

**KALININGRAD  
ARCHITECTURAL  
LANDSCAPE  
AS A TOURIST  
ATTRACTION**

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*The authors consider the development of urban tourism as one of the factors behind the socioeconomic development of a territory. They give estimates for tourism revenues associated with the emergence of a new attraction and its inclusion into travel itineraries and landmark maps. The authors look at the experience of development of historical European towns from the perspective of tourist attractiveness and explore the role of architectural landscape in creating a positive image of a town for tourists; they also provide a background for including historical and cultural landmarks into a traveller's experience.*

*The authors analyse the results of the international urban development competition for the best concept of the historical area of the centre of Kaliningrad Korolevskaya Gora and Its Surroundings/The Heart of the City. Further, they come up with recommendations on using the most interesting proposals of the contestants from the perspective of tourist attractiveness and identify the possibilities for the development of new architectural landscapes.*

**Key words:** spatial organisation of tourism; city tourism; tourism economics; architectural landscape; tourist attractiveness; architectural and urban development contest; historical centre of Kaliningrad

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## **Introduction**

The role of cities as tourist destinations is constantly increasing. Historical cities enjoy the greatest popularity. Kaliningrad is one of these cities.

However, its tourist potential has not been developed to the full. It is largely explained by the fact that most of the objects of historical, cultural, and architectural heritage, which could attract tourists, were destroyed in World War II. Therefore, one of the results of the 2013—2014 “Heart of the City” contest for the best project of historical centre redevelopment should be the creation of an image of Kaliningrad as a tourist destination. Moreover, the emphasis is placed on the development of tourist-attractive architectural landscapes.

Despite of the steadily increasing interest in the problems of city development, little attention is paid to the issues of urban tourism and urban space studies for tourism purposes either in Russia or abroad. When studying urban tourism, researchers focus on event or cultural tourism. Event tourism as a special form of cultural tourism is considered to be a means to solve problems of differentiating the tourist product and overcoming seasonality in the conditions of steadily increasing competition between cities [19]. For the Kaliningrad region, of special importance is the experience of neighbouring countries. In Poland, particular attention is paid to the restoration of the historical and cultural heritage in the context of restoring the surrounding landscape; the resources of 446 sights are directly linked to the history of Poland [18].

When studying urban space in the context of its tourist attractiveness, one can recall MacCannel’s theory of three elements: tourist, nucleus, and marker. In this connection, the idea of tourist attractiveness focuses on the idea behind the space presentation. Thus, there is a need to create a certain perception of cultural experience among potential tourists in order to encourage actual travel to the area [15].

An integral perception of a sight as a cultural and historical object is attained through creating architectural ensembles, i.e. a harmonised functional unity of buildings and the surrounding environment characterised by a distinctive aesthetic image [9]. There are two types of artistic ensembles: those created over a long period (showing signs of different eras and styles) and those created at once and to one design (characterised by a unified architectural style).

We define an architectural landscape as an integrated space comprised of heterogeneous ensembles characterised by harmonious spatial organisation.

This work aims to study contemporary processes of Kaliningrad architectural landscapes development that is carried out to turn the city into a competitive tourist destination. To achieve our aim, we address the following issues: the notion of urban tourist and the role of architectural composi-

tions and landscapes in a city's tourist attractiveness, the experience of development of architectural landscapes in the historical centres in cities partially destroyed in World War II, the history of development of urban space in Kaliningrad and the role of the Heart of the City contest in the restoration of the historical centre. In the end, we offer recommendations on reinforcing the tourist function through developing the architectural landscapes of historical cities.

### **1. Urban tourism as the most efficient function of a “new old” urban space**

Urban tourism studies in general focus on the development of urban space as a tourist destination. What do tourists expect from a city? A city should be attractive, modern and comfortable and have, at the same time, a certain historical atmosphere, probably a transformed one but reflected in the modern reality.

Russian scholars have made attempts to give an assessment of cities as tourist destinations. For instance, Z. Zhelnina identifies the following parameters: demand, innovations, development of specialised infrastructure, connections with other industries, increased information turnover, increase in the number of types and quality of jobs in tourism, and growth in the number of national operators [5]. However, this area requires further development so that these parameters do not reduce to simple characteristics but incorporate certain indicators reflecting both absolute characteristics and their dynamics.

