

## Article

# Reshaping the Gdańsk Shipyard—The Birthplace of the Solidarity Movement. The Complexity of Adaptive Reuse in the Heritage Context

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**Abstract:** The Gdańsk Shipyard—the birthplace of the Solidarity movement—is host to a unique example of a multi-layered brownfield redevelopment project, an area that is burdened by a complex history, overlapping heritage, and multiple memories. These circumstances require an integrated yet differentiated approach to the site’s heritage and make the creation of one homogeneous narration of its future impossible. At the same time, the size of the area, as well as its location within Gdańsk city centre, has meant that its future has been the subject of numerous discussions and speculations conducted over the last 20 years—starting from the creation of a large-scale open-air museum and continuing to the localization of the new Central Business District of the city. Consequently, that broad discussion carried out regarding the scope of redevelopment projects has been rooted in the possible introduction of diverse models of adaptive reuse. This variety of possible approaches also includes discussion on the mode of integrating heritage in the redevelopment processes. The goal of this paper—written just before the initiation of the final stage of the conceptual part of the project—is to present the complexity of approaches to issues related to redevelopment and heritage preservation.

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**Keywords:** Gdańsk Shipyard; Young City; adaptive reuse; urban regeneration; brownfield land; industrial heritage

## 1. Introduction

In 2014 the site of the historic Gdańsk Shipyard was awarded the European Heritage Label, thus becoming recognized as an important component in a common European narration. This label allowed further recognition of the importance of the Solidarity movement (Polish: Solidarność) which became the first independent trade union within socialist countries [1]. Solidarity, founded in 1980, played a key role in the Polish transformation from communism to democracy and from a command-and-control economic system to a market economy [2]. The awarded site includes the BHP Hall (this acronym relates to the main purpose of the building, which served as the venue for training in work safety and hygiene), the Shipyard Gate No. 2 (which was the scene of worker’s strikes, as well as the pacification of the Solidarity movement), the Solidarity Square with the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers (erected in 1980 to commemorate the shipyard workers killed by the communist police in 1970), and the European Solidarity Centre (officially opened in 2014 to house the museum depicting the history of the Solidarity movement and worker’s strikes, as well as the road towards the collapse of communism in Poland) [1].

However, the set of sites associated with the commemoration of the Solidarity movement is just a small section of Gdańsk Shipyard heritage. The almost 200-year-old history of a modern maritime industry in Gdańsk has resulted in the creation of numerous and diversified structures along the entire waterfront of the city. Moreover, along with the

neighbouring sites of former industrial estates, the area of the Gdańsk Shipyard (which went bankrupt in 1997 and has since been the subject of complex redevelopment) forms a new part of Gdańsk city centre—the district called Young City, whose name derives from the medieval name used for the settlement located within its present borders that was destroyed just a few decades after its creation [3]. Additionally, the location of the site of the medieval Young City for the new shipbuilding companies (starting from the mid-19th century and continuing along the Vistula (more precisely Martwa Wisła) waterfront for a subsequent 150 years) resulted in the creation of several layers of tangible and intangible industrial heritage, which only recently have become a subject of interest to researchers [4,5]. Consequently, due to the existence of so many layers of memories, it is impossible to create just one homogeneous narration regarding the historic Gdańsk Shipyard and its future.

The complex heritage of the site, including both the Solidarity movement and the historic part of the Gdańsk Shipyard, forms the basis for the latest application to the UNESCO World Heritage List [6,7]. Aside from giving the heritage of the site global recognition, the history of the birthplace of the Solidarity movement is also used nationally within political debate. This provokes several questions as to whose heritage this is, who is eligible to use it in the current political environment, and whether there are other actors on the political and social stage besides the current Solidarity Trade Union (which emerged in the 1990s out of the mass movement from the 1980s and now plays the role of a regular trade union, associated with the right-wing political party) who are allowed to use it within their statements. Therefore, the Gdańsk Shipyard remains a very vital and emotional part of the national (and perhaps global) memory that needs to be negotiated [8,9].

The discussion of the scope, character, and importance of the Gdańsk Shipyard heritage is also associated with the fact that the historic Gdańsk Shipyard (this term refers to the part of this entity located on the south bank of the Martwa Wisła River; on the northern side of this river several other shipbuilding complexes were located and developed, mostly post-World War II) has become part of a vast multi-layered area of about 73 ha of brownfield land awaiting redevelopment. Plans for the redevelopment of the site as the new city district originate from the beginning of the 20th century and were renewed after the political and economic transition of 1989. These plans also include an extensive array of different concepts of adaptive reuse for the entire urban area and particular buildings and complexes that represent diversified values of heritage [10]. Therefore, the nowadays site of the historic Gdańsk Shipyard, situated in the very centre of the city, is of crucial importance to the future development of this rapidly growing urban agglomeration [11–13].

