

TDK 2024 /

From post office to public space Placemaking at Népszínház street

Brief /

Department of Urban Planning and Design

Tutors /

Anyone from the department

2024/autumn



From Post Office to public space, placemaking at Népszínház street

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The Népszínház Street in Budapest is one of the most diverse and conflicted areas of the city, and its complex regeneration is currently under preparation.

The street, which is one of the centres of Józsefváros, used to connect the Józsefváros railway station, the market square at the site of today's Pope John Paul II Square and the Teleki Square market with the city centre and Blaha Lujza Square. Its society is still heterogeneous and diverse. It was once the arrival point of the trade fair travellers via the Józsefváros railway station and of the labourers from the countryside, some of whom settled here for shorter or longer periods, while at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries a "small-town Jewish quarter" also developed. Today, Népszínház utca is a gathering point for the city's ethnic groups, where immigrants from abroad, low-status groups not yet integrated into society, cluster together, while the district is also home to socially deprived groups. This results in a socially challenging but particularly exciting social diversity and public space.

The built environment of the street is basically defined by the courtyard typology of the late 19th century apartment buildings and the heavy traffic (cars, trams), which does not really create spaces for stay with its very low level of existing vegetation. The only exceptions to this are the sites of the first small-scale public space renovation experiments, which do not, however, create a coherent public space system for the time being.



Népszínház street



**Népszínház street
and its surroundings
on the 2nd military
survey**

Source: arcanum

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In this context, the municipality and RÉV8 Rt. are considering a public space renewal where the inclusive and welcoming integration of local social groups is as important as the transformation of the physical quality of the public space. Placemaking based on participation and local action, as well as public space experimentation, is the principal basis of this renewal.

One of the central places of this experimental process, which is currently being prepared, will be - according to the municipality's intentions - the former Post Office at 42-44 Népszínház utca, which can function as a centre of action, a stage for local events or a base for public space presence for a period of 1-2 years, during which local social groups can be addressed and the concept of the street's use can be developed with them.

In the TDK research, we are looking at the role and significance of Placemaking as a tool in a process related to real international research. The topic is related to the international project DUT Inclusive City of the Department of Urban Planning and Design, where we are looking for placemaking opportunities in Népszínház Street through real interventions with international partners (Norwegian, Dutch, Austrian, Italian). The TDK task here is mainly of a practical nature, where proposals are expected, at least as much at the level of programmes as in terms of physical interventions.



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Events and visits related to the research theme will be organised together with the project partners (KÉK, RÉV8). The authors of the winning entries will be involved in the preparation and implementation of future interventions.

