PULSE URBAN ALLIANCE

BELGRADE INDUSTRIAL ZONES



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Exploring Belgrade's Industrial Heritage: Who Owns the Heritage?

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Истраживање индустријског наслеђа Београда: Ко је власник наслеђа?

ABOUT US



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Who owns the heritage? BELGRADE INDUSTRIAL ZONES explores Belgrade's former industrial zones through the lens of what these places represent for various urban actors.

We examine their history, current users and residents, owners, cultural and economic practices, forms of everyday life, conflicts, and transformation scenarios. Industrial zones simultaneously act as material heritage, memories of labor and social connections, spaces for existing urban life, and major assets whose future pits various interests against each other.

Who determines the future of these territories and on what basis? What should be preserved here — buildings, memory, communities, ways of using space? What forms of development can create new urban value while preserving existing connections and practices? Who participates in decision-making, who benefits, and who bears the costs of transformation?

The study gathers the perspectives of various participants in the urban process and examines the emerging contradictions through three interrelated fields: memory and identity, economics and development, and culture and lived practices.



PULSE URBAN ALLIANCE

A non-profit organization dedicated to promoting sustainable urban development principles and research-driven urban design and urban development in the Balkans.

MEMORY AND IDENTITY

Belgrade's industrial areas retain tangible traces of the industrial era—buildings, workshops, chimneys, infrastructure, and the planned structure—that continue to shape the image of the place. Alongside these traces is an intangible heritage: memories of labor, social connections, family histories, professional culture, and the daily rhythms of factory life.



work culture

status nostalgia

mentoring and mentoring culture

worker's daily life

man's world culture

collective memory of workers

memory appropriation

workers' identity

trade union struggle

family factory history

emptying meanings

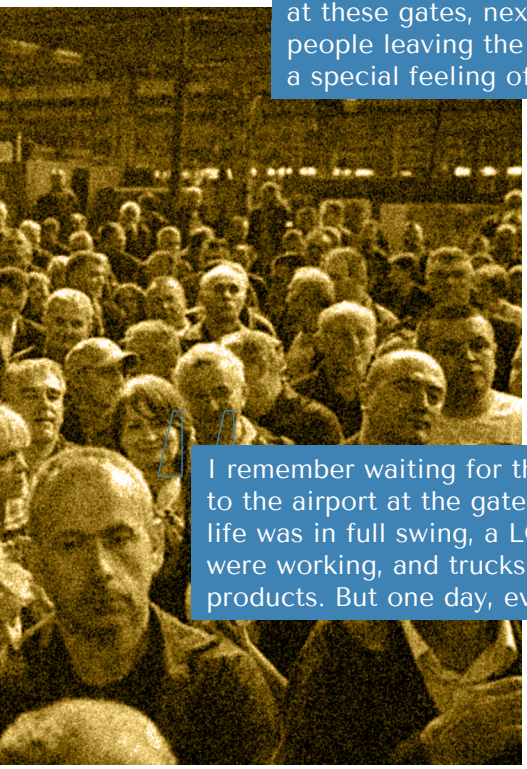
structuring place and space through sound and time

liquidation of place as a carrier of memory

inequality and injustice

The field “Memory and Identity” explores which elements of this multi-layered memory retain significance after deindustrialization, who remains their bearer, and how the transformation of territory can simultaneously retain the material environment and the meanings associated with it.

> Personally, I miss the 5,000 workers who used to leave the factory every day. Imagine standing at these gates, next to the school, with 5,000 people leaving the factory — a huge crowd, a special feeling of life. But that's gone now.



> Pariser, bread, and yogurt. And yes, bottles appeared from somewhere: five or six bottles of BIP beer and a large bottle of rakia. ‘Come on, guys, have a swig,' one of the ‘masters' offered, ‘you'll warm up.

> I remember waiting for the bus to the airport at the gate, where life was in full swing, a LOT of people were working, and trucks were leaving with products. But one day, everything closed.

> This factory built Yugoslavia.

> Our factory keeps working — Vračar is being built up.

Sources :
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CULTURE AND LIVING PRACTICES

Former industrial spaces are already being used as spaces for everyday urban life: workshops, clubs, theaters, bars, cultural venues, and other initiatives are springing up, utilizing available space and gradually forming their own communities. This activity creates new value for the place, but remains vulnerable to rising prices, commercialization, and the displacement of those who shaped this environment.