The scope of the issues associated with the process of reshaping the Gdańsk Shipyard allows for definition of the main research problem, which is associated with defining the nature of the interrelation between the needs of heritage preservation and various approaches to the adaptive reuse of various types of brownfield sites that constitute a complex environment of diverse urban areas. This issue is accompanied by the ongoing discussion on priorities in the redevelopment process and the interrelation between heritage preservation and urban regeneration. Additionally, the issue of dealing with multiple and juxtaposing parts of heritage is discussed, which plays an additional yet very important role in the redevelopment process of the distressed areas. We argue that the embroilment of ongoing discourse—both on the heritage and political levels—as well as the related conflict of interpretation, overlaid by the scale of the whole project—according to both financial issues and social demands—forejudge the final urban and architectural decisions. Therefore, the urban and architectural forms are secondary to the internal and external conditions of the area presented in the case study.

The goal of this paper is to present a solution to the above-mentioned research problem based on the example of the Gdańsk Shipyard redevelopment project. Existing as a

unique example of a multi-layered brownfield redevelopment project, it is an area burdened by complex history, heritage, and memories that disable the creation of one homogeneous narration about its future. Consequently, such complexity of memories—on an urban, regional, national, and European (maybe even global) level—enforce the need to design a model allowing the juxtaposition of diverse schemes of adaptive reuse, which can become a point of reference for other cases similar to the site analysed. The authors of this paper also intend to present an array of possible yet diverse directions for shaping redevelopment projects constituting the development program for the entire Young City area. Therefore, we decided to present such a complex case study as the basis for reviewing diverse types of adaptive reuse, which may also apply to different contexts and situations.

## 2. Context

The key part of the research constituting the main arguments included in this paper is associated with a very specific case study. Since there is still almost no literature on the topic of the transformation of the Gdańsk Shipyard, we decided to provide an extensive description of its history and the current transformations occurring on the site.

### 2.1. Gdańsk and the Gdańsk Shipyard

Gdańsk is an interesting example of a harbour city, which flourished during the medieval and renaissance eras due to its unique position as the main trade centre between Poland (and consequently the larger part of Central and Eastern Europe) and Western Europe (mostly the Netherlands and England). This position allowed the development of the large and complex urban structure (the area located within the city fortifications exceeded 800 ha) within which the maritime industries and port activities occupied a large share of land. Specialized port-related structures like granaries and cranes were created, as well as shipbuilding and ship-repairing facilities.

Due to the complex history of Poland at the end of the 18th century, the city (after the so-called partitions of Poland) fell into the hands of the Kingdom of Prussia, and was subsequently cut off from its economic base in the hinterland of Poland [14]. Since shipbuilding activities were of great interest to the Prussian government, it decided to localize one of the major centres in Gdańsk [15,16]. As a result, the foundations for the Gdańsk Shipyard were laid and the modern shipbuilding industry was founded. Located to the north of the historic city centre, on the banks of the Martwa Wisła River, the original facility gave birth to the entire waterfront industrial district, which took over the historic location of the Young City settlement [10]. Along with the transformation of the historic city centre and the development of the new, modern urban structures, these developments gave the city a new image of modernized metropolis [17].

As a result of World War II, Gdańsk became a part of Poland again. The consequences of this included the destruction of the historic urban centre, as well as an almost complete exchange of population [14]. Therefore, the city's history as well as the story of its post-war rebuilding and redevelopment is very different from other Western European examples [18,19]. The rebuilding of the Gdańsk Main Town (the key part of the historic city centre) became an important political statement, allowing the new community to feel at home and experience the rich history of the city [20–22]. The Gdańsk Shipyard—recreated after the war-time destruction—became a symbol of the recreated city [5,8].

However, the Gdańsk Shipyard once again played a key role in the history of both city and country, as in 1980 it became the birthplace of the Solidarity movement, which contributed extensively to the collapse of the communist system and reunification of Europe. Sadly, new realities also meant a new situation for the shipyard itself. As an economic entity—further developed in the years 1945–1989 as a large-scale shipbuilding facility that (due to the nature of the communist economic system) did not have to compete on a free market basis with western facilities—it did not survive the transition to market-economy realities and underwent bankruptcy in 1997. As a result, the area was acquired

by a new owner in 1999, and the redevelopment process began [10]. The site was again called Young City (after its medieval predecessor) and became the subject of various urban regeneration initiatives. Dubbed the Young City Project, it hosts several diverse components, including both improvements to infrastructure, as well as real estate development projects. Many of these are associated with the adaptive reuse concept, both on urban and architectural scales. There are also accompanied by other waterfront redevelopment processes as well as large-scale transformations of the entire Gdańsk city centre [23,24].

