

CATEGORY: urban / architectural

TEAM REPRESENTATIVE: urban design / architect professionnal / landscaper

LOCATION: WARSZAWA - osiedle Za Żelazną Bramą

POPULATION: City 1 708 491 inhab. Conurbation ca. 3 100 000 inhab.

STRATEGIC SITE: 156 ha

SITE OF PROJECT: 7,25 ha

SITE PROPOSED BY: Municipality of Warszawa

OWNER(S) OF THE SITE: Wolska Żelazna Bramę Housing Cooperative,  
Municipality of Warszawa, State Treasury

COMMISSION AFTER COMPETITION

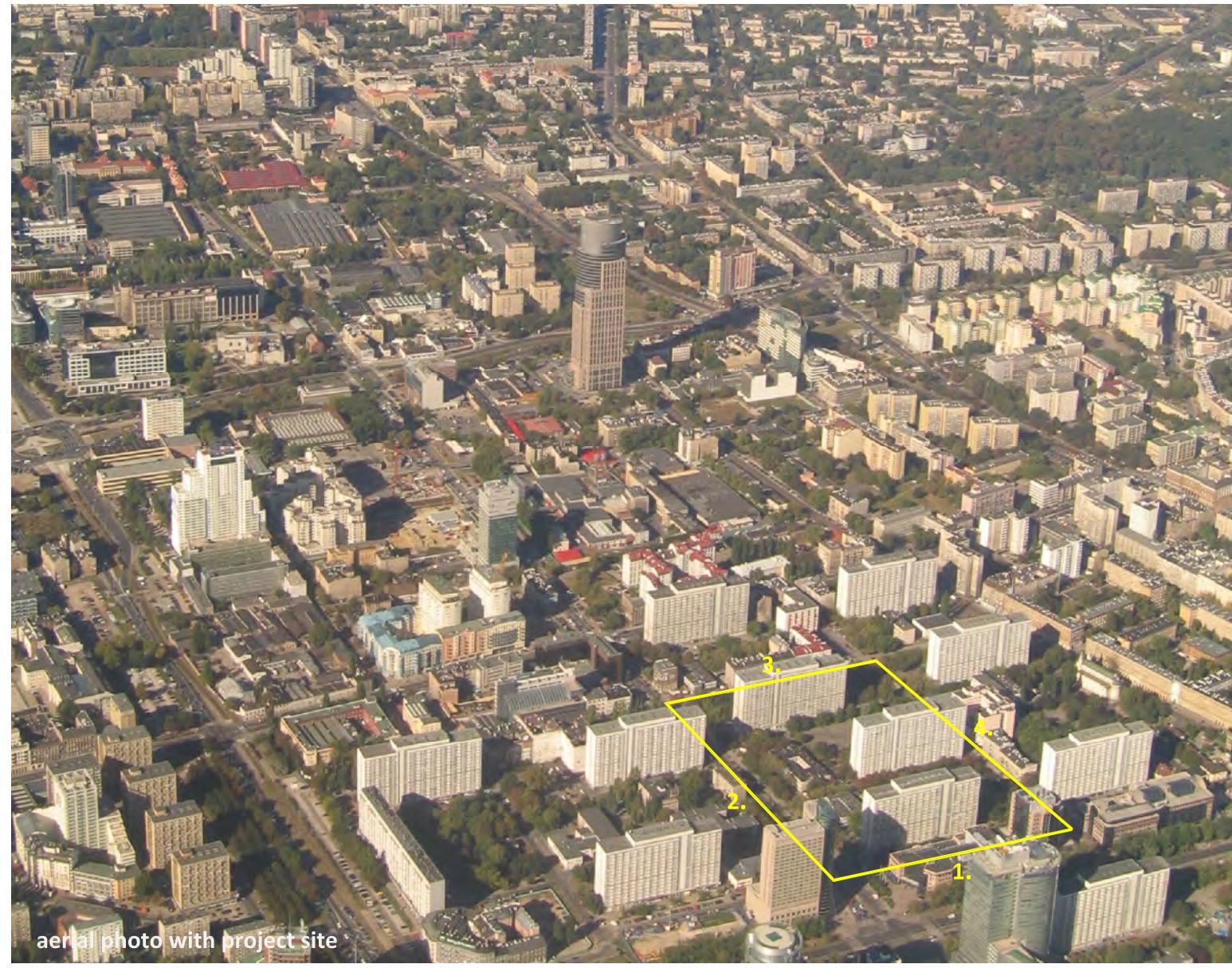
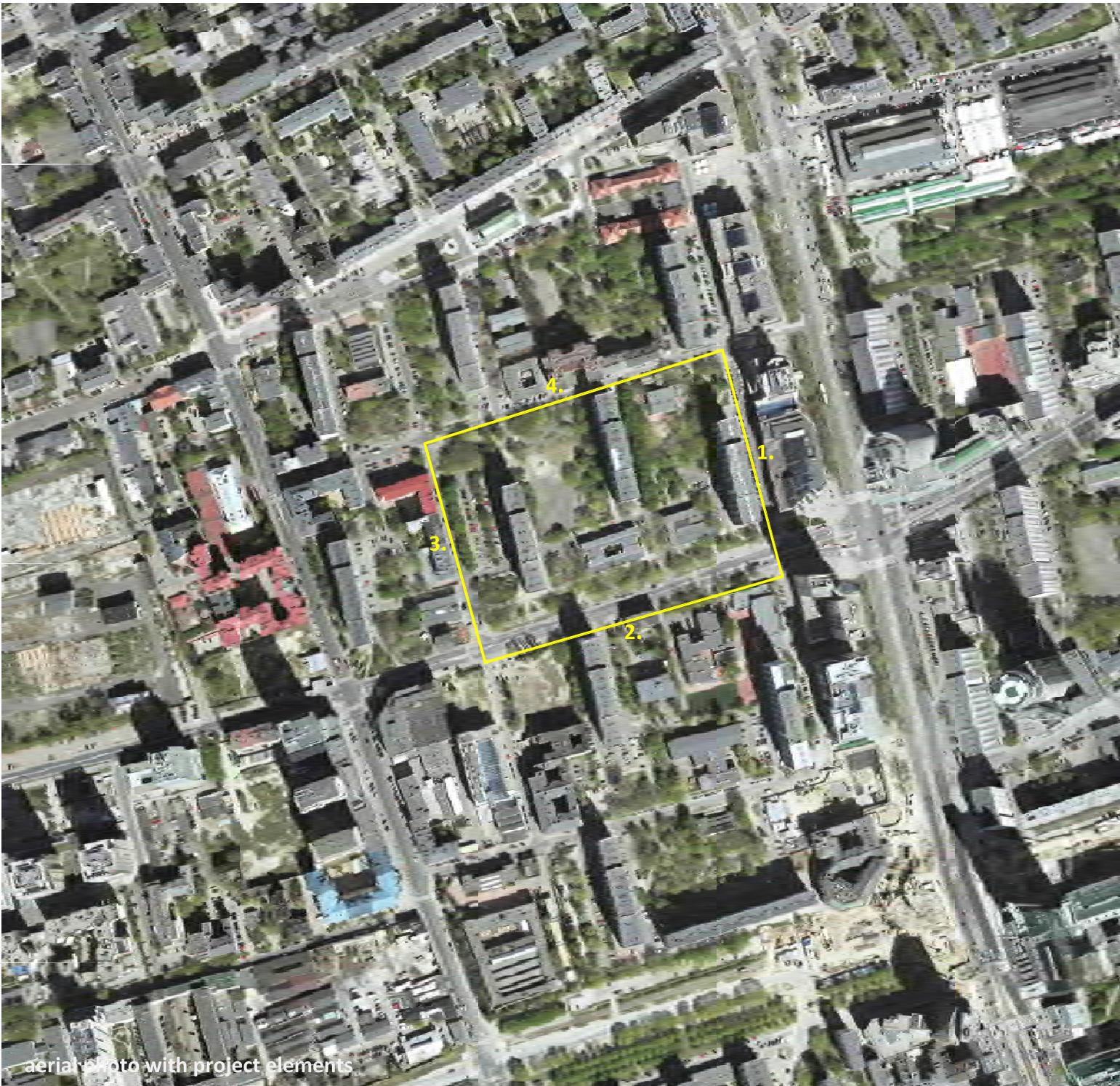
Participation in the discussions on the development of the area

