

# Temporary use of abandoned buildings

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## ABSTRACT:

Temporary architecture is a way to produce an instant experience. It concentrates on a specific location and develops unique tactics to activate it. It adapts to the site, which is often abandoned and backward. Temporary use focuses on a single purpose and its influence at a given moment. It reflects the current economic state and situation in adjacent neighbourhood and community. It aims at becoming a catalyst for a permanent change. Empty buildings represent a valuable resource for urban development of an area. They belong to the category of areas suitable for reconstruction. Their activation contributes to the recycling of areas within the urban structure increasing the efficiency of land use and contributing to the sustainable development of the territory. A removal of abandoned buildings from a functioning urban organism has a negative impact on the integrity of the urban structure. Archipop is the author's newly established database focusing on the topic of temporariness in architecture. Its aim is to map successful activations of abandoned buildings by the means of temporary interventions in Europe. Archipop deals with the subject of 'pop-up' in architecture. Its prime objective is to attract a target group of users over the shortest period of time possible by exclusivity of a presented activity, concentrating on temporary uses located in abandoned buildings in Europe. It examines successful projects of activation of unused objects by using temporary activity profile. Targeting at interested public, potential investors, and last but not least government and municipalities, Archipop was created to provide inspiration and opportunities of temporary use. Its ambition is to promote revitalisation of unused areas with the use of temporary architecture and to save historic heritage from its terminal destruction.

## KEYWORDS:

temporary architecture, pop-up, vacancy, abandoned buildings, Archipop

## INTRODUCTION

Temporary architecture is a way to produce an instant experience. It focuses on a specific location and develops unique tactics to activate it. It adapts to the site, which is often abandoned and backward. Temporary use focuses on a single purpose and its influence at a given moment. It reflects the current economic state and situation in adjacent neighbourhood and community and aims at becoming a catalyst for a permanent change.

### Temporariness

Authors of a book "The Temporary city" [1] cite the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman who describes contemporary period as a "liquid phase". The term refers to the times when long-term planning is not vital anymore. A state of constant change "requires individuals to be flexible and adaptable, ... to pursue opportunities according to their current availability" [2].

Authors of "Urban catalyst" refer to the temporariness as to "a kind of urban three-field crop rotation system". [3] They compare it to an agricultural habit whereby after two seasons of usage the fields "lie fallow for a season so the soil could regenerate." [4] They stress the need for a period of functional regeneration of an abandoned building in order to ensure its successful functioning onwards. Thus a suitable choice of a temporary function may serve as a testing field for a long-term functional scenario.

### State of vacancy

Underused areas find themselves in 'waiting' period. [5] They have been abandoned by previous permanent users and lack a definition of their future function, or a revitalisation has been postponed due to various reasons. However, empty buildings represent a valuable resource for urban development of the area. Every abandoned building is unique, and therefore a restoration must be approached individually with regard to the architectural, social, economic, environmental and local

legislation context. They belong to the category of areas suitable for reconstruction. There exists functioning urban infrastructure, networks and transport services. The activation contributes to the recycling of areas within the urban structure, increasing the efficiency of land use and contributing to the sustainable development of the territory. Brownfields are an addition to the property on offer at real estate market and prevent occupation of quality agricultural land. These abandoned buildings are an integral part of the development of the area and their removal from a functioning urban organism has a negative impact on the integrity of the urban structure.

On the other hand, derelict areas are complicated sites for several complex reasons. At the beginning, investors often encounter difficult ownership situation. This is associated with the evaluation of the real estate and the unavailability of loans for unclear investment plans. In the case of brownfields an initial estimation of future investment is almost impossible. Even after a thorough construction and historical survey and determination of soil contamination of the area, the restoration carries many risks. Moreover, department of historic preservation may impose strict requirements.

Contemporary situation in the Czech legislation does not define a uniform official approach to the restoration of abandoned buildings. Obtaining permits and planning processes are time-consuming and costly. Thus brownfields compete hard with the development on greenfields. There exists a strong demand for a mediator who would make the process of activating abandoned sites more comprehensible.

