

The role of the architectural heritage in the process of creating the image of contemporary Polish cities. Its perception and evaluation

Joanna Sokołowska Moskwiak

Institute of Architecture, State Higher Vocational School Racibórz, , Poland

ABSTRACT

Architectural and urban heritage, can form and support the competitiveness of the town, opening up extra chances for employment, investment and social life - on a higher level than the concurrence does. But to achieve such a stage the local community must be conscious of the wealth of cultural heritage it has in the environment, people must be taught to recognize, to asses, to appreciate and – finally – to protect historical monuments and their details. In any conditions of rapid urbanization, social pressure can save many valuable architectural objects and complexes. Education and promotion of architectural heritage could improve these processes.

The scope of the paper is to present how the city inhabitants understand the meaning of the selected historical urban and architectural structures, details, their expectations about the forms of information and the promotion of the historical heritage.

I will also present the method of checking the knowledge of architectural heritage and the level of identity the city inhabitants have about the historical place. The study was included in the public space in the center of silesian cities within the limits set by the observation, according to the criterion of historical and aesthetic values in a given area's monuments. The criterion where the intensity of retail and service functions and the administration.

Keywords:

architectural heritage, historical value, perception, reception, identification,

INTRODUCTION

Most of the European towns have had their spatial structure formed in the past. One of the most important values of a modern city that identifies the qualities, character and uniqueness is its architectural and urban heritage. The unique services offered by the city are usually located in historic districts and buildings. Some architectural forms and details are commonly recognizable and can create good images of the places: streets, squares (their parts), and even districts.

Since 19th century the development of Upper Silesia depended on heavy industry. However, for the last years this region has undergone radical changes in the economic, cultural and social fields.

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ZABRZE CITY CENTER

The processes of transformation have been starkly reflected in the urban space, the origins of which go back to the 19th century industrialization, when industrial establishments were

surrounded by spreading urban settlements or transformed villages and small settlements into new town centers. Silesia has always been characterized by unique thirst for cultural influences. The sources of this phenomenon should be searched for in its history. Still in the 13th century, during the feudal fragmentation, it was the most cosmopolitan district of Poland; based on it, local members of the Piast dynasty made the first attempts to unify the country. After their failure, starting from the 14th century Silesia became part of the Czech Crown, and from the 16th century of the Habsburg monarchy. After the Silesian wars, in the 18th century it was incorporated into Prussia which started colonizing the area with new settlers and undertook activities aimed at the economic development of these lands. The industry coming to life at the close of the 18th century drew directly on the cradle of the industrial revolution -the British Isles. Scottish engineer John Baildon, who came to Silesia in 1793 at the invitation of Friedrich Reden⁹ contributed to the development of metallurgy as well as to the creation of the Gliwice Channel and the Main Adit in Zabrze. By erecting the workers settlement in Piasek (Sandkolonie), the Donnersmarck concern implemented spatial and program models of the industrial patronage estate Saltaire next to Bradford in England [1]

At the beginning of the 20th century, through Wroclaw, Dresden and Berlin, modern design trends and ideas started to reach Upper Silesia. Already in the period before World War I we may find in Zabrze designs of Berlin architects the famous cousins Georg (1871-1958) and Emil (1870-1937) Zillman or Arnold Hartmann (1861-1919). However, modern architecture started gaining its momentum together with the end of the process of dividing Silesia between Poland and Germany (1922) after World War I.

At that time, in Germany architecture progressed along several paths and the construction movement was referred to as Neues Bauen, i.e. new building, Contrary to modernism, directly alluding to the “inten national style”, this is not a consistent style, but more of a conglomeration of phenomena and tendencies in designing. Thus, many buildings from this period have characteristic modernist features of various intensity, sometimes closer to traditional solutions and sometimes to avant-garde ones, with a very individual note, resulting from the design positions of authors. Three phases of interwar modernist architecture may be observed in Upper Silesia.

