

Simona Menoni Muršič

*Institute for the Protection of Cultural
Heritage of Slovenia
simona.menoni@zvkd.si*

Vlasta Čobal Sedmak

*Institute for the Protection of Cultural
Heritage of Slovenia,
Restoration Centre*

Gorazd Gerlič

*Institute for the Protection of Cultural
Heritage of Slovenia*

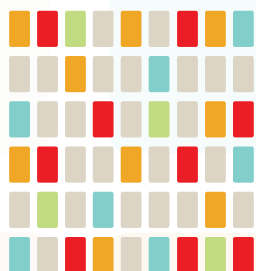
Mateja Neža Sitar

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Lecture

Conservation Metamorphoses of Ptuj

We illuminate conservation approaches through three key revitalisation projects undertaken in the past decade in the preservation of Ptuj's heritage, which have proved decisive in the revival of the historic city centre. Ptuj is one of the oldest-but also one of the most vulnerable-monumental environments in Slovenia, where conservation work poses a considerable challenge. It is therefore essential to emphasise the continuous presence of the monument-protection service and the interdisciplinary teamwork of conservators, in which close collaboration with architects is crucial. Through three large-scale and demanding projects, we present distinct problems, approaches, and solutions that have revitalised these historically important areas from ambient, scenographic, architectural, and urban perspectives.

The former officers' pavilion at Vičava 1, built in the Art Nouveau style between 1903 and 1905, is an example of renovation in which the conservation regime-beyond the basic goal of rehabilitation and revitalisation of the building for business use (Technology Park) – required that the building, in as intact a state as possible, continue to shape the wider setting of the cultural monument of national importance. At the same time, it had to maintain characteristic views towards the castle and from the castle. These principles guided the planning of conservation interventions in the building and its surroundings.

By contrast, the long-decaying buildings of the so-called Old Glass Workshops provide an example of the comprehensive renovation of a quarter of bourgeois architecture that developed from the 15th century onwards. Revitalisation of the area – together with the associated streets and Vraz Square – created conditions for creative, cultural, and event activities (Youth Cultural Centre). The conservation baseline was set as the conservation-restoration of all valued elements, in order to preserve the quarter's heritage potential despite the collapse of essential parts of the area. Conservators preserved the historical character of the quarter and directed contemporary architectural interpolations so that new interventions harmonise with the historic urban fabric.

The renovation of the Ptuj city marketplace illustrates a conservation approach to redesigning and redefining an open urban public space in the heart of the city. The starting point for the scheme was analysis and interpretation of historical sources and of the appearance of this area along the former riverbed of the Grajena.

Interpreting Ptuj's historical urban image is also vital for local residents, as such presentations of the past help establish an authentic sense of identity with the city inherited from former inhabitants. With effective cooperation, a shared interdisciplinary vocabulary, responsiveness to the wishes and needs of the local community, and – above all – mutual respect, projects of this kind present conservators with the challenge and responsibility of transmitting to posterity the enduring message of place through high-quality, modern renovation.

References

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