

REHABILITATION OF VESZPRÉM CITY IN THE XXI. CENTURY

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Abstract:

My paper presents the rehabilitation ambitions of the city management and the population of Veszprém to get into focus the earlier attractive parts of the city. Veszprém has been liked by the visitors, because of its special conditions: for example it is situated near by the Lake Balaton. The city managers transformed Veszprém several times for expectations of political claims in its long historical past. Some parts of the cityscape we can only develop, the other parts which neglected and started decay must be reconstructing and rehabilitating for that aim to protect and save them for the generation of the future.

INTRODUCTION: THE MODERN HISTORY OF VESZPRÉM

Veszprém is one of oldest cities of Hungary which is situated on the country's western part, which lies 15 km to the north from the Lake Balaton. Its history dates back to 7000 years. The city's blossoming day was during on the first Hungarian royal pair. Veszprém is known as the queens' city because of the first king I. István's wife Gizella, who established the oldest cathedral in Hungary.



Figure 1: The map of Veszprém

Photo: www.veszpremerkep.hu/terkep

In 1930 Veszprém obtained the county urban title. The industrialization (mainly chemical industry) is continued in 1950s with the research institutes' and a university's setup, and the city's population were triplicate under this 40 years. The city of queen became a city with a county right in 1990.

The university quarter's development began with the University of Veszprém predecessor. The Faculty of Chemical Technology of Budapest University of Technology was moved its branch here in 1949. There are detached houses and semi-detached house zones and housing estates over the university area.

Füredidomb is one of the smallest areas of Veszprém. Without an exception detached and semi-detached houses were built in the XX century. It is interesting that the railway line had been closed in 1969, which bound today's railway station to the city's inner areas and the Lake Balaton.

Early in the XX century Füredidomb was primarily planned industrial establishment, since there was a powerhouse in those days near by the railway.

The “New quarter’s” houses were found in the first half of the XX century located on east from the city center. Some time ago railway of the Lake Balaton (which I already mentioned above) was on the edge of this area. Őrház Street, and the former railway station's building memorizes us remind that same railway.

The downtown's road network was built in the medieval ages.

Saint István bridge is above the Séd valley which is between the Jerusalem and Cemetery mountain built in 1936- 37.



Figure 2: The Saint István bridge

Photo: ww2.legifotok.hu

According to Veszprém leaders the national main road leading through the city was not a good idea which was realized by them by the end of the 1940s. The ring road being built in more sections meant the solution in the 70 and 80 years. Veszprém was the first Hungarian city, which had a full road ring around the city. Since then the downtown's traffic decreased significantly.

MAIN ATTRACTIONS OF THE CITY

The Séd brook

Outstanding nature geography and tourism puts a brighter colour to Veszprém for making the Séd coast more beautiful. In past Séd brook played a crucial role in Veszprém life. Nearly 20 mills were powered by the brook except blooming market gardening and little apartments on the past century. The landscape reminds us a Swiss steep rocky mountainside, covered with a pine, was the place of the funfair. The park more than with twenty games, a

rowing lake, and a cozy a prideful 2000m expected the companies with a long pioneer railway with a 130 meters tunnel. From the funfair you could get reach Kittenberger Kálmán Zoo on foot or on the pioneer railway. The Zoo of Veszprém is a national likewise in Hungary.

After the renewal

After 1945 the city got born again thanks to a huge financial support and investments. Many public institutions were being built at this time, among them was the outstanding university (1948), its student hostel and two of its research institutes (1952), the county hospital (1962), county pharmacy centre (1962), party headquarters (1964), Hotel of Veszprém (1964), fireman barracks, modern department stores (1964), cultural centers, stadium (1962) and the wildlife park (1958). (Dr. Vajkai Aurél, 1973)

Once upon a time, there was a fan-fair

The Veszprém funfair was being built between 1958 and 1960. The funfair's planning began simultaneously with the zoo construction and social work in 1958.

The fun-fair opened his gates to the visitors in 1961. (Közép-Dunántúli Napló, 1961.)