The first phase includes the years 1922-1927. This period was characterized by a search for new forms of expression based on the heritage of Werkbund and the simultaneous development of dynamic architecture (Dynamisches Bauen). Its most characteristic branch was expressionism. “Transitory architecture” dominated, combining traditional elements such as symmetry, classic facade composition, sloping roofs with geometric and expressionist detail, as well as modernist simplicity and technological innovation.[4]

The years 1928-1933 were a period of boom of avant-garde and experiments in the field of architec~ ture as well as urban planning. Minimalist and functionalist tendencies developed in architecture, referred to as New Objectivity (Neue Sachlichkeit) in Germany. The common term “Weimar architecture” denotes most often buildings from that period.

Since 1933 and until the end of World War II, the process of moving away from avant-garde solutions occurred. As a result of Adolf Hitler coming to power in Germany and the Nazi party stretching its influence over all fields of social life, modern architecture was questioned as “degenerated art”. Traditional solutions started to appear more and more often. In the architecture of public utility buildings avant-garde was substituted with monumental modernism, often close in nature to the postwar social modernism in the “Eastern Bloc”. In residential construction a return was observed to simple traditional forms, or the “Domestic Revival style” referred to as Heimatstil.

The provided time intervals are symbolic because various tendencies intertwined over a span of two decades during the interwar period. The three phases in interwar modernism architecture in Zabrze left behind characteristic and distinctive buildings.[8]

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve these goals, in December 2015 and January 2016, tests were conducted directly on a group of 110 residents and other stakeholders of Zabrze. The test method, according to the purpose, scope and availability of needed information, was a direct survey [2]. The study was included in the public space in the city within the limits set by the observation, according to the criterion of historical and aesthetic values in a given area's monuments. The study aimed to:

- Define the perception of the historical objects
- Define the meanings and emotional value of monuments
- Define the impact of historic buildings in the city's image and the attractiveness of the parts of the center
- Show the degree of awareness of the cultural heritage in the city and the residents of this form of education in this area.[6]

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part contained questions about the sources of knowledge about the modernist objects in the center of Zabrze and the impact of cultural heritage on the level of identification with the city. The second part was to examine the perception of the historical center of Zabrze, using maps drawn up, the respondents - in accordance with the subjective feeling - selects the three most important areas and the three most important monuments of the presented area of Zabrze, then the three most important objects and zones for the city's image. Moreover, in this part of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate architectural details, which are characteristic of the city, which was presented to the respondents on a shared tableau.[3,7]

For the benefit of research, it's been stated that the subjects of the research will be the inhabitants of the city of Zabrze. The habitants and other stakeholders, are for example people who come over for shopping, to visit the official office's, for business reasons, tourism, people who use the service and cultural services. The range of tasks according to the perception of the monuments include: urban zones, single objects and architectural detail through the users of the city. Public space has been included in the research from the center of the city within the boundaries specified, using the observation method. Zones of the intensive presence of the monuments have been mentioned in the criteria of the historical and esthetical value of the monuments and also the intensity of their presence, which is within the range of the particular architectural complexes. The urban structure and layout of public space in Zabrze, allowed the unambiguous and clear separation of homogeneous areas. In this way, seven zones of intense presence of historical buildings were set (Map 1). The most important modernist buildings of the city were also selected for the study. In this case, based on literature, our own studies, an analysis of a point in the city, the technical condition of its elevation and a list of the most important historic buildings in which is demonstrated on the pictures (Fig. 1). The tableau shows the details that represent the most common patterns among the stylish decoration found on the elevations.

1. "DEWOG" ESTATE – MULTI FAMILY DEVELOPMENT UL. Czarnieckiego Str.
2. MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, Pl. Słowiański
3. PRIMARY SCHOOL no 34 in Pawłów

