

A Pedestrian Rule and the Shortest Path: Pedestrian Routes in the Eastern Side of the Historical Centre of Turda City, Romania

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ABSTRACT

The urban footprint of each city reveals important aspects of its daily functioning, the way it is understood and used by its residents. The urban character can be primarily appreciated by clear routes, daily used by residents, which give particular connotations to spaces, not at all accidental. The purpose of this paper is, on the one hand, to analyze the existent central pedestrian network of Turda city and, on the other hand, to analyze the expansion possibilities in the Eastern island of the historical centre. The expansion of pedestrian network involves building new connections or reviving old ties that were closed due to poor urban interventions. The main result of the study consists in forming a detailed list of both the historic pedestrian crossings and of the existing or possible future ones. The analysis of each pedestrian route aims to present the most relevant historical issues, observe and highlight the current functioning problems and enunciate possible corrective measures for optimization or even elaborate new proposals. The actual situation of the Eastern side of the main square shows us that the lack of urban strategies and the lack of carefully urban planning can lead to serious obstructions concerning the good functioning of the pedestrian links. Nevertheless, the conclusion would be that, even with minimal interventions in the urban structure, the pedestrian network could be highly improved and extended. An actual urban project, based on studies like this one, which would revitalize the pedestrian network, could also significantly revive the tourist interest for the city centre.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research paper aims to analyze the pedestrian network of the historic centre of Turda city, Romania and to examine some real possibilities of expanding it. The paper also aims to examine possibilities for reiterating some of the old pedestrian routes, nowadays forgotten and find solutions for revitalizing the existing ones. These proposals are intended to materialize in a series of measures concerning the reactivation of architectural and urban spaces and their reintegration in the pedestrian network of the historic centre and also of some of the pericentral

areas. Lately, in post-industrial cities, the need of a pedestrian network, linking attractions and heritage objects, is becoming more and more acute, as tourists must be guided in their cultural journeys through the cities. In the recent years, the city of Turda was seen as a major traffic hub, as it links important regions of Transylvania. Most people do not go through this city centre as pedestrians, but, in most cases, as drivers, by their private cars. Thus, there is no direct contact with the natural and built environment and, subsequently, social connections are limited.

In the case of future proposals of pedestrian circuits more attention should be given to heritage and

historical architecture, to public spaces, to new objectives in the central area and also to courtyards and natural elements, such as Racilor creek.

2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

In the twentieth century, European cities faced a number of challenges that made local authorities impose long-term planning of the central areas. Planners proposed to approach the historic centres as multifunctional spaces, dedicated to cultural and social activities, which has unfortunately led to the museification of these centres [1]. If we look back on the completed projects, we can appreciate that there are certain trends and patterns that were repeatedly implemented in the process of revitalization of historical centres. The external pressures, out of globalization sphere and the problems caused by the economy restructuring, on the one hand, and the need to create some new civic identities, on the other hand, have determined cities to use their material, human and cultural resources more intensively, in order to become more distinctive and to be able to regenerate the urban fabric and the local economy [2]. Since the early 1970s, in most European capitals, local authorities have adopted specific strategies, aimed at encouraging residents to re-discover their cities. One of the goals of these strategies was also to improve the safety and accessibility of central areas. A good example is the pedestrian plateau of Copenhagen, which is also one of the first ones in European context [3]. Some of the revitalization strategies included the following: festivals with different themes, promotion of local traditions and the implementation of new urban concepts as the pedestrian street and the pedestrian plateau generator, which also led to the reorganization of car traffic [4], or to the creation of a new architectural program – the cultural centres or hubs, etc. Dominique Fleury, Research Director at the French National Institute for Transport and Safety Research, discusses in his work about the pressure of motorised transportation and the cities struggle to protect themselves and to develop strategies for the revitalization of pedestrian networks [5]. He thus believes that this kind of strategies can lead to a better quality of life.

The main goal of all these actions was not to revive the local economy of cities, but to pursue the diversification of cultural activities and thus increase the number of population in central and pericentral areas. It was intended to revive the historic centre as a catalyst for growing a local civic identity, as in the case of Copenhagen city [6]. The consequence of these actions was both an economic one, with implications for local economic recovery in nearly all historical centres and a social one.

The example of Copenhagen is very conclusive: Jan Gehl (a Danish architect mainly concerned with

studies on what makes the city's urban spaces work) conceives a program, which was meant to transform the city from a car-oriented place to a people-friendly one.



Fig. 1. Cities of Turda, Cluj-Napoca and Bistrița, in national context.