The site of the Gdańsk Shipyard, along with other parts of the Motława and Vistula waterfront, can be compared to other examples of waterfront transformations (also referred to as dockland area redevelopments). These transformations are inseparable from the technological evolution of sea transport, including the methods for goods reloading and their processing. This evolution has had a great influence over the shape, development and, finally, the degradation of waterfronts in cities, including old and present port and shipyard structures [25]. Changes in the interrelation between port and urban structures can be described in different ways; a model study of the issue, widely accepted and quoted in the literature, has been prepared by B. Hoyle [26]. This worldwide phenomenon proves that cities can adapt to new situations in the world economy. “The New Faces” of old cities attract interested investors and tourists. These cities are also venues that prove interesting to their inhabitants, who are searching for new, more attractive living conditions. One of the key elements, in this case, is the direct vicinity of a body of water, as living near the water has become fashionable. Simultaneously, the vicinity of the water has facilitated the appearance of a new quality in the links with maritime tradition [27]. The regeneration of waterfronts denotes new enterprises and new urban structures, new values, and new interactions between the city and its areas on the water. This process has been pioneered by such cities as Baltimore, Boston, London, Liverpool, Oakland, Seattle, and San Francisco. The transformations of water areas in these cities began as early as the 1960s. However, it was the Inner Harbour project in Baltimore that played a significant role. It was the template for many other projects, e.g., the Darling Harbour in Sydney. The similarity goes further than the principles for the realization of transformations (in the functional sense), embracing also the cooperation between the public and the private sectors that lead to the realization of these projects. Generally speaking, the beginning of the transformations of post-harbour areas that occurred in the United States (Boston, Baltimore) blazed the trail for other centres. The best examples of waterfront transformations can be found in the following West-European and North-American cities: London, Barcelona, Genoa, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Manchester, Liverpool, New York, Toronto, Boston, and Baltimore [28–30]. However, the Gdańsk case is more frequently compared with the cases of Rotterdam and Hamburg, especially the case of the HafenCity project in Hamburg which serves as the main point of reference for Gdańsk [31]. The analysis of all of these cases proves that the revitalization of urban waterfronts is a complex process, involving not only spatial or heritage-related issues, but also economic, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions [28].

## 2.2. Gdańsk Shipyard—Its Complex History and Heritage

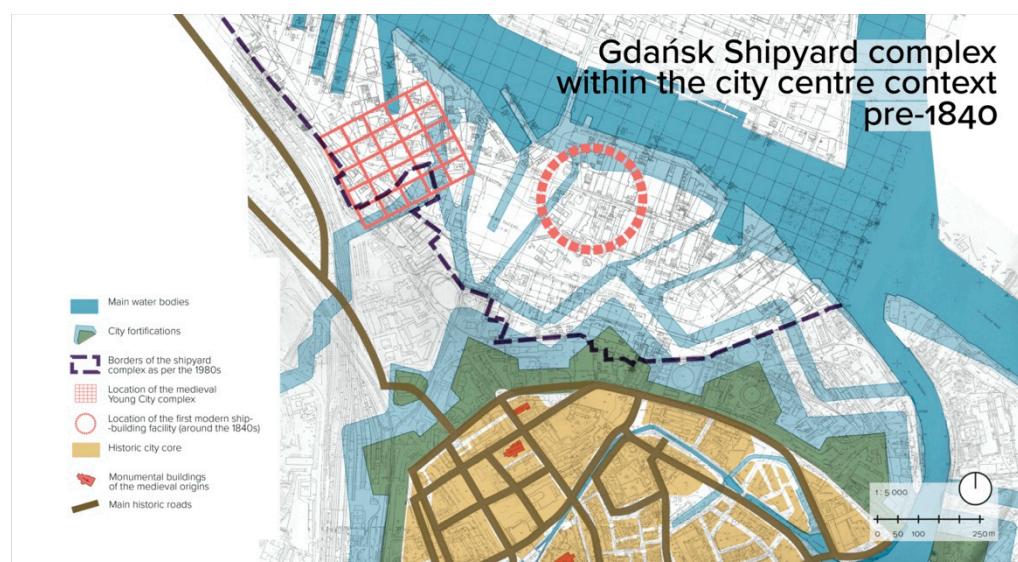
There is no single history of the Gdańsk Shipyard, nor is there only one heritage. Moreover, every narrative about this area is open to more than one interpretation and has many nuances. Such a state is typical for almost every urban landscape that lasts for multiple decades. However, in the case of the city that has been under diverse international influences, such complexity is compounded. Therefore, to understand the scale of the memories that are behind the multi-layered urban structure of the Gdańsk Shipyard and its heritage, it is crucial to briefly pre-set its history in a somewhat systematized way. Although the Gdańsk Shipyard has a very complex history of development, it can be described based on four basic periods.