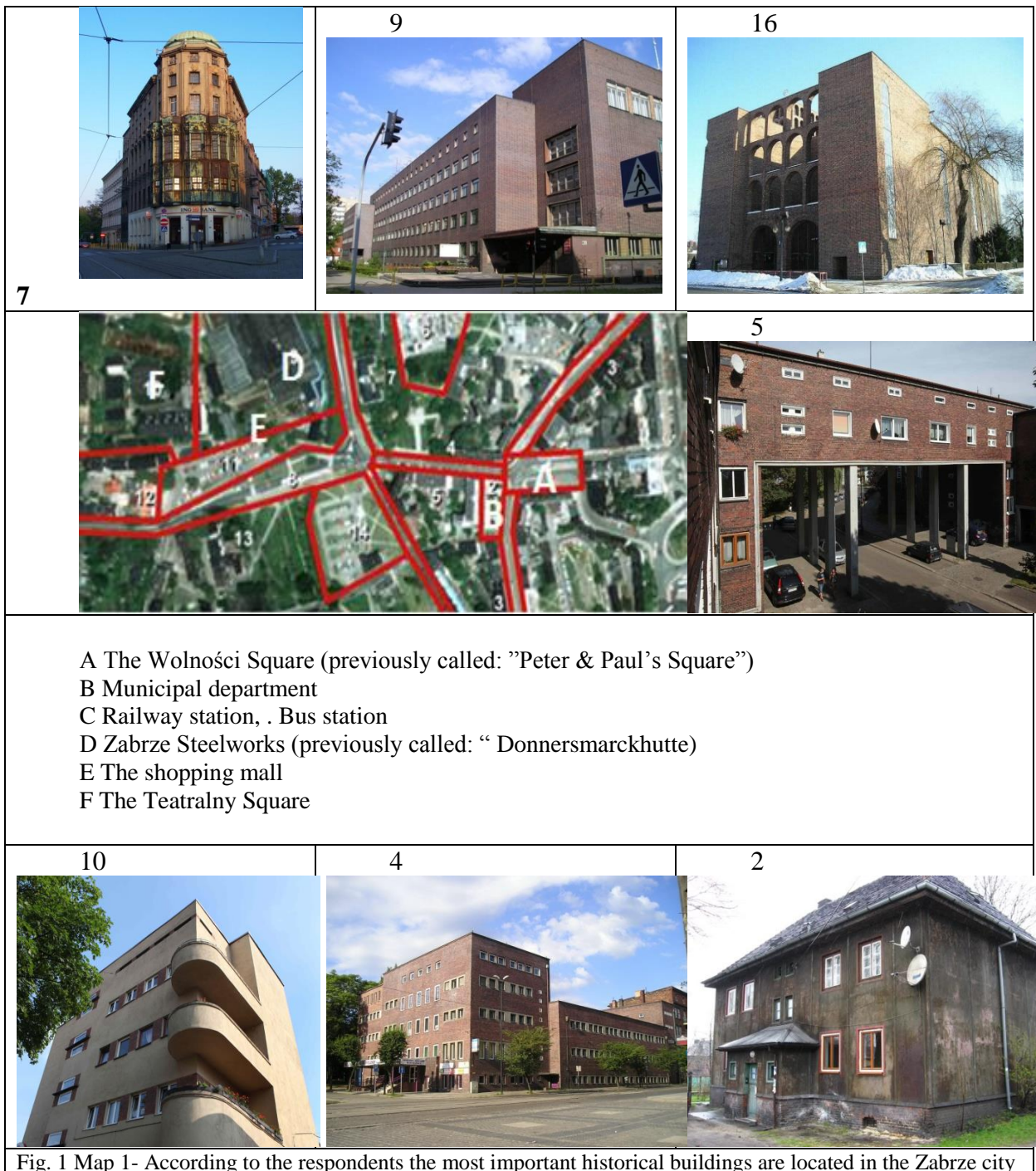


Fig. 1 Map 1- According to the respondents the most important historical buildings are located in the Zabrze city

4. THE STEEL HOUSE Krakusa Str
5. RESIDENCIAL DEVELOPMENT of Dybowski Str
6. WATER TOWER Zamoyskiego Str
7. FORMER ADMIRALSPALAST HOTEL Wolności str.
8. CITY HALL Powstańców Str.
9. POLICE HEADQUARTERS AT HTE CORNER of 1 Maja Str and De Gaulle'a Str
10. MUNICIPAL SWIMMING POOL Pl. Krakowski
11. ST. JADWIGA CHURCH
12. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH Traugutta Sqr.
13. SECENDARY SCHOOL COMPLEX Wolności Str.
14. MIDDLE SCHOOL AND GYM no 16 , Szenwalda Str
15. SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS Sitki Str.
16. THE ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH

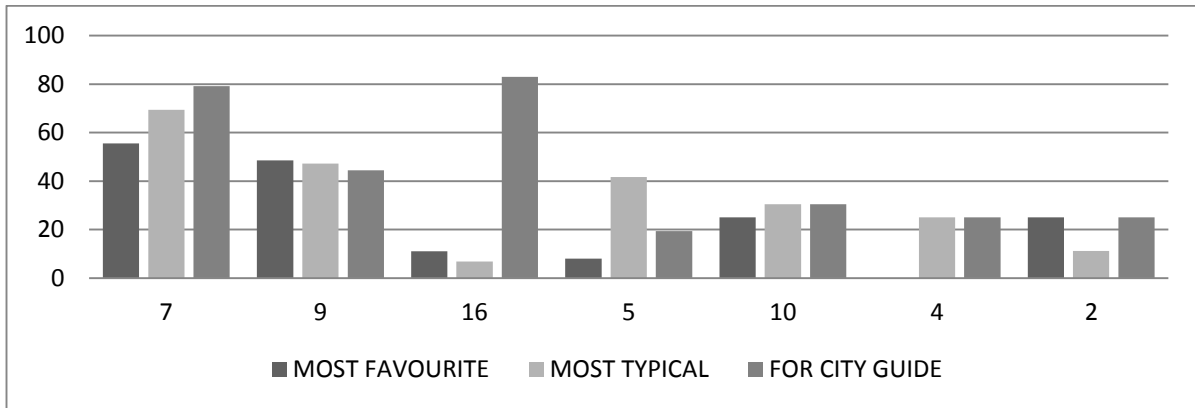


Fig.2 Facilities most important to respondents, the most relevant image of the city and those that the respondents would choose to cover city guide (in%) [N = 72]. Source: Author's own elaboration