Urban tourism as an independent type of tourism rarely appears in traditional classifications. It is included, *a priori*, into one of the classical types: business, ethnic, educational, religious, industrial, transit, and historical and cultural tourism — as identified by A. Aleksandrova, V. Kvartalnov, and Yu. Vedenin. In this respect, of special interest is the classification proposed by D. Nikolaenko, which is based on the objects of tourist attraction. It distinguishes between “big cities” and “small cities of past glory” [10].

It seems logical to define “urban tourism” as an aggregate of different types of tourism (business, cultural and historical, cultural and educational, etc.) that can take place within urban areas. At the same time, a special focus is on the city “centre” — an attraction in itself within any type of travel.

Urban tourism has the following functions determining the purposes of travel:

- educational (obtaining new information, broadening one's horizons);



- study (gaining knowledge, developing skills, exchanging experience);
- cultural (visiting museums, exhibitions, theatres);
- religious (striving for spirituality);
- event-oriented (using the possibility to be part of certain events);
- commercial (shopping, fashion, quest for individuality).

Therefore, as the combinations of these functions become more saturated and numerous, the urban space becomes more saturated too and the destination's excursion capacity and tourist attractiveness increase.

## **2. Experience of transforming an urban space for promoting tourist attractiveness; or cities for tourists**

Approaches to transforming urban spaces have undergone significant changes over the last 70 years. This can be seen in the evolution of architectural image of modern cities.

Firstly, there are such “extremes” as the meticulous reproduction of historical forms (for instance, the historical centre of Warsaw and Gdansk, whose restoration began in the first post-war years), when the architects not only tried to preserve the old forms but also to revitalise the surviving architectural fragments — portals, walls, etc. Many experts criticise this approach from the tourist perspective. However, one can only partially agree with this criticism, for a lower accommodation capacity (as a result of the preservation of low-rise buildings) is compensated by higher hotel rates explained by the proximity to the objects of historical and cultural heritage or even using them as hotels. This approach ensures the maximum preservation of the historical architectural landscape.

Secondly, modern architectural forms are introduced into the restored quarters, which resulted in the simplification of historical façades, sharp contrasts between the “historical” and “non-historical” buildings, violation of the historical standards of building height (as a result, unique surviving objects are left beyond the visual range, which disturbs the overall perception of the space, objects are perceived as independent elements. Thus, the centres of Poznan and Szczecin are less attractive for tourists than those of Gdansk and Warsaw.

Thirdly, historical centres are restored using new forms without preserving “historical justice.” The cases of Rotterdam and Dresden are often discussed by experts in this context [11]. It is an alternative method of transforming urban planning. New spatial forms emerge as a result of the complete restructuring of the area. There are different opinions on their attrac-



tiveness, but tourists have for a long time identified the purpose of their travel as “visiting the Dresden Gallery” rather than the historical city of Dresden. At the same time, a well-designed modern architectural landscape also finds its audience.

Fourthly, in the 1970—80s, there were attempts to restore the structure and scale of urban environment without reproducing architectural forms. This approach was adopted in Berlin, in the historical district of Kurfürstendamm. On the one hand, this area has preserved its historical building height: the only building of a height similar to that of the architectural centrepiece — the ruined church preserved as a war memorial and a warning for generations to come — is the new functioning tower of the same church. This contributes to the “collective memory” of the city. On the other hand, the new buildings that replaced those destroyed in the war exhibit pronounced modernity of architectural forms, for instance, the building of the Mercedes Centre. However, it is evident that new buildings are erected in compliance with strict regulations. The preservation of the historical planning, thoughtful inclusion of restored facades into the transformed environment, and introduction of new functions (this part of the city never sleeps) ensured an integral perception of the architectural landscape, which makes Kurfürstendamm one of the most attractive and thus most-visited districts of Berlin.

Another approach to transforming city space was used in the reconstruction of Elbląg. This project is often criticised, because the modern buildings contradict the “historical justice.” However, for specialists in tourism, the key element of a city is not (or not only) the architecture restored in the spirit of historical justice, but rather a well organised urban space, which is comfortable and attractive for visitors. From this perspective, Elbląg meets the identified requirements — compactness of the “historical” centre, a harmonious combination of the residential (upper floors) and public (ground floors and basement levels) areas, beautiful architectural forms meeting the accepted standards of “Medieval architecture,” advantageous location along a waterway, which makes it possible to reproduce the appearance of a Hanseatic city, inclusions of surviving and reconstructed objects of historical and cultural heritage (the gate, the cathedral, etc.). From the “tourism” perspective, the process of the revitalisation of Elbląg’s historical centre has been successful.

