

## **SUCCESSFULL URBAN REGENERATION PROJECT: GDAŃSK-LETNICA DISTRICT CASE STUDY**

Elżbieta URBAŃSKA-GALEWSKA\*, Magdalena APOLLO  
Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering,  
Gdańsk University of Technology

This paper presents the process of urban regeneration of Gdansk Letnica district, a project that from a very short time perspective can be described as successful. The paper will present a brief district's history as well as analysis of circumstances that may have influenced Gdansk authorities' decision of starting an urban regeneration project. The next part shows preparation of the urban regeneration project and its implementation. The conclusions take into account all aspects of the process, i.e. technical, economic and social.

Keywords: revitalisation, risk management, engineering of construction processes

### **1. DECISION OF URBAN REGENERATION**

#### **1.1. Historical background [2, 4, 7]**

Letnica, after war also called Letniewo and before Lauenthal, as one of the first districts of Gdansk underwent, as one of the first districts in Gdansk, a thorough process of urban regeneration in 2010-2012. Origins of today's Letnica stem from beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century (1803). This area, belonging to Cistercian convent in Oliwa, was then sold to the owner of Jelitkowo. Finally this area together with Zaspka lake became the ownership of the city of Gdansk and opening of railway between Gdansk Główny and Nowy Port in 1867 resulted in dynamic development of industry and housing in this town, later to become a district of Gdansk. The factory of phosphate fertilizers, steel mill and rolling mill were created, to be followed by ironware factory and bottle factory. A

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\* Corresponding author: E-mail: [ugalew@pg.gda.pl](mailto:ugalew@pg.gda.pl)

workers settlement was built, in 1880 it occupied an area of 78 ha. Characteristic, fan-like network of streets was created, their names related to industrial plants located nearby. Archival photographs present neat, beautiful gardens and summertime plays by Lake Zaspą.

In times of Free City of Danzig in Lauenenthal majority of inhabitants was of German origin. After the Second World War the population changed. Polish people came, resettled from Vilnius area and other areas incorporated into USSR after war, from central Poland and from Pomerania. Those were mainly workers and farmers from small towns. In the 1950s around 4 thousand people lived there. Unfortunately politics of Gdansk authorities contributed to gradual degradation of the district. Tenants not paying their rents and evicted from other districts were moved to Letnica. From 1970 the gradual degradation and liquidation of Zaspą lake had begun, it was converted into ash and slag landfill for CHP Gdansk. Landfill area was 30 ha. At the end of December 2005 almost 2 mln of sludge was stored there. According to municipal plans the settlement area was meant to become warehouse and industrial area, not keeping housing function. No refurbishment works were undertaken, however the tenant continued to live there. What is more economic transformation in 1980's and 1990's caused closure of many industrial plants. The district degraded, population dropped to 1.5 thousand inhabitants, unemployment and crime increased. This state lasted for almost thirty years.

## **1.2. Reasons behind decision regarding urban regeneration of Letnica**

Letnica is an example of workers settlement, built at the turn of 19th and 20th century. In 2007 the population was 1627 inhabitants, unemployment reached 13%. Out of forty companies located there, seven catered to the needs of local community. More than a half of the apartments consisted of one room with kitchen. The buildings usually had roofs covered with single layer bitumen roofing membrane. Before the project began over 60% of buildings were from before 1918 and 30% was built in 1918-1944. Those buildings did not have sewage system connected to the sewage network and only 4% had local sewage. There was no gas supply and no central heating systems. Only 25% of apartments had toilets and around 17% had a bathroom and hot water. Despite the dramatical deterioration of the resources and the degradation of the natural environment, the historic preservation officer decided that both the layout of the streets and particular buildings deserved protection and required regeneration. [4]. Additionally, the unique charm of the district and the ambience of the small town were noticed and appreciated.

In 1997, Letnica District Council was established and it applied to the City Council for a Local Development Plan Młyniska-Letnica to be elaborated.



Yet in 2002 the plan was adopted, but the City Council was still uninterested in the area. There were a lot of such areas within the Gdańsk city boundaries, which lost its original functions as a result of various transitions and were (and still are) endangered with total or partial degradation. This is only the decision of the stadium erection which triggered the commence of Letnica regeneration [2].



Fig. 1. Location of the Letnica district and the PGE Arena stadium.

In April 2004, Gdańsk City Council passed a resolution “Regeneration Program for Degraded Areas in Gdańsk – Local Regeneration Plan” which also included Letnica. The document included a long-term program of undertakings in spatial planning, construction, economy and social policy in order to overcome the crisis situation in Gdańsk districts and to create conditions for their further development.

