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MICROSPACES – AN OUTLINE OF TYPOLOGICAL RESEARCH
BASED ON EXAMPLES FROM KRAKOW

MIKROPRZESTRZENIE – ZARYS BADAŃ TYPOLOGICZNYCH
NA PRZYKŁADACH KRAKOWSKICH

Abstract

In the complex systems of urban spaces one can find many places, which, owing to their small scale, are often treated as a part of a larger whole. Whereas their borders are often blurred, their character allows for establishing them as a typological identity. Various “microspaces” play a significant role, often hidden or only temporarily arranged within a specific segment of a city space as its supplement, complement, or simply to make it more attractive. Observation of the transformations taking place in the public spaces of Krakow allows not only for the indication of the fact that such places exist and are being created, it also enables us to frame a sketch of their functional and spatial polymorphism. This article elaborates on some chosen examples of Krakow microspaces and their variants.

Keywords: public urban space, microspaces, urban design

Streszczenie

W złożonych układach przestrzeni miejskiej można odnaleźć wiele miejsc, które ze względu na swoją niewielką skalę bywają traktowane jako składowe większej całości. Tymczasem pomimo nierzadko rozmytych granic ich charakter pozwala na uznanie ich typologicznej odrębności. Różne „mikroprzestrzenie” niekiedy schowane lub tymczasowo aranżowane w obrębie jakiegoś wycinka przestrzeni miejskiej jako jej uzupełnienie, dopełnienie czy dla jej uatrakcyjnienia, odgrywają niebagatelną rolę. Obserwacja przeobrażeń zachodzących w przestrzeniach publicznych Krakowa pozwala nie tylko na wskazanie faktu istnienia i powstawania tego rodzaju miejsc, ale umożliwia także nakreślenie zarysu ich funkcjonalno-przestrzennej wielopostaciowości. W niniejszym artykule omówiono przykłady wybranych krakowskich mikroprzestrzeni oraz ich odmian.

Słowa kluczowe: miejska przestrzeń publiczna, mikroprzestrzenie, projektowanie urbanistyczne

1. Introduction

“Cities attract us, among other reasons, because they offer a chance to find people and places of whose existence we had no idea, as well as we never thought we were willing to find them. A city allows for random social interactions and opens up places where the ideas are born” [15, p. 93].

The landscape of a city is subject to constant more or less substantial, more or less successful changes, permanent or temporary transformations. All of these changes are the reflection and result of a multitude of complex processes that are going on in a city in various areas of its functioning, which creates a ceaseless inspiration for research. Contemporary cities, however, are becoming progressively bigger, more complex and more difficult to grasp not only for the researchers, but primarily for their inhabitants. Quoting Wojciech Kosiński: “The microcosm of the cities on Earth expands like the astronomical universe. The number and contribution of the propositions and polemics about the optimal paradigm of a city of 21st century grows proportionally to the multitude of entities” [9, p. 161]. The accumulation of the themes and their entanglement, as well as a plethora of stimuli, hinder a clear examination of the cities, yet this may be exactly the ingredient which consolidates their urbanity, since a certain randomness and unpredictability of a city life is somehow inscribed into its nature and creates its magnetism. A city examined in a macro scale attracts with a promise of diversity of impressions and opportunities as well as anonymity. Dejan Sudjic writes: “This is the essence of a city: you pick whatever you need and respectfully ignore the rest” [15, p. 94]. A city in a macro scale, however, scares and strains. Hence it appears that the picking referred by Sudjic results from a natural need to reduce the stimuli, to search for a human scale, of more intimate presentations of a city, of “my own” places in a micro scale. This craving evolves along with the city and does not necessarily need to show as a yearning for quarters of intimate cosy houses or narrow medieval streets. It does introduce, however, a respect for traditional urban layouts, and also a search for contemporary methods to domesticate a behemoth and to humanise urban space – or such shaping of it that it would become more accommodating and legible in its complexity, friendlier and easier to grasp with our senses.