Some of the main steps taken in this direction were to: convert streets into pedestrian thoroughfares, turn parking lots into public squares, honour the human scale, making walking a pleasant experience, or populate the core, which also gives a feeling of safety for outside visitors. [6]. Further on, we will present some models of such strategies and their effects in the cities of Cluj-Napoca and Bistrița (see Fig. 1).

2.1. The first pedestrian street in Cluj-Napoca – the pedestrian plateau generator

Based on the above theory, concerning the revitalization through easy access to culture, we will briefly present the pedestrian plateau example of the historic centre of Cluj-Napoca. We will talk about the first entirely pedestrian street in the city centre, the Matei Corvin Street, and its effect in expanding the pedestrian area.

The pedestrianization of streets in historic centres of cities has multiple implications on the development of urban life. In Romania, the first pedestrian streets arose due to the need to limit air and noise pollutions and to solve the issue of traffic congestion on the streets of historic centres. Thus, the first pedestrian streets were trying to solve the urgent problems of car traffic in the historic centres, which had a medieval urban structure and a medieval street network, hardly to be adapted for today's automotive traffic. Thus, urban regeneration has taken on greater importance, favouring the direct relationship between buildings and the public space. And thus, the so-called pedestrian platforms are born as ample spaces dedicated to pedestrians and trade activities, which also connect representative places, impregnated with historical values [7].

Considering the actuality of urban revitalization process and the malfunctions of cities such as Cluj-Napoca, we find that the need to rethink their public spaces, having the pedestrian as a main actor, has become a priority. In urban planning, pedestrian street infrastructure is part of the general circulation infrastructure: a route reserved for pedestrians, designed with specific material combinations, namely different types of paving and green landscaped areas. Matei Corvin Street, in the historical centre of Cluj-Napoca, was rehabilitated accordingly, the access of vehicles being restricted. The pedestrianization of this street has led to the opening of numerous commercial facilities, more accessible to pedestrians, and to the intensification of cultural activities in the immediate vicinity.

The Pedestrian Street, regarded as a factor of urban regeneration, favours the climate for the generation of an entire pedestrian network, or the pedestrian platform [3]. Jane Jacobs (1961), referring to the mix of functions accessible to pedestrians, which delivers a high-quality of life and adds variety and vitality to an area, names this: *“an intricate and close-grained diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support, both economically and socially”* [8, p. 14].

The shaping of these new pedestrian spaces, in historical centres, and the new links, that are created within the city, lead to the necessity of expansion of the pedestrian network towards the pericentral areas. Mathias Street was the first pedestrian street downtown Cluj-Napoca and, implicitly, the pedestrian plateau generator [9]. The Pedestrian Platform in Cluj-Napoca includes pedestrian streets and squares, but the process still continues, the pedestrian network continuing to expand.

2.2. Communal courtyard in the historic centre – the social cohesion generator

We will continue discussing the city of Cluj-Napoca, a good example, we think, for many cities, with similar structure, in Transylvania. The pedestrianization process, once started, can bring long-term benefits, and also involve other urban structures, such as courtyards in the historic centre of Cluj-Napoca.

The rehabilitation of these types of spaces could lead to a unitary character of the central pedestrian area. Most of these courts are already animated with commercial or cultural functions, such as cafes, restaurants, services or museums and other exhibition spaces. The restored courtyards could be exploited in many ways, by organizing cultural, social, commercial activities.

The pedestrian routes and the courtyard passageways could recall and capitalize on the history of the place. Reconnecting courtyards through pedestrian

routes would complement and extend the pedestrianized historic structure and would also create important and sometimes even necessary links between parallel streets, as there are already in some particular situations.

2.3. The Pedestrian passage - passages and historical axes in Bistrița

The Historical Centre of Bistrița, further approached, has undergone rehabilitation and urban regeneration process, which involved the reopening and reactivation of pedestrian crossings from north to south through the central urban complex. This process had several phases, besides the revitalization of medieval historical passages, there were proposed some new tourist pedestrian axes. Thus, the urban regeneration of the historic centre involved the rehabilitation of three major urban axes: The Crown Axis, The Arts Axis and The Guilds Axis [10].

By some minimal measures, a tourist brand of the city was created, the town of Bistrița being now known as the *pedestrian crossings city*. The pedestrian structure totalizes a number of 22 narrow pedestrian streets, which are the shortest open routes between the northern and southern limits of the city. There is now easy accessibility between the pericentral areas, the historical centre and the main monuments and major tourist attractions (The Evangelical Church Ensemble “Șugăletele”, The Silversmith's House, etc.). This process of pedestrian structure regeneration, counting on the shortest pedestrian paths, will thus lead to the unification of the historic centre and to a better understanding of its urban structure. The three axes mentioned above belong to the medieval town street network, and they are directly connected to the pericentral fortification system. This way, the markets assembly is highly valued, the public spaces being articulated by these narrow streets.

