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Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue ...

The historic built environment can be a source for the creation of sustainable models and a driver of contemporary urban regeneration. The challenge of our time is to find balanced development and simultaneous protection not only of individual cultural monuments, but also of the entire space. The concept of adaptive reuse emerged as a result of a conscious desire to preserve the historical environment, which is both an upgrade and also the opposite of the usual 'reuse' or 'new use' or demolition (Plevoets and Van Cleempoel 2012). Adaptive reuse, a subject of theoretical reflection since the 1970s, is the process of renovating existing buildings for new or continued use.

Cities are complex, layered entities composed of architecture, history, and collective memory (Rossi, 1982). In dense settlements such as cities, the adaptive reuse approach cannot be limited to just one building, but has to be designed as a comprehensive plan for adjusting the city to contemporary societal needs. At the same time, we have to bear in mind the historical, the ethnological, the functional, the city-forming, and the social roles of individual buildings and public spaces.

In the case of the historic city centre of Koper, adaptive reuse is an opportunity to preserve the historical built environment and provide for the everyday spatial and societal needs of the city. By designing the city and retaining its city-forming functions, while respecting all historical layers, we want to create good living conditions, stimulate urban processes and encourage new cultural and tourist practices.

Vesna Pajić graduated from the Faculty of Arts, Department of History and Art History, with a degree in The Development of Medieval Urban Heraldry. In 2018, she obtained the research title of Assistant, and in 2019, she passed the professional exam for curator. Since 2023, she has been a member of ICOMOS Slovenia. She honed her museological knowledge at the National Gallery, in the field of science communication, and within the framework of numerous exhibition projects. She curated and co-curated over 25 exhibitions. In 2024, she led the city's heritageisation project 'Koper-Capodistria 1500'. Since 2020, she has been an advisor to the Mayor of the Municipality of Koper for Culture and International Relations. From 2020, she has been curating the exhibition program at the Mala loža exhibition venue in Koper. Between 2020 and 2024, she led the program of the Libertas cultural squat. In 2021 and 2022, she participated in the project of renovation and interpretation of the Sabini-Grisoni Palace. Since 2021, she has been leading the renovation project of the former salt warehouse Libertas. As a doctoral student, she is researching the adaptive reuse of the historic built environment. Her research laboratory is in the historic city centre of Koper.

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