2. Microspace

In the last decade, somehow parallel with the fascination with the power of the influence of a city, the interest in returning to what is “closer to the body” has gradually been growing, which is often elusive in the multi-layered assumptions of researches, projects and processes. City microspaces can be found everywhere and totally unexpectedly. Their hallmark is the scale and a certain kind of intimacy, as well as a specific density of stimuli and impressions, which influences the way we interpret a certain piece of space as a concrete place. They can have the features of urban interiors or they can constitute a spatially coherent composition of elements in an open space. They can be new, new-old and old, temporary and permanent. They can appear on various types of minor patches of empty urban plots, in places where once there used to be some buildings but were demolished, in courtyards, in passageways, in subways, on the verge of,

inside or in-between the buildings. They can have a strictly demarcated border or, through their form and character, merely create its intuition. This elusiveness, once it finds a place, does not appear to be anything extraordinary. Manuel de Solà-Morales wrote that a good public space does not have any borders, or the borders it has are non-definable, changeable and complex [14, p. 65]. Yet to grasp the idea of the phenomenon of microspace as a place, one should refer to the most basic notions such as “space” and “place”. As Si-Fu Tuan wrote, there is a strong relationship between them, as people mingle on everyday basis with one and another – owing to this and through the consciousness of space which is synonymous with freedom and adventure, one can appreciate the value of place that offers a certain permanence and a safe haven [17, p.13]. According to Tuan, a closed and humanised space becomes a place, and a place in comparison is “a peaceful centre of established values”. Fencing in, however, is not the precondition for a place to come into being, when considering the aspect of migration and movement in space, it also turns out that a stoppage is experienced as a pause, which allows the transformation of this situation into a place [17, p. 16]. This transformation is easier still, once in this space, we can find with our own senses the elements which give us a sensation of a spatial arrangement of the organisation of the surroundings [17, p. 29]. Jan Gehl writes profusely about project methods in the shaping of durable elements of the surroundings in a manner which allows, or even provokes, a person to stop in a certain place and to entice them to stay there for longer [3, p. 128–196]. But the transformation of a situation into a place may also happen as a result of the influence yielded by temporary or even situational elements. Permanent and ephemeral microspaces may be the points on a psycho-geographic [10, p. 190], in the situationists’ parlance, or to put it differently on a mental city map, where they play a vital role in the social space. The following article presents new, positive examples of microspaces, ones that have a stimulating influence on their users. Yet even a superficial inspection of the surroundings will result in a statement that, amongst the existing microspaces – nooks and corners, there is a considerable number of “evil” places with an oppressive, stress-inducing character.

3. Spaces of consumption and entertainment

For the last couple of years, one can observe an increasing popularity of permanent, seasonal and temporary street bars in Krakow. The so-called Food Trucks have occupied for good a number of fragments of plots in Krakow city centre and beyond. After a couple of years of functioning (even if non-continuous), they have firmly become an inherent part of the city landscape. The culture of eating in the streets (street food) attracts both tourists and inhabitants by combining a variety of taste impressions with a not necessarily that short waiting time, which however can be spent at the pre-arranged nearby tables. The temporary format of *street food* usually entails a provisional character of furnishings around the trailers or food huts. The seats and tables are made of pallets or wooden fruit boxes or plastic bottle boxes. In the summer time, the patrons are protected by parasols attached above the tables and seats, by openwork roofing or awning, there might also appear some decorative elements – platforms, pots with plants, elements of lighting, and on cooler days – heat blowers and blankets. Within



