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YULIA IVASHKO*, OLEKSANDR IVASHKO**, HANNA KUZMINA***, ANDRII DMYTRENKO****, GRZEGORZ TWARDOWSKI*****

Features of the historical residential development of Kyiv Podil and modern problems of use

Abstract

The article examines the challenges of preserving and adapting the Podil historical residential development for modern use. Podil is one of Kyiv's oldest residential areas (the capital of Ukraine), known since the time of Kyivan Rus'. Historically, it was a centre of trade and crafts, with low-rise buildings. Unlike other historical districts of Kyiv, Podil has preserved the authentic character of its original development to the greatest extent. Several brick churches and stone houses from the 17th–18th centuries have survived, and their locations reflect the original layout. Most of the development dates to the 19th–20th centuries, and houses in the historicist style predominate. The problems associated with their use are outlined. These include non-compliance with modern standards for comfortable housing, enfilade planning, division into "front" and "back" zones, inconspicuous courtyard houses within the boundaries of former estates, and closed courtyards without insolation and aeration. At the same time, the main problem is the mismatch between these low- and medium-rise buildings and Kyiv's growth rates, and therefore the need to increase housing volume. Examples of confrontation between developers and activists who advocate the preservation of historical buildings are given. The authors propose a vision for solving this problem, based on an analysis of the experience of other cities and countries.

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest poświęcony zachowaniu i problemom współczesnego użytkowania historycznej zabudowy mieszkalnej Podolu. Podół jest jedną z najstarszych dzielnic mieszkalnych Kijowa, znaną jeszcze z czasów Rusi Kijowskiej. Historycznie był to ośrodek handlu i rzemiosła o niskiej zabudowie. W przeciwieństwie do innych historycznych dzielnic Kijowa, Podół w największym stopniu zachował swój autentyczny charakter starej zabudowy. Z XVII–XVIII wieku zachowało się kilka ceglanych cerkwi i kamienic, których położenie wskazuje na pierwotny układ. Większość budynków pochodzi z XIX–XX wieku, z przewagą budynków w stylu historyzującym. Opisano problemy związane z ich użytkowaniem. Jest to niespełnienie współczesnych standardów komfortowego zamieszkania, układ amfiladowy, podział na strefę „główną” i „poboczną”, niepozorne podwórka w obrębie granic dawnych osiedli oraz zamknięte podwórze bez nasłonecznienia i przewietrzania. Jednocześnie głównym problemem jest niespójność tych niskich i średnich budynków z tempem rozwoju Kijowa, a tym samym z potrzebą zwiększenia liczby mieszkań. Przytoczono przykłady konfrontacji między deweloperami a aktywistami opowiadającymi się za ochroną zabytków. Przedstawiono autorską wizję rozwiązania tego problemu.

Keywords: features, historical residential development, Podil, modern problems, use.

Słowa kluczowe: cechy, historyczna zabudowa mieszkaniowa, Podół, problemy współczesne, użytkowanie

* Yulia IVASHKO, Professor, Dr. Sc., Faculty of Architecture, Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4525-9182>, e-mail: iuv@knuba.edu.ua

** Oleksandr IVASHKO, PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Architecture, Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9194-2153>, e-mail: ivashko.od@knuba.edu.ua

*** Hanna KUZMINA, PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Architecture, Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6100-7690>, e-mail: kuzmina.gv@knuba.edu.ua

**** Andrii DMYTRENKO, PhD, Associate Professor, National University "Yuri Kondratyuk Poltava Polytechnic", <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4757-5218>, e-mail: ab.Dmytrenko_AU@nupp.edu.ua

***** Grzegorz TWARDOWSKI, Ph.D. Eng. Arch., Cracow University of Technology, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6518-7580>, e-mail: grzegorz.twardowski@pk.edu.pl

1. INTRODUCTION

Kyiv is a city with buildings from different periods, which sometimes creates problems because historic residential buildings do not meet modern housing standards. This raises a dilemma between preserving the historical appearance of an architectural monument and ensuring comfort in it. The problem is that the monument protection register, in which the monument is entered, does not specify exactly what is to be preserved in its original form – facades (or only the main facade), facades with interiors, or the entire building, including the layout. As a result, with rare exceptions of unique objects, most of the historical interiors of Kyiv houses from the 19th and early 20th centuries have not been preserved. This was also facilitated by numerous repairs during the Soviet period, when large apartments were divided into additional rooms, and by the destruction of Khreshchatyk and the surrounding streets during World War II. Since the 1990s, there has been an ongoing confrontation between developers and activists to prevent the demolition of individual objects or their distortion by superstructures. Predictably, such a confrontation will continue during the reconstruction after the war. For example, on Zhylianska Street, a loitering drone destroyed part of a 19th-century house; the city insists on its demolition due to disrepair, but the residents oppose it. Since all the apartments are privatised, the city cannot dismantle the house without the residents' consent, and it relies on the conclusions of an expert examination conducted at its initiative. Time passes, and the dilapidated house stands (Dvalishvili, 2024). The problem is that a significant number of residential buildings from the 19th–20th centuries are not adapted to modern living conditions. This mainly concerns low-rise buildings and mansions that are surrounded by modern high-rise complexes. Accordingly, such objects are perceived as dissonant, and developers are trying to eliminate them using various methods. To this should be added the rise in land plot and real estate prices in

Kyiv, driven by the city's growing population due to immigrants from other regions. Thus, internal migration is the factor that accelerates the pace of housing construction.

The pace of development of Kyiv gradually led to the fact that historical neighbourhoods with low-rise and medium-rise buildings ended up in central districts.