### 2.2.1. Establishment and Liquidation of the First Young City (Pre-1840)

The area of the Gdańsk Shipyard is located within the district named the Young City. This name refers to the medieval settlement, founded by the Teutonic Knights Order in 1380. This settlement marked the earliest location of a new city district on the banks of the Martwa Wisła, outside of the city walls. At the same time, it posed an economic competition to the Old and Main Towns (earlier settlements constituting now the historic core of the city) [3,10,14,32]. Mostly due to this reason, after the end of the Thirteen Years' War (1454–1466) the mayors of Gdańsk decided on the liquidation of the settlement and ordered the site to stay vacant—it could be used only for the military and temporary storage purposes. Therefore, until the end of World War II, part of the site was referred to as the “Young City wood storage area” (Figure 1). The process of liquidation of the settlement was so precise that until very recently (meaning: 2018, when during the archaeological excavations the first remnants of the historic district were unearthed) its precise location was unknown [3,10]. The tradition of the original Young City survived only within the names of several areas and streets, located in the foreground of the Old Town fortifications. Therefore, the name “Young City” could be used again to name the emerging new part of the city centre, which was conceptualized after the bankruptcy of the Gdańsk Shipyard in 1997 [33].



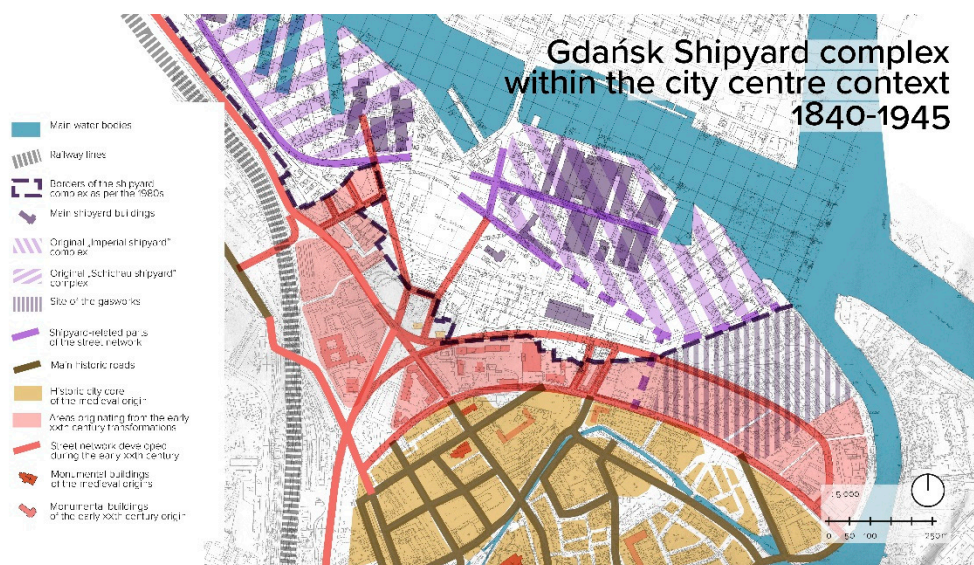
**Figure 1.** The pre-shipyard period (pre-1840). Between the Vistula River and Gdańsk city centre, there is a ring of an early modern fortifications system erected in the mid-17th century. Plan by the authors.

### 2.2.2. Development of the Modern Shipbuilding Industry under German Rule (1840–1920–1945)

The history of the modern shipbuilding industry in the location of the Gdańsk Shipyard began in the 1840s when the first small navy base was established in the foreground of the city's fortifications on the banks of the Martwa Wisła River (Figure 2). Shortly afterwards, this evolved into a major shipbuilding facility and was named the Royal Shipyard (German: Koenigliche Werfft) then renamed as the Imperial Shipyard (German: Kaiserliche Werfft) after the French-Prussian War in 1870–1871 [10]. Subsequently, the urban structure of the shipyard evolved and the entire complex was rebuilt and expanded a couple of times until the end of World War II [15]. This evolution can be traced when analysing the set of shipyard plans (Figure 3). In close vicinity to this state-owned facility, a new private one was founded by Ferdinand Schichau (Figure 4) [10]. The development of these entities was accompanied by numerous other military-focused complexes within the city