the vicinity of food trucks, especially those long incumbent, not infrequently there appear ambitious artistic murals and graffiti. The attendees of such places are usually young people, yet their temporary transience does not scare the middle-aged nor families with children. Many of such microspaces of temporary character appear in “used” places – e.g. Izaaka square, Dajwór 21, Judah square (Fig. 1a, b, c) which are referred to in literature as *second-hand spaces*, this is due to the shift of focus from their ephemeral existence to another value – namely the recycling of a place. What is important through such a classification, gravity is shifted from temporary impermanence to the ongoing multifaceted evolution of a place [20, p. 264]. Food trucks, camper vans, trailers on wheels, sometimes along with foldable huts and mini kiosks, like an itinerant attraction or a Gypsy camp back from the days gone by, organise the space around and fill in the gaps between the buildings, and sometimes even the gaps on the culinary map of a city. With time some of them, due to their popularity and distinctiveness, become a point of reference to spatial orientation. Their phenomenon consists in a specific duality of their nature, quite common in the present day – they are both a place for social meeting and, as is also characteristic of contemporary shopping galleries, a place for consumption. Although these places are not excessively expensive, visiting them is conditioned by whether the patrons can afford to buy such food and drinks. The amount of time one spends there is noticeably dependent on how much and how long one consumes, to subsequently vacate a place for other customers. Among the food truck places on the map of Krakow, the most numerous are those which occupy a small section of space. There is a notable exception – *Bezogródek Food Truck Park* which is opened in the Spring-Summer season in Piastowska Street (Fig. 1d). The 2,000 square metres of land have been furnished with attractive wooden platforms, green lawns, and even a playground for children. Among them, a dozen or so colourful food trucks are located every year. The most ephemeral types of space connected with the fashion for food truck are events such as e.g. two day’s long Summer Food Truck Festival linked with dancing and open-air cinema, which is arranged in the car park of Imbramowski square.

4. City Beaches

Summer time attractions which have been organised for the last couple of years are city beaches. Taking an example from other European cities such as Paris, Copenhagen, and Vienna, and also from Polish cities such as Warsaw or Wroclaw, year after year Krakow has an increasing number of places where one may feel the atmosphere of a spa health resort. Their small sizes, seasonal composition and character allow for the possibility of examining them in the category of micro-worlds, urban microspaces. Beaches per se do not constitute a novelty – natural, sandy beaches as well as guarded city beaches had been springing up since the beginning of the 19th century and used to be an obvious element of the Vistula landscape and a popular place for summer recreation for the citizens of Krakow. There are quite a few differences, though. First of all, water pollution and also the regulated channel of the Vistula river prevent bathing. Secondly, the mini-beaches apart from giving an opportunity to rest in the sand, offer extensive entertainment with cultural and sports programs: concerts, cultural

events, sports matches, etc. Staying on the beaches is also connected with consumption, as within them temporary facilities are located which serve food and drinks. By the beach near hotel Forum, whose functioning has been temporarily suspended due to administrative reasons, new ones were recently opened: a strip of a beach by Kotlarski bridge (Fig. 1h), a beach near Zwierzyniecki bridge, and also a small and accessible for everybody beach on the premises of the Railway Water Club on Księcia Józefa Street.

5. Playgrounds

The so-called “Children’s’ gardens” [10, p. 23] have an established position in the history and typology of public spaces, and as such, in their own character they could, due to their restricted sizes, functions and character, be treated as a variant of microspace. Recently many playgrounds have been created in the landscape of Krakow. They are known as Dragon Squares and Jordan’s Gardens – one can find better and worse versions, which is conditioned by their more or less lucky location. Meantime in 2016, thanks to an initiative from Archaeological Museum which offered a piece of land for public use, the Archaeological Playground was opened, which looks like a perfect example of a microspace (Fig. 2c). Contrary to uniformly equipped city playgrounds, this place is unique and custom-made for young lads, but also with their caregivers in mind. This place, which is located near the popular Planty footpath, is hidden behind the wall from the side of Straszewskiego Street, yet accessible through a wide-open gate in daytime, thanks to which a visit to this playground is enriched with an additional element of a certain fairy-tale sensation of discovery, of entering a different world of a “Secret Garden”. The leitmotifs of this place are archaeological themes, which refer in a non-obvious manner to the museum exhibits, they form their architectural and spatial re-interpretation, adjusted to the children’s world. The space of the playground, or rather the garden, has been divided into several zones of “functional strips” – a strip of green, of play, of communication and education. The strips have been interwoven with four wooden objects – devices to play which form a slide, a labyrinth, swings and a tunnel. There are also devices resembling musical instruments, climbing walls and a trampoline. Wooden seats, a platform and objects for the youngest of children were also included, as well as a piece of a square devoted to team games and workshops. This composition creates a joyous garden which is multifunctional and multisensory, also spacious and full of cosy “sub-spaces”, nooks and crannies along with being a social meeting place. The equipment of the Archaeological playground, apart from the picturesque white walls of the museum buildings, the whiteness of the surrounding wall, the cast-iron fence, the furnishings predominantly made of wood or covered with it, contributes to the greenery of the ancient trees and the new florae – grass and flowers.