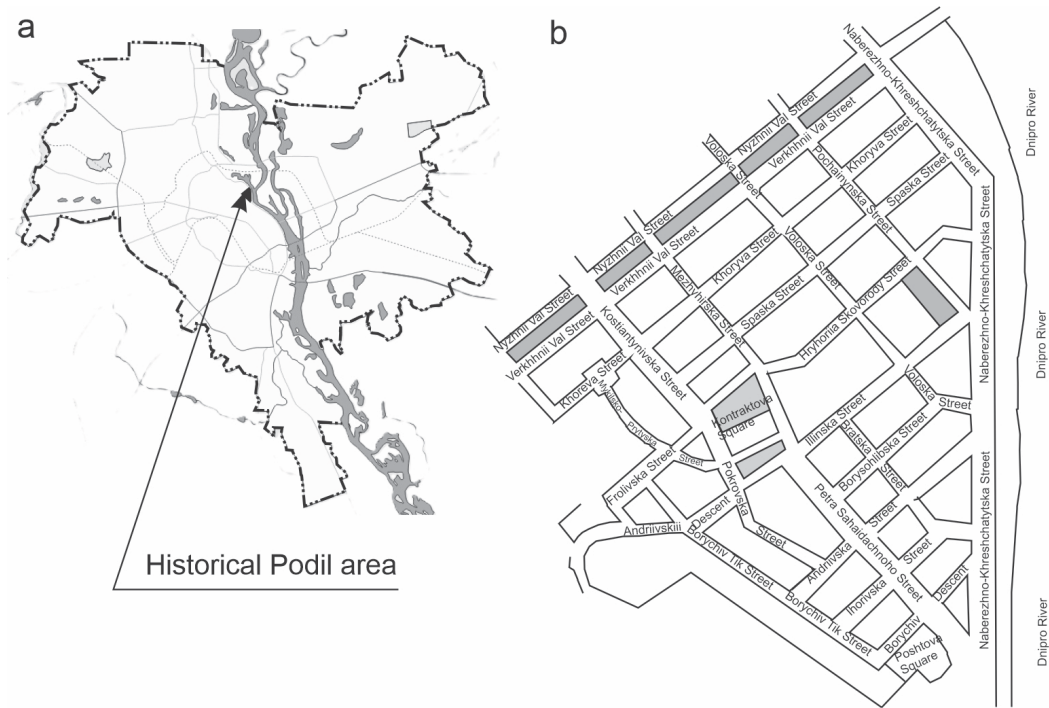
The problems associated with this today can be analysed using the example of the historical district of Podil, which was a famous trading and residential centre since the times of Kyivan Rus (Ill. 1). From those ancient times, this is evidenced by the historical names of the localities – Honchari, Dehtiari, Kozhumiaky, Torzhyshe, and, later, when the city received Magdeburg rights, Kontraktova Square. Such an activation of urban life in the lowland Podil occurred because, after the destruction of the Upper City by the Tatar-Mongols in 1240, it moved to Podil. From the 15th to the 19th centuries, the Magistrate, the Kyiv Orthodox Brotherhood, and the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy were located in Podil, and from the end of the 18th century, annual contract fairs were held on the main square of Podil – hence its name.

The specifics of Podil's residential development were determined by the social composition of the population: if, since princely times, the Upper Town was an "aristocratic" centre, then historically Podil had a trade and craft orientation. Kyiv merchants, burghers, and artisans settled here.

From a scientific point of view, the problem lies in finding a compromise between the needs of modern city development and the preservation of individual architectural heritage objects and the historical environment as a whole.

The purpose of the study was to highlight the historical and national features of Podil in Kyiv as a unique residential area, analyse the residential development of individual streets in different periods, identify the problems that arise today for its preservation and use and propose an approach to preserving historical heritage that takes into account the needs of the present.

Ill. 1. Historical Podil area: a – location of the historical Podil area on the territory of contemporary Kyiv; b – contemporary planning of historical Podil (green zones are marked in grey). Drawing by A. Dmytrenko, 2025



The objectives of the study were as follows:

- using the example of historical ones, highlight the features of Podil's development in different historical periods;
- to investigate residential buildings that represent a certain historical period of Podil's development;
- to highlight the changes that occurred in the development of estates and in the architecture of the studied buildings;
- to provide a brief architectural description of the selected objects, to determine what is common and what is different between them;
- to analyse the place of the selected historical residential objects in the modern urban fabric, restoration problems, and problems of their modern use;
- to propose an approach to preserving historical heritage that takes into account the needs of the present.

The study was structurally divided into two content parts: the first is the history of the streets of Podil, historical residential buildings, and an analysis of architecture; the second is the specifics of the preservation and use of historical objects in modern conditions, the conflict between low-rise historical buildings and the needs of a city that is rapidly growing and increasing in population, the problems of the state of disrepair of historical buildings, and modern ways of their use.

Although many historical objects from the 19th and 20th centuries have survived in Podil to this day, several characteristic examples were selected to represent the historical development of Podil, and their history and modern use were studied.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Taking into account the purpose and objectives of the study, the source database was processed in the following areas:

- the interaction of the architect and the surrounding space and the aspect of national identity (Kashchenko et al., 2021; Ivashko et al., 2020);
- specifics of the development of Ukrainian cities in different periods (Dyomin et al., 2021);
- legislative documents of the early 20th century (Sbornik stroitel'nykh postanovleniy..., 1913);
- research of residential buildings in Kyiv in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Ivashko, 2004);
- archival sources (Radominskiy, Petrov, 1900; Shamp'an'yer, 1907; Boguslavskiy, 1906; Boguslavskiy, 1907; Boguslavskiy, 1910; No. 4367; No. 1735; No. 1736);
- the negative impact of colonisation on the expression of national identity (Ivashko et al., 2024);
- several studies directly related to monument preservation and restoration activities, namely photo fixation (Kozakova et al., 2024) and restoration technologies and methods (Orlenko, 2019; Orlenko, Ivashko, 2019; Orlenko et al., 2021; Orlenko, 2018);
- professional training of restorers (Kuśnierz-Krupa et al., 2021).