The social view of the central political power and its ideas changed under a decade: the folk and the local society's opinion were already not important to the local political leadership neither for the political elite. The funfair and the popular urban beach were leaders' old-fashioned ideas. The aim was to develop a new city centre with a party headquarters and a hotel as well as with a twenty floor building under attracting shops for the customers instead of the funfair and the urban beach.

Therefore they closed the park finally in 1971.

The small railway managed to get onto a similar fate: picking of the railway line meant that the favorite area of adults and children finally was ready to walk in.

THE CHANGING FACE OF VESZPRÉM

After the war (1946-47) the city was struggling with difficulties. The nationalization began in Veszprém in 1948: factories, firms, craftsman workshops became state-owned. It worked

out a 3 year plans in 1950, its first considerable dot was the social work construction of the blown up viaduct. They invested the streets, spaces and quarters with democratic names on every step. The chemist's division of Budapest University of Technology was provided a place in the city 1950s. (Beszteri Béla, 1986).

The rows of plans were made for the city's modernization in 1956. The plans from kindergarten foundation were about building flats and pavements as well as a water system.

The working class's promotes and collaborates with the population as the better living conditions characterize the politics at this time. The plans were already ready for the bandstand of the theatre garden, the pioneer railway, the funfair and the direction of the Séd valley in 1958. The restoration of natural environment of Veszprém began with forestation and grassing in the framework of huge social work. The social work founded zoo was open in 1958. After a year the funfair was opened. The next building operations were in the city at this time: house parks, pharmacy centre, water tower, tourist hostel, colony of artists.

In 15 years the city-development drafts were getting ready over 1960. The government in the 60s provided huge material strength for Veszprém for town-development aims. The development began with big volume in the city, but the population's confidence became uncertain in the face of the city leader, because they didn't consider the city's public opinion. The initiations started from high level and the local political leaders didn't want to involve the population into the decisions. The fast development of the 50s entailed the increase of the population's number. The first general sorting plan of Veszprém was already ready at that time. Because of the economic and technical claims it was necessary to modify the plans later.

The new city centre was drawn up. The old railway station's area was built in and hospitable units with big capacity were getting developed as well as businesses, department stores, 6 storey apartment houses, new coach railway station, an office block, tall houses and a car park. (Jákói Bernadett, 2005.)

The craftsman function relocated back onto the ground floor and on the place of the demolished apartment houses basement there were established newly worked up housing estates. A medium city had two real functions: a secular and a church centre function. Veszprém has this double function nowadays too. (Balassa László, 2005.)

Ideas for the rehabilitation of the Séd valley in these days

The local political leaders noticed that the circle of the tasks to be solved was being changed continuously, and locally regional problems were waiting for a solution and tasks had been struggling along for its row according to an opportunity suggested. The civil society and the executive sectors were queuing too. (Pálné Kovács Ilona, 1997.)

The tourism development is one of the major motivations the city is longing for nowadays. The development of the walkway of Séd valley is included in the development tasks. After the country planning this area might be one of the most beautiful walkway of the city. More proposals: development of the pedestrian traffic, the bicycle traffic, passable walkways, resting place; putting benches and dust bins to the park, cleaning the Séd bed enucleating the Séd bed and the walkway. (Mayer Péter, 2001.)

Year by year more civil organisations take a part to the community and town planning. The local government and the institutions try to create the partnership and the reciprocity for working together with the civil organisations. (Veszprém a királynék városa Európa Kulturális Fővárosa, 2005.)

There were more ideas already to develop the footpath beside of the Séd. The targeted favourite place of the tourists, families with children, youth is the wildlife park. The city leaders know it is an important viewpoint. Much of the local government's income originates from this and they would gain even more if the rehabilitation of the green area would succeed. There were hundreds of initiations, remained just on the paper as there was no investment. A part of the previous plans was implemented successfully, such as forming of the parking area and surfacing of the walkway.

The local government made plans for the direction of the public place along the Séd after the primer development plans in 2002. It was making a car park in front of the onetime funfair, a walkway between the zoo's entrance and the onetime funfair, and planting beside of these.

