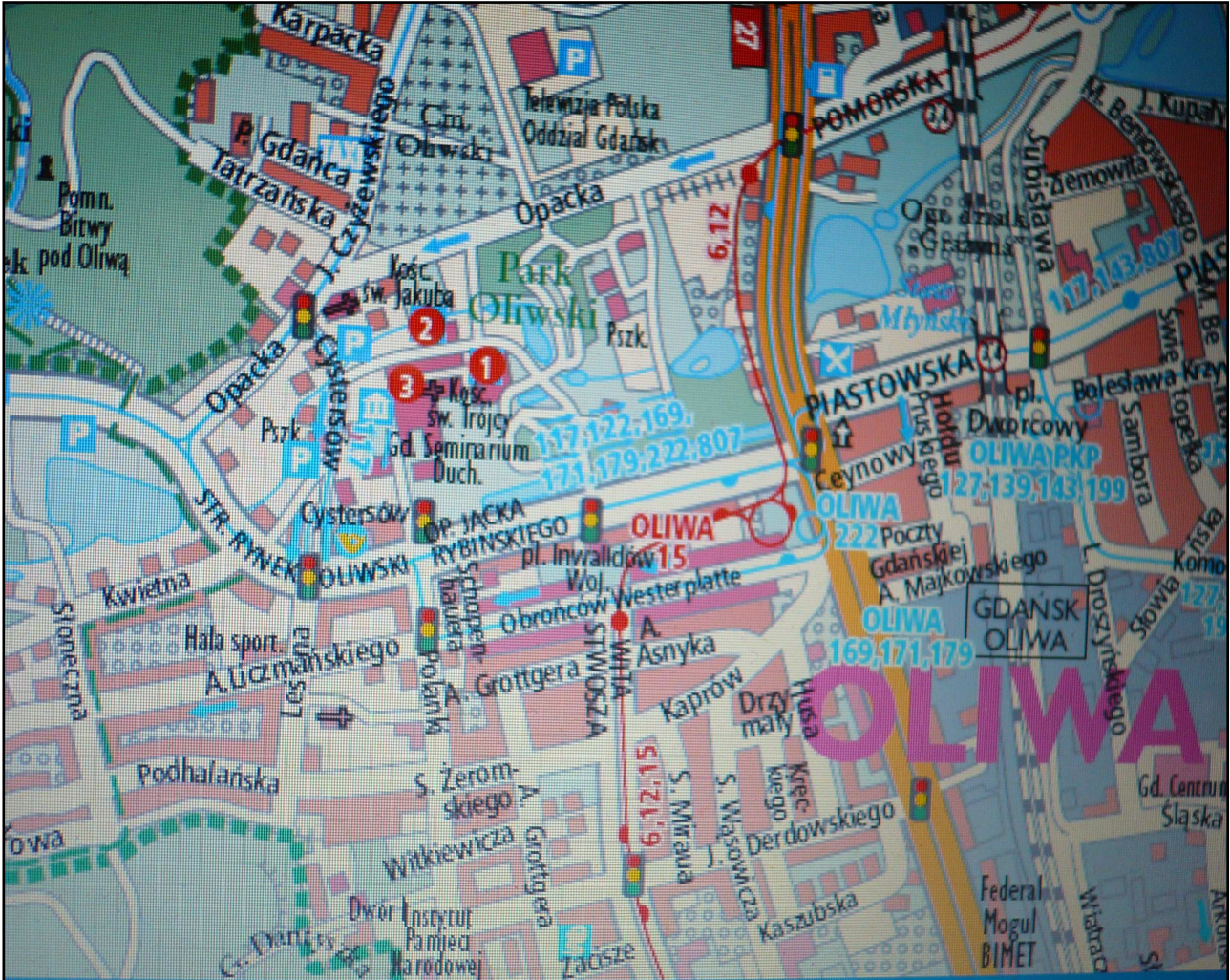


OLIWA



map 1: the area of Oliwa

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Introduction

At the beginning of our abidance here in Gdansk there was of course an adaptation and exploration phase in which we made a lot of walks especially in our neighbourhood. So we visited also the district of Oliwa that is just 20 minutes away from our dormitory and found it very unique. It was like a village in the big city of Gdansk and we decided that it would be very interesting to find out what Old Oliwa is like and the observation exercise was a good reason for us to look at it closer. This was the beginning of several visits of Oliwa during which we recognized a lot of details, watched many people and walked a lot through the streets of this small old village.

But also inside of Oliwa there were kind of different parts and it was not like a big homogeneous place but rather a village which was divided by itself in different parts. Thus we decided to share it into three different parts: the living quarters, the main road (Opata J. Rybinkiego) and the Park Oliwski. For us it was as well very important to have preassigned points for our observation and we chose the basic existence functions from Partzsch to have a more detailed view on Oliwa as there are: living, work, supply and services, living in community, spending leisure time and culture and transportation. These functions are very relevant, elementary human requirements and therefore pretensions for every particular living space of the human being. So we tried to have a more clear and objective view on Oliwa than people who have a connection to this part of the city. It was very important for us to observe Oliwa without any prejudices and influences from the outside.