Next, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2004, the president of Gdańsk, Paweł Adamowicz, sent a letter to the President of PZPN, M. Listkiewicza, declaring willingness to participate in the Euro Cup 2012. The Department of Urban Planning, Architecture and the Protection of Monuments of the Magistrate proposed a locality for the future stadium. The plans included six localities within the town boundaries: Letnica, „Czerwony Most”, Święty Wojciech,

Szadółki, Klukowo and Nowe Miasto-Północ, presenting the advantages of the particular localities. The possible road developments and the distant from the town centre were taken into consideration, as well as the area ownership.

According to the elaborated plans, Letnica was recognised to be the district “best suited” for this kind of venture, since, apart from the advantages of the locality presented in Table 1, it was noticed that such an undertaking presents a unique chance for Letnica to be revitalised and for the neglected Gdańsk areas: Brzeźno i Nowy Port (Fig.1) to initiate their economic recovery.

In 2007, The Gdańsk Development Office prepared the “Analysis of Growth Opportunities” for Letnica, in which a project of the development of this part of town was presented for the first time [2].

Table 1. Weaknesses and strengths of district Letnica [2]

Strengths	Weaknesses
Investment areas of 30 ha owned by the Commune which may be sold.	A working ash landfill
Easy access to public transport and individual transport (Marynarki Polskiej street)	Poor aerosanitary conditions – significant dust-pollution.
Proximity of attractive recreational areas: beaches, the sea, park in Brzeźno, Fortress in Wisłoujście.	Poor building land (poor bearing capacity.
Future proximity of the stadium.	High level of underground water, implying water-ground relations to be regulated.
	The lack of a technical infrastructure.
	Poor condition of the existing roads.
	The necessity of modernisation of the existing buildings.
	Buildings of production-storage functions dominating.
	Proximity of industrial areas to the east of the district boundaries.
	Dwellers with a passive attitude to life.

It was also noted that such problems as: threat of social pathologies, low level of education and initiative of the dwellers, poor state of environmental conditions and tourist attractiveness.



## 2. PROJECT OF URBAN REGENERATION OF LETNICA

The analyses carried out by Gdańsk Development Office were the bases for the elaboration of the main directions within the project of the district revitalisation. They included a project of modernisation of housing buildings as well as the public space, a plan to build new roads and a program to stimulate local dwellers. In 2008, it was assumed that the project would be realised by municipal units of GZNK (Management of Communal Real Estate in Gdansk), ZdiZ (Management of Roads and Green Spaces), as well as such municipal companies as TBSs (Social Building Association) and other entities subordinated to the Magistrate. A series of technical expertises and plans of renovations of 30 buildings as well as the street system were performed. The elaborated documentation allowed submitting a proposition to EU in January 2010 to revitalise Letnica with funds within the Regional Operational Program for Pomorskie Voivodship 2007 – 2013 [6]. The proposition was supported with both the district's historical values as well as the problems with technical and social infrastructures. The population of the area (12 ha) designed for regeneration amounted to 1137 people.

Each regeneration program is assumed to be directed onto the social-economic growth and to improve life quality of the local society on the areas of intervention. There is why the undertakings within the regeneration projects must include both investments and non-investment tasks [3]. The basic investment tasks were as follows:

- Overhauls of 29 residential buildings of a total area equal 11 292,68 m<sup>2</sup>, out of which residential area amounted to 5 836,29 m<sup>2</sup> (together with appurtenant cellars and cells) and the areas taken by services and industry amounted 434,94 m<sup>2</sup>,
- repairs of semi-public spaces (interiors of residential quarters) of a total area 25 789,57 m<sup>2</sup>, which included 1 680 m<sup>2</sup> of pedestrian paths and lanes,
- the rebuilding and modernisation of the library and gym facilities in the building of the primary school (total area of the rebuilt and modernised rooms is 414,9 m<sup>2</sup>),
- the adaptation, regeneration and rebuilding of the building of the former school for the needs of the dwellers' social activities („Dom Otwarty” total area 928,77 m<sup>2</sup>),
- rebuilding, construction and modernisation of the road sections together with the construction of a new and the rebuilding of the existing underground infrastructure as well as the construction of new road sections.