Therefore, most historical cities of Europe have been tested by time and assumed a stable modern appearance. This has been achieved through using two approaches: preservation and formation. The preservation and recon-



struction of the historical heritage and the objects that survived World War II are, firstly, a necessary measure to maintain the historical appearance of cities that exhibit the traditions of old Europe. Secondly, it is one of the key components of developing the socioeconomic potential through attracting tourists. The formation of a new historical space is a possibility to give a city a new image and a new attitude, which will contribute to attracting not only local, but also international tourists. Here, we discuss spatial objects rather than architectural objects, regardless whether they are reconstructed or new. These spaces can have very original forms with historical background. In both cases, an architectural landscape is developed, where history manifested in the diversity of urban space becomes a tourist object [16].

### **3. The economy of urban tourism: the role of historical and cultural objects**

According to the European Cities Marketing, in 2006 the tourism revenues of the most attractive European cities amounted to 540 million euros. Since then, the revenue from tourism has been growing at the rate of 19 million euros a year. An annual increase in bednights in European cities amounted to 600,000. An important factor is the development of low-cost airlines, whose presence increased by 14 % in 2008. The destinations of low-cost airlines — Cologne, Dublin, Tallinn, Zurich, etc. — account for most tourists. Moreover, “urban tourism” is one of the most rapidly developing types of tourism. Today, it accounts for 40 % of all European leisure travel [13].

According to expert calculations, cultural and educational tourism brings the following numbers of tourists to the Kaliningrad region: a) 50—100,000 “excursion” tourists, most of whom are transit tourists staying in the city for 1—2 days during a trip along international routes; b) approximately 100,000 “recreational” tourists who visit resorts to improve health and promote wellness; they visit cultural and historical objects both in groups and individually and spend 7—10 days in the region; c) approximately 30,000 thousand business tourists, who visit cultural and historical objects either individually or within excursions organised by the host party; d) local tourists (most of them come in groups for educational purposes).

According to the data presented in the Decree of the Kaliningrad Government on the State Tourism Programme [12], 28 % of tourists (approximately 150,000 people) come to the region for cultural and educational purposes. Moreover, the expert assessment suggests, there are 100,000 people



coming to the region for health improvement and wellness purposes, who also visit the city centre on excursions. If the distribution of tourists by type does not change and the targets of the programme are attained (1.5 million people staying in Kaliningrad for at least one night by 2020), at least 450,000 people will visit Kaliningrad for the purposes of cultural and educational tourism. With the allowance for other target groups, at least 700,000 people will visit the objects of historical and cultural heritage. Today, despite its rich and turbulent history, Kaliningrad's guided tour potential does not exceed 1.5—2 days (one-two bednights). This is a result of the insufficient number of surviving historical and cultural objects. Therefore, the introduction of new units will contribute to the guided tour potential and an increase in the number of tourist mainly of target group a.

The creation of new attractions (through recreating the destroyed or creating artificial objects) is relevant as a means to increase the city's excursion capacity. For instance, the opening of an open-air exposition at the excavation site of the Königsberg Castle in 2006 increased the excursion potential by two hours [14]. If a new landscape (for instance, one containing a museum exposition) is created at the same site, it will "keep" tourists for three-four more hours and increase the time spent in the city to two-three days or even more.

The economic benefit is evident. If 450,000 tourists extend their stay by one day, the spending of one tourist will increase by 5,000 roubles (average daily spending of one tourist according to the statistics), the annual tourist spending will increase by 2 billion 250 thousand roubles, whereas the regional and municipal budgets will receive 225 million roubles a year.

#### **4. Development of architectural landscapes in the historical centre of Kaliningrad**

Kaliningrad has a significant number of objects of cultural and historical heritage. According to the Monument Protection Service, Kaliningrad boasts 429 cultural heritage objects protected by the state. However, only a dozen objects enjoy popularity. Individual objects such as forts or the King's Gate are visited by a third of people coming to the region. The architectural and historical complexes — the Cathedral and the Amber Museum — attract approximately half of the visitors. The most popular sights are the Fish Village and the Museum of the World Ocean [1]. Remarkably, both objects are architectural landscape complexes situated in the historical part of the city on the river.