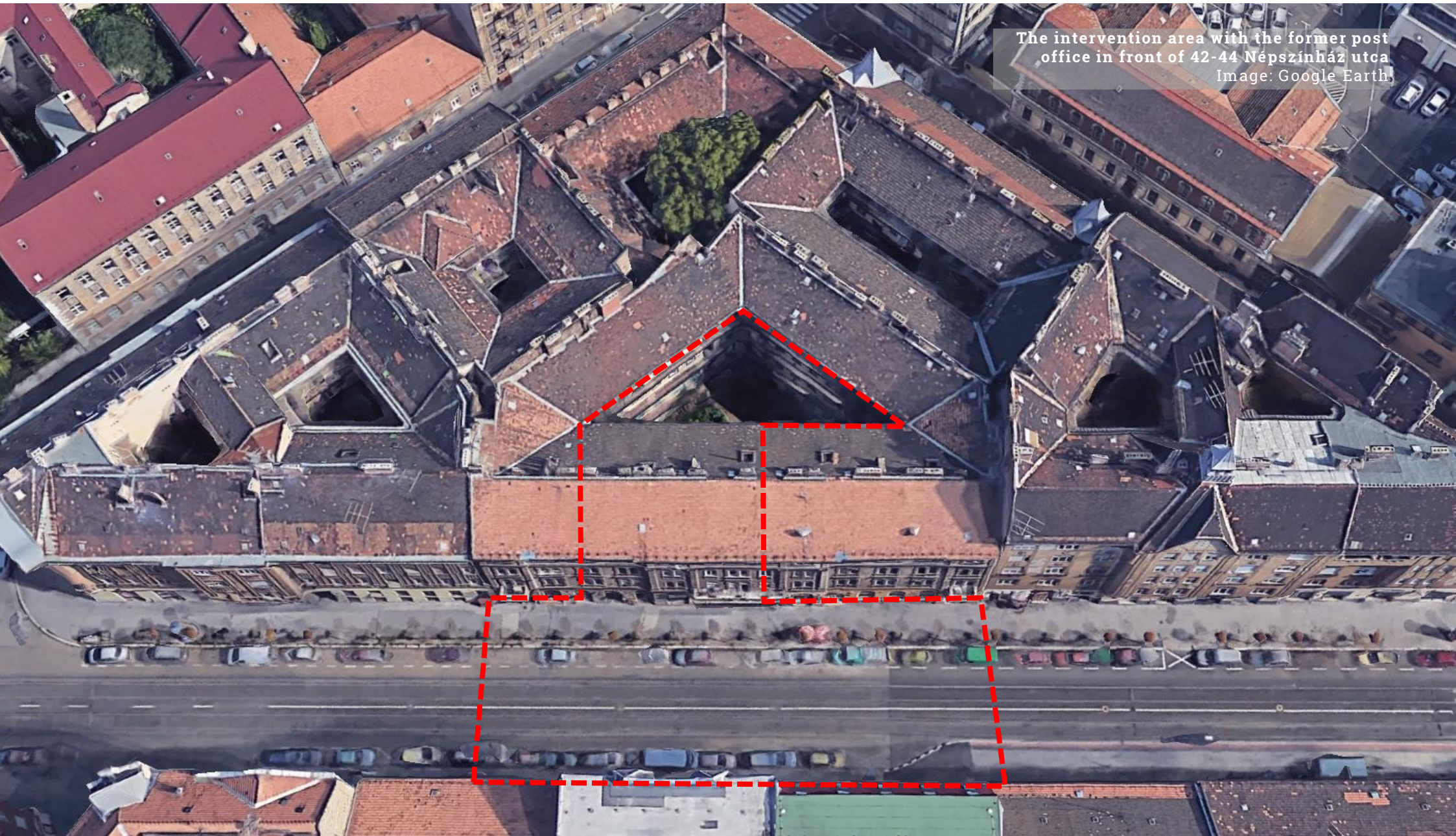
The task is to create a concept for the use of the former post office premises at 42-44 Népszínház utca, the courtyard of the building and the public space in front of it for the next 1-2 years for a transitional, participatory period. In addition to the physical interventions, the task includes the definition of a concept for the use and utilisation of the exterior and interior spaces, the conceptualisation of events and programmes that contribute to the involvement of local communities, reflect social and ethnic diversity and interpret the urban characteristics of the place in an inclusive way.

The genre of the task is primarily design, but it can be based on an artistic approach, research or even on reaching out to local groups, but it should also include proposals for spatial or land-use proposals.



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The intervention area with the former post office in front of 42-44 Népszínház utca
Image: Google Earth

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Organised joint programmes (dates later):

- Joint site visits and information on ongoing actions

Any faculty member of the department may be chosen as a consultant, but registration on the department's TDK platform is required.

The TDK can be done individually or in groups of up to two persons.

The detailed material (survey plans, photos, base maps) is available on the department's website.

Content requirements (for art TDK work):

- Concept for the redevelopment (either temporary or permanent) and/or use of the relevant section of Népszínház street
- Proposal for the use of the former Post Office premises at a scale of 1:200
- Anything else (research, drawings, analyses, preliminary drawings, etc.) that helps to understand the concept

Submitters (for TDK art work):

1.) 1 A1 page with all the drawings necessary to understand the concept (the poster must be made on a template and will be printed by the department)

2.) Description (minimum: 10, maximum: 15 pages): A presentation of the concept of the plan, through which the concept of the plan can be understood and interpreted and, if necessary, the related research.

The genre of the technical description can be of your choice: it can be a traditional description, based on research, a literary essay, a photo essay or other genres. The use of artificial intelligence is allowed for the creation of the fiction (but must be clearly indicated).

Awards

In addition to the traditional prizes, the proposals for the TDK will also receive an additional financial award supported by the Foundation for Urban Architecture.

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References, materials and recommended literature

- Az eltűnt postahivatalok nyomában (Tracing the missing post offices): <https://jozsefvarosujzag.hu/az-eltunt-postahivatalok-nyomaban/>
- Mikropark a Népszínház utcában (Micropark in Népszínház street): <https://rev8.hu/mikroparkok/>
- Balizs D, Erőss Á: A kulturális sokszínűség nyomai a budapesti Népszínház utca nyelvi tájképében (Cultural diversity in the linguistic landscape of Népszínház Str., Budapest), ALKALMAZOTT NYELVTUDOMÁNY 21: 2 pp. 1-20., 20 p. (2021) – with English summary
- PLACEMAKING EXPERIMENT IN JOSEPH TOWN / BUDAPEST: <https://www.heritagemanager.hu/en/work/nepszinhaz-peoples-theatre/>
- What is Placemaking? (Project for Public Spaces): <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>