### What is 'pop-up'?

Temporary architecture is also referred to as 'pop-up'. 'Pop-up' describes an activity such as *"a shop, restaurant, etc. that operates temporarily and only for a short period when it is likely to get a lot of customers"* [6]. Its prime objective is to attract a target group of users over the shortest period of time possible by exclusivity of a presented activity.

Architect Timothy Moore calls temporary activities *"screensavers for future building activities"* [7] as they provide an interim function while future plans for an object are in process of authorisation. The term describes an analogy to screens; they act as an entertaining foreground of a permanent activity profile.

### Principles of pop-up

In temporary architecture the effort is concentrated on a single purpose and its effect over a limited period of time. A plan of temporary use should take into account the requirements for preservation of historical structures as well as an introduction of a permanent function. Authors of the study in Kiev define four general phases of gradual revitalisation with the help of temporary activation as follows. [8] The first phase puts great emphasis on a current condition of construction by defining the most critical parts which require immediate intervention. The second phase determines spaces suitable for use in the initial phase in the form of temporary activation. Thereafter, a

programme of short-term events is launched to attract attention. The main attempt of the temporary activation is to generate interest and revenue and win support for a thorough revitalisation of premises and expansion of functions in time and place.

Temporary activities adapt to the previously built space so they are very adaptable and flexible. [9] The demands are minimal. The construction is characterised as modular and uses locally available material. In addition, single parts of the construction are usually to be easily assembled and disassembled, allowing its recycling at other places. A variable design allows simple modification of the structure at the site. However, overall research and design is fundamentally affected by a limited budget. In majority of cases designers tend to use locally available material or recycled parts.

### METHODOLOGY

Research is based on a hypothesis that temporary use is an architectural tool to initiate a long-term activation of abandoned buildings. A method of analysis of individual case studies was employed. Pop-up projects selected for research are located in Europe given the cultural link to the Czech environment. The following criteria are observed and analysed.

#### Criteria for analysis of case studies

At the time of publication forty-six projects are listed on the author's database [10]. Selected case studies fulfil the given criteria of using temporary activity for activation of an abandoned building and proved successful in their goal.

#### Location

Presented examples are listed with the emphasis on their diverse distribution within urban structures. The current success of the pop-up activities is based primarily on the location in large cities due to concentration of inhabitants, a wide range of functional options and their higher successful rate. Foreign projects are located in cities from 170,000 inhabitants (Mülheim) to metropolises (London) across Europe. Czech examples are traced from a rural village Elčovice (691) to the capital city of Prague (1.3 million). Closer analysis of criteria of location confirmed there are more favourable conditions for subsequent renovation of buildings in the centres of large cities. Apart from a higher concentration of potential users there is a higher probability of raising and/or generating finances for further revitalisation. Legislation should address the subject of equal conditions in revitalisation of unused areas.

#### Conditions of rent

Owners of premises set a zero rent in order to attract tenants. Zero or symbolic fees (e.g. for utility bills) proved to be effective since operators of temporary activities are motivated to invest directly in the reconstruction of a place. A direct lease to a person or association with a specific purpose in mind also proved successful.

Listed case studies succeeded in activation of vacant premises and all of the selected were supported from the start by favourable conditions of lease in form of symbolic zero or utility

fees. In summary, the financial optimisation is vital for its successful process of temporary activation of abandoned buildings.