The study used predominantly qualitative methods. The method of historical analysis is aimed at studying and analysing the history of selected historical residential buildings in Podil. The method of photo fixation is the evidentiary basis of the text part and conclusions. The method of architectural analysis examines the style of their architecture, characteristic manifestations, compliance with general stylistic trends of a certain period, determines the change in approaches in the planning of estates and residential development, common and distinctive between objects and, on this basis, concludes the prevailing trends in the

residential environment's formation.

Using such methods, we can, in the future, identify a set of problems associated with historical residential development and suggest ways to overcome them. The study is based on archival sources and long-term field research conducted by the authors in 1997–2003 and 2023–2025.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Legal and urban planning features of the residential buildings' location

The problems with the modern use of historical buildings stemmed from legislation specific to the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. According to the rules approved by the Kyiv City Council (Duma) in 1873, all streets and squares in Kyiv were divided into four categories. This essentially split them into main and secondary categories, for which architectural requirements were not imposed. Due attention was not paid to the complex development of estates, since administrative and legal requirements were prioritised over architectural and compositional ones. The number of storeys of the buildings along the street front was also not uniform, as two- and five-storey residential buildings stood nearby. The contrast between the main front facade and the courtyard ('back'), with its aesthetically displeasing extensions and protrusions, was preserved. The same applied to the courtyard's aesthetically displeasing development.

The streets and squares of Kyiv were divided into four categories. Streets and squares of the first category were built up only with brick houses not lower than two floors, and the project was developed by a certified architect or civil engineer. On streets and squares of the second category, it was allowed to build not only brick houses, but also houses with a brick lower floor and a wooden upper floor. Houses on streets of the third category could be wooden, but on brick foundations, and on streets of the fourth category – wooden without restrictions. Corner houses of all streets were subject to the rules for streets of the first and second categories. As a rule, streets in the central districts of Kyiv were classified as first and second categories, including some streets in Podil. This led to contrasts in the development of aristocratic and poor areas.

Traditionally, the main house in the estate had its main facade facing the red line of the street or square. The windows of the most expensive apartments also faced the main facade. Residents used the main staircase, and the back staircase for servants, located in a special extension, led to the courtyard. In most cases, the courtyard facade was aesthetically displeasing due to the inconspicuous extensions.

In general, two trends can be traced in the development of private estates in Kyiv. The first arose before the beginning of the 19th-century construction boom and was characterised by the sparse development of the estate territory, when the estate did not receive maximum profit. Instead, during the construction boom, a trend towards the commercialisation of housing emerged, and it was then that medium- and, later, in some places, multi-storey buildings with apartments for rent began to be built in place of low-rise estate buildings. In this case, the estate was built up with the main house and courtyard wings as densely as possible, leaving only a small, completely enclosed courtyard without insolation and aeration. Residents called such courtyards, 'courtyard-wells'.

The main legislative and urban planning requirements concerned compliance with the estate boundaries, the prohibition on arranging roof slopes and windows towards neighbouring plots,

and the requirement that windows be opaque. This meant that the end facades were mostly windowless.

Mutual disputes between neighbours were resolved by the court and the Kyiv City Council, and the agreements were notarised. Even more requirements were put forward to ensure compliance with the plot outlines, resulting in house plans of irregular shape, sometimes aesthetically unappealing.

The layout of estates of the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries included a front house, an outbuilding or several outbuildings, barns, service rooms, a firewood storage room, a carriage house, and a garden. However, the layout of estates with rental houses was fundamentally different: a small enclosed courtyard remained free from development, there was no garden, and a laundry room for tenants could be arranged in the basement.

Historical origins of the Podil development

The specificity of Podil's residential development was determined by the social composition of the population. If, since princely times, the Upper Town was an 'aristocratic' centre, then historically Podil had a trade and craft orientation. Kyiv merchants, burghers, and artisans settled here.

The uniqueness of Podil lies in the fact that it has preserved its historical colour much better than the Upper Town. Even against the background of modern development and active invasion, the integral, authentic scale of the Podil environment is preserved.

Today, the central street of Podil is Hetmana Petra Sahaidachnoho Street (formerly Oleksandrivska). This street was laid out at the beginning of the 19th century as part of the redevelopment of Podil following the 1811 fire, and it immediately became Podil's main street. Previously, such a main street went by various names – Hnyla, Rizdviana, or Pokrovska.

It should be said that Hnyla Street has been known since the middle of the 15th century. In the 16th–17th centuries, there was an Armenian trading colony with a church here, which burned down in 1651. The street had a ring-shaped outline, an irregular layout of estates along its sides, and exceeded Oleksandrivska Street in length by 1.5 times. In 1766, the Intercession Church was built on Hnyla Street, which was renamed after the church. Another church – St. Nicholas the Good – was built in 1807 according to the design of the Kyiv architect Andrii Melenskyi. The church was destroyed in the 1930s; only the bell tower, which stood separately, survived.

In 1799 – 1800, the first Contract Building was constructed on Hnyla Street and later rebuilt according to the design of Andrii Melenskyi. Later, it housed administrative premises and a women's gymnasium.

Among the few houses that survived the fire of 1811, one should mention house No. 5, which belonged to the jeweller Samson Strelbytskyi. This house was built in 1808 in the classicist style and is made of brick (III. 2).

House No. 8 on the opposite side of the street belonged to Nazarii Sukhota and was built and rebuilt several times between 1804 and 1878. It is known that Andrii Melenskyi participated in planning the estate. A one-story outbuilding was erected next to the house. In 1838, there were court premises here, and later, until 1876, the City Duma (Council). In 1878, the building was completely reconstructed; two floors were added, the classical porticoes were destroyed, and the windows were changed. The outbuilding with an arched gallery was merged with the main building. The new complex housed the city gymnasium, which existed until the 1917 revolution. Later, there was a school here, then the Palace of Pioneers of the Podilskyi District.

