

Piroska Varga

CULTURE FACTORIES

Abandoned industrial buildings as cultural sites



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THESIS

MASTERWORK:

*Rudapithecus Spectacle and Educational Trail
Felsőtelekes-Rudabánya, Hungary*

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SUMMARY

My thesis explores revitalization potentials of abandoned industrial buildings. Because of this wide-ranging agenda and the huge number of implemented examples, I focused on three, inherently different examples: Zsolnay Cultural Quarter, Culture Factory Ózd and Rudapithecus Spectacle and Educational Trail.

This selection was motivated by personal experiences, as I had the opportunity to meet and talk about these project with László Herczeg and Györgyi Csontos and became one of the designers of Rudapithecus Spectacle and Nature Trails. Moreover these three projects are the most relevant revitalization projects of the most significant Hungarian abandoned industrial areas in the last 10 year. My intention in this thesis is to support domestic revitalization projects, but it is also important and adequate to present the difficulties and results of Hungarian examples. Furthermore I mention other good examples from Hungary and abroad.

Based on discussed domestic examples and masterwork, it can be concluded that these revitalization projects lack in many things regionally. Especially if we compare them to Western Europe. But to fill a building or a specific factory area with a new function can certainly be successful and outstanding.

Creating strategies on a regional and a national level, needs long term planning. This requires a more reliable legal and political framework than we live in. Despite of the given circumstances, all implemented projects were well prepared, because of excellence, competency and commitment of the involved experts.

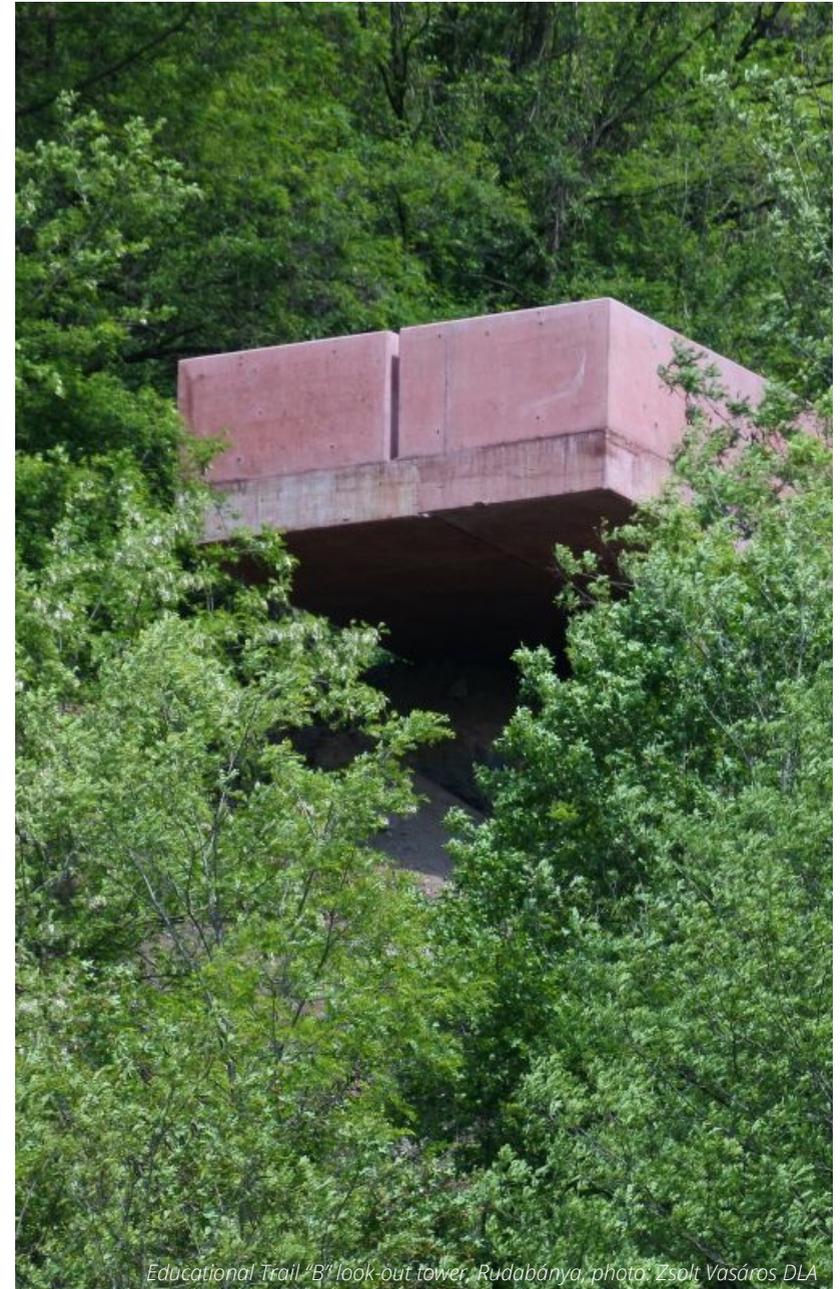
A very elaborate heritage survey was conducted in case of the Zsolnay Cultural Quarter. Extensive local knowledge and former researches of the architect helped to base the planning works correctly despite of the substantial time pressure in Ózd. Preliminary studies of paleontologists and geologists supported implementation of the substantive content at Rudabánya.

