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## **TERRITORY OF VICHEVA SQUARE AND PROBLEMS OF ITS ARCHITECTURAL RENOVATION**

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the historical features of the formation of Vicheva Square in Lviv and its current state. The work focuses on the historical background of the square planning, its development during Soviet times and degradation as space nowadays. The main tasks are architectural approaches and ways of the renovation of the area.

**Key words:** Renovation, Vicheva Square, Lower castle, Vernisage market, Lviv, heritage, publik space, square.

### **Problem statement**

Due to the development of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan and the Integrated Concept of Lviv City Development, it became necessary to evaluate the functions and update the vision of the development of many points in the city. Moreover, the problem is what to do with the areas, which have great historical importance in the urban structure, and now they are in poor condition or used for a strange purpose. This is exactly the situation with the Vicheva square in Lviv, on which a part of the Low Castle was located, and today there is a market and car parking.

### **Analysis of recent research and publications**

The studies of the following authors are devoted to the research of the Lower Castle in Lviv, namely: Y. Vitvitsky, I. Kachor, I. Mogytych, F. Markovsky, D. Shvets, O. Konyuk, R. Mogytych, A. Cholovsky (R. Mogytych, 2000). The problems of the city's public spaces have been studied, among the main sources of information are the founders of the topic K. Zitte and D. Lynch, as well as authors: J. Gayle, C. Montgomery, L. Gemsoy, J. Jacobs, F. Thibalds. The following Ukrainian authors explored the topic of public space in urban areas: M. Bevz, O. Rybchynsky, B. Cherkes, O. Kryvoruchko, H. Prtryshyn and others.

## Purpose of the article

The purpose is to investigate the historical background of the square formation and determine under the historical data the zoning of the square and its spatial organization to do a basic analysis before design and renovation proposals.

## The main material

### *Historical Background of the territory.*

The first historical mention of the Low Castle is dated 1292. The king Lev Danylovich (Leo I of Galicia) built a castle in 1270 in the valley of river Poltva (northwest corner of today's Lviv city centre) and later moved his yard here from the High Castle. In 1340, when Lithuanian prince Lubart tried to seize Lviv, the Low Castle was strongly damaged, however, was rebuilt soon. In 1353, prince Lubart ordered the city to be burned and the rebuilt fortress was destroyed again.

Due to the danger of war with the King of Poland Casimir III, in 1345 and 1349 in Lviv, due to the orders of Lev Yurievich (killed in 1323), the city fortifications and the Low Castle were also strengthened. In the 1360s, the construction of the Low Castle was carried out (R. Mogytych, 2000).

Low Castle was named so in contrast to another, the High Castle, which was on a mountain in the northeast part of the city. Being built in 1270, it belonged to the ancient buildings and later became part of a new enclosed "downtown". On the territory of Low Castle, there was a stone chapel of St. Catherine of Alexandria, which was originally an orthodox church. After the conquest of Lviv by the Polish King Casimir, the castle served as the unofficial royal residence. He was repeatedly aware of the damage, in particular during the attacks of Lithuanian Prince Lubart in 1340 and 1353; from the fire of 1565; during the robbery of the city by Swedish troops in 1704. It was rebuilt multiple times. Due to lack of funds, it gradually declined and in 1802 was dismantled for construction material. Nowadays, the territory where the castle was located is partially occupied by the drama theatre, partly by the building of the National Museum. Some part of the territory is not built up, it has a souvenir market and named Vicheva square. The short street that crosses the territory where the castle used to be (between the National Museum and the market) was named Low Castle in 1991. Nowadays, no archaeological studies have been carried out regarding the former castle territory (R. Mogytych, 2000).

