1. INTRODUCTION

A market square, town square is a special public space, the nature of which, the way it has been developed, how it is used, and above all how people identify with it, is crucial in subjectifying the values that bind a person to their environment. The need to shape the town square should result not only from the way it has been set up, designed according to architectural objectives, but primarily to meet the expectations of users, take into account their relations and aspirations in the context of historical tradition. Research carried out in Stary Fordon shows a long process of building mutual relations between the local community and architects, with the participation of officials, NGO representatives and students-designers. The method of source analysis (planning documents, designs, literature), the observation method (evaluation of the existing state) and the critical method (comparison of concepts) were applied here. An internet survey and a direct survey among residents were also conducted. The paper aims to present a participatory model of public space design, of which the variant student concepts are an important stage.
place [11]. The beauty of a town square is the goal of the hosts and increasingly more often of the local communities. In her work, M. Dymnicka presented the complexity of the public space character, the history of shaping its interpretation and influence [4]. In the era of globalization, the importance of the town square as an identity seal seems particularly important, and the search for ways to obtain this value and clear message is a multi-faceted, difficult task. The space of town squares was shaped over the years. Today it is subjected to various transformations resulting from the city’s policy, original interpretations by urban planners and architects; however, these changes cannot go beyond the historical context. The awareness of a genius loci as a “guardian of memory” during attempts at new interpretations of historical space should inherently accompany the designers. Differences in interpretation and complexity of the problem can be accurately illustrated by the examples in Gdańsk, Wrocław and Gliwice [3]. The town square space is to serve the common good, therefore it should be inclusive. People attract people, and that makes a place attractive. Ever since the classic work by William H. Whyte [13], researchers have been trying to identify factors that attract people. They can make a seemingly attractive space indifferent, “transparent” and another “equipped” more modestly, becomes a favourite place to stay, the city’s “in” place and the pride of the residents.

3. THE FORDON CASE

3.1. Degraded space in the perspective of revitalization

Fordon was incorporated into Bydgoszcz (350-thousand inhabitants, a town in the north-west Poland, situated at the confluence of two rivers, The Vistula, Brda and Bydgoszcz Canal) in 1973. The larger, more robust city absorbed the smaller and weaker one in the process of acquiring new areas for housing investments. A sudden slowdown in the development of the town occurred, which dates back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The original design assumptions of the 1970s assumed the expansion and elimination of the historic buildings in Stary Fordon (this name was given to the district after the merger with Bydgoszcz) [7]. The preservation of the most important historic buildings defining this space, namely the Catholic, Evangelical churches and synagogue, was not even taken into account. The testaments to its multicultural history were to be irretrievably destroyed. Fortunately, the cut backs to financing social housing investments in Poland prevented the implementation of the full project. The historical “centre” of the town survived with its Market Square, surrounding buildings and dominant features. Over the years, Stary Fordon was degrading both socially and materially. The suspension of investment, growing unemployment and the distance from the new centre of “authority” resulted in a sense of marginalization of inhabitants and a slow destruction of the local community. Stagnation or regress persisted over the following years.

A slow period of growing interest in Stary Fordon began at the end of the 1990s. The first and thus far only one monograph of the town was put together, and a historical and conservation study was made [2]. Stary Fordon began to appear in discussions on the valuable buildings of Bydgoszcz, and its inhabitants increasingly more often looked at the surrounding space with a growing sense of local identity. Tight from the outset, the author took part in research conducted by the Bydgoszcz administration, which gradually, on the wave of “discovering” the enclaves of historical buildings began to pay attention to areas suitable for revitalization [6].

Revitalization works accelerated after 9 October 2015 as a result of the Revitalization Act [9]. Social participation in the revitalization process became a fact. The local government defined the scope of the most important rescue operations by delimiting degraded areas, and this included Stary Fordon (2 thousand inhabitants, 157.30 ha) [8]. Analyses of the condition of existing Fordon development begun in terms of its valuation, conservation and functional guidelines, determination of spatial advantages and directions of further development of the former town.