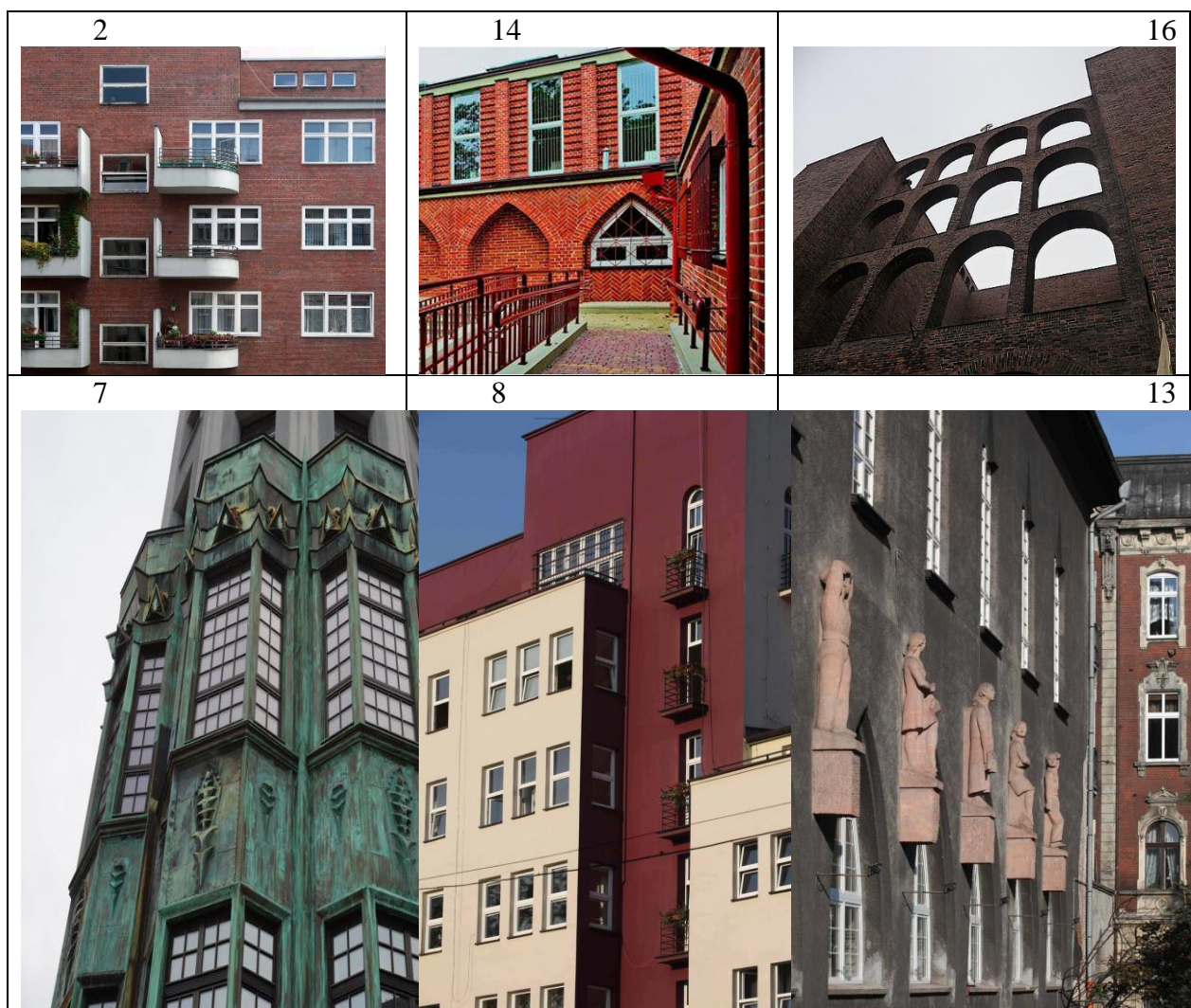


Fig.3 Details adorning the facades of Zabrze modernist buildings. Source: Author's own elaboration

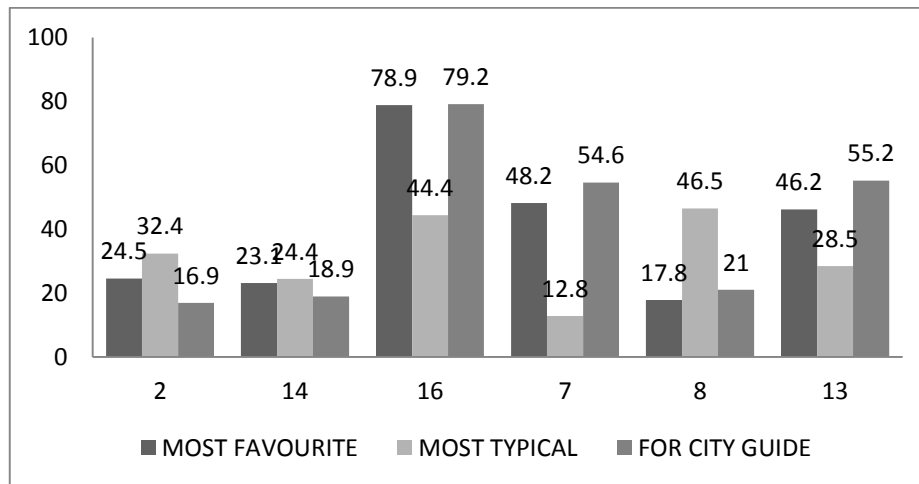


Fig.4 Details adorning the facades of Zabrze modernist buildings identified by the respondents as the most important to them, what matters to the city's image and those that respondents would choose to cover the city guide (in%) [N = 67]. Source: Author's own elaboration

Most of the respondents voted that the best form of information for the sights in Zabrze their promotion would show in a public space - was answered by almost 48% of respondents. It should be noted that, located in the city center shopping center "Platan" offers exhibition space, which is intensively used. Another good idea that could also be used is information boards placed in the immediate vicinity of the monuments (this category has received almost 39% of votes). It is worth to promote these monuments using different forms, as it could also provide programs on the radio and television (30%) also publications on this subject, in a special supplement in the local press - this kind of sentence was given by almost 25% of respondents.