Rehabilitation of greenery

The local government made plans for the direction of the public place along the Séd after the primer development plans (1999) in 2002. Came true the direction of a car park in front of the funfair, forming of a section of walkway between the zoo's entrance and the funfair, and the development of plants.

Economic situation of Veszprém will recover with the development of the tourism service system. The tourism projects enjoy priority in the city's strategic aims. The rehabilitation of a green area is rich because of the protected environmental values. The deficit of principal is the barrier of the realisations. The local government and the investors have this deficit too. There are many suitable development programs for the local government and the entrepreneurs to solve this situation. As a result cultural, economic (tourism) value added expected. (A.D.U. Építészeti Kft., 2005.)

It is necessary to continue guide marketing campaigns before the single units being ready. The elements of campaign: city marketing, program marketing and institution marketing.

The major aim of the city marketing is the presentation of a city's image. The “Changeable Veszprém” campaign which has information about the city for the visitors receives a considerable emphasis: why to visit the city, what can you see there, how and what may the visitor can do here.

Working together for Veszprém

The enquiring citizen was informed about the draft of the Séd valley rehabilitation by the local government and the colleagues of A.D.U. Architect Office one of the forum which was organized November 2005. The aim of the event is connected with the information of the plan, the discussion of proposals and opinions.

A lot of citizens were present on the forum.

The substantial debate began following the presentation of the ideas. Interests came to light. For example the Benedek Hill was covered by acacia until the 1930's, and the hill was defended with a gate at that time, and fishing competition was organized in the Séd valley.

The forum was useful for the participants of both sides. The exchange information was defined by the cooperation or thinking together, to do for the good interest and not the party politics. (www.index.veszprem.hu)

The local governments' negative attitude for the civil approaches changes slowly because the cooperation of the city rehabilitation is everybody's interest. (Pálné Kovács Ilona, 1997.)

A population forum connection with the centre's rehabilitation was convened by the city management on 14th of January 2010. There were representatives of the local government, the architect and the population. A plan of the downtown's reconstruction and a concept were presented by the local government. They wanted to enlarge the downtown with new functions according to the plans. Another partly with a union support project would be attached to this plan: concourse of the two heavy traffics road driving into the downtown would be developing in the immediate future.

The downtown rehabilitation and the city reformation includes the renewing of plazas, function extension of the downtown, build a parking and deep garage, create a building for the culture, renovation the old Hotel „Korona”, reform and unobstructed facade of the Kossuth street (walking street). Forestation and the landscaping are very important such as the reformation of the cityscape, and the redesigning of the buildings and spaces. The park behind the Hotel Veszprém would be the Park of the Twin cities. The park would be the place of sculptures, art exhibitions of the twin cities but not the primary function. It would be a playground, which mostly reminds of a labyrinth in front of the building which was former party headquarters.

One of the parts of the downtown's rehabilitation plan is underpass which is disputed for ages by the population and the professionals. By the majority of the inhabitants the city's symbol, inherited from the socialism, is unnecessary. The leaders of the city would like to unobstructing the underpass. The stairs would be replaced by a long-lasting ramp with this solution, therefore it would provide an opportunity for the crossing of the physically handicapped people, and it would be suitable for the cyclist traffic at the same time.



Figure 3: Plan of the rehabilitation

foto: <http://veszprem.hu>

The part of the city's rehabilitation is the artistic and cultural centre after the transforming Séd Movie.



Figure 4: The new building sin the city centre

Photo: <http://veszprem.hu>

The building which was former Hotel Korona is currently ancient monument. The renovation demands big attention, and restoration of the former light of the building needs building story researches.



Figure 5: Restored historical building int he walking street

Photo: <http://veszprem.hu>

The 20 stored building and the mezzanine-floor around it are situated on the walking street which is carried considerable trade flow.

One of the most important aims beside the modernisation and unobstruction of the building that give an illusion for the population is founded with the glass screen of the building that let the houses of the opposite side reflect. (<http://veszprem.hu>, 2010.)