3.2. The Town Square – initial state

The Stary Fordon Town Square has an intact spatial structure. Its area is marked by eastern and western frontages consisting of buildings typical of small-town buildings from the turn of the 19th century, mostly one-storey or two-story. They are probably built on the foundations of buildings dating back to the second half of the 17th century, because in 1656 the Swedes burned almost the entire city. The northern frontage is marked by the Baroque Revival church of Saint. Nicholas (1929–1933), whose setting shapes the town square into a trapeze. The present church was erected on a north-south axis, in place of the earlier, oriented, from 1600, partly using its relics: the
current eastern chapel is the former chancel. From the south, the Town Square is bounded by a prison complex, the former Customs and Excise Directorate (1780–1783). Its visible part has been rebuilt and is an alien element in this space. Along all the frontages, there are streets with various intensity of communication, including a thoroughfare along the western frontage. An important element of the Town Square is the monument of Fordon residents murdered during World War II, funded by the local community in the 1960s. Fordon residents are proud of the only monument in the city built through their will and using collected funds, just like the church façade renovated using their own means. It is a manifestation of an existing, strong local identity, which was crucial when deciding how to prepare the Stary Fordon community for the planned changes on the Market.

3.3. The first concept for the development of the Market Square

The first conceptual design for the Market was developed by Miejska Pracownia Urbanistyczna in Bydgoszcz in 2013 [10]. Urban planners designed a “new town salon” based on their own thoughts and pioneer consultations with residents. The idea was to create a friendly, integrative and at the same time aesthetically attractive and socially accepted space, meeting the expectations of the heritage conservator. When assessing the proposed solution, it should be recognized that it fulfills the most important tasks: introduces functional zoning, exposes the most valuable elements, isolates the unsightly façade of the prison, marks places of recreation and meetings, is open and safe. It is free from design errors and could theoretically be implemented. Unfortunately, the local community, whose activity and awareness grew with each subsequent workshop and consultation, did not accept this proposal. In particular, a glass spatial form attracted criticism, an object designed to serve as tourist information. Also, the transfer of the monument honouring murdered residents of Fordon and its inclusion in the pseudo-frontage separating the

Figure 1.
Town Square in Stary Fordon, bird’s eye view, (Archive of UTP)

Figure 2.
Town Square view, drawn up by Miejska Pracownia Urbanistyczna, 2013 (Archive of MPU)
city square from the parking zone aroused major doubts. Street furniture proposals were deemed “non-Fordon” and not encouraging to spend time in the Town Square. In the discussed case, consultations with residents turned out to be insufficient.

In the author’s opinion, the right tools were not used here to better diagnose the expectations of the local community. During the meetings, a number of proposals were submitted, noted by the designers, with the aim of including them in the documentation as fully as possible and in accordance with the design trade practices. The end result turned out to be only partially consistent with the residents’ ideas and could not be used as a canvas for the implementation design.

3.4. Student designs and survey

In 2016, another attempt was made to diagnose the expectations of residents. This time, conceptual designs by students studying Design at the University of Science and Technology, adjacent to Stary Fordon, were used. As a part of the Shaping Space course run by the author, students prepared to four alternative variants. At the beginning, they were acquainted with the history of the place, its most important buildings, site visits were carried out at various times of the day and year, analysing lighting, communication volumes and pedestrian paths. The design awareness in terms of creating a friendly and accepted place according to the principles described by J. Gehl [5] with an adapted scale of features, and a proper arrangement of the street furniture generating mutual interactions of the users were considered crucial. The students also became acquainted with the earlier MPU design and received basic conservation and functional guidelines, including the principle of using traditional materials that fit in with the environment. Designing of street furniture dedicated to this interior was a particularly important task for Design students. Then a survey was conducted. The order was reversed intentionally, not to just ask the residents questions, but to back them up with student visions, opening their imagination to alternative solutions.

Florian Znaniecki has already drawn attention to the humanistic context of shaping space [14]. He postu-
lated that researchers should see reality through the eyes of those who participate in it and produce it. Znaniecki saw the importance of the local community in shaping the public sphere, becoming a pioneer of participative thinking about the city. Despite such a long tradition of thinking about space for its users, the pre-dating Jane Jacobs’ “manifesto” by thirty-odd years, designers are not easily able to listen to the voice of the local community. It seems that the role of student studies combined with the results of the survey may prove to be crucial for solving similar problems. The didactic value of studies and the involvement of young designers in the implementation of a real task had an additional meaning.