But we also realized that it is necessary to see the subjective view on this quarter of Gdansk and for it we dealt with a special internet homepage which is not only about Oliwa but also from the inhabitants of Oliwa and they have there the possibility to talk about their experiences in and with Oliwa. So our final part of this paper will be about these chats and talks in this forum and will bring a more personal notion into our minds.

Living area in Oliwa

This district has a nice atmosphere, it is special and different from any other living area we experienced so far at our home country in Hungary and Germany, but if we focus only on Trójmiasto these buildings show some similarities with buildings in Sopot but they are different from the architecture in the downtown of Gdansk or Gdynia.

As we took a walk around in the small streets our impressions were that Oliwa is definitely a calm and friendly living district with two floor family houses which have a typical architecture. It is also important that some of the houses are in bad condition, but it's important to notice that some of them are already renovated, and this might be the sign of the beginning of the gentrification. The houses are fairly similar to each other, they have a wooden front part, which overhangs, stands out from the rest of the house.



typical house in Oliwa

As we already said it's a living area, which means there are no shops or workplaces except the church and the school. The possibilities of the leisure time activities are limited. There are some opportunities for outside activities, people can go to the park, or take a walk in the hills and the forest, go for a jogging. There is also a museum, a Zoo, but there is no theatre, cinema or shopping centre.

The small streets have a characteristic scenery, there is no asphalt but cobble, which makes the transport and travelling less comfortable but gives a special atmosphere, and on both sides of the streets there are typical tree alleys.



street with tree alleys

The main traffic is on the street Stary Rynek, and in these small streets there is no real traffic, because only those people go there by car who live in those houses, and the public transportation is also on the main street, therefore there are no bus stops.

There are containers for clothes for the Polish Red Cross organization.



a container

From the seven basic functions by Partzsch the living function, which is the first one, is the dominant.

Oliwa has some grey houses covered with dust, and life of the city begins with the traffic of the cars in the direction of the ring-road. The question is what makes Oliwa different from other parts of the Trójmiasto agglomeration? This historical place has a familiar and a little bit provincial character where time goes by much slower. We could find some untidy houses which reminded us to Sopot because of their architecture. For sure its advantage is its old-fashioned style. You can't find a building made of concrete which doesn't fit among other houses or to the Cathedral. Each of the houses has its own style, it is different from the other ones in the details, each one is unique. Some of them have art nouveau decorations, for ex. on the street Alfa Liczmanskiego.



decoration of a house in Oliwa

The inhabitants of Oliwa are not different from other inhabitants in Trójmiasto, but if we take a look we can notice that many old people live here, though there are also young people and children. We also can find people from the periphery, who can't find their place in the society, alcoholics for example. The wood around the city is not yet a popular recreation area, and sadly the Radosc valley also loses its beauty because of illegal dumps.

The main street of Oliwa: Stary Rynek and Opata Rybińskiego



Stary Rynek

The main street of Oliwa has a central role in the life of this district of the city as it can also be seen from its name (Stary Rynek means old market). Lot of the socialgeographic basic functions appears in the street, like transportation, supply and services, job, community life and communication.

Both for the Three Cities and both for Oliwa Stary Rynek is an important transportational route. One of the roads going to Gdynia and leading out of the city goes through Oliwa. Because of this reason there is always big traffic on Stary Rynek and Opata Rybińskiego. Especially the transit transportation is big there. Those who live in Oliwa and don't have a car shouldnt worry about how



big traffic on the main street

to get to other parts of the city. There are more buses going on the main street (117, 169, 171, 179, 222, 622, 807, 820, N1), and the stops for tram and SKM are also not far away.



Bus stop in Oliwa

Another important function is supply and services. Within Oliwa most of the shops and stores can be found on the main street: a bakery, a butcher's shop, food shop, vegetable and fruits shop, shop of electronical goods, clothes shop, optics and flower shop. From services there can be found a dentist's surgery, a car washer, shoe repairer, banks, pizzeria, bars, cafeteria, pension, hairdresser and solarium. These are not all of them of course, but still they are not enough to satisfy the basic necessities of the local people. The choice of items is not big enough in these shops, a bigger shopping center is missing for the locals from the district. Another question is how the



presence of a shopping center would change the face of Oliwa and would fit in to the district. It is opening time of a shop in Oliwa

interesting that there is a small shop on the main street, where an old lady is selling drinks, and the

shop is opening every day at 5:30 in the morning. It seems to be standing there for a century.