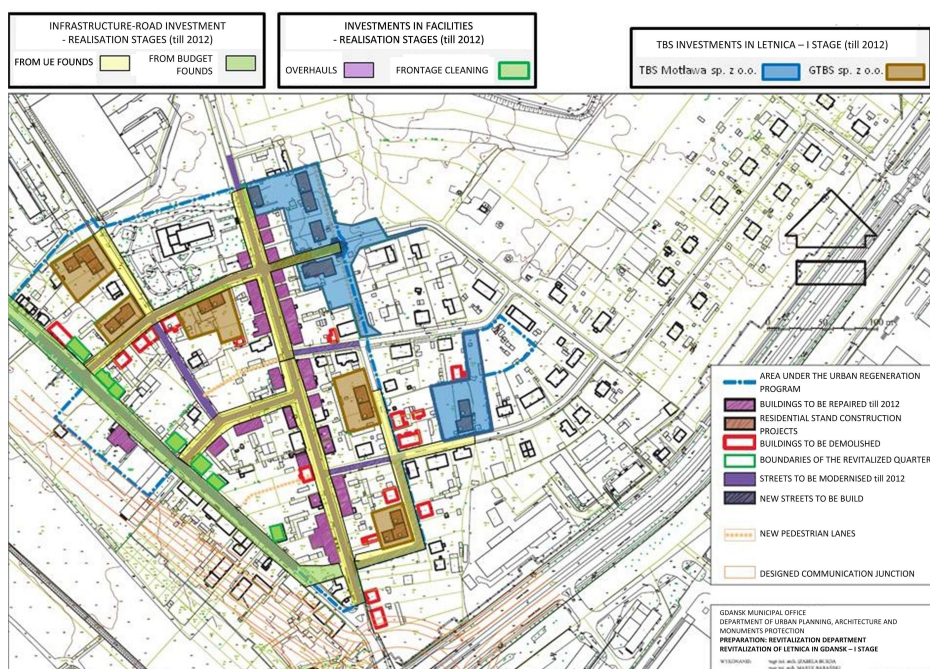


Fig. 2. Area under the Revitalisation Program [1]

Regeneration works included the demolition of parts of the buildings which were not eligible for repairs and modernisation. In such obtained areas, new buildings were planned to be built.

The Coalition established in 2009 for social revitalisation, which included nongovernmental organisations, the parish, administrative municipal units and the President of Gdańsk, prepared a plan of social tasks (noninvestment). They included projectes such as:

- „Od ulicy do Euro 2012! – rewitalizacja społeczna mieszkańców dzielnicy Letnica” (“From the streets to Euro 2012! – social regeneration of Letnica inhabitants”) – setting up a citizen's consulting centre and organisation of sport activities,
- „Integracja w Sztuce” („Integration in Arts”) – artistic workshop for children and youngsters,
- „Nudo warsztaty lingwistyczno-taneczne” („Nudo linguistic-dance workshops”) – linguistic-dancing workshop aiming to equal educational opportunities through foreign language classes and dance,
- „Klub Aktywnych Kobiet” („Active Women Club”) – workshop for women

Social activities aimed to foster the dwellers' integration and to strengthen their social ties as well as to upgrade tourist and investment attractiveness.

In July 2010, the found was granted within PRO WP 3.2.1\_1 and the district's regeneration process was commenced.

### 3. ORGANISATION OF THE REGENERATION PROCESS

The investment part of the regeneration was planned for 2010 – the half of 2012, and social tasks were planned for eight years (2008 – 2015). The whole tasks within the project (the completed and the continued ones) have been coordinated by: the Department of Regional Programs in the Marshal's Office, the Regeneration Unit of the Department of Urban Planning, Architecture and the Protection of Monuments as well as the Department of Developing Programs in Gdańsk Magistrate.

With the extremely short time foreseen for the realisation of the investments (2 year), the proper scheduling of the construction works, and then reliable realisation of the tasks occurred to be a very difficult undertaking. It is obvious that the more complicated and complex the tasks are, there are more problems with meeting all the requirements and keeping the deadlines and thus with the tasks coordination.

Letnica regeneration project assumed the cooperation between numerous economic entities. Apart from the formal participants of the investment part, there are numerous contractors of the particular tasks. Such a complex character of works occurred to be a great challenge in terms of the organisation of the whole undertaking thus resulting in the increased cost and extended duration of the implementation of the project investments.