Table 1

**The most tourist attractive objects in the centre of Kaliningrad**

| Object   | Contemporary use   | Expert evaluation of tourist attractiveness   |
|--|--|---|
| The Albertina University building designed by F.A. Stüler, bronze monument to Kant | A building of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University and a monument to Kant                 | An architectural complex that requires further development — the reconstruction of the university building (restoration of the portico), organisation of the square in front of the building<br>A potential architectural landscape |
| Archaeological excavation at the site of the Castle                                | An observation deck overlooking the excavation site  | A tourist attraction<br>An object of the Heart of the City contest; the Central square area in the design specification   |
| Königsberg City Hall (Stadthalle building)   | Kaliningrad regional Museum of History and Arts  | Poorly embedded into the general landscape of the Upper Pond, excluded from the historical context<br>A potential architectural landscape   |
| Friedrichsburg gate — a fortress element (Fort Friedrichsburg)                     | The Ship Resurrection centre for history and culture (a branch of the Museum of the World Ocean) | An architectural complex consisting of two museum complexes — Friedrichsburg Gate and Boat Yard   |
| Museum of the World Ocean  | Museum complex   | An architectural landscape consisting of the main building, exhibition halls, a historical fleet dock with research and museum vessels and a submarine museum   |
| Fishing Village  | Ethnographic, crafts and commercial centre   | An architectural landscape designed to resemble the architecture of pre-war Königsberg, the Mayak (Lighthouse) tower houses a gallery and a tourist information centre  |

**5. Architectural landscapes in the Heart of the City**

The new urban space of Kaliningrad is still developing today. The tourism attractiveness has been declared a priority. The Strategy for the Socio-economic Development of Kaliningrad until 2025 places emphasis on the

formation of the city's "water façade" and the development of the historical centre as part of the European cultural and historical heritage with the objective of including the city into European tourist routes. The State Tourism Programme for the Kaliningrad region includes the formation of a cultural and education cluster the Heart of the City (the historical area of Kaliningrad) [12].

In 2013, the Heart of the City non-profit partnership supported by the Administration of Kaliningrad was commissioned by the Government of the Kaliningrad region to organise an open international urban development contest for the best concept for the development of the historical centre of Kaliningrad (King's Mountain and its environs) [11]. The aim of the contest was to develop a justified architectural and spatial solution for the area of the former King's Mountain and its environs (56 hectares bounded by the embankment of the Novaya Pregolya, Zaraiskaya St., Shevchenko St., Zhitomirskaya St., Victor Hugo St.) [11,4].

On September 19, 2014, the results of the contest were announced. 19 contestants from 14 countries (out of 30 shortlisted for the second stage) took part in the final stage. Trevor Skempton (UK) and HOSPER urban planning firm from Sweden shared the third prize. The French-Russian project Devilliers and Off-the-grid studio were awarded the second prize. The joint project of Studia 44 and the Urban Planning Institute (Saint Petersburg) headed by the famous Russian architect N. Yavein won the first prize [11]. The detailed description of the projects their schematic designs can be found on the official website of the Heart of the City at <http://www.tuwangste.ru/contest>. However, we believe that the other contest participants also proposed interesting ideas from the perspective of tourist attraction centres.

In our opinion, the tourist functions of the city were best developed in the project that shared the third prize. The British architect Trevor Skempton prepared and presented his individual project. There, he proposes to create the first architectural landscape within Central Square (former Kneiphof). Its elements are as follows:

- the finalized House of Soviets. Special attention is paid to a park area and water features, which are to incorporate the renovated Central Square (which will be turned into a fun zone during the 2018 FIFA World Cup).

- the image of the castle can be restored in the form of a "Gothic tower" (144 m) situated at the site the Castle's wall facing Kneiphof.

- the "classical" tower will provide a contrast to the straight lines of the House of Soviets and other high-rise buildings. The tower is designed for commercial and residential properties.



— the west wing of the Castle is to house city museum, and exhibition and conference halls.

— a concert hall (designed to hold 2,000 people) will be connected to the gothic tower and the House of Soviets at the basement level, the main entrance faces Central Square.

