (including protection of artisan activities).
- Housing, generally the dominant historical use (floorspace): Protect the function, as well as social and cultural mix.
- Sustainable relationships: Strive for ecological balance within (wherever possible) and between cities and "reduce, reuse and recycle" and "stay close to source".
- Avoid domination by tourism.



EVALUATION OF THE VISUAL INTEGRITY IN VILNIUS

Gediminas Rutkauskas, Director of Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency

The article accents what the reader should have in mind when he or she is talking about the visual integrity and the management of it.

Challenges of historic towns

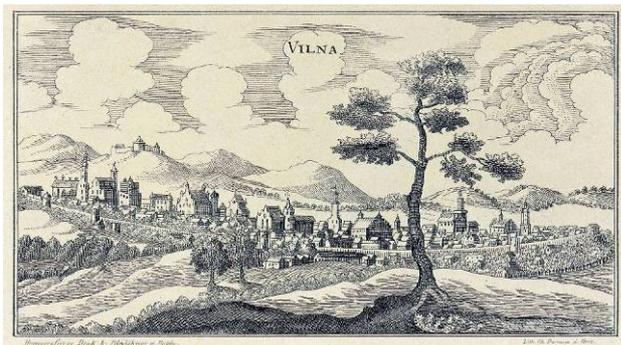
Historic towns are the living examples, which display the evolution of society and its cultural identity. They are integral part of a broader natural or man-made context that must be considered as indissoluble part of them. They are living organisms, and as an active part of contemporary life, subject to change.

The change brings positive as well as negative impacts to the historic towns. Challenges, derived from change and globalisation during the last decades, have aroused menacing historic towns, in particular

- mass tourism,
- urban traffic,
- destruction of intangible heritage,
- energy problems and climate change.

Also the development of mono-functional historic centres oriented to satisfy pure leisure needs or as consumer product for mass tourism endangers the traditional activities and functions which affect the identity and quality of life of these areas.

There is a strong demand to preserve these historic towns from a disruption with the social fabric and its cohesion.



Prerequisites for the integral management of preserving historic towns

Every historic area and its setting should be considered in their totality as a coherent entity whose balance and specific nature depends on the fusion of the parts of which it is composed. This includes human activities as much as the buildings, the spatial organisation and the surrounding.

The safeguarding of them ought to be an integral part of a general territorial understanding, which can not be divided from the overall urban structure. That demands coherent policies of economic and social development and ought to be considered in the structural and urban plans at any level, supported by the residents of historic urban areas.

Also an effective management system ought to be introduced. It should be conceived according to the type and characteristics of the historic town and its cultural and natural context.

The management system has to be flexible in order to be able to change according to the cultural policy, social needs, economic potentials, resources available and other factors. It should combine traditional practices, tools of urban planning in force and other formal and informal systems of planning control.

It should deal with

- the continuous development of historic urban areas,
- the analytical and careful regulation of the creative processes of architectural development,
- the cultural development challenges by elites, democracy and globalisation and
- the integral entity of political, cultural, economic and spiritual aspects.

Valuation of the visual integrity

The setting of historic towns, as important part of the visual integrity, ought to be taken as the natural or man-made context which influences the static or the dynamic perception of these areas and they are directly linked to the social, economic and cultural ties of the society.

Safeguarding historic towns and their setting implies to take the necessary steps to protect, conserve and restore and at the same time to harmoniously adapt them to the coherent development of contemporary life. This means, actions have to be implemented which ensure the harmonious relationship between the historic urban area and its setting. It concerns both tangible and intangible elements in order to protect the identity of a place without impeding their evolution.

Having the visual integrity in mind the natural and cultural urban landscape has to be thought as well as one entity, taking into account general panoramic views and their progress as well as the visual pro



spective of objects, streets and areas. Also the time and the change brought by it have to be considered in terms of images and sentiments due to the natural evolution of the living city (new structures and functions), the mental evolution and the change of values and perceptions (new human needs).