Table 1: A table of criteria for the analysis of case studies.  
Author: Marie Joja

|                     |   |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|---|
| CITY                | Prague  | Brno  | Vratislavice nad Nisou  |
| NO. OF INHABITANTS  | 1.3 mil.  | 379.5 ths.  | 8.1 ths.  |
| LOCATION            | historic centre   | historic centre   | centre  |
| TITLE               | <b>KASÁRNA KARLÍN</b>   | <b>THE DISTILLERY</b>   | <b>ZAUHLOVAČKA</b>  |
| BUILDING            | Ferdinand's barracks  | distillery  | water reservoir tower   |
| ADDRESS             | Prvního pluku 20/2 [p.č. 97/4 / Karlín], Czech Republic   | Pekařská 76 [p.č.984], Czech Republic   | Rumburská [p.č. 1484], Czech Republic   |
| LAND REGISTRY       | <a href="https://vdp.cuzk.cz/vdp/ruian/parcely/3883349101">https://vdp.cuzk.cz/vdp/ruian/parcely/3883349101</a>                   | <a href="https://vdp.cuzk.cz/vdp/ruian/parcely/1533286702">https://vdp.cuzk.cz/vdp/ruian/parcely/1533286702</a>   | <a href="https://vdp.cuzk.cz/vdp/ruian/parcely/1539493505">https://vdp.cuzk.cz/vdp/ruian/parcely/1539493505</a>                                 |
| DATE OF ORIGIN      | 1845–1848 (cultural heritage site)  | end of 19th century   | 1916–1918 (cultural heritage site)  |
| MONUMENT            | <a href="https://pamatkovykatalog.cz/ferdinandova-kasarna-13264068">https://pamatkovykatalog.cz/ferdinandova-kasarna-13264068</a> | <a href="https://prazdnedomy.cz/domy/objekty/detail/125-bd-rehorova-33-39">https://prazdnedomy.cz/domy/objekty/detail/125-bd-rehorova-33-39</a>                       | <a href="https://pamatkovykatalog.cz/zauhlovaci-a-vodarenska-vez-11534467">https://pamatkovykatalog.cz/zauhlovaci-a-vodarenska-vez-11534467</a> |
| ORIGINAL FUNCTION   | barracks  | distillery  | technical infrastructure  |
| OWNER               | Department of Justice   | Marta Horáčková   | INTEX a.s.  |
| TECHNICAL CONDITION | good state - used   | good state - used   | good state - used   |
| USABLE SPACE        | yard / buildings  | yard / buildings  | building  |
| TYPE OF CONTRACT    | lease   | lease   | lease   |
| TENANT              | Pražské centrum z.s.  | KOGAA   | AvantgArt, z. s.  |
| DATE OF LAUNCH      | 6/2017–present  | 2018–present  | 2016–present  |
| TEMPORARY FUNCTION  | cultural centre   | social reactor  | cultural centre   |
| PATTERN             | stand-in  | pioneer   | impulse   |
| ARCHITECTURE        | cultural heritage salvage   | prototype of social reactor   | cultural heritage activation  |
| CONSTRUCTION        | wood material recycling   | wood material recycling, polycarbonate  | original reconstruction   |
| URBANISM            | urban renewal   | urban renewal of Pekařská street  | urban renewal - brownfield  |
| FUTURE              | auction 2020  | overall reconstruction  | overall reconstruction  |
| LINKS               | <a href="https://www.kasarnakarlin.cz/cs/o-nas">https://www.kasarnakarlin.cz/cs/o-nas</a>   | <a href="https://www.archdaily.com/898479/the-distillery-social-reactor-kogaa-studio">https://www.archdaily.com/898479/the-distillery-social-reactor-kogaa-studio</a> | <a href="http://www.zauhlovacka.cz/o-nas/">http://www.zauhlovacka.cz/o-nas/</a>   |

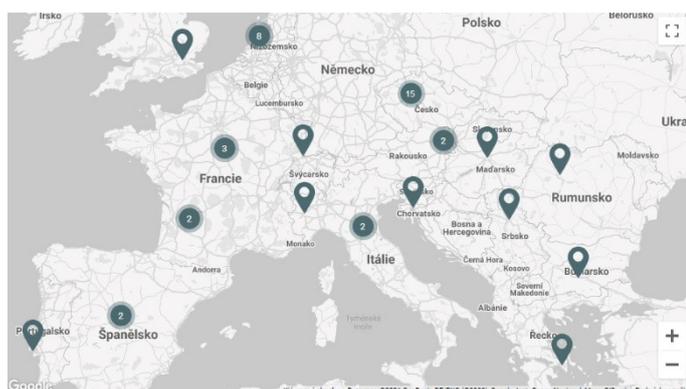


Figure 1: An interactive map of case studies, currently available in the Czech language only [10]. Author: Marie Joja