A special structure (called Circular Oculus by the project authors) will connect Central Square with the historical structure of the Pregolya embankment and Kant Island (including a car park). Its main function is to create a pedestrian zone above Moskovsky Prospekt with a round opening (which makes the structure airy and gives a view over the river and Altstadt from Central Square).

The second architectural landscape is to be created at the site of Altstadt (the historical name of one of the three towns — Kneiphof, Altstadt, and Löbenicht — the later comprised Königsberg).

This landscape features the concept of historical reconstruction, which is possible thanks to the surviving foundations. It will give an opportunity to get acquainted with the historical and cultural heritage of the old new city. The “historical” concept will be developed in the restoration of the Blacksmith Bridge, which could connect Altstadt and Kneiphof — the third architectural landscape within the contest territory.

The third architectural landscape is designed to create an attractive environment in the eastern part of the Kant Island. It is one of the projects, which — despite the contest requirement of preserving the park of the Kant Island — suggests developing an architectural landscape through rebuilding the Albertina and Gymnasium (historical buildings of the Albertina University) leaving the park on the western part intact. It seems to be the best variant, because a stand-alone object — the Cathedral — will be supplemented with an architectural complex, another historical tourist attraction.

The final touch is residential development in the area (however, the buildings should not be higher than six storeys to preserve the line of the King’s Mountain towers).

The project visualisation suggests that it would make the city original and unique. New high-rise buildings at the site of the historical King’s Mountain take on the shapes of chess pieces and emphasise the city’s unique role on the chessboard of Europe. Moreover, they can become new symbols and create a unique city brand for tourists.

It seems reasonable to set up an expert commission to analyse the best proposal and unique solutions for the development of the Heart of the City.

For the purpose of creating tourist attractive landscapes, we present sev-

eral conclusions based on an analysis of the submitted projects:

1) The future of the House of Soviets:

— only one of the nineteen projects participating in the final stage suggests the building's demolition;

— only one of the nineteen project suggests the complete restoration of the Castle;

Therefore, the House of Soviets will remain the centrepiece of the area. A decision on its appearance and functions will be reached at the next stage of revitalisation.

2) The major question of the contest was whether the Castle was to be restored.

— only three projects suggest restoring the Castle or its elements as:

a) an airy wireframe structure (Homelend Architecture, Russia);

b) an “inside out” castle (AK and partners (Russia) in collaboration with *Wilmotte & Associés* (France));

c) a castle inside new buildings following the perimeter of the historical walls Castle basements under a glass cover.

This project [11] proposed by the contest winners (Studia 44 and the Urban Planning Institute) describes the new Central Square as follows: The glass prisms of the “New Urbanism” quarters run eastward and westward from the “toy houses” of New Altstadt. The King's Mountain remains the centrepiece of the city landscape. The combination of the images of past and present reaches its maximum concentration. The new business, cultural, and recreational centre on the King's Mountain is a mega-structure housing a theatre and a museum, a conference hall and boutiques, offices, exhibition halls, and a multimedia library. The Theatre will be built in the yard of the Castle completely covering its area but without touching the historical walls. The Castle's basement level, which surrounds the new theatre building, is covered with a glass roof to house the City History Museum. The outer layer of semi-transparent theatre façades consists of tubes of tinted glass; as a result, the building will look different depending on the time of day and lighting” [11].

This possibility seems to be very promising, because today the opened basements already attract tourists. However, to increase tourist attractiveness, it will be reasonable to rebuild parts of the Castle, for instance the Gothic Tower as proposed in the project of the British architect. This will preserve a historical feature of the city, which is necessary for attracting tourists.

3) It is preferable to supplement the Cathedral through reconstructing the University buildings so that it creates an architectural ensemble or even

landscape. This will reinforce the “spirit of the place” and breathe new life into the area.

4) Tourist attractions were also proposed in other projects that were not chosen by the jury. These proposals deserve additional examination during the further planning stages:

- an aerial tramway line over the project areas (the Upper Pond, the King’s Mountain, Altstadt, Kant Island);
- pedestrian and bicycle routes connecting different functional zones;
- a waterway along the building of the Marriage Registration Hall, which would expand the space for yachts and boats.

At the next stage, the Kaliningrad authorities intend to develop an area planning design. This document will describe the important elements of the tourist destination in more detail and focus on improving not only individual objects but also the architectural landscape in general.

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