

Harvard team uses Kyiv as lab

By VLAD LAVROV
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One of Kyiv's industrial areas has become a real-life playground for a group from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, who seek to turn it into a modern city district.

For the time being, though, it remains unclear whether the project, which would require 1.7 billion euros and up to 20 years to complete, will ever be implemented.

The Telychka district chosen for the project is located on the right bank of the city, south of Pechersk, and is serviced by the Vydubychi metro stop. The site was in part chosen because it is the first glimpse a visitor gets of Kyiv's downtown when entering the city via its southern-most bridge.

At the moment, the 200-hectare space is heavily industrialized, with a number of warehousing facilities and factories that produce concrete, asphalt and construction materials.

The 30 Harvard students visited Kyiv during the spring semester of 2004 at the invitation of one of Kyiv's development firms. Guy Perry, an urban design critic who taught the studio class, instructed the students to create "a city within a city" and "a place celebrating and appropriating the Dnipro and the adjacent green escarpments." He told them to create a place they would want to live in.

"We asked the students to think what would attract people to Kyiv, to make them come here instead of Warsaw or Moscow."

Virtual fantasy

In designing the new district, the students, who came from all parts of the world, including Ukraine, considered the area's highly visible riverbank location. They also considered the European practice of transferring industrial zones outside city limits, which Kyiv has shown signs of doing.

Their final plan makes Telychka virtually unrecognizable. The plan calls for new office, hospital, research and educational facilities. It provides residential options from affordable to luxurious, plus hotels and retail centers, as well as cultural and leisure spots, according to Perry. He emphasizes that his students concentrated on planning and designing the district, and not on the architecture of individual buildings.

Perry says that instead of making Telychka just an office or a residential area, the way urban planning was approached in North America 20-30 years ago, his students wanted to give the district a "24-hour character."

"We looked at the current thinking in North America, Japan or Europe...we believed that Kyiv could jump over [it], without making all the mistakes of the last 30 years," says Perry. "We tried to put Kyiv in front, instead of just catching up."

Awaiting approval

Perry himself thinks that the project is realistic, even despite its high cost, because Kyiv is of great interest



Top: Graduate students at the Harvard School of Design undertook a project in the spring of 2004 to design a replacement for a run-down industrial park in the Telychka district south of downtown Kyiv. Below: An image taken from the students' proposal. The plan envisages moving the warehouses and factories elsewhere and building in their place a modernist haven replete with office, hospital, research and educational facilities, as well as an array of residential options, hotels, retail centers and cultural spots. The architecture of the individual buildings, however, would be left to local architects. (Post photo by Serhiy Zavainyuk; courtesy image)

to international developers. The newly designed district, in his opinion, would provide an ideal platform for development, since there will be no conflict with those aesthetically attached to Telychka's current landscape.

On the other hand, the design has yet to be approved by the Kyiv City Administration, whose support is a

prerequisite for the project's next stage, which would be soliciting developers and financing. The newspaper *Biznes* quotes expert estimates that transferring the existing industrial facilities from Telychka would cost \$1 million in itself.

World follows trend

Andriy Myrhorodsky, first deputy head of the Kyiv City Council Commission for City Construction and Architecture, one of the class's organizers, says that the Telychka project closely follows the development trends of such cities as Warsaw and Moscow. And given that the project is to be implemented in several stages over a lengthy time span, its development costs look less intimidating.

"As a developer, I must say that this is one of the most interesting and realizable projects in Ukraine."

Iryna Yarmoliuk, spokesperson for

the Kyiv Head Department of Architecture, Design and Urban Environment is more cautious when it comes to the project's future.

"At this stage it is not a project, but a concept of what could be built on the spot."

Yarmoliuk, however, confirms that its general idea goes along with the city's intention to gradually remove ecologically harmful industrial sites from within the city borders.

Yarmoliuk also said that the city development plan calls for construction of a public-use facility on the territory of Telychka, yet she added that what the Harvard students came up with still calls for detailed economical and architectural development.

"I would say that at this stage [the city] is getting its first acquaintance with the concept of what Telychka could look like. It is a realistic project, but not at this point."

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