### Temporary functions

A cultural centre is the most frequent definition of a temporary function. In the analysed group of projects 58 per cent involved cultural events such as concerts and exhibitions. It is followed by creative quarters with studios, start-up hubs and co-working (21 per cent). Community centres rank third (17 per cent), providing space for local community engagement. The last but not the least is a so-called “social reactor” (4 per cent), a newly introduced category of multi genre.

### Urbanism and architecture

The aim of transitional function is not to transform, on the contrary, the ambition is rather to adapt to the unused place in

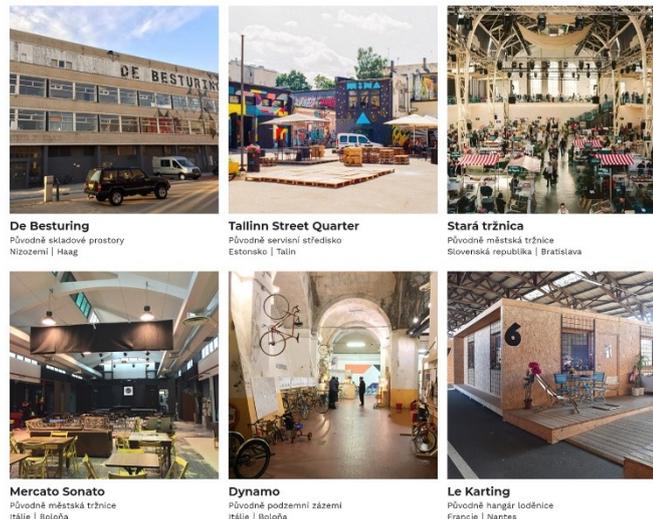
its existing condition. This approach relies on minimal interventions made to bring a place back to life. An abandoned building will thus be the centre of attention along with its surrounding, which has been detached from a functional urban context. Unused areas are often associated with bad reputation as they attract unwanted or illegal activities. Temporary functional content becomes an impulse for urban renewal.

## Archipop

Archipop is the result of a specific research by Marie Joja based at the Faculty of Architecture at Brno University of Technology in the Czech Republic. It is a newly established database introduced solely by the author presenting the topic of temporariness in architecture. Its aim is to map successful activations of abandoned buildings by means of temporary interventions in Europe. It is a product of a long-term analysis of the process of interim use of vacant buildings.

### Realizace

Filtrovat dle:



**De Besturing**  
Původně skladové prostory  
Nizozemí | Haag

**Tallinn Street Quarter**  
Původně servisní středisko  
Estonsko | Tallin

**Stará tržnice**  
Původně městská tržnice  
Slovenská republika | Bratislava

**Mercato Sonato**  
Původně městská tržnice  
Itálie | Boloňa

**Dynamo**  
Původně podzemní zázemí  
Itálie | Boloňa

**Le Karting**  
Původně hangár loděnice  
Francie | Nantes

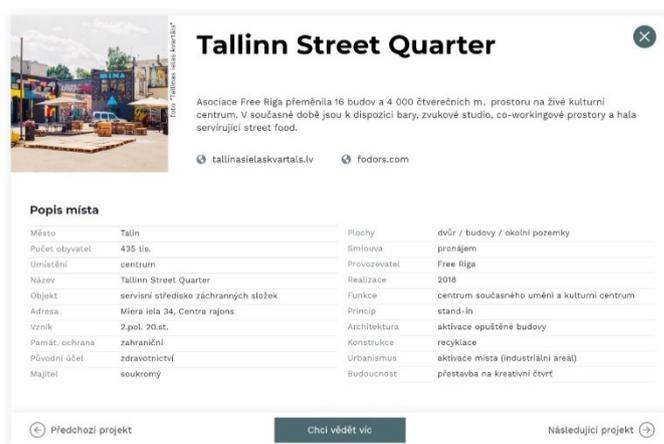
Figure 2: A visual presentation of projects, currently available in the Czech language only [10].  
Author: Marie Joja

