

Conference Paper

Expert Role of Regional Museum for the Projects of Public Spaces Improvement

Tatyana Ladygina¹ and Maria Belyaeva²¹Specialist in cultural heritage preservation, Krasnoufimsk Local History Museum, Yekaterinburg, Russia²Doctor of Cultural Studies, Professor, Sociocultural Development of the Territory Department, Yekaterinburg Academy of Contemporary Art, Yekaterinburg, Russia

Abstract

This article considers the experience of improving public spaces of one of the small towns in Sverdlovsk region – the city of Krasnoufimsk. The topic of urban improvement is a serious challenge for our country. When designing public areas, it is important to consider the features of the city, its history, uniqueness, opinion of the population. Several tasks can be solved through the improvement of the city: the development of a comfortable urban environment, attracting tourists and preserving the cultural heritage. The choice of certain landscaping projects in most cases requires historical and cultural examination. Cultural workers should also act as experts in the public space reconstruction project. This article reflects on a similar experience during the reconstruction project of the Ufa river embankment in the central district of Krasnoufimsk, when employees of the regional museum were invited to participate. The text presents examples of filling the space of the embankment with hidden meanings from the regional history. The authors are of the opinion that representatives of museum community in modern society are not only keepers of the past, but also creators of the future image of the city.

Keywords: public spaces, urban landscaping, small town, cultural heritage, historical and cultural expertise, local history museum.

1. Introduction

The theme of urban landscaping is one of the most pressing challenges currently on the agenda in our country. In certain cases, the choice of urban landscaping projects requires historical and cultural expertise. It is crucial to take into consideration the city's history, its traditions, public opinion of its population, as well as the city's individuality. The article is devoted to the experience of improving public spaces of one of the small towns in Sverdlovsk region – the city of Krasnoufimsk (38000 people) and what effect such initiatives have on the image of the place.

Corresponding Author:

Tatyana Ladygina

muzey-kr.okn@mail.ru

Published: 25 August 2020

Publishing services provided by
Knowledge E

© Tatyana Ladygina and Maria

Belyaeva. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons](#)[Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the Questions of Expertise in Culture, Arts and Design Conference Committee.

 OPEN ACCESS

2. Materials and Methods

The pressing nature of this issue at hand – the practical development of authentic image of the territory – has predetermined an avid interest to this subject in different sciences – economics, politics and sociology to begin with. Cultural research into the theory of image making and image promotion of the place is indirectly reflected in works of those scholars, who were interested in regional culture and organization of public spaces (Zakharova E.E., Zavyalova E.A., Kotova O.N., Lysenko E.A., Pogudina A.L., Trefilova T.E., Nischimnykh Yu.A., Orlova I.A., Selikhov V.S., Chesnokov N.N., Kozlova L.V., Kozlova G.S., Fogt V.) Some cities choose the way of mythologizing their cultural heritage, while others opt to actively involve PR campaigns created by contemporary cultural practices, which had already existed or had been created with an intent to shape urban landscape and introduce new forms of everyday leisure activities into lives of its inhabitants [1-6].

3. Discussion

Talking about contemporary trends in shaping comfortable urban environment it is worth stressing a high level of involvement among its residents. This trend is typical not only among residents of large cities (such as Ekaterinburg) but small towns as well. The contestants (construction companies) that were applying for governmental grants had to present reports about meetings with city residents, work of public commissions that were called up to discuss and determine the main vectors of urban landscaping in public spaces.

At the present, a federal project “Shaping Urban Landscapes” is being carried out on the territory of Krasnoufimsk. This project is the first major state project that is dedicated to the development of urban environment. It attracted attention of municipalities to the problem of planning urban territories and to the practicalities of developing public spaces.

So, the city park named after Blukher was chosen by public voting to become the first public territory in Krasnoufimsk to be improved. The park had undergone a radical transformation during two stages of reconstruction in 2017–2018, it has also switched to a year-round schedule and obtained new forms of leisure activities and cultural events. Its territory was transformed into a popular place for family recreation and a convenient venue for hosting different cultural events (concerts, festivals and competitions), as well as sport events (morning family exercises, Nordic walking), charities and public

events. Dancing and entertainment programs are held in the park along with festivals of contemporary youth culture, quests for children, flash mobs and photo actions. New formats of seasonal events have emerged especially in the winter time: *Mother Winter's Fun*, *Ball in Felted Boots*, *Santa Claus vs The Grey Wolf*, *Christmas Caroling*, *Father Frost's House*. Nevertheless, all these positive effects on the park's renewal and transformation of this territory didn't follow any comprehensive model that would have been connected to the meanings of the territory, thus it didn't have any visual correlation to the city's cultural heritage and the park didn't really contribute strongly to shaping the image of the town.