This project conducted to a constant increase of tourism potential in what concerns the entire fortified urban ensemble, well connected through pedestrian links and being seen as a whole, as it highlights the original plan of the medieval city.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the historical centre of Turda we are dealing with isolated historical sites, located out of the pedestrian network, as in most cities of Transylvania. On the one hand we have squares (The Republicii Square, The Museum Square, The December 1st, 1918 Square, The Russian Market, The Food Market) which are not linked by a coherent and continuous pedestrian network; on the other hand we have fortified churches along the Racilor Creek (Roman Catholic church,

Reformed church, Unitarian church, Calvin Reformed church) that are not valued and properly marked. The tourists have low interest to explore such objectives.

The historical centre of Turda and also the surroundings are very accessible in terms of distances between them, which are relatively short. This is an argument in the idea of extending the current pedestrian network. The urban regeneration of Turda city, involves primarily the reactivation of some spaces of identity, within the central area (Fig. 2).

In Europe, after the Second World War, most of the cities with medieval structure faced a general problem, namely, the loss of urban identity. Until today, in some European countries including Romania, measures were taken in order to increase the importance of pedestrian routes in historic centres. Thus, the pedestrianization process was intensified, aiming a series of social, economic and tourist benefits, and also a kind of reinvention of pedestrian spaces [11]. The so called New Urbanism focuses on restoring the diversity in cities and on making them walkable and enjoyable, also offering new options for living for the residents.

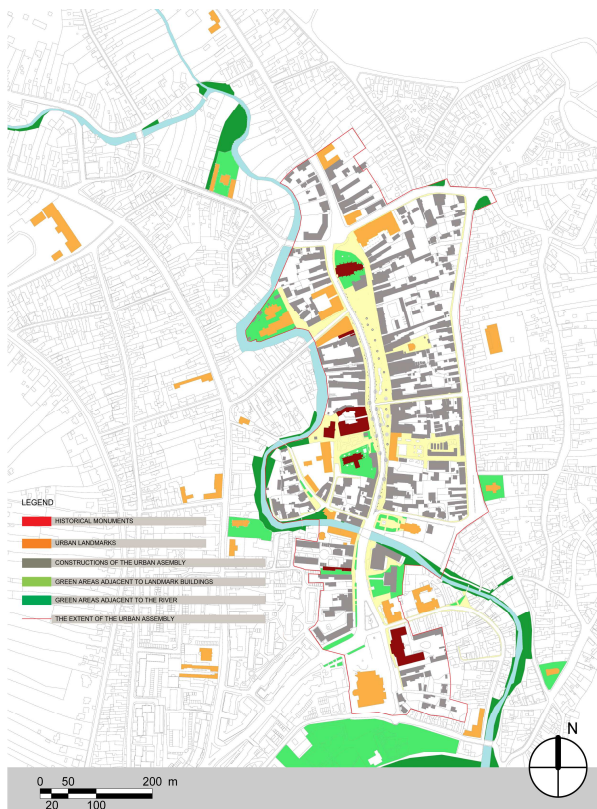


Fig. 2. Pedestrian routes, green spaces and urban landmarks in the central area of the city.

The necessity of connecting fragmented areas of auto traffic or of improper architectural insertions in historical centres has led to several new strategies, in order to rethink public spaces. Thus, in a fragmented city, we find various types of barriers that have the potential to be transformed into spaces of social

cohesion. Turda city is rich in such places, for example, in the central area, there is *the Eastern front*, constituting a barrier at the pedestrian level, but also having the potential to be opened to pedestrians. By rethinking the connections between the possible tourist sites or by reactivating some old pedestrian routes, the current pedestrian network can be improved in order to support tourism and cultural activities. Culture should have a polarizing role in the city and in the adjacent areas [12].

3.1. Pedestrianization of courtyard passageways. Analysis of potential pedestrian areas

In the context of today's globalization, which deeply affects the social dimension of many cities, it is increasingly important to find strategies aimed at recovering the original elements of identity, the scale of the place, the lost pedestrian spaces and also aimed at creating diversity in the urban areas.