Oleksandrivska Street connected Podil with Pechersk: it began near the Palace Park and ended at Kontraktova Square, and had a regular layout and perimeter development. Its development began immediately after the 1811 fire, and a year later, nine brick houses and the Church of the Nativity of Christ on Poshtova Square, in the classicist style, were simultaneously built here.

Of the Podil houses in this part of Podil, built before the fire of 1811, only one has survived – the house of confectioners Bala-bukhas No. 27-a on the corner of Oleksandrivska (now – Petra Sahaidachnoho) and Andriivska streets. The house was built in the late 18th – early 19th centuries. It is one-story, brick, rectangular in plan, and has a basement with a vaulted ceiling. The facades are in the Classical Revival style; the original layout has not been preserved. The house stands at an angle to the street, illustrating the circular layout of the streets of Podil before the 1811 fire.

Next to this tenement house in the 1830s-40s, another Bala-bukha's house was built along the building line at number 27. Its narrow end facade faces the street. Both the main and side facades are designed in the classicist style. In the second half of the 19th century, an extension was built to the house, and in 1982, the gallery on the second floor was restored.

III. 2. Samson Strelbytskyi's house. Photo by Y. Ivashko, December 21, 2025





III. 3. Perspective of Petra Sahaidachnoho Street. Photo by Y. Ivashko, December 21, 2025

Many residential buildings on Oleksandrivska Street belong to the early period of the street's development. These are two- or three-story houses in the classicist style with simple facade decoration. However, the most common style of building on the street was historicism, with extensive stucco and brick decoration (III. 3).

A rare example of a large commercial establishment is the house of merchant P. Dehtiarov at No. 16/5, built in the 1830s. In the same years, the house of jeweller Fedir Korobka (house No. 20) was built according to the design of architect L. Stanzani. Interesting examples of the development of Oleksandrivska (now – Petra Sahaidachnoho) Street in the late 19th and early 20th centuries are house No. 23/3, in the historicist style with a combination of Renaissance and Baroque features, and house No. 10, in the 'brick style'.

At the corner of Oleksandrivska Street and Borychiv Descent, there was a manor belonging to the Church of the Nativity of Christ. The neighbouring manor belonged to the Kyiv merchant of the 2nd guild O. Syrotkin, since 1869. There was a house with a brick first floor and a wooden second floor, a brick two-story wing, and outbuildings. In 1891, a new three-story brick house was built on the site of the house, which has survived to this day. Next to house No. 19 is a two-story brick house No. 21, which also belonged to the Syrotkin family. It was built in the 1830s and rebuilt many times.

The neighbouring house No. 23/4 was built in 1898 in pseudo-Renaissance-Baroque forms as a private mansion of the Tarkovsky family. It is known that in 1869, the owner of the estate was the Podolsk burgher K. Sveshnikov, and at that time, a two-story brick house was built. In 1898, this house was demolished, and a U-shaped house was built in its place.

In 1919, Oleksandrivska Street was renamed Revoliutsii Street; in 1934, Kirova Street; in 1955, Zhdanova Street; and from 1989 to the present, Petra Sahaidachnoho Street.

When discussing the residential development of Kyiv Podil, it is necessary to analyse the development of Khoryva Street, named after one of the legendary princes who founded Kyiv.

Until 1631, at the beginning of Khoryva Street, there was a wooden three-nave church of St. Nicholas the Prytskyk, which gave its name to the neighbouring Prytysko-Mykilska Street. In 1631, the church was dismantled, and in its place, at the expense of the

Kyiv burgher Petro Zaliznyi Hrosh, a brick single-domed church was built in the style of the so-called 'Cossack Baroque'. During the fires of 1718 and 1811, the church was badly damaged and was restored several times. It has survived to this day.

In the 17th–18th centuries, wealthy Podil burghers settled near the church of St. Nicholas the Prytskyk. Masonry houses were built: the house of the merchant Artemykha, the house of the Kyiv sotnyk Savva Tuptal, and the so-called 'house of Peter I'. The layout of houses in the Cossack Baroque era was derived from folk housing, with separate rooms and common halls. The houses had one, two, and several rooms according to the type of Ukrainian huts, in two halves. They had basements and exploited attics, which led to the appearance of roofs with folds characteristic of the 17th–18th centuries. The facades of the houses were decorated with stucco window frames, pilasters, wide, unfastened cornices, and were crowned with Baroque pediments. The three mentioned brick tenement houses were built in the 17th century. The house of the merchant Artemykha was located on the corner of modern Khoryva and Mezhyhirska streets, and in its place, in the 19th century, another house in the pseudo-Byzantine style was built. Artemykha's house was damaged during the fire of 1811 and was dismantled during the redevelopment of Podil. Most likely, it was one-story, with a high hip roof covered with tiles. In the 18th century, a first-floor section with semi-circular windows and triangular pediments was added. Of the three historical tenement houses of the Cossack Baroque era, only the so-called 'Peter I house' has survived, built in the late 17th – early 18th centuries. Legend has it that Peter I stayed here during one of his visits to Kyiv before the war with the Swedes, but researchers have never found any documentary evidence of his 1706 visit. However, his other visit is documented: in 1708 he laid the foundation of the Old Pechersk Fortress, and in 1709 he visited Kyiv after the Battle of Poltava and attended a solemn service in St. Sophia Cathedral.

The location of the Peter I House, as well as other Podil tenement houses that survived the fire, illustrates the circular arrangement of streets before the fire of 1811. It is believed that construction of the Peter I House was initiated by the masters of the architectural school O. Startsev and D. Aksamitov, who at that time were working on other Kyiv projects.