Archipop is a product of a complex search for examples of a temporary activation activity. Individual pop-up projects are difficult to be found. There is an increasing demand for detailed information about the specifics of temporary use. All parties involved in the process of a pop-up activity would appreciate inspiration together with a manual that would lead them step by step through the process of activation of an abandoned area. Archipop is launched as a publicly accessible website providing a complex set of information about temporary use of abandoned buildings. It pursues the aim to become a valuable resource of data for the topic of successful revitalisation of unused areas.

Archipop targets at pop-up spaces in abandoned buildings located exclusively in European countries. It examines successful cases of activation of unused objects by temporary activity profile. The database targets at interested public, potential investors, and last but not least government and

municipalities. It aims at spreading awareness of the topic of temporary use and its role in activation of abandoned areas. Its objective is to provide information and tactics for implementing pop-up activities. Its goal is to inspire the government and municipalities to clarify the definition of temporary, to understand its positives and to make the process of revitalisation of abandoned areas more accessible.

Archipop is a database which is updated on a regular basis. It is connected to an editorial system. It presents information about selected projects on individual cards. Each case study is analysed according to a group of criteria including location, definition of ownership, a type of lease contract, a function, an aspect of architecture and future definition. An overview of projects is displayed on an interactive map.



**Tallinn Street Quarter**

Asociace Free Riga přeměnila 16 budov a 4 000 čtverečních m. prostoru na živé kulturní centrum. V současné době jsou k dispozici bary, zvukové studio, co-workingové prostory a hala sloužící street food.

📍 tallinasiaskvartais.lv 🌐 fodors.com

**Popis místa**

|                 |                                       |              |   |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Město           | Tallin                                | Plochy       | důl / budovy / okolní pozemky               |
| Počet obyvatel  | 435 tis.                              | Smílova      | pronájem                                    |
| Umístění        | centrum                               | Provozovatel | Free Riga                                   |
| Název           | Tallinn Street Quarter                | Realizace    | 2018  |
| Objekt          | servisní středisko záchranných složek | Funkce       | centrum současného umění a kulturní centrum |
| Adresa          | Miera iela 34, Centra rajons          | Princip      | stand-in                                    |
| Vznik           | 2.pol. 20.st.                         | Architektura | aktívace opuštěné budovy                    |
| Památk. ochrana | zahraniční                            | Konstrukce   | recyklace                                   |
| Původní účel    | zdravotnictví                         | Urbanismus   | aktívace místa (industriální areál)         |
| Majitel         | soukromý                              | Budoucnost   | přestavba na kreativní čtvrť                |

◀ Předchozí projekt  Další projekt ▶

Figure 3: A project card, currently available in the Czech language only [10].  
Author: Marie Joja

## CONCLUSION

Pop-up is not a contemporary trend. It is a historically verified tactic to activate a place, either unused or abandoned. A temporary function provides a space and time to attract attention and test different options for a future definition of a function. A pop-up activity works with the current state of a building, it does not seek its transformation. The temporary use should take into account historic value of a building and embrace it in developing a future vision for the place.

Temporariness is a tool for architectural salvage. The life cycle of an abandoned building has not been closed—it has only reached an interim phase and awaits until its new function is defined. A pop-up activity is a suitable way to bring the place back to life and to lead it towards complete revitalization. Archipop is created to present inspiration and positives of temporary use. The goal is to develop a manual which is going to lead temporary project's initiators through a process of activation of abandoned buildings via pop-up activities. The underlying ambition is to promote revitalisation of unused areas with the use of temporary architecture and to save historic heritage from its terminal destruction.

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