



CATEGORY
Urban/architectural

LOCATION Warszawa
ulica Wileńska

POPULATION 1 706 500

STUDY SITE 98.8 ha

SITE OF PROJECT 6.7 ha

SITE PROPOSED BY Municipality of Warszawa

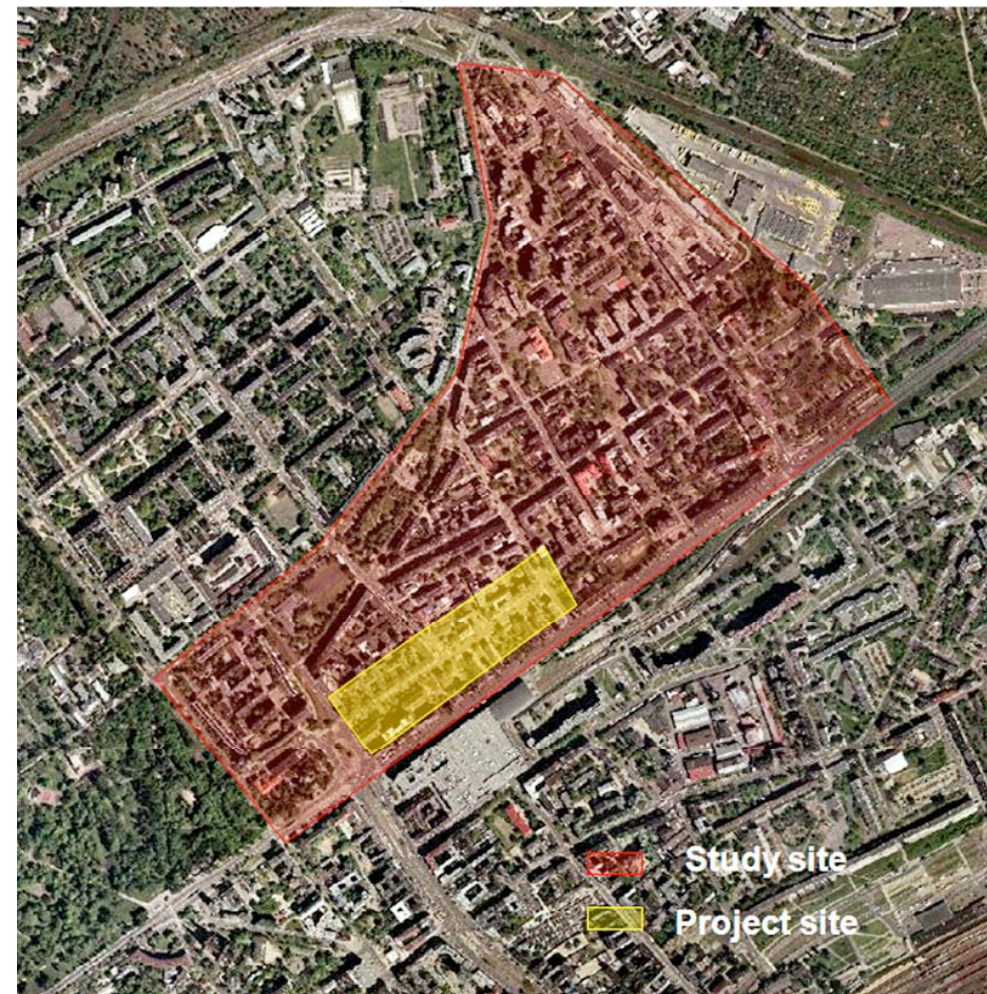
OWNER(S) OF THE SITE street: city; plots: city, railway, private owners

TYPE OF ORDER AFTER COMPETITION engagement of winning architects for the transformation of the spatial area of Wileńska Street