In parallel time, also within the space of Planty park, though from the side of Gertrudy Street, another unconventional playground was opened – the so-called Wild Planty (Fig. 2d). In a place where there used to be an unremarkable tarmac square, a new fairy-tale space was created, where supernaturally sized wooden mushrooms grow, and where reside rocking toys, sound devices and wooden seats.

Another new park and recreation space connected with the playground, which turned a non-place into a place is the so-called Zwierzyniecki Horse Square in Zwierzyniec, next to the Dębnicki bridge. Within this square, new alleys were built, equipped with modern elements of urban furnishings and lighting, as well as devices which can be used in children's games such as colourful wooden animal figures, and a wall game for children which depicts elements from the history of Zwierzyniec.

6. Pocket Parks

The idea of pocket parks has been known worldwide for a couple of decades. This model of a public space has its genesis connected with the investment premium created in 1961 and included in the document *The Zoning Resolution of the City of New York*, so-called bonus/public plaza which allowed the investors building of higher skyscrapers thanks to the creation of tight public spaces (squares, parks) in the city tissue. In the beginning the places which were built on the basis of this document were faced with a wave of criticism, and justly so, as they often were merely empty, concrete squares which were more of a repellent than an attraction – sometimes on purpose, so as not to make their users feel too comfortable with them [11, p. 231]. After years of experience and faced with contemporary challenges connected with the development of a city at the threshold of the 21st century, the documents referring to the “bonus” and, since 2007 the “public plaza”, have been clarified. Also, detailed guidelines referring to the shaping of this kind of space were created [6, pp. 112–113]. Owing to this, within such unique “privately owned public spaces” – as Jerold S. Kayden refers to them in his publication [7], we can find many valuable spots which could successfully be defined as microspaces. A special fame and a status of a model realisation were deservedly earned by New York's Paley Park, designed by Robert Zion and opened in 1967 in Manhattan. Its example perfectly reflects the idea of a space in micro scale and the concept, known all over the world, of place-making, promoted and realised by the New York organisation Project for Public Spaces (PPS) [8, p. 60]. The concept of pocket parks has been popularised all over the world. In the last couple of years in London, within the project, London's Great Outdoors, two million pounds were spent to build them, with a construction of no fewer than a hundred of such places within the space of twenty-six of London boroughs. The idea of pocket parks has also been gaining ground with the authorities of Polish cities since recently. The need and willingness to build such places was declared by the authorities of many cities and in quite a few of them such spaces have been or will be completed, e.g. in Lodz, Wroclaw, Malbork or Krakow, where since 2018, thanks to the initiative of the thriving Municipal Greenery Management and within the project “Gardens for the citizens of Krakow” a building of eighteen pocket parks is scheduled to commence. Ultimately each district should have at least one such park. The concept of pocket parks sparks enthusiasm among the inhabitants and not infrequently it is thanks to them exerting pressure on the actions of city councillors, thanks to their determination and initiative that the subsequent locations are chosen. So far two such pocket parks have been completed on the map of Krakow: “Butterfly Garden” in Dekerta Street in Zabłocie and a square located at the