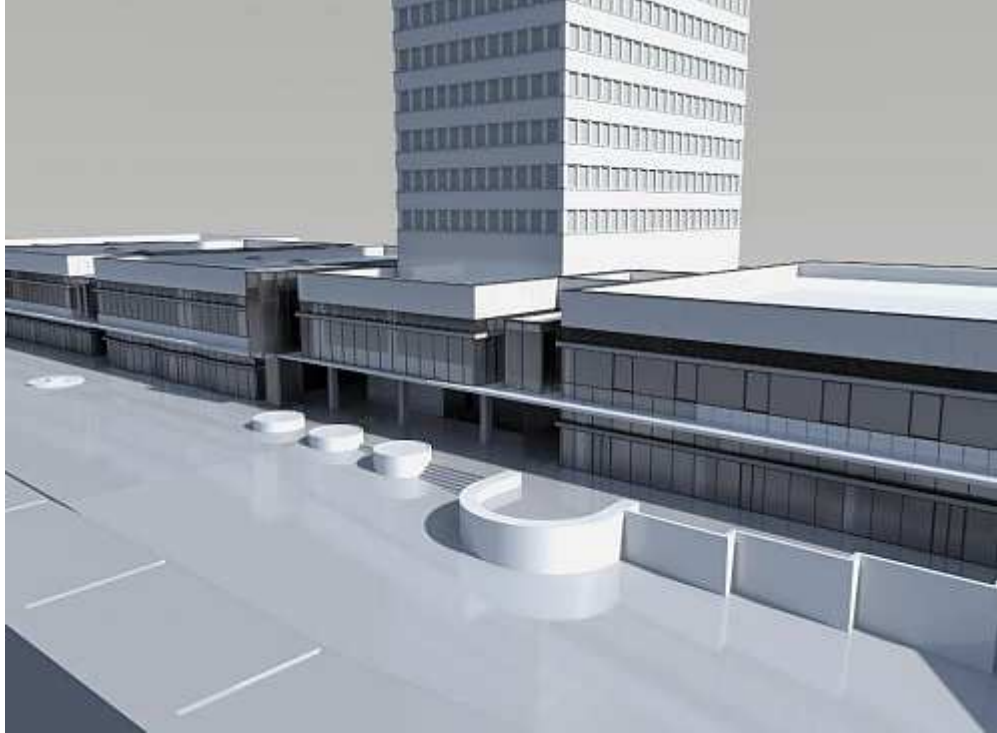


Figure 6: Modern building with glass screen front in Veszprém

Photo: www.veszprem.hu

The city management wishes to realise the idea with a union support project, and a private fund working together with consortium partners. Another architectural office's ideas were presented for the citizens on the population forum. This compiled study for the aim at the road network and the pedestrian traffic mostly. Their new ideas were presented which adopted by the local population with a big joy on the forum. Despite of this the plan reached the urban local government's desk after the submission of the project. Therefore the city leaders probably will not use it as a feasible concept plan.



Figure 7: Pedestrian zone and Forum in Veszprém

foto: http://naplo-online.hu/cimlapon/20100112_valtoztassunk_jovon

The city management tries to shape the face of Veszprém by applying for funding for several projects. Like the Monasteries and gardens project with an aim of renewal of natural heritages and reconstruction of the Jesuit a church's and Greek age monastery ruin's which had the most considerable historic heritages of Veszprém. (<http://epiteszforum.hu>, 2009.)

The Saint István viaduct is requires again a renovation nowadays. It was necessary again to limit the transit traffic because of the bridge condition. The city won an application for the renovation of the bridge – which is an industrial ancient monument - 391 million Ft on February 2010.

CONCLUSION

The city management tries to shape the face of Veszprém actively searching for funding. The aim of renewing the historical heritage, preserving natural endowments and reconstructing many old buildings help to maintain the image of an attractive city for tourists while coping with the tasks of a modern 21st century city.

It seems that the previous and the present management of the city make an effort to develop the settlement, keeping an eye on the city's and a population's interests. Although formerly it was not of value and significance to protect and restore the old buildings – this view starts to change. The claim is higher for the historical values, buildings and to protect the environment.

The claim of city leaders and the citizens are the same in many ways in spite of some conflict in my opinion. The principal aim is to make lived and attractive city for not only the tourists but most importantly, the citizens of Veszprém.

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