Success of these projects depended on an open minded cooperation of architects and experts with a thorough knowledge of the area.

Today the whole culture heritage in our country, is in trouble and not just the industrial ones. Citing Pál Lővei Dsc, art historian: *"Aggregation of loosely connected fields in 2001 concluded gradually to the total liquidation of heritage management. Here and there one can find some excellent professionals, but the national heritage management – in the sense valid in Europe, America, Australia and Asian countries – abolished at the latest in 2011, merely rearguard debates are going on."*¹.

On one hand I wanted to introduce a basic situation of industrial heritage in Europe and Hungary in my thesis. But on the other hand I investigated developments from the architect's point of view with additional cooperation with the given city/area and I mainly focused on how reconstructions, transformations are affecting buildings. Despite the challenging situation in heritage management there are several initiatives and relevant knowledge and we can be proud of the implemented projects countrywide which can compete either on professional or international cultural levels, as certified by important international architectural awards and by their public attendance. However abandoned areas like Rudabánya are outside of urban context or affect such a big territory by themselves, therefore they raise severe landscaping questions from soil recultivation to designing the reconstructed area. Factory reconstruction programs have a direct developmental impact on their environment. Therefore the new function moved into old factory buildings during rehabilitation project. This enables the town, which includes the industrial area, to become an attractive cultural center and might show an alternative for building a new, knowledge-based economy

¹ Ficsor Benedek: Darabokra hullott az örökségvédelmi rendszer, 2017. június 23, link: <https://mno.hu/grund/darabokra-hullott-az-oroksegvedelmi-rendszer-2404751>, megtekintve: 2017. december 30.
Benedek Ficsor: Heritage Management System Falling Apart, June 23, 2017



Educational trail 'B' look-out tower, Rudabánya, photo: Zsolt Vasáros DLA

THESIS



Blasting up the 9 chimneys in Ózd, photos: Ózd Municipality Museum

Industrial heritage as a value in question

The unique history of Hungary has a significant influence on our national attitude towards industrial buildings, as well as, generally, towards all industrial heritage issues.

Due to this feature, different – and foredoomed to be limited – opportunities have been provided, compared to other Western European developments. The industrialization appeared with considerable delays, the prominent growth of the Monarchy era, the losses caused by the first and second World Wars, followed by the excessively heavy industry developments of the 1950s and 1960s, then the radical economic transformation after the socialist regime – these elements of our historical heritage were just a few circumstances which have not been particularly favorable to the protection and preservation of the industrial heritage, as well as have led to the elimination of the broad concepts.