intersection of Falata and Prusa Streets (Fig. 2a). The Butterfly Garden was created thanks to a collaboration between the students of Jagiellonian University and the Municipal Greenery Management. The whole place with an area of ca. 550 square metres was planted with shrubs and flowers which are particularly liked by butterflies. It was for them also that small wooden boxes were placed. This square is supposed to attract not only butterflies, but also the local inhabitants for whom the wooden seats were built. Local residents were involved both in the concept and realization process of this garden, and the social dimension of this project is emphasised by the fact that the funds for its realisation were partly sourced thanks to social funding. The second of the abovementioned realisations was created in Salwator district. The space of a once neglected square was reclaimed and equipped with wooden chaises lounges, benches, tables, and a pergola, what promptly made this new square popular with inhabitants. Apart from the programme “The Gardens for the Inhabitants of Krakow” other projects are carried out within the city space, whose idea is the utilisation of the potential of places “non-places”, so far defunct, underinvested, yet often ideally located. Among such investments there is, currently almost finished, the Papcio Chmiel Square in Krakow Zwierzyniec (Fig. 2b) or, also still under construction, the linear park in Ruczaj in Zachodnia Street. Both of these places are a perfect example that thanks to good ideas the greenery and an engagingly designed space for meetings, rest and recreation can be arranged on virtually any small piece of land – be it a triangular island between the streets, or a strip dividing acoustic screens and two streets which completely lack expression or a connection with the surroundings.

7. Ephemeral Microspaces

Short-lifespan objects, often connected with various events from the city space, are referred to in *The Metapolis Dictionary of Advanced Architecture* as “impermanences”. According to the dictionary, they are “Non-permanent architectures, linked to a limited space of time after which they disappear (...) These forms of architecture, which establish a limited-time relationship with the landscape, manifest themselves as an event, a proposition which neither remains nor modifies the place it rested once it ceases to exist; it leaves no trace” [3, p. 332]. Their range, character, and their designers’ ideas not infrequently turn such installations into a new place, a point in the space of the city, which can also be referred to using another term from the aforementioned dictionary, namely “reversible” – describing actions whose effects can be turned back and re-established to the original condition which existed before the spatial intervention [3, p. 528]. Within insignificant buildings, small pavilions, urban space arrangements which appear along with cultural, entertainment, artistic and social events, one can often isolate such that bear the traits of a microspace.

Interesting objects and enterprises within the urban space were created in correlation with the Jewish Culture Festival. One of them, the so-called JCF Quarter (Fig. 1e), was described by the organisers of the 25th edition of the Festival as follows: “Quarter is a microcosm – a reflection of the world transferred to smaller, limited space. You live, study, play and rest in a quarter. Quarter needs to include everything for you to be willing to be there” [1]. Within the object various



functionalities could be found: a reading room, a café, a kind of a workshop, and centrally located multifunctional space which, during the festival, was a stage, an extension of the reading room or of the café, and a municipal social salon. Owing to the fact that the structures of the Quarter were built on a green strip between the Old Synagogue and Dajwór Street, the area around it was also used as a cultural and entertainment space, filled in with deckchairs, and thanks to the natural incline as a kind of an amphitheatre. In turn, the 27th JCF included the accomplishment of the project known as the Jewish Boulevard by the Vistula River, near the famous footbridge “Bernatka” (Fig. 1f). On a wide strip of lawn, along the strolling alley and in the neighbourhood of barge-restaurants moored alongside the quay, a sequence of spaces divided by screens with a cultural and recreational character was designed, full of deck chairs, seats, fancy coffee tables, pumped up mattresses and couches, wicker baskets and pots with plants, etc. The screens intensified the impression of a beach, or spa event and comprised various functions: of a café and a temporary reading area – on the one hand, it offered a sensation of intimacy, on the other, thanks to it being made of partly see-through materials, it did not cause a barrier from the outside world. This incomplete, subtle functional and spatial division, in the intention of designers, with its open and changeable structure alluded to the main theme of the festival – layers.