At the moment, a reconstruction of the Ufa river embankment that is located in the historical center of the city is on the agenda. It is at approximately this place where the Krasnoufimsk fortress used to be at and the town was founded. It is there that the trade square for fairs was organized. Monuments of architecture dating back to the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, as well as the impressive building of the House of Culture dating back to the Soviet times are located in this part of the town.

Reconstruction project will involve architectural and artistic renovation of the river embankment where pedestrian and cycling lanes will be built along with panoramic spots protected by decorative fences, a sports park with work-out machines in the open and benches for the rest. The territory will be decorated with small architectural forms and decorative lighting.

According to several researchers (Savelyev M.V., Kiseleva D.A., Bondar N.V., Pigin Yu.A.) the river embankment represents the "symbol of the city", and these territories, as a rule, are the main recreational areas in any city, where favourable conditions for rest are created for local residents and the guests [7]. Successful projects of urban landscaping require conceptualizing the phenomenon of the place, its cultural codes and their promotion in the future, a combination of financial and human resources but municipalities of small towns can't invite famous experts and have to rely on local resources. For instance, in case of Krasnoufimsk many categories of town inhabitants were involved in the project including children (competition of drawings) and adults such as experts in regional history, architects and people working in the field of culture. Specialists from Krasnoufimsk Regional Museum were invited to take part in this project on the official level as experts who were entrusted with carrying out cultural expertise based on the town's cultural heritage and values of its inhabitants.

In O.N. Astafyeva's opinion, there has been a great demand for the experts' work recently if they can provide special information in the required areas [8], since making the right decisions is based on expert conclusions. In particular, many researchers agree

with the fact that museum has a significant impact on the development of territories (Bezzubova O.V. [9], Ovchinnikova Z.A. [10] etc).

In Krasnoufimsk, the museum community initiated structured and well-scheduled work dedicated to shaping the town's image in 2015 using the following slogan: "Krasnoufimsk is a town of Zemsky Traditions" [11], that is the reason why employees of the Regional Museum identified the meanings of visual images for the river embankment in keeping with the overall concept of the town brand.

"Cultural expertise is a new kind of expert activity that sprang from a high demand for specialized historical and cultural knowledge that can be applied to making certain decisions in different fields of social and cultural significance" [12].

Taking into consideration that the importance of monuments of history and culture in shaping collective and individual identity is constantly growing, museum specialists have made a decision to connect the meaning of the river embankment with the historical context of Krasnoufimsk.

Having studied the experience of urban landscaping in different cities and towns and having done the analysis of Krasnoufimsk's extensive history, a list of suggestions that reflect the town's cultural heritage and its authenticity has been drawn up for the new river embankment.

These suggestions have been broken into the following themes:

1. famous people
2. monuments of history and architecture
3. memorable dates and events.

As a result of this hard work pioneered by specialists of Krasnoufimsk Regional Museum together with the developers of the river embankment reconstruction project, Ufa's history, spirituality and nature will be reflected in authentic art objects, which are built in the paving slabs (moulding) and 3D books.

Samovar will be presented as one of the art objects because the first samovar in Russia was made in 1738–1740s in Nizhneirginsk village of Krasnoufimsk district. Another unexpected art object is a unique ancient shark (Helicoprion), since 250 million years ago the waters of warm Perm Sea used to splash at the place where is now Krasnoufimsk. The authenticity of this territory will also be reflected in sculptural composition of a fish diving out of the sea wave with a characteristic tooth spiral.

The visitors will also be able to see a model of a railroad, a bas-relief of a steam train and a tunnel together with an ingenious engineering idea – viaduct. Railroad viaducts

in the Urals are functioning only in the vicinities of Krasnoufimsk because the landscape of this area is mountainous and while working on the railroad in the beginning of the 20th century the engineers had to use seven bridge constructions of this kind that are still operational.

Its foundation (283 years in the year of 2019) Krasnoufimsk usually reckons from the moment the first stones of fortress were laid down and not from the foundation of the factory as is the case with most Ural towns. This unique feature will be depicted in the figure of Cossack from Orenburg army with a canon.

The built-in pavement slabs will feature navigation signs to different town sights (Museum of Zemsky Medicine, Railway Station Building of architect Schusev, religious monuments) and memorable signatures about famous people. For example, the first woman pilot in Russia, Iraida Vertiprakhova, was born in Krasnoufimsk. She was awarded with “Distinguished Pilot of the USSR”, FAI medals, she has set a world record of non-stop flight and is a 6-time world winner in parachute sport. A sculpture composition “A girl with a plane” will be dedicated to her.

In 2019, the first stage of river embankment project will be completed, which will result in planting shore-fixing bushes, laying out a park and placing art objects. A street binocular will be installed at the central panoramic spot, while pavements and paths will be illuminated by streetlights. Living blocks that are situated next to the river embankment will also undergo some changes.