As a logical consequence of the above, no appreciative approach could be evolved on industrial heritage based on values and widespread social consensus, thus such elemental steps of protection and preservation as the value register and the monument nature itself are remained to be questionable as well. Therefore, one of the fundamental problems regarding the preservation of the Hungarian industrial heritage is that the – sometimes hopeless – struggles of the professional and social groups involved at political, economical and social levels are conducted in isolation, at local stages and in narrow circles.



Representative hall of Power Plant, Cultural Digitalizing Centre, Ózd, photo: Balázs Danyi

Unusual values – the layers of building, object, intellectuality, community and tradition

The importance of integrated heritage protection can be decisive in the protection of the former and now largely or completely abandoned industrial sites, compared to the protection of other valuable buildings.

The significance of such protection lies in that it covers not only the protection of fixed buildings and the related material memories, but also extended to the intellectual heritage inherent within.

Our experiences gained during the research confirmed the above facts: along the erosion of the heavy industry, the mining industry and generally the industrial sector that shook its head after or partially before the change of regime in Hungary, with the destruction and amortization of material goods, little attention was paid towards former workers, families and communities. The foreign and domestic successful examples observed are all based heavily on the existing intellectual bonds, the related traditions and memories.

The above written details could provide a good and hopeful foundation for a successful development, or, leastwise could be a prerequisite for the preservation.

Culture and community – a unique developing power

The revitalization programs of the abandoned industrial buildings - primarily due to their scale and unique nature - can have direct impact on their wider environment as well.

Many of the successful examples have been cultural investments; the reason of them – beyond the spatial potential and capabilities – is laid in the community initiatives catalyzing developments and in the conception based on intellectual heritage. In addition, bottom-up good examples and well-implemented conceptions concluded at high political level are also known.

The cultural function always assumes a community that uses, visits, and/or manages its new function. Culture deemed to have a community-building role, therefore such a new function to be infiltrated into old factory buildings also ensures an opportunity for the buildings subsisted usually as inclusions and their environment to become converted into an attractive local center of their surrounding city.



Exhibition in the Ruhr Museum, photo: Matthias Dusch



Landschaftspark Duisburg Nord, photo: Michael Latz

Large scale" complexity in design

The issue of rehabilitation of brownfields is very complex, in many respects – design makes no exception from this circle.

In most cases, it is not only an architectural issue, but serious economical, sociological, environment and nature protection related - sometimes political level decisions - may also affect to if an industrial building or area could pronounced to be a value, as well as to its preservation and development.

In addition, different aspects of the issue are represented by experts from different professions; as for the design aspect, by professional designers.

In order to preserve a value-based and value-centric utilization, the varying professional aspects should be treated together, however, with different emphasis. The coordination and moderation of the contributing experts and designers involved often remains to be part of the architect's functions. In many cases, this task - due to the complexity of the process – goes beyond the usual role of a general designer, taken into account the crucial features of such projects: the social embeddedness and the intention of creation of an intellectual heritage.

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Heterogeneity: capability and the principle of further development

During the revitalization of the individual buildings as well as the large, often urban scale, abandoned industrial sites, it is essential to recognize, to document and to thematise the architectural toolkit. One of the specialities – or can be said that the foundation - of a good industrial building is the flexibility which lies mainly in its spatial formation. During the fundamental technological turnouts and drastic changes, however, buildings were either unable to adopt the new functions without compromises or major transformations – thus further transformations, demolitions, extensions, build-ups and further constructions have been carried out; architecture continued to follow the function.

*The special design and the shorter or longer life cycles of the industrial buildings create a unique situation that in no other fields of architecture can be so remarkably, which may also determine their further constructions. **In cases of successful revitalization examples it can also be noticed that the unique space experiences providing their original and special nature, as well as the typically additive medium remains – so heterogeneity remains to be a distinctive feature of the aggregation.***

However, this design orientation can only be derived from the exploration of the historical, archaeological and other material and intellectual value layers of the original context – the proposed design concept can be their further overlapping.