Student concepts were presented at a meeting with the residents and extensively discussed. Representatives of the local community learned the variant ideas for the development of the entire square along with street furniture and greenery designs and material suggestions. Thus, they realized what the consequences are resulting from functional changes in particular Town Square zones. Most importantly, they could feel like the real hosts of this space [11].

Nearly 300 people took part in an online survey prepared by the author on the space of the Town Square, expanded by the traditional version of the “survey” conducted in 2016. Old Fordon Supporters Association (Stowarzyszenie Miłośników Starego Fordonu), which also supported student designs by legitimizing them in the minds of residents, helped with the online survey. It was possible to precisely formulate questions to residents on the basis of concepts developed by students. In the survey, (revolutionary!) questions to residents concerned referred to the liquidation of vehicular traffic within the Town Square and a reduction of parking spaces, the possibility of dislocating the monument (previously con-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.</th>
<th>Stary Fordon Town Square survey – a sample question (prepared by the author)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A list of various changes to the Town Square is shown below. Please mark the ones which you agree with.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple choice, replied 399x, no reply 3x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Answers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance of water fountain, water curtain or the like</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New, customised street furniture (benches, flowerbeds, etc.)</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More greenery</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monument moved from the centre of the town square</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooster</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of parking spaces and expansion of pedestrian areas</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A summer garden</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface replacement</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4. View of the Stary Fordon Town Square, part of the winning competition design by Łukasz Pieńczykowski, Jakub Bartkowiak (author’s materials)
tested), indication of the expected functions, and finally a question about woonerf, as an intermediate space.

The results of the survey along with student designs were presented by the authors and representatives of Old Fordon Supporters Association to the Mayor of the City of Bydgoszcz. The main assumptions and expectations were defined, which were to become the basis for the development of the final implementation design.

### 3.5. Competition

The collected information was used to develop guidelines for a nationwide architectural competition announced by Bydgoszcz for the functional and spatial design of the Town Square. The competition formula presented another opportunity to make the most appropriate choice. The author chaired the competition panel of judges, and representatives of the local community were also part of the competition committee. From among a dozen or so designs, with a very different way of interpreting the competition guidelines, the proposal which was the closest match with the residents’ expectations and the competition guidelines was chosen. Due to the applied process for arriving at the optimal concept, it was possible to design a new Town Square space with social potential, friendly to pedestrians and one which “detains” users within the square. Elimination of the current “transitability” was achieved by limiting the vehicle access to the Town Square zone and the removal of parking spaces. The designation of the eastern zone of the Town Square as the first woonerf in Bydgoszcz was accepted, thanks to which the area of the market square was recovered. Dislocation of the monument justified by the new functional program of the Town Square was proposed. The design incorporated a customised surface, mobile street furniture and the expected equipment elements: Kaiserpanorama, an old pump, multifunctional “basin” (water/ice rink/occasional events). All the designed elements of the Town Square, as well as the functional program itself, were approved by both officials and residents who expressed their satisfaction on Internet forums and portals devoted to Stary Fordon. Maintaining the through traffic along the western Town Square frontage should be considered a failure. T. Bardzińska-Bonenberg pointed out the need to remove intense thoroughfare communication as a condition for the success and effectiveness of revitalization activities [1].

The process of arriving at a satisfactory final design, taking into account the interests of all parties, customising the space so that users can fully feel at home in their surroundings can be considered as a model despite the indicated communication defect.

Currently, technical documentation is being prepared in the fastest “design-build” mode so as not to prolong the implementation cycle.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Introducing the research and student conceptions stage into the consultation cycle, as an inspiration for further discussion, should become a routine activity. Using the potential of students, made it easier for residents to define their own needs and expectations and to identify with the designed public space, to imagine the planned changes. Through the use of this method, architects received more complete data to develop the design. And thus, post factum discussions and even protests frequently seen in such undertakings were avoided by the application of the participation method in the initial phase of preparations expanded by the students’ works stage. That method requires preparing discussion phases, time, participation of students or volunteer architects and involvement of local NGOs. Nevertheless, this is possible, and it is the most appropriate solution for cooperation between a university and the local administration.

### REFERENCES