### *Current situation of the territory*

At the site of Vicheva square is located Vernissage – a landmark location in Lviv – the market for paintings, art products, souvenirs, and antiques. Vernissage began in the epoch of "Perestroika" in Soviet times, at the intersection of Krakivska and Virmenska streets thanks to the artists. They were the first who put their works up for sale here. Then, masters of other creative crafts joined them. The art festival "Vyvykch", which took place in Lviv in 1990 and 1992, had a great influence on such displacement. (Fig. 1)

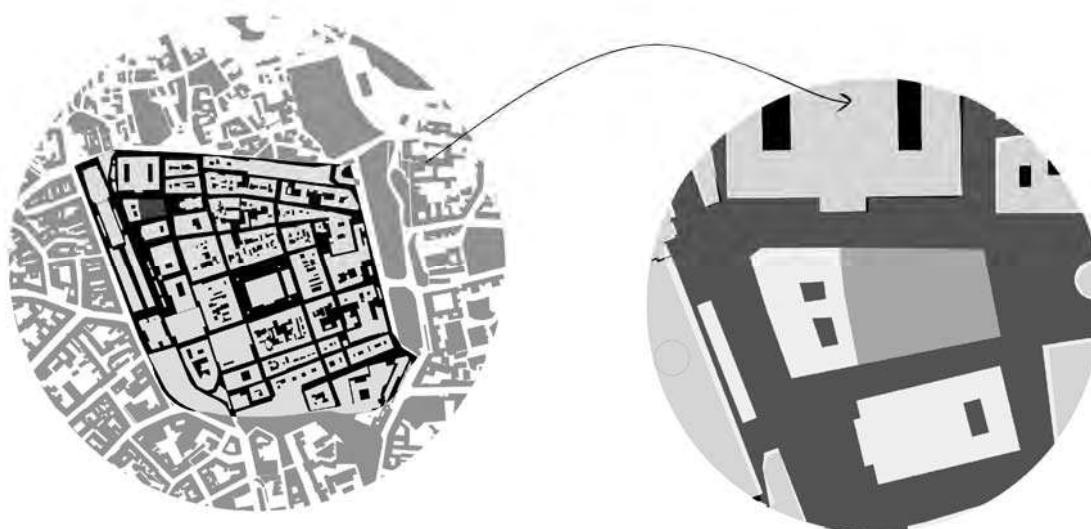


Fig. 1. Location in Lviv city center and territory of Low Castle. Source: Danylo Plesnyskyi

Since 2008, attempts have been made to demolish “Vernissage” under various pretexts: from “streamlining” to building a hotel. Such plans by local authorities have provoked a public complaint, and Vernissage remained. Since 2013, the Lviv City Council decided to arrange a spontaneous artistic goods market.

Therefore, once this territory had its own built structure, but it was subsequently lost and an area formed like a city square. Part of the square was built up during the next development period of the city with the appearance of large public buildings that became the landmarks of the place: a theatre and a museum. This area has historically been formed as a public place: a meeting place in the middle of the castle, later a square in front of the theatre, today a square for the sale of works of art.

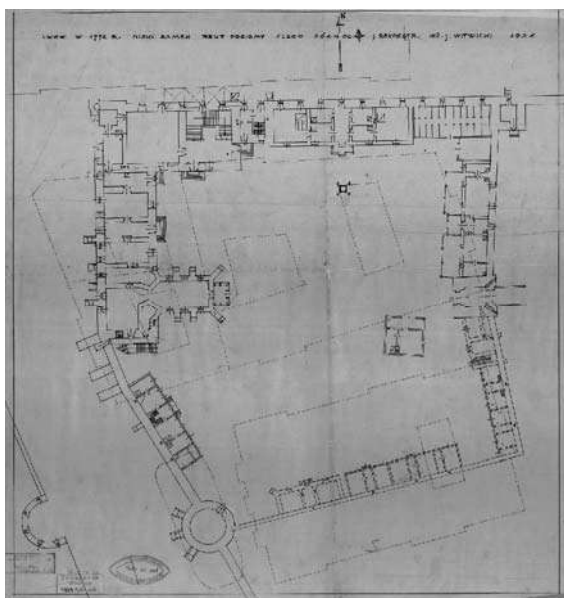
Nowadays, this area has been an attractive place for people and looks like a gift shop for tourists.