Zsolnay Cultural Quarter photo: Piroska Varga

Space creation: consequences of the change of function

The spatial structure and functional layout of the industrial buildings usually differs considerably from the residential or public buildings, due to the space requirements, architectural and interior design requirements regarding them. This feature can primarily be observed in the spatial dimensions and the ratio of the types of space correlating with each other. The proportion of the cellular type rooms is relatively low, thus their utilization in case of a revitalization is relatively simple. Lot more questions arise in cases of the large, typically warehouse or manufacturer-mounting spaces and halls, due to their size and the different level of comfort resulted from their industrial function.

In case of a change in function, creation of practical spaces suitable for the new function constitutes an essential element of the architectural design. In cases of large-scale spaces, the architectural consequences of the new and drastically different comfort needs shall be overbridged, withal taking advantage of the special "dimensions" provided by the spaces, at the same time. The implemented examples show a great variety of architectural-design attitudes. The maintenance of the - often emblematic - façade architecture goes hand in hand with serious compromises in order to create inner comfort, or, otherwise it might be overlooked. An essential element of the design concept is the character, namely the understanding of the coexistence of "unusual" values, including their evaluation and development.



New ramp in the Power Plant, Cultural Digitalizing Centre, Ózd, photo: Balázs Danyi



Educational Trail "D" look-out tower, Rudabánya, photo: Zsolt Vasáros DLA

MASTERWORK

*Rudapithecus Visitor Centre and Educational Trail
Felsőtelekes - Rudabánya, Hungary*

Project name: Rudapithecus Spectacle of Monkey Island –
protective building with visitor centre and educational trail
code of the project ÉMOP-2.1.1/B-12-2012-0082
client: Municipality of Rudabánya – Lajos Szobota Mayor,
Árpád Sallai Phd. honorary chief notary
Planning period : 2013-2014
Construction period : 2015-2016

leading designer: Dr. habil Zsolt Vasáros DLA

architect designers: Zsolt Megyesi, Gábor Nagy, Áron Sasvári,
Anikó Somlai (Narmer Architecture Studio, Budapest),
Gabriella Antal, Veronika Borzsák, Piroska Varga
(BORSOD2050 project – BME Architecture Doctoral School)
collaborating architects: Emőke Bandur-Juhász, Ágnes Eiszrich,
Anna Kőnig, Bence Török

structural engineering: Norbert Blasius (X-pol Kft.),
Kovács Olivér, Dr. János Szendefy (Eferate Kft.)

building engineering: Csaba Makáry, Tamás Mottl (Agorex Kft.)

building electricity: Ilona Nyári (Libella Lux Kft.), András Peták (VA-IQ Kft.)

concrete technology: Péter István Varga DLA (VPI Stúdió Kft.)

kitchen technology: Piroska Kaszab (Multi Konyha Kft.)

fire safety engineer: István Horváth, Orsolya Brindzik (Pentamer Kft.)

geodesy: Ferenc Mislai (Mester-Geo Kft.)

soil mechanics: Roland Szántó (Alap-Geo Kft.)

paleontologist: Dr. László Kordos

accessibility specialist: Anna Kormányos

BIM consultant: Szilágyi Balázs (Körös Consult Kft.)

photos: János László, Klára Lovas, Dr Zsolt Vasáros DLA habil

Distribution of authorship in case of Education Trail buildings:

Pier "B1", "B2" and fireplace "B3" and viewpoints "C":

Piroska Varga 1/3, Dr habil Zsolt Vasáros DLA, Veronika Borzsák 2/3

Viewpoint "D":