There also was conducted a seasonal, spatial and cultural event that lasted for a couple of months – a campaign “Wyspiański goes to the field” (*which means in local dialect that he goes outside, translators note*), organised on the square opposite the main building of the National Museum in Krakow as part of the programme “Wyspiański’s Year”. This campaign encompassed a temporary installation of a “Graduation Tower” by Robert Kuśmirowski, next to which wooden seats with plant stands were placed (Fig. 1g). The participants of this event, on the inauguration day, would plant flowers and trees of the species inspired by the collection of forty-seven sketches by Wyspiański which presented the pictures of plants, known as the Herbal. Parallel to Wyspiański’s plant stands, the characteristic seats and couches appeared on the museum square, which were presented by Krakow’s partner city – Vienna. This type of furniture, designed by the architects Anna Popelka and Georg Poduschka, which functions with enormous success within the space of the central square of the Viennese Museums Quartier and emphasises its superior role in the system of mutually opening, public spaces which have formed a complex yet functional system [5, p. 40] of the historic quarter since 2003, though with a different colour of the seats every year, which also influences the change in the perception of the furniture per se as well as the surroundings. During this time the geometry and technology of these famous seats changed as well – following the earlier models of “Enzi” and “Endo”, the “Viena” model appeared, and this model was present in Krakow.

8. “DIY” Spaces

Special types of microspaces are those shaped by grass-roots, as they always result from an accumulation of some sort of social and spatial discomfort, and a need of its immediate alleviation. They can be objects, a type of “incidental architecture” [2, p. 418] or an emanation of some kind of shortage and a result of a feeling of necessity to fill in the void [18, pp. 716–

117]. Not infrequently these are modest arrangements and adaptations of some segments of space, which, however, despite meager budgetary expenditures, restore even for some time the dignity to places and to people. In the area of the aforesaid Zablocie, which was controversial owing to the gradually diminishing appeal of its post-industrial heritage confronted with the expansion of housing development as well as the lack of greenness, a park was recently created which was arranged by the employees from the nearby office building. The necessity to have a place to relax, where one could go to have lunch or go for a walk, provoked the makeover of a small enclave of existing yet underdeveloped greenery. Some captured pallets were used to construct temporary seats, an old table was lugged in, swings were made out of old, brightly painted car tires, and colourful festoons were hung between the trees. This place proved to be particularly popular. It also gained media coverage, which drew the attention to such a desperate act which, in a way was this grassroots campaign, thanks to what it triggered a latent public debate about the necessity of creating a park in the Zablocie area.

9. Backyards, Courtyards and Passageways

The places with characteristics of microspaces are to a large extent places which are connected with dwelling, but also with the urban layout of pedestrian communication, and sometimes also with office buildings, services and commercial outlets, or buildings for public institutions. Backyards, courtyards and passageways constitute specific micro-worlds and can have varying status: public, half-private, or private, and their accessibility can be restricted. While focusing the attention on the public ones, one notices that many of them are located in the area of Old City and Kazimierz. The magic and characteristic Mediterranean climate of the Krakow courtyards and passageways is a well-known topic, to mention the beautiful Kazimierz passageway between Izaaka and Józefa streets. While looking at the new constructions one needs to pay attention to a few which are particularly interesting and noteworthy. A kind of a typological hybrid is the space created on the side of the building of the Lesser Poland Garden of Art, which forms a type of a roofed courtyard, of a city salon, square, or even a pocket park and a spatial development of the neighbouring Rajska Street (Fig. 2e). The intimate character of this place, whose interior is shaped by the openwork walls of the building, the greenness, the sophisticated benches and roofing relates with its geometry to the angles of inclination of the surrounding buildings [5, p. 153], and allows being there to be experienced like being in a specific type of a micro-interior city enclave. The impression of interlacing spaces and of blurring of the borders between the exterior of the garden, the streets and the interior of the building is enhanced by the concept of an opening in the openwork covering of the garden from Rajska Street, where the growing crown of the maple tree will fit in the future [19, p. 358].