Repair and modernisation works were performed in stages, but the short implementation time, limited with the Euro 2012, resulted in overlapping the schedules of building repairs with the schedules of road works. It caused a lot of disorders both in the works themselves and the evacuation of tenants for the time of the repairs. The road works often cut off the access to some of the buildings which were due to be repaired at the same time. There also occurred additional hazard resulting from the fact that building sites were visited by unauthorised persons, tenants including. It should be stated that some of the reasons resulting in the delays in the implementation works and the cost increase were impossible to foreseen as they were the effect of errors and mistakes made at the planning stage, while others were caused by “human factor” (negligence, omission, lack of competence, communication problems – delivering inaccurate or outdated information). There also occurred a lot of technical problems, among others:

- Scratches of walls in the repaired buildings, being the effect of the hardening of subsequent layers of pavements on roads in the building proximity,



- uneven settlement and deformation of the renovated buildings caused by the process of pressing piles into the ground being prepared for new objects in the buildings proximity; the technology had to be changed into a screwed piles technology (commercial tasks realised by GTBS Sp.z o.o. and TBS “Motława” Sp.z o.o.).

Despite the numerous mentioned above difficulties, in January 2012 the repairs and modernisations of all the buildings and roads were completed.

The regeneration works were also realised by TBS “Motława” and GTBS Sp. z o.o. within their investment activities. They built eight residential buildings, containing 120 flats altogether, on the revitalised grounds. TBSs completed their activities in June and August 2012 and rendered the buildings for use.

#### 4. ASSESMENT OF LETNICA URBAN REGENERATION

The regeneration of district Gdańsk- Letnica has been one of the recent largest investment realised in Poland. The evaluation of each regeneration processes, Letnica including, should be performed in terms of technical, economic and social aspects. From the technological point of view, the process was completed. However, subject completion of the project is planned for June 2015, and finance completion for August 2015. Thus, the comprehensive analysis of the town expenditures connected with the realised investments will be possible after their final settlement. It should be stressed that 70% of qualified costs i.e. 49,6mln PLN is due to be financed by EU, whereas the social regeneration process started together with the public consultations in 2008 and will continue yet for many years. It seems, though, that the success in this field may be announced now. All the repaired houses are occupied by tenants, and in summer 2012, 1<sup>st</sup> Letnica Congress took place which united all its native dwellers.

In the evaluation of the so-far achieved benefits, the following notation can be found in the Feasibility Study [3] elaborated for the needs of the project application for the EU funds:

*„Realisation of the investment will contribute to series of social benefits. One of the most important ones is the growth of the value of the premises in Gdańsk Letnica. The comprehensive regeneration will improve the attractiveness of this part of town and in consequence result in the increase of the values of the premises. For the needs of the analysis, it was assumed that a standard flat is on average occupied by three tenants, and the values of premises are estimated to have grown by 25%. Such a high growth results first of all from the current unit rates, which are relatively much lower than in other*





*parts of the Town. Additionally, the area receives more promotion by the construction of the Stadium”.*

The expectations of the authors of the elaboration were met in 100%. Letnica regeneration together with the construction of PGE Arena stadium and Trasa Słowackiego (Słowackiego Street) – the connection between the airport in Rębiechowo and the Sea Port of Gdańsk (tunnel under Martwa Wisła including) resulted in the considerable growth of investment attractiveness of the surrounding areas. Shortly after the announcement of the decision of the organisation of Euro 2012 in Poland, Baltic Investment Group bought a land of 6.5 ha which was the former taxi base. What is more, the value of the premises in the area grew nearly ten times [5], which is expressed in the fees for perpetual use of land.

Taking into account the time pressure as well as the unique character of the project, Letnica regeneration project may be recognised as a success. Technical problems have been overcome, social problems have been considerably reduced, and the economic benefits, measured with the level of social benefits considerably confirm the validity of introduced changes. It is particularly worth noticing that the dwellers were involved in all the social projects. It is this involvement which allows the global assessment of the regeneration project to be prognosed as a success.

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SKUTECZNY PROJEKT REWITALIZACJI  
NA PRZYKŁADZIE DZIELNICY GDAŃSKA - LETNICY

Streszczenie

W pracy przedstawiono proces rewitalizacji dzielnicy Gdańska-Letnicy, przedsięwzięcia, które z bardzo krótkiej perspektywy czasu można określić mianem sukcesu. Opisano historię dzielnicy oraz przeanalizowano wszystkie przesłanki, które miały i mogły mieć wpływ na podjęcie przez władze miasta Gdańska decyzji o rewitalizacji. Następnie przedstawiono przebieg procesu przygotowania projektu rewitalizacji jak i przebieg realizacji inwestycji. We wnioskach zwrócono uwagę na wszystkie aspekty procesu rewitalizacji, tj. techniczne, ekonomiczne i społeczne oraz ich wzajemne powiązania.