Piroska Varga 1/3, Dr habil Zsolt Vasáros DLA, Gabriella Antal 2/3



Mining lake of Rudabánya orthophoto photo: János László, CIVERTAN



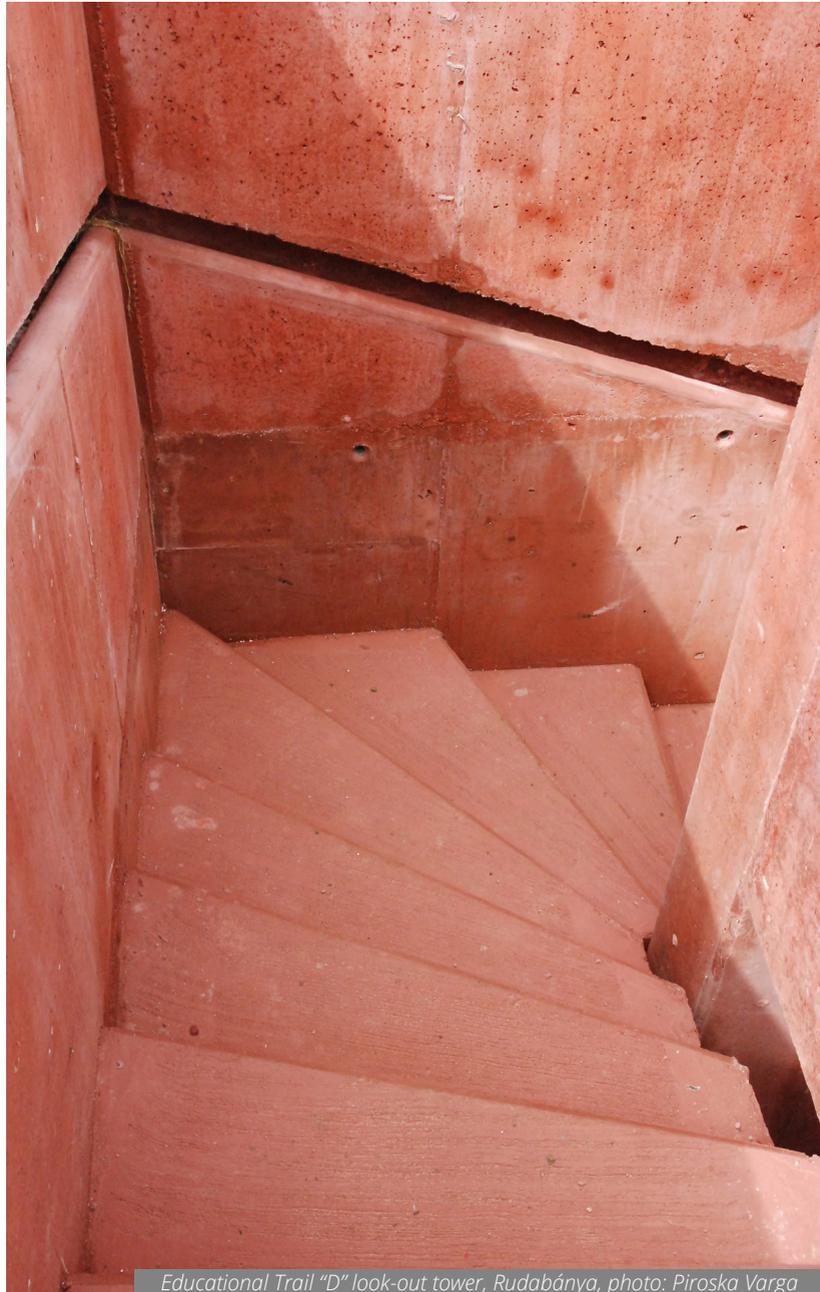
Educational Trail "A" look-out tower, Rudabánya, photo: Zsolt Vasáros DLA



Educational Trail "C" look-out tower, Rudabánya, photo: Zsolt Vasáros DLA



Educational Trail "D" look-out tower, Rudabánya, photo: Piroska Varga



Educational Trail "D" look-out tower, Rudabánya, photo: Piroska Varga



Educational Trail "D" look-out tower, Rudabánya, photo: Piroska Varga



Educational Trail "B" bathing platform, Rudabánya, photo: Piroska Varga



Educational Trail "B" bathing platform, Rudabánya, photo: Zsolt Vasáros DLA



Educational Trail benches and information panel, Rudabánya, photo: Piroska Varga



Educational Trail benches and information panel, Rudabánya, photo: Piroska Varga