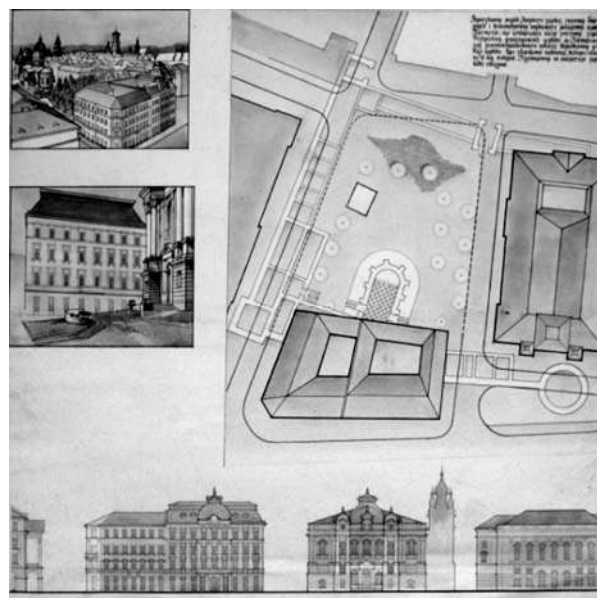
**Fig. 2.** Low castle, today's use of space. Source: Olha Kryvoruchko

The main features of the place: randomness, lack of visual orientation, disordered human movements, and loss of any memory of the place. Its chaotic space without its face.

At the moment, there were no thorough archaeological researches in the territory of Vernissage, and it is impossible to confirm the location of the historic Low castle and its cathedra on the modern plan of the city. However, theoretical attempts were made to find out what was hidden underground (Fig. 3, 4).



**Fig. 3.** Low castle, 1772 by J. Witwicki  
Source: Zabolotny library



**Fig. 4.** Low castle 2nd variant (Nizki zamek)  
Source: Oleksandr Konyk 1993



Having analyzed the previous theoretical works, we have found out that the layout and lines of the modern buildings of streets and quarters on the site of the Lower castle correspond to the research of Janusz Vitwitski. From his reconstruction plan, it is clear that after the demolition of the fortifications and all the buildings of the castle there were created the directions of streets and the location of the buildings.

#### *Problems of the territory*

One of the main problems of the place is the loss of its historical identification. Nowadays, this area is not identified with either the historic Low castle or the square in front of the theatre. Although the art market has also become a very important element in the structure of urban landmarks. It is not enough for Vicheva Square to have its characteristic, recognizable and unique face. It deserves to be called the oldest part of the city and the place of residence of the monarch during centuries.

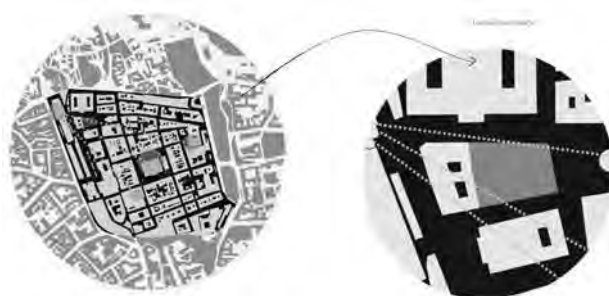
Although this area belongs to the pedestrianized part of the historic centre of the city. It is difficult for people, mainly due to the presence of the market, large crowds of tourists, as well as too tight parking of market vendors and visitors to the city centre. Also, a part of the square has been converted into a paid parking lot, which, however, does not completely satisfy the parking needs. All this does not contribute to the attractiveness and comfort of the territory (Fig. 5, 6).

Another aspect of the area is that it is located in a closely built-up downtown area with a small percentage of green spaces, as well as overheating and heavy pollution. Also, due to the density of the building, this area is hardly ventilated. Thus, the lack of green spaces with good landscaping deeply affects the quality of the space.

Strong connections with the environment and existing city network (pedestrian streets and other public spaces), combined with the improvement of the quality of the space itself (also its microclimate and aesthetics) would give a positive result on the way of renovation of the Vicheva Square. Besides, the implementation of a small transport ring will provide good results.