"That which applies to areas in general also applies to cities in particular: unconsciously, we all have a more or less defined image of certain cities, whether based on correct information or prejudices. Research shows that a city's image is influenced in a positive manner by the extent to which the city is known, or "unknown, unloved" and "known, loved" [13]. This aspect is well reflected in the current situation of Turda. Although there are few remaining industrial units in the city, Turda is still regarded as an important industrial centre, as it actually was back in time, during the communist regime. More recently, the city's image has improved thanks to the renovation of the Salt Mine, which has become the main local tourist destination. However, the historic, cultural and social dimension of the city, within the architectural - archaeological assembly, remains unexploited. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the pedestrian central area's potential could be the basis for future strategies, regarding architectural and urban connections.

Turda's urban ensemble is included in the 2015 List of Historical Monuments [14]; the entire area sums up to a total of 27 hectares, where 7 historical monuments are located, around the main squares of the historic centre. The central area is characterized by a specific urban space, the Republicii Square, which has a lenticular shape and the adjacent squares are niche-type urban spaces. The centre of Turda has been and still is an active urban space, where trade-fairs and different other social and cultural activities have been held since the medieval ages. Nowadays, the "car culture" makes it more difficult for the people to get used to a different approach of the public spaces, in order to use them in more various ways. In their book, *New City Spaces*, Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe (2000) argue that the main acting force against the cultivation of good public space is this "car culture" [15]. In the

case of Turda, the pedestrian promenade takes place on the eastern front, giving the market a polarizing role in terms of social cohesion. On the other side of the Republicii Square, the car traffic still flows in a continuous agglomeration.

The first part of the historic centre was the eastern front (No. 1-52, Republicii Street, edified in 15th-20th centuries, validated as historical and architectural monument by CNMASI, Code no. 13B549). In the historic centre, the plots had an elongated form, specific to Transylvanian medieval town planning. The initial disposition of the houses was in "L" shape, having the short side disposed along the street and the long disposed inwardly plot, attached to property boundaries of the neighbouring parcels. The transformations of the urban front have begun in the late 18th century and early 19th century, with the unification of several parcels and the changing of land occupation. The "I", "L" or "U" shaped layouts of building plans have generated the courtyards and their access gangways [16]. These transformations characterize the front, matching the pedestrian routes, analyzed in this paper.

The following pedestrian routes are proposed to widen the pedestrian access to the central square, and create short links between the Republic Square and the adjacent streets. Some of these paths used to exist entirely, others were only partially opened, and some of them did not even exist, but they will be analyzed in order to find solutions for the revitalization of some courtyards and to find new, interesting perspectives over monuments and other buildings of the central urban assembly. This study will continue to pursue a detailed analysis of these pedestrian paths and courtyard passageways. Some of these passages pass only through private courtyards, whereas others pass through semi-private courtyards and end in an apparently clogged street. All these crossings on the Eastern front of the Republicii Square generally have several proposed exits.

The existing pedestrian routes will be presented in order, from the north of the eastern bloc towards south. Those few cases, in which we can talk about existent pedestrian ways, like, for example, the "Lengyel" passage, are encountered only on the eastern front. These are the result of a very compact and cohesive front, the only crossing street being the Șterea Șuluțiu Street.

The urban and architectural elements, based on which some new pedestrian passages will be proposed, will be detailed below, each case being separately analyzed. The purpose of these shortcuts is to connect tourist sites and attractions in the downtown area and, not least, an effort to educate pedestrians to enjoy the urban perspectives and the aesthetic side of a walk through town. Starting from the Republicii Square, passages would reach the following streets:

Castanilor Street, Axente Sever Street and Gheorghe Lazăr Street. These streets are, by contrast, less used than the central square. This is also due to poor accessibility because of the poor street network that fails to cover the daily traffic needs in the areas. Moreover, these adjacent streets that we are talking about are intensively used as parking areas. Because of this lack of pedestrian space, these secondary street fronts were not developed in terms of pedestrian activities, economic ones, or public services or cultural points of interest. So, the proposed pedestrian passages would also revive the economy and give new opportunities to local inhabitants.

Thus, this study proposes to integrate the existing, yet unused, passages and also to create new ones, wherever the urban structure allows it, focusing on the rehabilitation of courtyards, removal of parasitic buildings and reopening of pedestrian gangways. Thus, these pedestrian paths could be reintegrated into the public spaces circuit. The opening of gangways on the western front of the urban island must be a priority, especially where these small demolitions of parasitic buildings and inappropriate extensions or closures would have small costs, but huge benefits. Of course, here we look at a small-scale pedestrian network, the scale of the historical centre; therefore, it is important to give importance to the private inner courtyards and also maintain housing in the downtown area by keeping a balance between public and private spaces. The fact that there are still inhabited buildings and courtyards in downtown area is a significant plus, because many cities have fallen into the trap of museification in historic centres. By maintaining the private housing in the central area, there will be assured a certain vitality and animation for the public spaces.