CHANGE TO OPERATE
The study site is a location that is characterized by the co-existence of various activities and social groups: traditional residents who include for the most part the less wealthy social groupings, wealthier new residents, immigrants, local craftsmen, club goers who frequent the numerous local clubs and visitors to art galleries, passengers departing from ulica Wileńska (Vilnius Street) on buses that connect Warsaw with communities situated to the north-east of the city, employees and visitors of local administration offices, school students, as well as those using the nearby rail terminal and the shopping mall which is connected with it. The presence of various groups in the entire area is most pronounced in ulica Wileńska. The essential task of the contest is the exploitation of the area's dimensions, as well as the possibility of decreasing street width where it has no communication justification, in order to create a public space that integrates the locality's diverse residents and its visitors. Ulica Wileńska should not become the "city's salon" rather the "sitting room of the community". The transformation

of the street should constitute an important element in the revitalisation of the area which would be conducted in such a way as to avoid its gentrification, namely through the displacement of its current residents. In order to achieve this goal, deliberations should be so directed as to include the Study Site.

CITY STRATEGY
Warsaw is Poland's capital city and its largest city. Also, it is the administrative, cultural, educational and business centre. The large inflow of new residents is a constant characteristic of Warsaw. Additionally, commuters arrive daily to their jobs. This is connected with the dynamic character of Warsaw and lately also in a boom of various economic, cultural and quasi-cultural institutions. Following years of stagnation, there is an almost exclusive development of commercial buildings construction. There has been a reversal the earlier process of depopulation in the city centre. Here there has been is growth of luxury apartment construction, while houses outside the city are built mainly by those who cannot afford apartments in the city centre.



SITE DEFINITION

The study site covers the Praga district which is located on the Vistula River bank opposite to the city centre. This district consists of buildings from the turn of 19th and 20th centuries, which gives the area its unique character that constitutes a significant value in a city largely destroyed during World War II and then subjected to significant transformations. In the opinion of many Warsaw residents, Praga is an unsafe district. But this is changing. There is now an emergence of numerous ateliers, and such institutions as alternative night clubs or private theatres. New residential housing is also undergoing construction while factories and some craftsmen workshops are closing down. There are still governmental offices and schools, churches and an Orthodox Church. In the immediate vicinity there is a shopping mall connected with a train station. The project site measures an area of 6.7 ha and covers a fragment of ulica Wileńska, which should be the subject matter of most of the transformations, and adjacent to it plots, which have been included in the project site in order to ensure an optimum relationship between them and the street.

Here there are also two types of residential buildings, namely construction linked with ground floor services, and free-standing houses, as well as the headquarters of Polish Railways. The eventual transformations and their completion should be made subject to the current needs of its users, as well as to the continuance and emphasis of the community's character. Vilnius Street has an initial bus stop for suburban buses. The task at hand, is the creation of a space which would integrate a variety of residents and users of the district.

NEW URBAN MOBILITY

The terrain has an excellent communications infrastructure, which is used by the area's residents as well as those from the city and surrounding areas. Many of the club guests and ateliers are foreigners. The dense city structure encourages movement on foot and on bicycle. Thus, there is already communications mobility. There is only the need to improve its quality as well as to expand face to face contact. The busy street running alongside the southern boundary of the terrain subject to the contest, together with the rail line located on its other side, forms a natural spatial barrier which the contest participants should take into consideration.

NEW SOCIAL LIFE

The study site reflects well the definition of a city as a place which gives the possibility of entirely different people meeting each other without the necessity for personal relations. The only thing needed is the creation of a sense of community between the various social groups that now exist here side by side. It is essential that the new project implementation on ulica Wileńska takes place with the cooperation of its residents which will ensure that they will better identify with it and as a result guarantee it greater permanence. Their consciousness of having strong ties with this community should not be threatened. At the same time, changes in street width should ensure that its visitors, from passengers of buses departing from here to club guests, find that the street is pleasant to visit and not just a means of communication.

NEW ECOLOGY

Because of the need to preserve the district's character, eco-friendly activities on this terrain must have a subtle character. As a starting point, these can be a reduction in the impact on the environment through transport communications that favours the multi-functional and dense building construction of the district, as well as the neighbouring Warsaw eco-system, constituting one the premier green areas of European capitals and numerous green terrains.



aerial photo of the project site



A - north side of ulica Wileńska
C - south side of ulica Wileńska

B - interior of the block at ulica Wileńska
D - general view of ulica Wileńska