The project is in the active implementation stage and we can state with certainty that upon its completion the river embankment will improve the image of Krasnoufimsk and make it better, highlight the town’s authenticity and will become the center that attracts both town residents and the tourists.

Thereby, shaping comfortable urban environment in contemporary Russian towns has taken, among many ways, a road of urban landscaping of park zones and river embankments that also requires participation of local experts both for implementation of designers’ ideas, and for preserving cultural heritage and historical memory. Involvement of the locals and regional expert communities is an important pre-condition to successful urban changes, as well as boosting the area’s potential to appeal.

4. Conclusions

The project of the river embankment in Krasnoufimsk demonstrates new opportunities for the town’s development in part using the local resources of expert knowledge. The river embankment will be completed using modern materials and technologies and it

will blend into Krasnoufimsk's historical context thanks to assistance of specialists from the Regional Museum. Representatives of museum community are not just the keepers of the past in contemporary society but also the creators of the future image of the city. Thematic alleys, recreational areas, open space for fairs and trade shows and mass cultural events in town, conceptual art objects and sculptures will highlight the unique nature of the town and will foster the development of town's identity.

References

- [1] Zavyalova, Y. A., et al. (2018). Territorial'noye Proyektirovaniye Kak Marketingovyy Faktor Povysheniya Privlekatel'nosti Monogorodov. *Vestnik Kemerovskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. Seriya: Politicheskoye, Sotsiologicheskoye i Ekonomicheskoye Nauki*, issue 3, pp. 101–107.
- [2] Zakharova, Y. Y. (2017). Obshchestvennyye Prostranstva Kak Faktory Sotsiokul'turnogo Razvitiya Lokal'nykh Territoriy. *Vestnik kul'tury i iskusstv*, vol. 2, issue 50, pp. 122–126.
- [3] Kozlova, L. V., Kozlova, G. S. and Fogt, V. (2017). Obshchestvennoye Prostranstvo Istoricheskogo Tsentra Irkutskaya Kak Ob'yekt Issledovaniya v Ramkakh Uchebnoy Praktiki v Arkhitekturnoy Shkole. *Izvestiya vuzov. Investitsii. Stroitel'stvo. Nedvizhimmost'*, vol. 7, issue 21, pp. 126–135.
- [4] Pogudina, A. L. (2016). Formirovaniye Komfortnoy Gorodskoy Sredy. *Nauchnyy al'manakh*, issue 5–3 (19), pp. 146–148.
- [5] Trefilova, T. Y. and Nishchimnykh, Y. A. (2019). Problema blagoustroystva mal'nykh gorodov Dal'nego Vostoka Rossii. In *Proceedings of International Research Conference Novyye idei novogo veka*, vol. 3, pp. 173–178.
- [6] Orlova, I. A., Selikhov, V. S. and Chesnokov N. N. (2019). Osobennosti Proyektirovaniya Gorodskikh Obshchestvennykh Prostranstv. *Nauka i Obrazovaniye*, issue 1, p. 58.
- [7] Savelyev, M. V., et al. (2019). Printsipy Formirovaniya Gorodskikh Obshchestvennykh Rekreatsionnykh Zon Naberezhnykh Territoriy. *Vestnik Tomskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. Kul'turologiya i Iskusstvovedeniye*, issue 33, pp. 173–188.
- [8] Astafyeva, O. N. (2010). Ekspertno-Analiticheskaya Del'nost' Kak Sistemno-Strukturirovannoye Znaniye. *Voprosy kul'turologii*, issue 5, pp. 96–100.
- [9] Bezzubova, O. V. (2016). Muzey i politika pamyati. *Mezhdunarodnyy zhurnal issledovaniy kul'tury*, vol. 3, issue 24, pp. 76–84.

- [10] Ovchinnikova, Z. A. (2017). Muzey v Kontekste Sotsial'no-Kul'turnykh Transformatsiy Informatsionnogo Obshchestva. *Vestnik kul'tury i iskusstv*, vol. 3, issue 51, pp. 43–48.
- [11] Belyayeva, M. A. and Ladygina, T. A. (2019). Gorod Zemskikh Traditsiy: v Poiskakh Unikal'nogo Obraza Ural'skogo Goroda. *Vestnik kul'tury i iskusstv*, vol. 1, issue 57, pp. 62–72.
- [12] Kapshay, A. V. (2015). Ekspertiza Kak Aktual'naya Kul'turologicheskaya Praktika. Presented at *International Research Conference Gosudarstvennaya kul'turnaya politika i obrazovaniye kak chast' strategii natsional'noy bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii*. Kazan: Kazan State Institute of Culture, pp. 196–199.