3.2. Pedestrian passages: the Lengyel passage, passage of the summer cinema, the food market's passages

The historic centre of Turda offers different tourist objectives, which can be easily included in a pedestrian route, due to the short distances between them, and due to their variety, both concerning the architecture and the social-cultural dimension (Fig. 3).

Thus, as it can be concluded, the medieval town footprint is shaped as an apparently spontaneously assembly; the basic rule for pedestrian crossing distances was to limit the routes frequently used by pedestrians to 450 m; also, an important factor was the road hierarchy and the direct connections for pedestrians [17]. Public spaces in Turda, both the pedestrian ones and those who have the potential to become pedestrian, consist mainly of public squares, green spaces, courtyards and the passages that we talked about. Some of these pedestrian passages and

gangways will be further analyzed, in terms of accessibility and potential for pedestrian activities.



Fig. 3. General view of the proposals to reactivate the pedestrian crossings in the eastern islands.

The Astoria Hotel passage is the first proposal regarding the extension of public space in the north of the historic centre (Fig. 4).

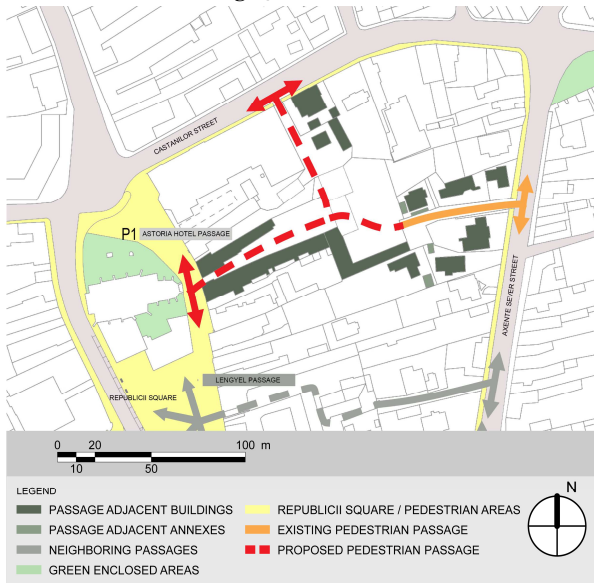


Fig. 4. Proposal (P1) for a pedestrian route through the courtyard of Astoria Hotel.

Former Astoria hotel building was built in 1889 and it is today an architectural object with ambient value. The building has an architecture plan

shaped in “L” form, the ground floor is intended for commercial purposes and the upper floors are intended for habitation. The ground floor has an architecture adapted to commercial activities, like most buildings in the Republicii Square. The changes and the adjustments of the facade date back in the early twentieth century [18].

The building located in Republicii Square, at number 49, hosted the Astoria Hotel and Restaurant from 1931 until 1938, when the hotel was owned by Heinrich Nussbaum. The hotel was one of class II, the courtyard being used as a public space [19]. The courtyard has some indisputable qualities in terms of quality of an urban space. Here we can mention the nice visual perspective that opens towards the altar of the Roman Catholic Church, as it can be seen in the above scheme. Being the farthest northern of the proposed pedestrian passage in this urban island, the space may receive two outputs, one in the Axente Sever Street and the other one in the Castanilor Street. These streets could be reactivated, socially and economically speaking, by bringing pedestrians in these areas.

The first step in opening up this passage would be to open the pedestrian access to Axente Sever Street. Thus, it would be necessary to cross through two private plots to reopen this forgotten exit. An alternative pedestrian route could cross the eastern island, at an angle of 90 degrees in plan, with an exit in the Castanilor Street, also by crossing two other private plots.

Lengyel Passage was the name designated to the pedestrian passage that crosses the courtyards of buildings at number 25 in Mihai Viteazul Square (the current Republicii Square, number 44), with exit in Axente Sever Street. The passage resolved, as a pedestrian link, the connection between Republicii Square and the Axente Sever Street (Fig. 5).