Also the introduction of contemporary elements in harmony with the surrounding should not be discouraged since such features can contribute to the enrichment and progress of an area. Change has not to be seen as a threat, but as an opportunity to increase the quality of life in historic towns. The adaptation of them to contemporary life or their revitalization requires the careful installation or improvement of public service facilities and new activities.

Important aspect of the visual integrity is its contribution to the identity building of a place and its spirit

– genius loci. The important elements of it have to be identified and safeguarded since they help determining a live environment, giving sense to the existing building layout.

One important charter dealing with the integral urban conservation management is the ICOMOS Charter of the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (Washington D.C. 1987 and under current update).

Elements of visual integrity to be preserved

Dealing with the visual integrity of historic towns, elements particularly to be preserved are:

- The relationship between the town or urban area with the setting of its surrounding, both natural and man-made.
- The various functions and traditions that the town and their urban areas have acquired over time and its adaptability to new functions without betraying its history and without losing its inhabitants.
- The cultural tradition, spirit of places and contemporary creative potentials that contributes to the identity of a place.

Any threat to these qualities would compromise the authenticity of the historic town and their historic urban areas.



INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE OLD TOWN OF VILNIUS

Rūta Matonienė, Head of Development and Planning Division, Urban Development Department, Vilnius

Distinctiveness of Vilnius

The distinctiveness of Vilnius is determined by its culture, traditions, the hilly landscape of the city with the fantastic views and in particular by the remaining Old Town with its medieval streets, peculiar composition of spaces and historic buildings. These are the architectural objects from the Gothic era till the beginning of the 20th century. The Old Town retains very close contact with the suburban areas.

Vilnius has been the most significant cultural and scientific centre in the region, as well as an important regional centre of crafts and trade, open to everybody over the centuries to Lithuanians, Byelorussians, Jews, Germans, etc.

Change of Vilnius's Old Town after 2nd World War

The Second World War and the subsequent reconstruction process did change the Old Town appearance. During the war the Old Town suffered relatively small damages compared to other Eastern European cities. Nevertheless, spaces between buildings were left, where buildings used to be. Not typical for the Old Town, squares and empty spaces were formed, which nowadays are considered as very attractive for the local community.

These empty "wholes" were "deepened" during post war period, which had the main target to implement the vision of the 'socialist city' with wide streets, huge and modern buildings, giving little attention to the cultural heritage and its history. Thanks to the unstable after-war economic and political situation, the radical structural and major sovietisation changes of the Old Town did not take place.



Another significant change was the new constructions in the 60-90ties in style of modernism and postmodernism. Main examples are the Contemporary Art Centre "Lietuva" and "Maskava" cinema theatres.

Vilnius City Municipality and the Jewish Cultural Heritage Support Fund of Lithuania signed the agreement to restore fragments of the historical Jewish Ghetto in July 2002. The Jewish quarter was formed in the Old Town in the 16th century, giving place to about 60.000 Jewish people in 1939. In 1941 the Germans established the Jewish ghetto which was liquidated in 1943 and later demolished and not restored until today.

According to the Agreement, which objective is to commemorate the Jewish cultural heritage, it is planned to reconstruct the former architectural structures of the Jewish quarter, based on historic, iconographic and archaeological material. At the moment first two sites are being developed and the reconstruction of former historic block of buildings is going on.

Restoration of the Old Town since the 90ties

Since the 90ties the main development trends in the Old Town focused on the conservation and restoration of historic buildings and converting the building functions, making them suitable for trade, catering and offices. This was financed mainly by private investors.

Few heritage restoration works have been done by the state and the city. The biggest project has been the Palace of Grand Dukes of Lithuania, which is going to accommodate a

- museum,
- educational institution and
- place for important state events.

Huge investments were made by the municipality in the transport infrastructure, the renewal of public spaces and parks in the Old Town and its surrounding. These investments are to be considered as very valuable impulse for the Old Town revitalization and the return of vitality and competitiveness to the historic centre. It has encouraged new investments and the creation of work places in the Old Town.

