

Transformation of public spaces and urban identity in the Terézváros district

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This study examines the spatial and functional transformation of public spaces in the Terézváros district (Budapest's 6th district) and their impact on the formation of urban identity. The aim of the study was to comprehensively assess the environmental conditions, identify factors influencing the perception of the district, and identify sustainable development directions while preserving the historical character of the area.

Terézváros is one of the most functionally and developed districts in central Budapest, combining residential, cultural, and tourist elements. In recent decades, the district has undergone significant changes caused by increasing tourism and changing patterns of public space use. These processes have exacerbated the functional imbalance, leading to a decline in the proportion of permanent residents and increased pressure on infrastructure.

The study's methodology included an analysis of the district's historical and spatial development, a study of its functional structure and transportation system, and a visual-spatial assessment of the street environment. Data from the Regional Institute of Urban Development (TEIR) and municipal documents, cartographic and visual materials, and field observations were used. Particular attention was paid to four streets—Izabella, Eötvös, Szondi, and Aradi—selected as representative examples of the various morphological and functional types within the district.

The analysis revealed that the key environmental challenges include high traffic and parking congestion, a lack of green space (less than 1 m² of green space per person), fragmented public spaces, and a low proportion of participatory governance. High potential for local rehabilitation based on the existing structure and resident engagement was also identified.

Individual recommendations were proposed for each street, including redistribution of the street profile, increasing the width of sidewalks, introducing "green pockets" and linear tree

plantings, improving the visual legibility of facades, and updating small architectural elements. Particular attention was paid to the creation of "third places"—small public spaces that stimulate social interaction—as well as the development of shared space practices ("urban commons").

The conceptual basis of the proposals is an integration of the principles of "status quo development" and "New Urbanism." The former approach aims to maintain the sustainability of the historic structure through local improvements, minimal intervention, and the preservation of morphological integrity. The latter aims to improve the quality of the urban environment through compactness, pedestrian orientation, and multifunctionality. Their combination forms a strategy for the gradual but systematic adaptation of the district to modern requirements.

The obtained results demonstrate that the development of Terézváros is possible without losing its historical character, provided local values are preserved and the principles of sustainable urbanism are consistently implemented. The study emphasizes the need to balance the interests of residents, tourists, and the urban economy, viewing the district's identity as a resource capable of ensuring the long-term sustainability of its development.