Old-fashioned drink shop in Oliwa

These shops and services are making the base for another function : the work. These stores create a workplace for the local people. Since the locals know mostly the needs of the people living in Oliwa, it would be a great opportunity for them to open an own store. With this they would create workplaces and would increase the arrange of services. Still most of the people living in Oliwa work in other parts of the Three Cities.

Most of the community life and communication happens on the main street of Oliwa. In the shops or in the bus stop the people meet, they sit in a pizzeria to eat something, they go in a cafeteria to drink something (not mentioning the traditional community life of pubs from morning until night) or go for a walk to Park Oliwa.



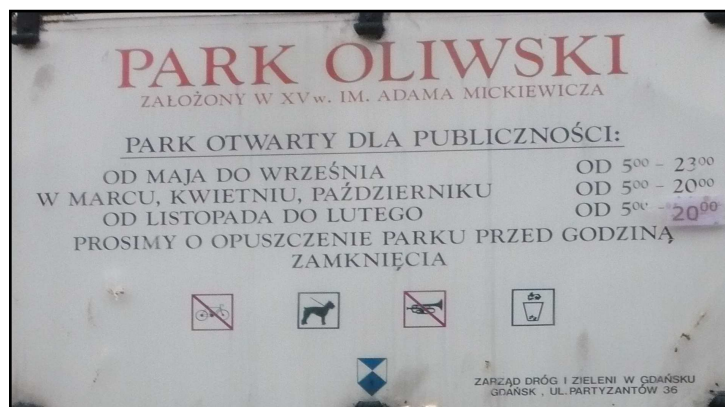
People walking in Stary Rynek

Naturally the function of living also appears on the main street, since there are living houses on both sides of the road, but considering whole Oliwa this is not significant. Those wanting to spend their free time or do some recreational thing don't have the opportunity to do such things on the main street. They rather visit other parts of the Three Cities. It is the same situation with education and culture.

On the whole we can say that the main functions of the main street of Oliwa are transportation, supply and services and work.

The Park Oliwski

The Park Oliwski is surrounded by the Aleja Grunwaldzka in the east, the Opada J. Rybińskiego in the south, the Oliwa Cathedral in the west and the cemetery Oliwski and the Ulica Opacka in the north. So it is located almost in the middle of the whole area of Oliwa, just five minutes by foot to the SKM station and on the opposite side of the Tram station. At last it is very good to reach and perfect situated for the local recreation because the first aspect of a park should be the recovery of people.



the park entrance sign

To see them having a rest or just relaxing during they make a walk was not very easy which is of course a matter of the predominant weather during autumn and winter. Instead of this I saw the people using the park for taking a short cut to reach faster their destination because it has a very good north-south and east-west access.

But for me, especially in wintertime, it was not that nice to cross the park when it is dark outside by the reason that just the main way has an illumination in the night and there were also some strange persons sitting on the benches. Nevertheless the people are using the park also in the



the lantern at the main way

evenings before it is closing at 8:00 p. m. (as you can see at the entrance sign). The ways are in a good condition and there is also a winter service for the main way which make it secure to use when it is snowing or frozen. In the middle of the park the Abbots Palace is located. Inside the palace are two museums and a restaurant and you have to walk across the park to reach the palace and its culture offer.

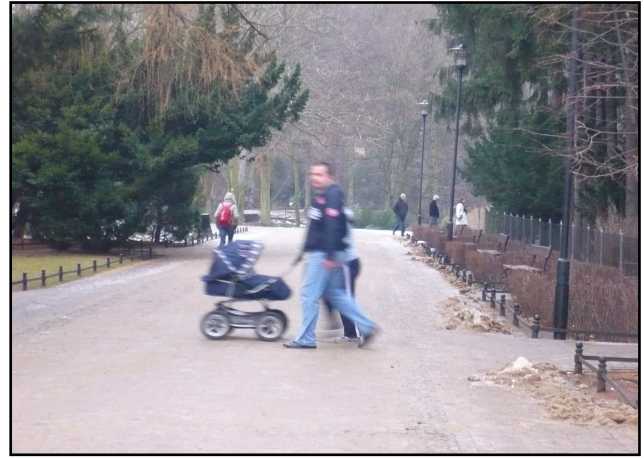


the Abbots Palace

Though in other respects I concentrate on the fact that the park is used by a lot of mothers and their baby carriages. In the afternoon it is possible to see in half an hour about five or more of these pushchairs and the mothers are also meeting each other in the park and make together a walk through it. So they use it to be outside in the green but away from cars and noises and the ways allow them to use the baby carriages which is for example in the near located national park completely impossible.



mothers with their baby carriage



parents with their baby

On the other hand the park gives the opportunity to meet each other, to sit on benches, to walk around or just to feed the ducks in the little lakes.



people feeding ducks



a girl feeding ducks

As a conclusion it is to say that the park is raising the level of living in the area of Oliwa because everybody can use it and relax in it without paying any money. It also offers the opportunity to spend time with family and friends and use the leisure time to take a deep breath afar from everyday life and to enjoy a bit more silence and calmness than in the hectic life. At least the park gives room for relaxing without leaving the district of Oliwa or the city Gdansk at all. And even when the people just use it as a short cut to their real destinations they will join some minutes of this relaxed atmosphere.