Initially, the house belonged to the Kyiv magistrate; according to

other sources, to wealthy Kyiv burghers. After the fire of 1742, it was rebuilt, with a southern porch, a northern gallery, and a western extension. Most likely, the construction work during this period was supervised by the famous architect I. Hryhorovych-Barskyi, who, as a member of the Kyiv magistrate, worked a lot in Podil in the 18th century. In the second half of the 18th century, a hospital was located in the 'Peter I House'.

Originally, it was a small brick two-story building in the early geometric baroque style. The house was located on the west-east axis, with two round towers attached to it from the northeast (later, an open arcade-loggia was added to them). In the middle of the 17th century, a porch with an open arcade was added to the house. Significant changes took place in 1817–1820, when almost all the Baroque decor was destroyed. By the beginning of the 19th century, the Podil school was located here, and then a kindergarten. In the 1970s, work was carried out to study the object, and in 1978, its restoration was completed. The building was returned to its 18th-century form. Today, it houses a museum and office premises.

The houses of Artemykh, Savva Tuptal, and Peter I illustrate the first, early stage of the formation of Podil and Khoryva Street before the fire of 1811. However, after the fire, Khoryva Street, like the whole of Podil, became straight, and four rectangular blocks were symmetrically located on both sides of it. The final development of the street took shape at the end of the 19th century. Until the middle of the 19th century, part of Khoryva Street up to the intersection with Pochainynska Street belonged to the first category, and from Pochainynska to Naberezhno-Khreshchatytska Street – to the 4th category. By the end of the 19th century, the entire street was classified as the 1st category. According to the rules, only brick houses of at least two floors were allowed to be built on a street classified as the 1st category. Outbuildings inside the estate had to be brick as well, one- or two-story. On the part of the street classified as the 4th category, it was allowed to build one- or two-story brick, brick-and-wooden, and wooden houses. The history of Khoryva Street in the second stage of its development following the 1811 fire can be represented by four estates. The estate at the intersection of Khoryva and Kostiantynivska Streets belonged to the architect Andrii Melenskyi. He lived there for more than twenty years. A two-story house in the classicist style, built according to the architect's design in 1814–1817, has survived. The history of the estate No. 29 has been known since 1857.

Originally, a wooden house, an outbuilding, barns, and a stable were built on the estate. In 1857, the construction of the house that still stands was completed, with a wooden floor added to the brick mezzanine. Until 1918, the house was residential; now it houses administrative premises.

Estate No. 36 on Khoryva Street belonged to merchant families. As of 1853, the estate had a corner brick two-story house, to which a two-story extension was later added. In 1883, the estate housed a tobacco factory, then a lamp shop, a bookbinding workshop, and, in 1903–1906, a locksmith's workshop. Today, the corner house houses administrative premises and a bank branch. Estate No. 46 has been owned by the priest Stefanovych since 1856. As of 1885, the estate had a wooden house, an outbuilding, outbuildings, and a large garden. Later, according to the project by architect M. Kazanskyi, a one-story brick house was built on the estate, with a second floor added. It is known that at different times there was an orchard with dwarf trees, French roses, and a swimming pool. Poplars, acacias, and roses grew in the front garden in front of the house. The history of another estate at 33 Nyzhniy Val Street is known since 1852 (Ill. 4). At that time, the estate had a brick house and wooden office premises. As of 1874, the house was one-story, with a semi-basement, and wooden residential outbuildings in the yard.

Merchant Futorianskyi, who bought the estate in 1893, planned to make an extension to the house with a drive and build a first floor, an outbuilding, and a barn. The project was developed in 1894 by architect Hordenin, but was never fully implemented. The extension to the house was made, but the second floor was not built. As of 1898, there were warehouses in the basement, a shop with storage rooms on the first floor, and an apartment on the second floor. The zoning of the premises was similar in the courtyard outbuilding, with storage rooms in the basement and on the first floor, and an apartment on the second floor. At the beginning of the 20th century, water supply and sewage were installed in the estate.

After the fires of 1907 and 1911, the estate's development was radically changed. Instead of two neighbouring residential buildings, a three-story house with a basement was built, and a brick floor was added above the barn. In 1912, the three-story house, which faced Nyzhniy Val Street, had warehouses in the basement, four shops and a warehouse on the ground floor, apartments on the first floor and in the mezzanine, and a maternity hospital on

III. 4. Houses at 33 and 35 Nyzhniy Val Street. Photo by Y. Ivashko, December 21, 2025





III. 5. Modern view of the Gothic-Revival manor house from the street. Photo by Y. Ivashko, December 21, 2025

the upper floor. In the three-story wing, a mineral water factory was located in the basement and on the first floor, and apartments on the upper floors. In 1913, a hospital was located on the third floor of the four-story wing.

At various times, the manor's premises housed a grocery and gastronomic store 'Renome', a free maternity shelter, and warehouses and shops – haberdashery, sausage, paper, and fish. A variety of goods were sold here – from apothecary utensils and beer to iron, bags, and tarpaulins. Today, there are also shops on the first floor of this neo-Renaissance building with attics.

The architecture of the building is typical of the historicist-eclectic period. Usually, the ground floor was occupied by shops, so it had large shop windows and several separate entrances. The lower floor also housed a passage to the courtyard. Instead, the upper floors were occupied by rented apartments. The customers-merchants were impressed by the historicist style with its small-scale, semi-circular windows with stucco frames and attics of complex shapes. This building uses a three-axis scheme for the main facade, with the axes defined by three attics, and the two side attics are symmetrical. The general central-symmetrical solution of the composition of the main facade is somewhat disturbed by the location of the passage to the courtyard and the entrances to the shops.