community is more important than profit

preserve heritage or essence

who pays for preservation

replacing informal culture with commerce

lack of understanding of the value of artistic practices

shifting responsibility

conflict between informal and commercial practices

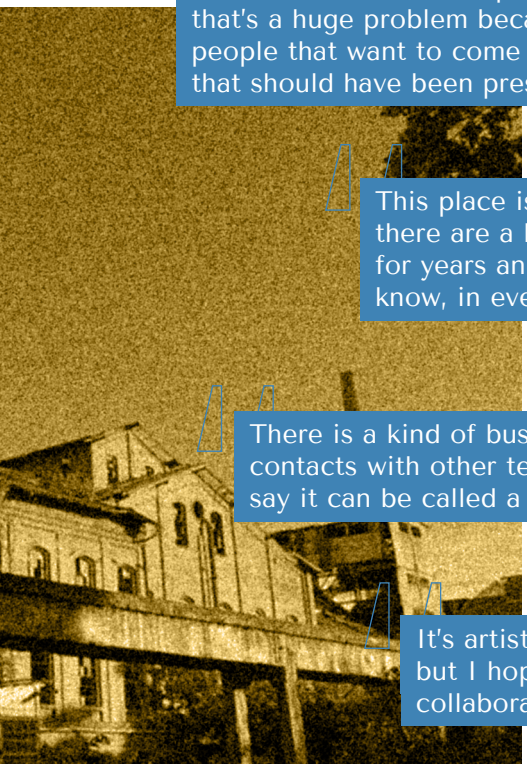
what should come first – a creative space or a creative class

lack of cooperation between residents

conflict between informal and commercial practices

what should come first - a creative space or a creative class

The Culture and Living Practices field explores how such communities are formed, why sustainable cooperation between residents often fails to emerge, and how territorial development can preserve the life they create without turning culture into an intermediate stage before gentrification.



> This whole area was like made for alternative people. But now they're trying to I don't know the the prices are bigger. that's a huge problem because there aren't people that want to come here and I think that should have been preserved.

> This place is really special in that term, because there are a lot of people that are coming here for years and they are participating in every, you know, in every event that we are creating.

> There is a kind of business network and contacts with other tenants, but I wouldn't say it can be called a community.

> It's artistic area. Maybe losing a bit this concept, but I hope we will stop with losing and start collaborating again.

> It's important to maintain the community spirit. We need to bring people together through various events and other initiatives. It's important to maintain the spirit of connection that exists here as a working-class neighborhood, and in these neighborhoods in general.

ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT

Belgrade's urban planning documents view former industrial sites as a resource for the internal transformation of an already established city. The current master plan links their development with mixed urban uses, culture, the creative sector, housing, business, and public spaces.



fertile chaos

act or observe

mistrust and broken agreements

public funds vs. investment urbanism

personal trust or playing by the rules

top-down or bottom-up development

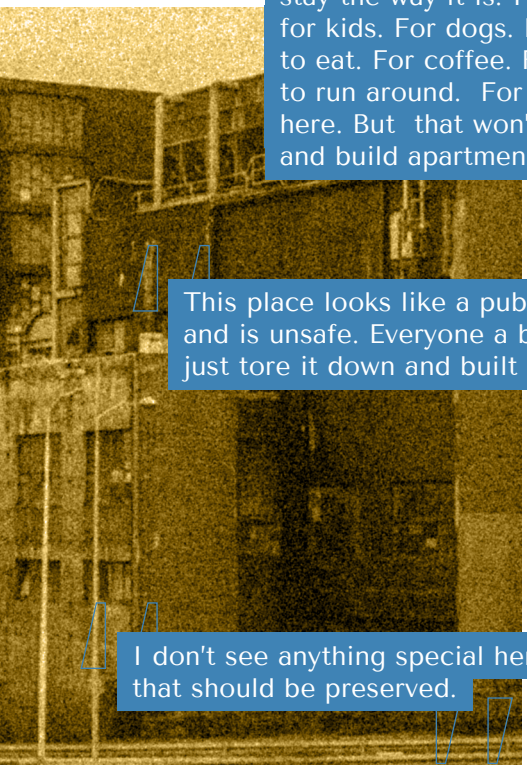
criticism without action

loss of agency

delaying the inevitable or seizing the initiative and proposing alternative scenarios

advocacy planning and provocative planning

Such a transformation requires answers to several related questions: who pays for the preservation and reconstruction of industrial heritage, how is the value created distributed, what happens to existing users when land values rise, and whether territorial development can maintain social value along with economic viability.



I wish they'd never demolish it. I wish it would stay the way it is. I wish there would be a place for kids. For dogs. For a movie theater. For people to eat. For coffee. For kids to run around. For dogs to run around. For a big cultural center to appear here. But that won't happen. They'll tear it all down and build apartment buildings.

This place looks like a public toilet; it stinks and is unsafe. Everyone a be better off if they just tore it down and built something decent.

There is no way to influence this, ALL OF THIS HAS LONG BEEN PRIVATE PROPERTY", WE have no instruments of influence.

I don't see anything special here that should be preserved.

I would like this place to remain unchanged, to remain as it is.

They won't save anything. They'll cut everything down. Every tree. They'll tear everything down.

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