A lot of churches and monasteries have been renovated, too. New buildings in the Old Town have been planned only in the conversion areas. During the soviet times factories were built here instead of reconstructing the historical buildings.



Need of integrating new developments in the Old Town surroundings

Rapidly changing basic conditions of modern times like the fast-growing economic competition with the accompanying development pressure, climate issues and demographic situation poses a big challenge to the management of Vilnius's Old Town and raises the demand for significant changes.

To ensure the attractiveness of the Old Town the urban quality has to be maintained and adapted to the new needs. It is very important to find efficient ways to ensure the competitiveness, vitality and the economic and social cohesion of the city through the possibility of integrating new developments.

The lack of a multilevel governance approach and integrated sustainable urban development policies, which link the preservation of cultural heritage with the socio-economic development of historic urban landscapes, will eventually result in non-competitive urban areas with low amenity value for inhabitants and visitors alike.

Activities to upgrade the Old Town

Necessary activities to sensibly upgrade the Old Town in order to make it attractive and competitive are:

- Promotion of jobs and services in the Old Town area;
- Enabling better understanding of the historical values of the Old Town;
- Fostering the engagement of investors, local businesses and the community to invest financial and human resources in the cultural heritage as-

sets by supplementary funding schemes and tax incentives of the public institutions;

- Creating a clear and transparent legal and administrative framework to support new developments in and around the Old Town;
- Reducing the tax and bureaucratic burden for investors;
- Setting up rules that regulate the heritage protection process and help to achieve an exceptional quality of new developments.

New development: Park of Architecture

Background

In 2006- 2007 Lithuania had a booming economy and the real estate sector produced 480.000 m² of housing floor per year. Credits and loans were easily to get and lots of families were seeking to buy flats or a family home. The huge demand of new housing space subsequently poses an additional pressure towards new developments in the Old Town.

In the end of 2007 the urban development department, being under significant pressure of the growing real estate market, decided to initiate the project "Park of Architecture". A 78 ha area was defined for new developments in cooperation with private investors and property owners. The site today encompasses factories in operation as well as one abandoned former industrial site. A small scale residential area with some buildings under heritage protection, a park and a shallow river are in close neighbourhood of the industrial site.



The fragmented community and the abandoned industrial buildings did not attract higher interest to this area, despite short distance to the centre.

Nevertheless, the location of the project area is an important factor of the success of the project and at the same time a big challenge to all partners as its territory borders and overlaps to the one side with the Vilnius Regional Park and on the other side with the UNESCO world heritage site of the Old Town.

The goal of the project is to convert the former soviet industrial property into a multifunctional sustainable quarter, whilst supporting a sensible attitude to the historical context and the needs of the future residents as well as saving natural resources.

Development process

The first step of developing this area was an open invitation in 2008 to private land and property owners to take part in this initiative to develop a new sustainable residential quarter hand in hand with municipality.

Several companies had applied for this invitation and a consortium of 4 owners of former and existing industrial sites in the city centre was selected with a total territory of 16 ha for conversion. They had expressed the willingness to move their industrial businesses to other locations and to develop housing and commercial real estate stock in very attractive area for conversion.



A great challenge for the municipality of Vilnius had been to handle the entire process for the huge territory and to find the common solutions with all developers and partners of the project.

An important step was that a group of architects, property owners, and city officials visited several similar projects of housing in Germany, Sweden and Denmark. The impression they brought back became background for the common idea of converting the former soviet industrial area in a sustainable way. The main **guidelines** for the development of the area are:

- Modern urban planning - principles of sustainable development, mixed use housing concept;
- Incorporate contemporary architecture in the historical context;
- Demonstrate efficient use of eco-materials and energy resources, implement sustainable energy principles;
- Reach social cohesion in healthy and safe urban environment with advanced solutions of mobility;
- Create a new tool for the architectural-environmental education of society;

- Create possibilities for Užupis creative district physical and ideological expansion, involve professional and local community into constant dialog;
- Oblige private partners to fulfil ground principles, determined for the project.