House No. 33 is somewhat similar in architectural style to the neighbouring house No. 35 (III. 4). Both are designed in the historicist style, a pseudo-Renaissance style popular at the time among merchants and burghers. The owner of the estate No. 35 was the Kyiv merchant Ye. Zadolynnyi until 1857. At that time, a stone and wooden house, a brick outbuilding, and a barn were built on the estate. In 1857, the merchant Khoroshynskyi became the next owner of the estate. The new owner dismantled the old auxiliary buildings in the yard and built new ones in their place. As of 1897, the estate included a brick two-story residential building with a shop on the ground floor, a two-story stone-and-wooden residential building with a restaurant and shops on the ground floor, a two-story brick residential building with shops, a new wooden shop, a brick one-story wing, and office premises. Water and sewage were installed in the estate.

In 1898, the buildings in the estate were damaged by a fire. In 1898–1899, a new brick, four-story building with a basement was built on the site of the demolished houses. The basement

housed warehouses, the ground floor housed three shops, the 1st and 2nd floors housed a hotel, and the 3rd floor housed rented apartments.

The building was repeatedly repaired after the fires of 1904, 1906, 1909, and 1913.

From 1907 to 1914, there were shops and a hotel here.

However, in house No. 35, a different compositional structure was used – the house is four stories tall; the ground floor is occupied by shops, and the upper floors by apartments. Unlike house No. 33, the main facade is asymmetrical; the shapes of the windows in the side parts are different – sometimes semi-circular, sometimes paired, sometimes rectangular. Pairs of columns separate the side parts and the central part to a height of 2nd–3rd floors on pedestals, at the level of the ground floor – pairs of pilasters. The ground floor imitates rustication, and the windows are framed.

On one of the central streets of Podil – Verkhniy Val, two houses differ from the others in their unusual Gothic-Revival appearance (Fig. 5). Once, both houses, with a gate between them, belonged to the Prussian subject K.-L. Nytskyi, who owned the estate from 1886 to 1915. The estate was a plot elongated along the street, on which houses and auxiliary buildings were built in 1893 and 1908. The Neo-Gothic style was maintained in the two main houses and the gate to the courtyard. It is believed that the author of the earlier two-story house of 1893 was K. Shyman. This is confirmed by the attraction of this extravagant architect to Gothic stylisation (in the buildings at 10 Malopidvalna Street and at 2-b and 2-c Andriivskyi Descent). He was also involved in approving the project in the Kyiv City Council and supervising the author.

The two-story Gothic-Revival house was built on the site of dismantled wooden buildings. It is a brick building with traditional shops on the ground floor, including a sausage shop. The composition of the main facade is two-axis; the axes pass through two entrances, windows, and decorative pinnacles with side turrets. Despite the general Neo-Gothic style, there is a layering of other styles – Gothic windows are combined with round, bow, and rectangular. The neighbouring later house was designed in a similar style; on the upper floors, there were four windows, on the lower – shop windows. In the centre of the first and second floors were two wide balconies with openwork metal railings.

Table 1. List of researched sites in Podil with a description of their current condition

Address	Year of construction	Style	Functional use		State of preservation and main conservation problems
			Original	Current	
45 Pokrovska Street	1808	Classical Revival	Residential building	Residence of the US Ambassador	Restored in 2020, in good condition
12 and 14 Petra Sahaidachnoho Street	End of the 19th century	Historicism	Tenement houses with shops	Residential buildings with shops	The stucco decoration is crumbling, the paint on the facades is peeling, and there is no comprehensive restoration project
33 and 35 Nyzhnii Val Street	end of the 19th century	Historicism	Tenement houses with shops	Residential buildings with shops	Facade contamination, peeling paint on facades, no comprehensive restoration project, each owner installs their own windows
33 and 35 Verkhnii Val Street	1893	Gothic Revival	Sausage factory with shop and habitable rooms	Residents are now being evacuated due to the state of emergency	Violation of the statics of buildings due to multi-storey complexes nearby, tilting of facades with the threat of collapse, cracks, waterlogging of foundations and roofs, biofouling

The ground and first floors were separated by a cornice belt; the second and third floors – a cornice with denticles. The house was decorated with pilasters and window niches. The central figured spire gablet has not been preserved in its original form. The results of the study of the current state of Podil's historical buildings are summarised in Table 1.

Problems of preservation and modern use of historical residential buildings in Podil

There are several such problems today. The first concerns the inconsistency of existing low- and medium-rise buildings with the city's needs, which are rapidly growing in terms of territory and population.

During the reconstruction of the old buildings, the enfilade layout is replaced by a complete apartment redevelopment. All engineering networks also have to be replaced. In addition, in some buildings, the floors, frames, and doors are wooden; there are wooden houses lined with brick, or with a brick ground floor and a wood-plastered upper floor. Despite their historical authenticity, such buildings do not meet modern standards. Even in more comfortable apartment buildings of the early twentieth century with utility networks, high ceilings, and spacious rooms, there is an enfilade layout, long dark corridors, and one-sided orientation of the rooms. In addition, in some low-rise buildings in Podil, there is still heating with stoves. Another problem lies in the properties of the soil base and the proximity to the Dnipro River:

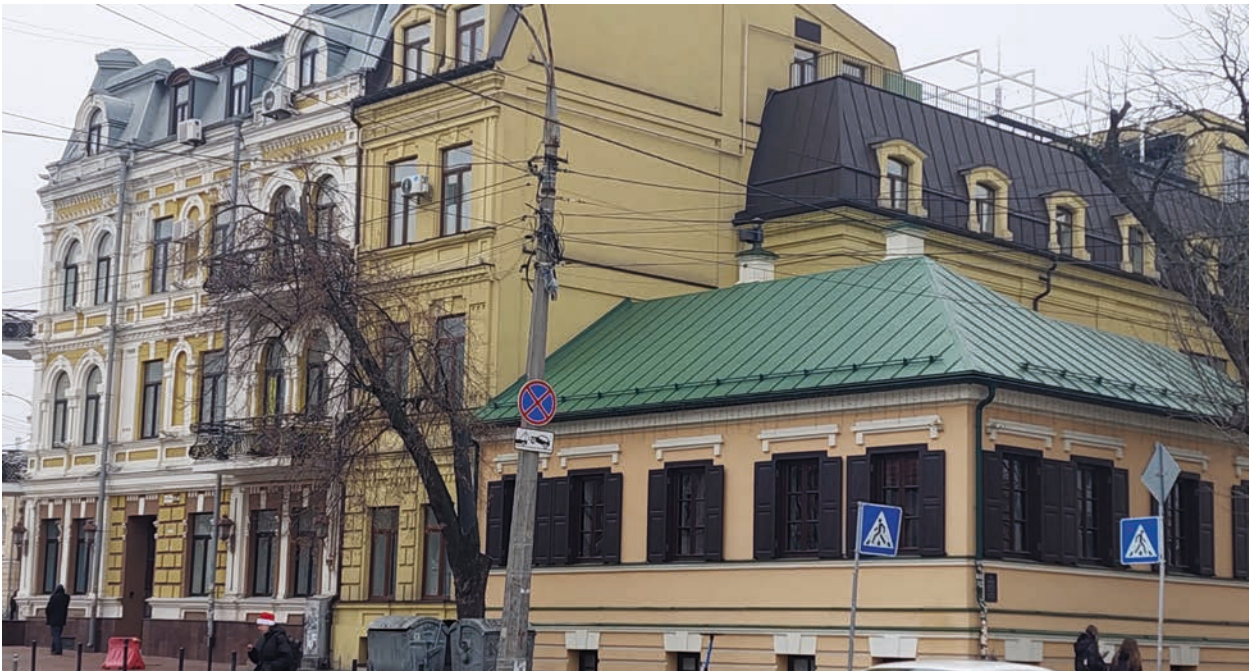
in almost all old houses, there is waterlogging of the foundations; in some places – walls, mould, subsidence of parts of the houses with the appearance of cracks, peeling of plaster, and destruction of bricks and mortar. Therefore, the restoration of such houses should begin with stabilising the soil base and foundations, installing a blind area, organising drainage, and eliminating the causes and consequences of excessive moisture and mould. If a historical building is privately owned, it all depends on the owner's attitude to the historical heritage. There are examples in Podil where historic buildings have been restored and remain in use. However, the practice of adding attic floors to them, which is atypical for Kyiv in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, is controversial.

The field studies conducted by the authors on the modern use of historical low-rise buildings in Podil have shown that, after restoration, they are usually no longer used as housing but instead serve as offices, shops, banks, and small private hotels (Ill. 6).

The authors studied the historical development of Kyiv during 1997–2025 in dynamic terms and documented changes in the urban fabric. In fact, examples of developers destroying historical buildings without authorisation under the guise of reconstruction are not uncommon in Kyiv.

As an example of the most high-profile cases, in 2020 the oldest 150-year-old house at 76 Saksahanskoho Street, located in the Central Historical Area of Kyiv and in the first-category

Ill. 6. Hotel in the former house of architect Melenskyi. Photo by Y. Ivashko, December 21, 2025.



development regulation zone was demolished (Maksiuk, 2020), in 2021 the historic house of merchant Utkin (built approximately between 1890 and 1905) was demolished to build an apart-hotel in its place (Vannek, 2021). An attempt was made to demolish the mansion of O. Barban at 6 Observatorna Street (Yavorskyi, 2024), and the Modernist building 'Flowers of Ukraine' (Litskevych, 2021). In the case of the houses on Saksahanskoho Street and near the Railway Station, the developers completely destroyed the historical objects, and now these areas stand empty. In the case of the O. Barban mansion and the store 'Flowers of Ukraine', dismantling was stopped at the stage of partial destruction (Nuzhnenko, 2021). In 2024, the developer illegally demolished Ye's historic house. Zelenskyi on O. Konyskoho Street for the construction of a residential complex (Kucheriavets, 2024; Albul, 2024). The construction equipment was seized, and the court imposed a preventive measure on the co-owner, who is accused of intentionally destroying the historic building, despite the arrest. It was a wooden, brick-clad house, built in 1890 at the behest of the merchant Vasyl Malin, one of the oldest buildings on the street, known for the Zelenskyi family of wealthy burghers having lived here from 1911 to 1915.

If we talk about Podil, then even though the historical scale of the development is still generally preserved here, scandals gradually arise from time to time related to the location of another 'high-rise' among the low-rise buildings – a residential or office centre. The developer began dismantling the building housing the famous 'Kvity Ukrainy' store (1980s), with a greenhouse, flower shop, and stained-glass windows, at 49 Sichovykh Striltsiv Street in 2021. The owner planned to demolish it to build a modern business centre. Activists stopped the dismantling, and the Supreme Court confirmed the monument's protected status in December 2025 (Dzhanov, 2025). Now the object has been put up for sale again, but whoever buys it must restore and preserve it, which, accordingly, repels potential buyers.

