

## Project description

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 10 September 2009 09:14 - Last Updated Thursday, 15 March 2012 22:26

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Facing the Impact of the Second World War: Urban Design in Contemporary European Cities is a title of Intensive Project being realized in the years 2009-2012 within the Erasmus LLP founding [ERA\_IP\_7\_2010/2 Agreement]. The application and the grant was prepared by Division of Public Spaces for Movement, Department of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology.

The programme was initiated and has been coordinated in terms of contents, organization and finance by Cracow University of Technology, namely prof. Krzysztof Bieda and Ph.D. Kinga Racoń–Leja. Project partner universities are: Delft University of Technology, HAWK Hildesheim — University of Applied Sciences and Arts and University of Applied Sciences HTW Dresden.

As planned, there are 3 editions of the Intensive Course, in the form of 2–week workshop for architecture, urban design and landscape architecture students. The first edition of the course took place in 2009 in Oswiecim–Krakow, the second took place in Rotterdam in 2011 and the third one takes place in Dresden in 2012.

## Project Goals

The objective of the project is to develop students' abilities to undertake urban design tasks within the broad context of issues beyond sheer urban composition, but relevant to problems and expectations of the community. Such issues may include: social conditions, urban history, local identity and tradition, cultural and natural environment, landscape, and others. They may be instrumental in problem solving and design decisions. The contextual approach to urban design can be fully grasped through understanding of, and respect for, broad community needs, expectations, views and values and requires the ability to cooperate with external experts and include public participation techniques in the design process.

The contextual approach to urban design will be developed and encouraged with an emphasis on one specific aspect of European cities namely, the impact of the Second World War on urban structure and its traces in various forms. These may be sites of former places where events from the past are commemorated (e.g. Oswiecim/Auschwitz–Birkenau — course 1), parts of the city destroyed and — often — rebuilt without continuity of historic form (e.g. Rotterdam ? course 2), or it can be war–destroyed areas still waiting to be repaired (e.g. Dresden ? course 3).

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The project is aiming at students of architecture and town planning, including landscape architecture at BA, MA and PhD level at the participating institutions.

The courses are divided into two teaching modules: analytical and conceptual studies. Students work in international teams. The activities involve:

- field work
- design workshops with representatives of local communities including persons with special needs
- discussion panels
- lectures and presentations

At the end of the project students present and discuss the results. The works are further displayed through exhibitions. ICT techniques are used to communicate between all project participants, for the purpose of graphic presentation, including 3D simulations, text processing, multi-media presentations, and promotion of the project results.

The proposed project supports the concept of sustainable and responsive urban design and development. The issues and problems to be addressed are relevant to urban design and development management in most European cities. An important expected outcome will be, hopefully, increased ability of participating students to resolve complex urban tasks in a responsive, contextual way, regarding historical, cultural and social issues, and — in respect to indirect target groups, through dissemination of the results — an increased awareness of significance of such approach to urban design. Further expected outcome will be specific solutions and design concepts for the project sites. Even if not directly implemented, such concepts and involved public discussion may help to increase public awareness and involvement and contribute to better future solutions.

## Dresden 2012

The Dresden workshop takes place between March, 17th and March, 31st, 2012. The local organizers are professors Cornelius Scherzer and Angela Mensing?de?Yong from HTW Dresden.

**Theme:** *Paradigms, the Public & Potentials — conversing former military complexes, dealing with damaged buildings and qualifying low density post war areas.*

In the Second World War the city lost much of its center and large adjacent areas of mixed use and housing through British and American bombing in early 1945. After the war, politically centralized decision-making, ignoring traditional patterns of ownership, buildings and open space favored the construction of representative roads and spacious and green residential

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areas. At the same time there have been discussions and changing paradigms of how to accentuate the post-war city structure by important buildings for public use. The bombing of the city on 13/14 February 1945 is debated in public today with growing intensity and polarization.

Research will include issues of militarization of society and urban development in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>

century resulting in huge military complexes. It will also look into paradigm shifts and decision-making in the post-war years regarding historic and new urban structures and buildings. Emphasis will be laid on recent development since 1990: plans and projects of the 1990s suggested a densely built-up centre following the notion of the traditional 'European City', the pre-war street pattern and building heights. However, the enormous investment necessary for the proposed dense development was not available. Still, existing pre-war buildings are underused or empty and only a few smaller areas have seen a more or less complete dense rebuilding, the most prominent being Neumarkt and Frauenkirche.

## Rotterdam 2011

Second IP edition was the workshop in Rotterdam which took place between 19 March and 2 April 2011. TU Delft professors: Eelco Dekker (Rotterdam workshop coordinator), Marc Schonderbeek and Micha de Haas were in charge of the organization, with the support of Jeoren de Willigen from the Rotterdam Academy of Architecture and Urban Design. In addition to tutors from the participating universities many experts were invited with lectures, presentations and as guest critics. Coordination of the content, program and finances was provided by CUT — Krzysztof Bieda and Kinga Racoń-Leja.

### **Theme:** *Small Scale, Big Change*

The bombardment of Rotterdam at the beginning of WWII erased its city centre completely. During the years directly after the war, a complete new centre has been built: a symbol of modernity and optimism. What was left was the zone that marked the border between the new city centre and the old city around it: the 'Brandlijn' (fire demarcation line). The *tabula rasa* has not only resulted in a process of stitching modern buildings with historical ones, but has created a loss of coherence in Rotterdam's city centre, a problem that even nowadays has a large influence on the 'agenda' and tasks of Rotterdam's urban planners.

The purpose of the workshop was to challenge the student teams to come up with the smallest concrete intervention (i.e. connecting design with actual fabrication and/or construction), that

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would have biggest urban or social impact.

### **Oswiecim 2009**

The first IP edition was a workshop organized in Oswiecim–Krakow, held from 19 September to 3 October 2009. A group of 60 students from CUT, TU Delft and HAWK Hildesheim, participated in the course.

The initial idea of the Oswiecim course was brought by Barbara Starzynska and Hans Citroen, external experts, promoting the city of Oswiecim for many years. The workshop (as well as the entire three–year course) was organized by the team from CUT, under the leadership of Krzysztof Bieda and Kinga Racon–Leja.

The first week of the workshop was based in Oswiecim, the second part in Krakow. The workshop tasks included design studies attempting to formulate a vision of future development of the city of Oswiecim. Despite its tragic history of the Second World War period, the new vision of the city was an attempt to create an attractive new urban environment — a "city of knowledge" responding to the needs and aspirations of future Oswiecim community.

The workshop outcomes were presented to and consulted with the local authorities, including the President of the City of Oswiecim, the Head of the Planning Department, and the City Council representatives, as well as the entrepreneurs, residents and media. Particular attention was paid to involvement of and input from groups of special needs: the disabled, senior citizens and children.