Cooperation with neighbouring communities has a special focus to find an approach to “locate” the intangible values and creative atmosphere of the surrounding communities, in particular of the Užupis community (“Artists Republic”) and the Tymo community (handicrafts and eco market), to the ‘Park of architecture’.



Architects and city planners are designing the area, using workshops, applying the main principles of sustainable development. The municipality of Vilnius is implementing main principles of social cohesion for a healthy and safe urban environment, installing new methods of modern project communication, e.g. through a Vilnius’ citizens opinion poll about the project’s public spaces, info centre, exposition about the building site, creative activities on the site, etc.

Concept of spatial development

The concept of the spatial development of the area consists of basic quality requirements for the urban structure, function, housing and mobility. This concept must be adopted by city council and signed by the project developers and the municipality of Vilnius.

Urban structure

- Contextual diversity of urban planning principals, responding to the history of the area;
- Quality of public spaces and housing;
- Principal requirements for heights, density;
- Safety providing planning solutions;
- Intensive use of waterfront.

Function

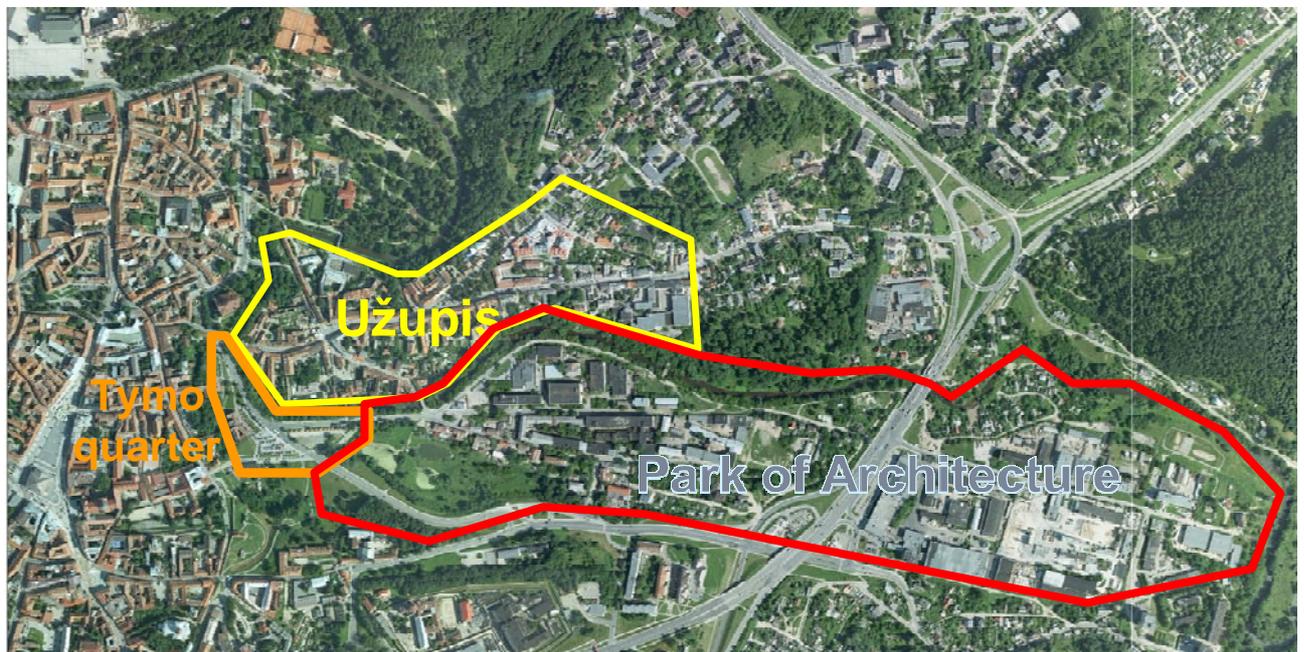
- Mixed used area – housing, working places for SME;
- All required social infrastructure (schools, kindergartens, community centre, primary health care);
- Safe accessibility by foot or by bike.