One of the latest such scandals is the developer's destruction of the historic 1902 Police Station in Podil. Illegal demolition work on historical buildings began on February 25, 2022, on the second day of the full-scale invasion, when the city was engaged in fortification. Significantly, the Police Station building was included in the List of Valuable Historical Buildings of Kyiv. In 2023, a reconstruction project was presented, and the Department of Cultural Heritage Protection of the Kyiv City State Administration issued a corresponding permit for the work. However, the developer, Dnipro-2002 LLC, under the guise of archaeological research, brought heavy equipment to the site and destroyed the Police Station building. This work was carried out within the protected area without any approvals. After visiting the site, the Department of Cultural Heritage Protection of the Kyiv City State Administration demanded an immediate cessation of any actions that go beyond the approved reconstruction project. The inspection on December 8 revealed actions not permitted in the protection zone of the Central Historical Area of Kyiv, within the boundaries of the local monument 'Historical Landscape of the Kyiv Mountains and the Dnipro Valley'. In particular, a local monument was destroyed; unauthorised earthworks were carried out, disturbing the archaeological layer; concrete piles were installed; a retaining wall was constructed; and, as a result, the protective relief was altered. Thus, under the guise of reconstructing a non-residential building for an office and educational centre, preparations were made for large-scale new construction of a high-rise building. The Kyiv City Prosecutor's Office has initiated a criminal case into the destruction during preparatory and construction

works of the archaeological monument 'Cultural Layer of Podil, 12th–18th centuries', located on the territory of the area of 13 Kyrylivska Street – 3 Romskyi Lane. The court plans to seize land plots where illegal construction is underway and issue a decision imposing a complete ban on any construction work in this territory (Ponomarenko, 2025).

It is not by chance that we have given examples of the confrontation between activists and developers. In megacities like Kyiv, central districts are attractive to investors and developers. The authors analysed trends in the development of Kyiv's central districts over the last decade and found that the main form of development is the construction of high-rise elite residential complexes. Such residential complexes are usually fenced off from the street to prevent strangers from entering; they have their own internal green spaces and service areas. Some of them are turning into a 'city within a city'. Examples include several phases of the 'French Quarter' near the Lybidska metro station (Bild.UA, 2025; Entsyklopedia Novobudov, 2025b), 'Faina Town' on Saliutna Street (ParkLane, 2025), and the 'Malakhit' residential complex on Bohdanivska Street (Entsyklopedia Novobudov, 2025a). The Comfort Town residential complex in the Dniprovskyi district is particularly large, consisting of several rows and 24 buildings, each 6–16 floors high, with a monolithic-frame structural scheme. In fact, this is not a closed complex, but a closed microdistrict, where, together with residential buildings, there is a multi-level ground parking lot, a kindergarten, a primary gymnasium, a fitness centre with swimming pools, sports fields (football, basketball, volleyball), a tennis court, table tennis, a supermarket, shops, cafes, restaurants, beauty salons, a post office, banks, pharmacies, an outpatient clinic, dentistry, playgrounds and recreation areas, places for walking dogs, a promenade with art objects and its own fountains (Comfort Town, 2025).

Thus, such closed residential spaces become a continuation of Le Corbusier's idea, embodied in the Marseille housing unit, in which the house is treated as a machine for living, where everything is.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Trends of the last decade, especially during the war, demonstrate an increase in the population of Kyiv – the capital of Ukraine – and exacerbate housing problems. There are several categories of displaced people here: some need temporary social housing, some have moved their businesses from the East and South of Ukraine to Kyiv, and are buying real estate in Kyiv. At the same time, there is demand for land plots in central districts, with prices steadily rising. Therefore, developers are trying to take possession of them by all means, both legal and illegal, and the construction of such a large-scale residential complex is the most profitable in modern conditions.

But in the central districts, a fairly large number of historical buildings of various architectural values are preserved; some of these objects lack protected status, making it easier for developers to destroy them. It is worth noting that the majority of historical buildings in Kyiv are objects mainly from the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, built during several rounds of 'construction booms'. Most of them are former tenement buildings, the quality of whose architecture directly depended on the category of the street or square. At the same time, such lower-category buildings can still be found in the city's central districts. The houses had a specific enfilade layout with walk-through rooms, were heated by stoves, and were divided into a "front" and "back" zone, respectively, with two stairwells – 'front' for residents

and their guests, 'back' – for servants. The apartments were also functionally divided: the 'back' zone was adjacent to the kitchen and pantries. The apartments had long, dark corridors.

Such a layout does not meet modern housing requirements, and the old engineering networks are also worn out. Along with brick houses, brick-and-wood houses and solid wooden houses were built. Even when such a building is an important historical element in the development of a particular period in Kyiv, the question of its future use arises, since its status as a monument imposes many restrictions on changes to its appearance. It is not by chance that we have cited several examples in which a developer has destroyed historical buildings: work on the sites has been suspended, but they still stand empty, and the historical objects remain in the same dilapidated state.

Based on the analysis of the historical development of residential development in the city of Kyiv and modern architectural and urban planning practice, options for solving the problem of preserving and re-profiling residential buildings in the historical districts of Kyiv should objectively take into account the fact that after the war the city will continue to grow and actively develop and is predicted to become one of the main centres of population concentration. Accordingly, the cost of land plots in promising districts will rise further.

Therefore, the issues should be resolved in the following areas:

- streamlining the register of historical buildings;

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- certification of objects with determination of characteristics, condition at the time of inspection, possibility of use for various functions;
- objective assessment of whose expense the historical object will be maintained and restored.

The last point is very important, since one thing is to prevent the destruction of a historical object, and another is who will maintain and use it in the future.

A comparison of the experience of preserving historical heritage in Ukraine and in European countries presents a paradoxical picture: the existing legislation on the protection of immovable cultural heritage in Ukraine is stricter than in most European countries, yet the state of preservation of architectural monuments and the historical environment is noticeably worse. The problem is that the existing legislation (in particular, the Law of Ukraine 'On the Protection of Cultural Heritage', regulatory documents relating to the development of scientific and design documentation for the restoration, adaptation, and other types of preservation of immovable cultural heritage objects) imposes many obligations on the owner of a building that is an architectural monument, but does not offer any forms of encouragement. The solution could be to amend the legislation to provide the owner of a building recognised as an architectural, historical, or cultural monument with certain benefits (primarily tax benefits), provided that it is properly preserved.

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