**Fig. 5.** Pedestrian connections of tourists and residents of the city.  
Source: Danylo Plesnytskyi



**Fig. 6.** Pedestrian connections of tourists and residents of the city in structure. Main attractive points.  
Source: Danylo Plesnytskyi

The first diagram reflects the unconditional pedestrian connections of tourists and residents of the city. It is characterized by the shortest marches along the diagonal and seamless lines. The second diagram reflects the unconditional pedestrian connections between tourists and city residents from the Opera House and Rynok Square. The main attractive points are Opera House, Rynok Square, Dominican Cathedral and Chapel of Boims.

## **Conclusions**

Therefore, analyzing the historical background and all aspects of the area, we can make the conclusions. The situation we have now is a chaotic organization of public space that is surrounded by parking and territory, cut off from the rest of the downtown. The remains of the Low castle and the foundations of other build structures are underground. It is unknown at present what archaeologists could find, but their findings will certainly be valuable, and the opportunity to exhibit them is certainly real. Also, by analyzing the connections of the city's major landmarks, points of attraction for visitors and the pedestrian lines that people move daily, we can conclude that this area is hindering the natural movement of people by a

disruptive market and creating traffic chaos. Therefore, starting with any steps towards the renovation of the Vicheva Square, apart from the analysis of the historical component and the data of future archaeological researches, it is necessary to pay special attention to the movement trails and the comfort of staying for people in this area in their everyday city life.

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## ТЕРИТОРІЯ ПЛОЩІ ВІЧЕВОЇ ТА ПРОБЛЕМИ ЇЇ АРХІТЕКТУРНОЇ РЕНОВАЦІЇ

**Анотація.** У статті досліджується історичне підґрунтя утворення сучасної площі Вічевої та визначення відповідно до історичних даних її ролі у сучасній структурі міста Львова. Також предметом зацікавлення є містобудівний аналіз, що був проведений на рівні дипломного проектування для напрацювання архітектурних пропозицій та рекомендацій.

Низький замок має назву на противагу іншому – Високому Замку, що знаходився на горі, на північному сході міста. Найдавніша згадка – 1270 роки, у зв'язку з перенесенням сюди помешкання короля Лева Даниловича, він належав до найдавніших будівель, і пізніше став частиною нового середмістя. На території Низького замку була кам'яна каплиця

святої Катерини Олександрійської, яка спочатку була руською церквою, про що свідчили описи про багаті розписи її інтер'єрів. Після завоювання Львова польським королем Казимиром III замок служив неофіційною королівською резиденцією. Йому неодноразово завдавалася шкода, зокрема під час нападів литовського князя Любарта в 1340, 1353 роках; від пожежі 1565 р.; під час пограбування міста шведськими військами в 1704 р., проте він відбудовувався багато разів. Через брак коштів на підтримання в належному стані, будівлі Низького Замку поступово занепали, і були остаточно розібрані в 1802 р., а частина вивільненої площі перетворена під торгову площу. Нині територія, де був замок, частково зайнята драматичним театром, а частково будівлею Національного музею. Деяка частина території не забудована, вона містить ринок мистецьких творів і сувенірів Вернісаж, це площа Вічева. Коротка вулиця, що перетинає територію, де раніше був замок (між Національним музеєм та площею Вічевою), отримала назву Низький замок у 1991 році.

Аналізуючи історичне підґрунтя та всі аспекти сучасної містобудівної ситуації, ми можемо зробити деякі висновки. Хаотична організація громадського простору через присутність тут ринку, оточеного парковою, відрізаність від решти середмістя, незручність пішохідних шляхів, які тут інтенсивно діють, відсутність озеленення – усе це створює суміш з несприятливих моментів для успішної реновації площі Вічевої. Проте, заховані під землею залишки Низького замку та церкви св. Катерини – створюють дуже позитивне підґрунтя, що може дати гарний поштовх до розвитку площі, саме в аспекті історико-археологічної та культурної спадщини.

**Ключові слова:** реновація, площа Вічева, Низький замок, ринок Вернісаж, Львів, спадщина, громадський простір, площа.