Housing

- Diversity of dwelling types -from luxurious to social, do it yourself projects;
- Diversity of ownership -private apartments, flats for rent, even hostels for students;
- Apartments with workshops for artists and craftsmen.

Traffic and technologies

- Priority for pedestrians and bicycles;
- Priority for public transport;
- Less cars – less parking places, “car sharing” service;
- Advanced engineering technologies, reduced energy demand, rain water use.



VILNIUS CITY DEVELOPMENT AND METHODS TO PROTECT TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IDENTITY

Mindaugas Pakalnis, Head architect of the Municipal Enterprise "Vilniaus Planas"

Natural and cultural heritage: The identity of Vilnius

Vilnius' urban development is affected and interacts strongly with its natural and cultural heritage, which strongly shape the identity of the city. The cultural heritage is presented through the Old Town, which is surrounded by the natural heritage, the green hills and slopes.

The city development concept 2025 has as one objective to preserve the value of its heritage, in particular the hilly landscape, the fantastic views, the greenery in the city centre, the still existing contact of the Old Town with the suburban areas and the remarkable cultural heritage presented in the Old Town.

Challenges for the urban development and the visual integrity of Vilnius

The development of Vilnius is represented through its cultural heritage with buildings from Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Eclectics, Totalitarianism and Modernism period. The current urban development is characterised and challenged by

- a twofold development of the city centre: on the one hand rehabilitated areas with high standards and on the other hand devastated territories and brownfields amounting to 120 ha,
- the construction of high-rise buildings at the rim of the city centre and its green slopes,
- a chaotic development of the suburbs and
- an increase in housing space in m² per inhabitant (from 1998-2009 16 m²/inhabitant to 23 m²/inhabitant).

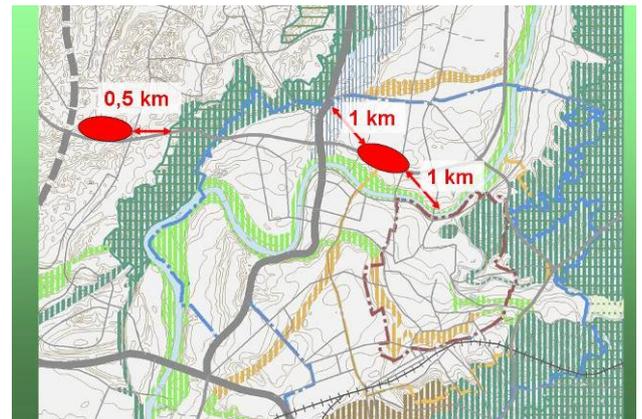
Instruments for the protection of the visual integrity

The main instruments of the City of Vilnius to protect its visual integrity are:

City Master Plan

The City Master Plan defines two areas for high-rise developments. The intention of the master plan is to concentrate the high-rise building on these two areas to minimize the visual impacts on the historic centre and to secure that the view on the green

slopes is not affected. The selection of the two areas bases on studies done in 2004, which proposed two different approaches: One marking the structural axes to the city centre with high-rise buildings and the other, to concentrate the high-rise developments in certain areas. Within the studies the natural heritage was analysed to define which natural elements (green belt) has to be protected, defining the zones not appropriated for high-rise buildings.



Monitoring of city panoramas

The municipality of Vilnius defined the main view points of the Old Town. From these view points the visual impacts of developments on the historic centre is monitored.



City 3D-model

The municipality of Vilnius uses a 3D-modell and a physical model to check the visual impacts of new developments on the visual integrity of the Old Town. The physical model is mainly used to discuss directly with professionals and citizens the visual impacts on the Old Town.

The City 3D-Model (GIS-based) gives the additional opportunity not only to control the view points, but also to visualize the impacts from the "street view" perspective. Based on the City 3d-modell it is decided if a high-rise building can be build on the spot or not.

URBACT II

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

www.urbact.eu/hero