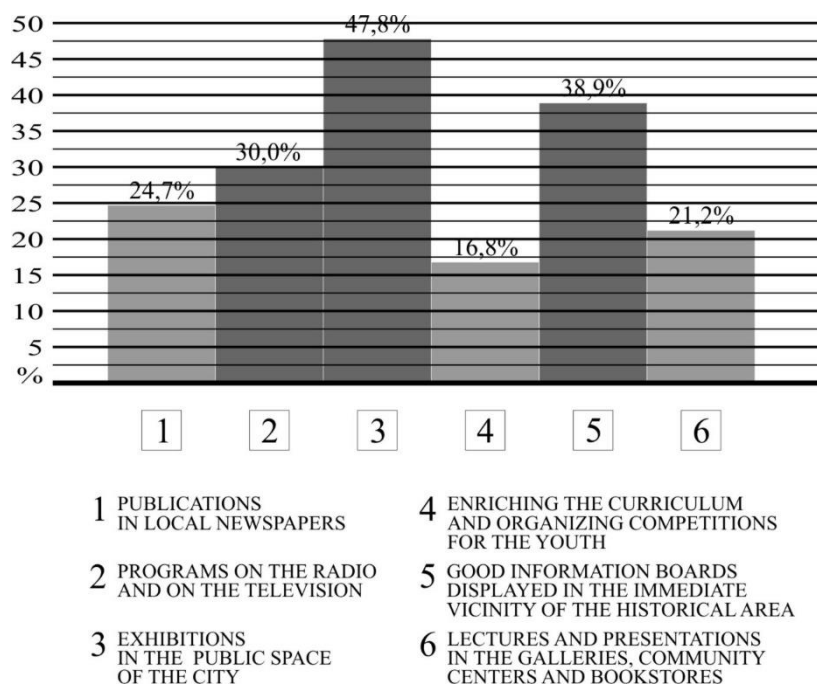


Fig. 5. Preferred forms of information on monuments and their promotion in the opinion of the respondents (in%) [N = 110]. Source: Author's own elaboration

THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The majority of respondents (88%) recognizes the unique aesthetic qualities of the urban space has that historically shaped Zabrze. Half of this group does not know whether the objects they like are monuments or not. It can therefore be argued that the education on the cultural heritage with locals and other stakeholder groups is not sufficient.

Respondents didn't recognized easily the center of the historic area. The most favourite and also the most important for the image of the city is Zabrze's churches, workers settlements and green areas. There is no traffic-free zone in Zabrze. Respondents expect to see the Old Town with a clear plan in part of crystallization in the form of a market and attractive (after revitalization activities) application programs. Looking at both categories, the second position placed the Wolności square, which connects to the Old Town, and to which it adheres former Admiralspalast Hotel, is considered by respondents as the most important monument of Zabrze. City hall area was considered very important for the city's image, but not very important for the respondents. This space of the poor for user program, is mostly designed for cars, and does not offer users any outdoor time.

The unique buildings such as the city hall and the other objects which represent a group of churches, residential houses, municipal buildings and urban villas are monuments, among which the respondents chose as the most favourite objects, the most important for the city and the most suitable to be placed on the cover of the city guide. In all the categories this accounted for a high number of display objects as unique for example: the St. Joseph church and the building of the Admiralspalast Hotel. The Police Headquarters led respondents to indicate it as very important, from the point of view of the city's image, valuable architecture and usefulness of the building. The surprise in the ranking of sites suitable for placement on the cover of the guide is the highest position of the villa. Respondents felt that the architecture of this building best represents the character of the city.

The evaluation was also subjected to architectural detail. The brick details, was appreciated though not to such an extent as to want them on the cover of the guide. Due to the number of objects with such decorations the distribution of responses is not surprising. In all the categories St Joseph church obtained the highest place.

The subjects stated they would like information about exhibitions and monuments in public space, information boards placed in close proximity to historical sites and more activity in disseminating information and promoting the cultural heritage of Zabrze

CONCLUSION

The results of the perception and evaluation of architectural modern heritage in Zabrze show that this part of the city's offer is very important for its users, the potential for cultural heritage and, above all, architecture is not sufficiently utilized in the process of image creation.

This paper presents a method of perception and acceptance testing of space and historic buildings in a contemporary Polish post industrial with the rich heritage city. The results show that the users of the city attach a great importance to the aesthetic value of historic importance and expect a broader and deeper education in this field. They are also proof of the high degree of identification they have, within the city surveyed. Attention is also clarified about the opinions the respondents have about the individual image of urban areas as well as the individual objects.

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