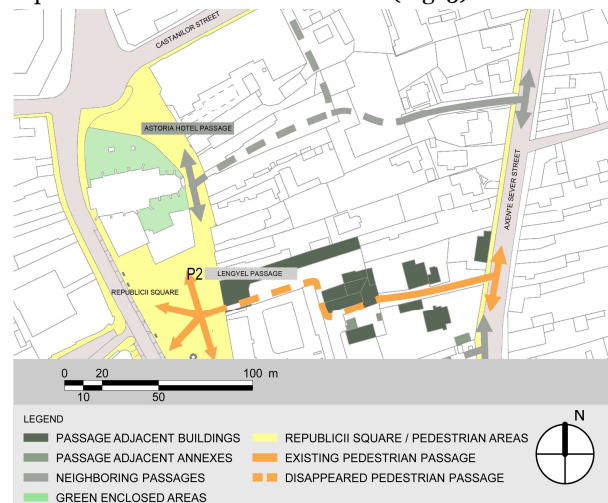


Fig. 5. Proposal (P2) for reopening the Lengyel pedestrian passage.

The building was built on the site of an older building that disappeared due to the explosion of 1917; in the old building was activating a printer, the Joszef Fussy

printing house, as it was called, therefore the location being well known in town. The building, rebuilt after the explosion, is still preserved today, and, after 1944, has received several names, among which we can mention: "The Iron", "The Iron Shop", "The Tunnel of Turda". [20].

Along the passage there were several public functions that animated this route. After 1918, the Great Union's year, there were built many public and private buildings, due to industrial and economic development [21]. There appeared a new typology of trade building, having a special space toward the street in which to expose the selling goods and also having a gangway into the courtyard. On this pedestrian passage was also a famous restaurant, which had a nightclub and another hotel. There also was a bowling alley, well renowned and highly frequented [20].

Lengyel Building height regime consists of basement, ground floor - commercial functions, and two upper floors - housing functions; the architects who were involved in the design process remain unknown. The used plan was the traditional one for Transylvania region, "L" shaped. The building was built in the interwar period; the architectural style adopted was the neo-Romanian. The building was originally conceived as a tenement. The access to the inner courtyard is through an alleyway, sized to serve both to pedestrians and to vehicles; this gangway is treated as unimportant in the architectural composition of the facade, which keeps its symmetry. The facade inside the courtyard is much simpler in terms of architectural details. The building, back in the courtyard is lower, just ground-floor and one upper level, and is supposed to be part of the old building, the part that was not affected by the explosion. The facade of the building in the courtyard is crossed entirely by a long concrete balcony [18].

Passage Lengyel was necessary as a pedestrian route as it was located at approximately the middle of the northern island and provided a direct connection between the Axente Sever Street and the Republicii Square, significantly shortening the travelled distance. The building at number 44 in the Republicii Square is not one of the most valuable buildings, in architectural terms, but the possibility of using the inner's courtyard space as a pedestrian is what gives important value to it. The building could be preserved in its current form, with the mention that the ground-floor architectural register should be redesigned, so that would invite the pedestrians into the courtyard. Also, the parasitic small annexes in the courtyard should also be removed in order to create a proper pedestrian walkway.

In the scheme above can be seen the two entries in the passage, the entrance through the building so called "The Iron", in the first picture, and the entering from the Axente Sever Street, in the second picture. Today, the passage is rarely used, only by those

who remember his existence, or by those who actually live in these courtyards. The Axente Sever Street's entry is not properly designed, does not invite the passer. On the other hand, the courtyards of houses in the Republicii Square are used quite extensively for commercial activities, and public services. So, the development of the city's pedestrian structure by using these courtyards would be quite possible and financially feasible.

This location in the Republicii Square, building number 38, was called The Summer Cinema or "The Summer Garden", in the interwar period, and later, was called "the Russian market", here being held an industrial market. Before all these, there was another building, a famous bookstore, owned by Joseph Fussy [22].

Regarding the history of the cinemas in Turda, it is known that these were highly popular locations. In the city there were five cinemas: The Fox Cinema and The Youth Cinema, which had two halls, The Peace Cinema, The Cinema of the House of Culture, in The Bessarabia Square and The Summer Cinema. The Fox Cinema was purchased by the Local Council of Turda in 1915 and it was opened until 2006; since then, the cinema was abandoned, today being used as a cafe. The Youth Cinema was purchased by the Local Council of Turda in 1981; today, is no longer working as a cinema, being just a deserted building. The Peace Cinema had been demolished, ten years ago. The Cinema of the House of Culture, in Bessarabia Square, is, also, no longer active, as the House of Culture had opened a community centre there. Today, in Turda, there's active just one so called cinema, the video projections amphitheatre of Rudolf Mine in Saline, this being a recently creation.

The building, through which the access to the former Russian Market is made, has a "U" shape, with unequal sides. In the courtyard, upstairs, is a catwalk-balcony made out of wood and metal brackets. The access gangway is pedestrian and auto. [18] On this location of the cinema never existed a walkway linking the two zones, the Republicii Square and the Axente Sever Street; but, the idea of rehabilitating the cinema is well connected with the idea of a new pedestrian path, toward Axente Sever Street, which would revive the pedestrian activity in the area, as we said before (Fig. 6).