In the meantime, additional public space was created, connected with another cultural edifice – The Józef Czapski Pavilion built in 2016 (Fig. 2f). This is a type of a courtyard available during the opening hours of the museum. The green courtyard, hidden at the back of the buildings in Piłsudskiego Street, like other examples of microspaces gives the impression of a city oasis. It makes a type of a foreground to take in the whole picture of the museum, and

in large part, it is covered with a lawn with a subtle, elegant access to the exit zone from the pavilion, and even more subtly delineated “path” to the café patio at the foot of the building.

Due to the still existing fashion to build gated communities in Krakow, one will not find too many public and structurally interesting new backyards or passageways connected with housing estates. There is one noteworthy example of a passageway, though – the one located in Zablocie which connects Ślusarska and Tadeusza Romanowicza Streets (Fig. 2g,h). This link built by a property developer as part of a project of a huge housing estate stands out as an attempt to make it “a place to stop” [4, p. 128]. This passageway, apart from catering for the foot traffic, is enhanced with greenery, as well as with the specifically designed elements of small architecture which invite for the children games and exercise no matter how old you are. Within the space of the passageway walls with holes were build, which allow one to sit in them or walk through them, seats with varying height, a kind of pirate grass, and in the surface of the passageway and elsewhere there are spots for backyard games, such as shove-halfpenny or bottle-caps. Another added value of this place is the fact that on the wall which stretches on the south side of the passageway, which fences it from the plot settled by Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow, there is a mural by the artist Piotr Lutyński.

10. Summary and Conclusions

The microspaces discussed in this article have been divided with regard to the functions which they have in a city and in the structure of its public spaces and also with relation to the criteria of their durability. The typological taxonomy proposed by the author forms a research stage and has an open nature, which allows for further exploration of this issue, and for the territorial extension of the range of research and for the addition of subsequent variants. At the current stage of research, the observation and analysis of the features and functions of the chosen examples of microspaces allow for the following conclusions:

- ▶ microspaces can be characterised as permanent or temporary,
- ▶ they can have various functions: recreational, for communication, social (meeting places), cultural and connected with consumption,
- ▶ their characteristic feature is the micro-scale size compared to the city scale, intimacy and a sensation of a density of stimuli and spatial elements, which influence our interpretation of a given piece of space as a specific place,
- ▶ they can be a product of adaptation work – grassroots, social, informal, or a realisation of a specific, professional project,
- ▶ they can have the characteristics of an urban interior or they can form a spatially coherent composition of elements in an open space,
- ▶ they can have a strictly delineated border, or merely create an intuition of it by their character and form,
- ▶ this article included microspaces of public status (e.g. pocket parks) or private but open to the public (e.g. plots with street food) and public-private (e.g. beaches administered by private companies),

- ▶ microspaces can be accessible round the clock or their access may be restricted by opening hours (e.g. the Archaeological Playground are closed at night), and also by entrance charges (e.g. open-air cinema),
- ▶ they can be positively stimulating or oppressive (e.g. neglected and dangerous dark alleys).

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Fig. 1. a) Izaaka Square, b) Dajwór 21 Street, c) Judah Square, d) Bezogródek Food Trucks, e) JCF Quarter, f) Jewish Boulevard by Bernatka Bridge, g) “Wyspiański goes to the field”, h) Urban beach by Kotlarski Bridge (Photos a, b, c, f, g – D. Wantuch-Matla; d – J. Matla; e – courtesy of BudCud)



Fig. 2. a) Pocket Garden at Falata/Prusa Streets, b) Papiro Chmiel Square – pocket garden, c) Archaeological Playground, d) Wild Planty Playground, e) Lesser Poland Garden of Art, f) Józef Czapki Pavilion courtyard, g) Passageway at Ślusarska/Romanowicza Streets (Photos: a, b, e, f, g, h – D. Wantuch-Matla; c, d – J. Matla).