Questionnaire

We asked a person to fill a questionnaire for us about life in Oliwa, what was it like to live there. He used to live there for twenty years, and nowadays he goes back to his family home to visit his mother and relatives.

He used to live in a condominium house (mieszkanie spółdzielcze), and his parents received a flat in Oliwa, because his father was a military officer in the Polish army and he got a service flat, which he bought for himself later. In his opinion Oliwa is characteristic place because the inhabitants of Trójmiasto go there to have a relax with pleasure – take a walk in the park, visit the Zoo with family, the Palmhouse, or to visit the latest painting exhibition in Opatów Palace. Oliwa is different from other parts of Trójmiasto because it is a very calm district, with lot of green areas and trees, it's not too crowded, and there are no huge shopping centres. It is also a safe district. People who live there know each other very well, and there are definitely more personal and closer relationships between people than in other places in Trójmiasto. For the question if people can count on their neighbours, he answered that because the inhabitants of Oliwa live there for a long time everyone knows each other quite well. Yes people can count on their neighbours, they go together for a walk, for shopping and look after the flat when the owners are not at home. He did like to live there, because from Oliwa there was very good access by public transportation to attractive places for young people like cinema, swimming pool, sport stadium. It was also close to school, high school and later to Politechnika. For the question if more young or older people live there now he answered that there are definitely more old people. He said that he and his friends went out most of the times to the cinema in their spare-time. For the everyday transport they used the SKM train or the tram. The traffic was always very big. Today only his mother lives there, his friends moved out, but they still have contact with each other. We asked if many people leave Oliwa, if many people move out to another district, and his answer was if someone had a flat there than that person wouldn't move out, just in the case if it was necessary. People like to live there because it is close to everywhere thanks to the SKM, trams and buses, but in the same time it is a calm and safe area. It was also an interesting question for us that what kind of changes did he notice since he moved out, but the answer was short, Oliwa hardly ever changes, changes appear very slowly. The last question was what was missing the most from the place, but it seems the inhabitants had everything they needed because everything was close.

Gdansk Oliwa – Forum, pogaduchy z sasiadamy bez wychodzenia z domu!

(www.Mojeosiedle.pl)

I found this website on the internet by coincidence, and I started to read it, because I was curious what were people writing about. The fact itself that this city has a webpage, where the inhabitants talk to each other proves me in a way that this is a strong community, where people need to talk with each other, and they like to share their opinions and problems, and they try to discuss them. The main aim is to find a solution and to find out if others see the same problem in the same way. The topics on the webpage are different, you can find topics like Oliwa w mediach, Oliwa w internecie, co wiem o miejscu mojego zamieszkania, rynek Oliwski, Park Oliwski, Oliwa na starych zdjęciach, Zdjęcia dzisiejszej Oliwy and many other topics.

I think this page is also interesting to find out what is real life like in Oliwa, because what we see while taking a walk through the street it may seem that that is a perfect living area, but the people who live there might have a different opinion. For example I read the topic called powrót komuny w sklepie na lesnej, it was about the problem, that in shops there isn't a wide range of choice from food.

A rather ironic citation from one of the site users:

„Większość sklepów w Starej Oliwie to komuszy skansen. Jak z filmów Barei. Aż dziwne, że tak modna dzielnica ma takie bzdurliwe sklepy. Rozwój handlu oliwskiego zatrzymał się w latach 80-tych ubiegłego wieku. Zupełny folklor, ubogi asortyment, śmierdzące wnętrza, gburowata obsługa.”

Of course many of the users defended shops in Oliwa, because they like them the way they are, that they are small, and it is important for some people that they know the saleswomen, and they got used to it. In this way it's more familiar and more personal. For an outsider the peaceful life of Oliwa might seem idyllic, and it would be hard to imagine a hypermarket or a shopping centre somewhere in the city, but on the other hand there might be a big demand for these kind of facilities to make people's life easier.

There are also a few comments about the post office at the main street (Stary Rynek) where the women who work there (except one lady) are not really nice and helpful, and the worst time to go there are the closing hours.

These details show what is real life like in Oliwa, but I think these everyday problems are familiar to everyone, it also reminded me of my own feelings about shops and facilities in my own hometown in Hungary in Szeged. I also noticed that not only young people write on this website but many people who live there for more than 20 years, so it makes the page even more authentic.