The building in Republicii Square, at number 36, where another pedestrian passage could be, is a building edified in the interwar period. The building is "L" shaped. The access to the courtyard is via a pedestrian gangway (Fig. 7).

This proposal to open a public walking route is supported by the fact that, informally, here actually existed such a path, but never had the chance to turn into a public one. This passage has been primarily used by residents of building number 36 and by the few

townspeople who knew this route; at daytime the middle gate is open and one can pass undisturbed through there. So, with minimal intervention, it could become a semi-public space, or even a public one. In the historic centre urban islands there are several similar situations. There are several pedestrian passages that were closed or blocked by annexes and garages and there are several possible paths that are only used by the inhabitants of the common courts, based on mutual agreement.

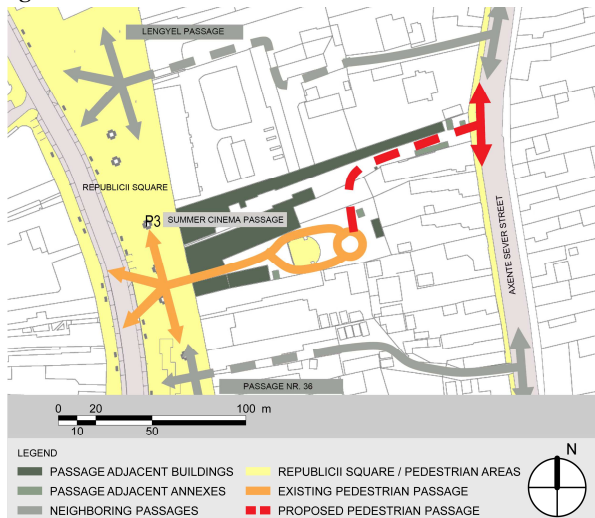


Fig. 6. Proposal (P3) to continue the pedestrian passage from the summer cinema courtyard to Axente Sever street.

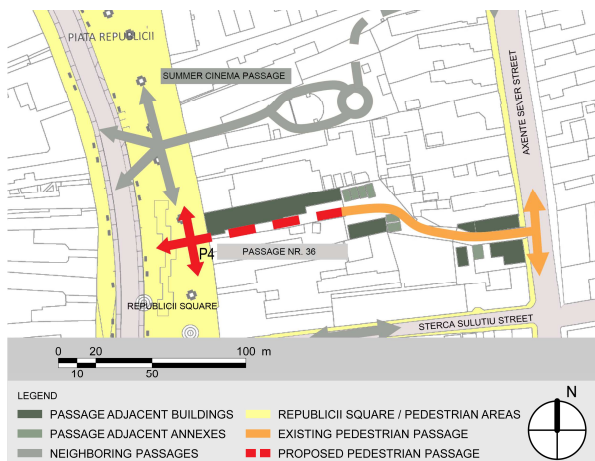


Fig. 7. Proposal (P4) for a new pedestrian passage.

The Agro-Food Market in the historic centre of Turda is the main city market, having a symbolic meaning for the residents. This market has always been an intense pedestrian route, for it is the only crossing of the central south island, in the middle of it, and provides a pedestrian link between the Republicii Square and the Gheorghe Lazar Street. The Șterca Suluțiu Street, which divides the eastern island, the Castanilor Street that marks the upper limit of the island and the Andrei Șaguna Street, they all have a less intense pedestrian traffic (Fig. 8).

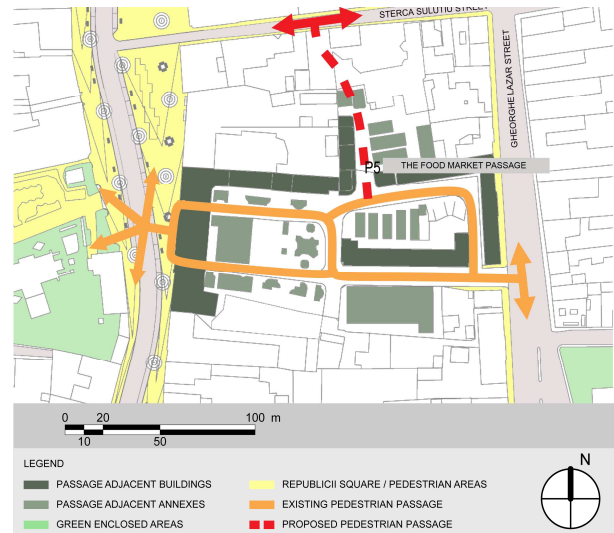


Fig. 8. Proposal (P5) for the rehabilitation of the food market into a pedestrian slab.