#### HOW THE SITE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE ADAPTABLE CITY?

Za Żelazną Bramą settlement (built 1965-1972) in the very center of Warsaw. It includes 19 nearly identical 16 storey 87 meters long apartment buildings. At the part of the settlement the new multifunctional development treats the settlement buildings like a rocks to built between. Site of the project is located in the part where the new development has entered into not developed areas leaving the spaces by the apartment buildings nearly untouched. The integral part of the original settlement create low rise educational, commercial and healthcare buildings. The development plan allows to replace some of them by the more intensive development. There is a question of improving the quality of live here, finding balance between centrality and locality, between preserving the values of already historical space and giving the new quality to the adaptable city which is already there.

#### CITY STRATEGY

Warszawa- the capital of Poland and its economical center is one of the most dynamically developing metropolises of Europe. The site needs a strategy in the context of rapid changes: to give a new life into in-between spaces and adjust the modernist residential buildings to nowadays needs of diverse inhabitants, to propose development of accompanying buildings, which act as one of the main city streets frontage, introduce new uses, let the area profit from the 24 city but provide protection from its negative consequences. The phenomenon of the last years in the whole Poland, is the boom of the activity toward the growth of the participation of the inhabitants in the development of their neighborhoods. Nongovernmental organization Fundacja Na Miejscu starts the process of community planning of the green recreational area which is part of the site of project.



## SITE DEFINITION

Za Żelazną Bramą settlement had been established on the area which until the Second World War was covered by very dense traditional city pattern. During the war the German occupants has created here the Jewish Ghetto. Afterwards they had exterminated the Jews and demolished the majority of the development of the area. The strategic site has been defined in order to cover the whole Za Żelazną Bramą settlement, different kind of surrounding development, and the central area of the XVIII century assembly of Oś Saska (Saxon Axis) created by the Saxonian kings which had been elected to be the kings of Poland. The elements of the assembly are still present in the direct neighborhood of the site of the project. The name Za Żelazną Bramą (Behind the Iron Gate) comes from the gate which had been dividing the park which is the most important element of the axis from the farther part of it.

## ADAPTABILITY : MAIN CHALLENGES TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

The site of the project is in the middle of "emerging Manhattan" with new high-rise hotels, office and residential buildings which made the structure of Za Żelazną Bramą settlement more complex. Small size of the apartments, long access corridors and bad quality of finishing of the buildings had made Za Żelazną Bramą since its origins a subject of complaints of its inhabitants. Additionally quite quickly had come the critic from the site of architects and other specialists. The main points were monotony, big scale and totality in planning. Oś Saska and some other historical elements had been followed in the pattern of Za Żelazną Bramą but at the same time dominated by it. Quite quickly the big part of the common spaces in the ground floors of the apartment blocks have been converted into shops.

In 1986 Za Żelazną Bramą was the subject of the international architectural workshops "From neighborhood to downtown" which participants proposed radical changes. In the last decades all 19 big buildings had been renovated. Some architectural solutions had been changed in order to improve the thermal insulation but strong graphical layout of the elevations is preserved. Now on the wave of sentimental popularity of the heritage of late modern also Za Żelazną Bramą got its fans. Many point the loss of green areas caused by the new development. Central location and the very small size of the apartments attract to Za Żelazną Bramą people who come to Warsaw from the other places of Poland and the world. There is a large Vietnamese community. Many of the apartments are being used as the offices of the small firms. The local development plan foresees the coexistence between housing and services. The question is to use this complex identity as an opportunity.