The Agro-Food Market is located in the courtyard bordered on the west side by the building in Republicii Square, at numbers 28-29, whereas in the eastern side is bordered by the building on Gheorghe Lazar Street, at number 6. The building has one basement, a ground-floor, with commercial activities and one upper floor with residential function and public services.

The building was built in the late nineteenth century, in 1879; the architects and the craftsmen who were involved in the design process remain unknown. Also, the building has undergone some changes, made in the twentieth century. The architectural value of the building is just for the general ambient; the building was built on a plot resulted from the unification of several adjacent parcels. The building occupies the largest front of all buildings on the eastern side of Republicii Square, making it a landmark, especially because of the two access gangways; it was edified with the clear purpose of shelter the foodservice market, being the result of some new urban concepts, according to which the urban markets also become the central city promenade spaces, the actual trade spaces being moved to specially designated areas [18].

In the current building's place, centuries ago, was the residence of inspectorate for salt and gold in Transylvania. In specialty literature and in the few monographs of the city one can find more data about the start of this building construction. It was assumed that the building was built in the period of 1860 – 1870. The first floor has operated as a hotel – The Elizabeth Hotel [22]. The building was constructed on the former gardens of “Rățești” where was also a primary Greek - Catholic school. The building preserved the two pedestrian penetrations, as gangways, at ground-floor, this being occupied by spaces for trade, whereas the upper floor was occupied by Elizabeth Hotel's rooms and administration spaces, in the period of 1892 - 1920.

The building has a "U" footprint-shape, with an inner courtyard, bounded on both sides by constructions. The two penetrations of the main facade make the food market function suitable by giving enough accessibility. The facade towards Republicii Square has a specific architecture and some facade ornaments tributary to the French Classicism. The rear facade is unimpressive, from architectural point of view, the upper floor being crossed by a catwalk-balcony. The interior courtyard space for market activities would require a reconfiguration to accommodate the contemporary needs of everyday business. The commercial activities were always dominant in city centres, and this is emphasized today, many of recreational spaces being parasitized by mainly commercial functions. As we said before, the courtyard of this market is also the main pedestrian walkway through southern urban island of the historical centre. Being a commercial area of major interest, the market supports multiple neighborhoods: the central area district, the Turda Nouă district, the Salt Baths district, the "Poșta-Rât" district, etc. Whereas on the Western Front the Market opens onto the central area by two pedestrian passages, on the Eastern front it opens just by one passage, towards Gheorghe Lazar Street. It can be noticed difference in the intensity of pedestrian traffic through the two passages on the western side, the northern one being extensively used by pedestrians, because of the commercial interior fittings. In 1953 the building of the former Elizabeth Hotel was refurbished and modernized. The site has resulted from the union of several contiguous properties. In the northern part of the inner court yard it can be seen a smaller, detached, court this being a more recent extension of the whole space for the market.

In our opinion, the reconfiguration of the interior courtyard, by implementing a pedestrian platform, should be a priority for the local authorities. It would involve a clearer and more organized outline of the interior space and a more balanced organization of traffic flows, also by moving some of the present activities in a basement. It should also be considered the proposal of a second penetration on the eastern front of the market, to improve the connection with Șterca Șuluțiu Street. This link could be made on the northern side, through one of the neighboring courts.

4. CONCLUSION

This paper sought to analyze the possible expansion of the pedestrian network of a small part of Turda city. We chose to analyze only the situation of the Eastern side of the main square, or the eastern urban island of the historical centre, as it provides a rather complex picture of what could be achieved, with minimal interventions, but with great benefits. The

basic rule regarding the choice of pedestrian routes is generally that of the shortest path between two goals or points of interest. In some of the cases we looked at, we are dealing with existing passages, but abandoned over time, whereas in other cases we proposed some new paths, supported by public interest and by esthetical views over some objectives in the central area.

Some of the pedestrian routes and passages analyzed in this study are merely mentioned in the local administration plans and there is no specific urban and social study, which to contain them all and to be coherent and feasible.

Therefore, a well-conceived project that would follow our study and would implement the discussed proposals might and should incentivize tourists and visitors to spend some quality time in Turda, in a proper way and not just ignore or use the city centre as a mere transit stone to visit the salt mine or Turzii Gorges. We would say therefore that our study also has this educational side, as it is very important, not only to design good cities and public spaces, but also to teach people how to use them.

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