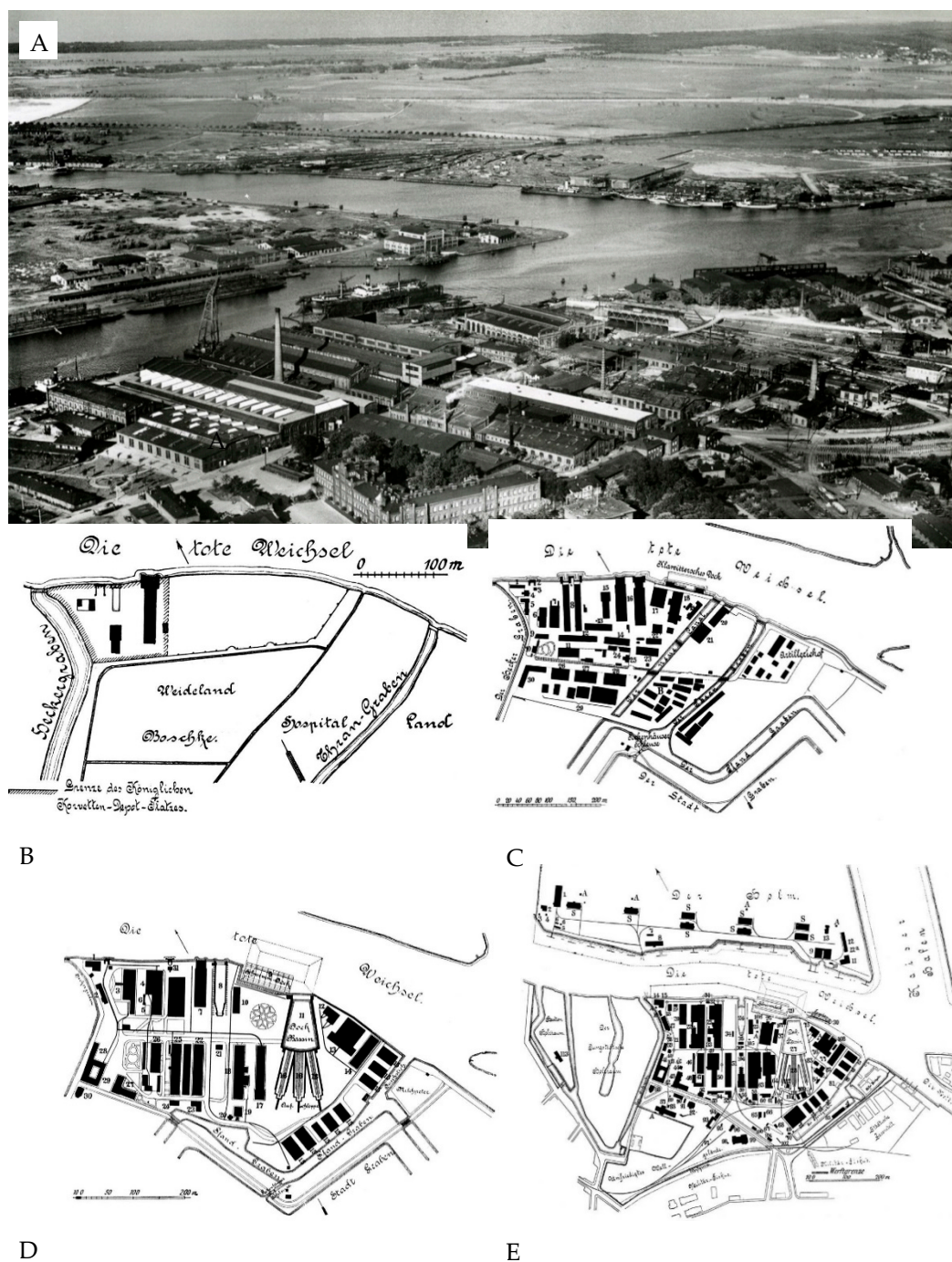
as well as by the foundation of the new technical university in 1904 (German: die Königliche Technische Hochschule zu Danzig) [34].

Along with the liquidation of the city fortifications system at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the new concept of reconnecting the shipyard and city areas emerged. This took the form of the “city ring”, which was planned for the western and northern fronts of the city [17]. Although typical for cities of this period, this particular development resulted in enlarging the industrial lands and provided more space for the further expansion of the shipbuilding and other industrial facilities [35]. Only the creation of the Free City of Gdańsk after the end of World War I and the passing of ownership of the Imperial Shipyard into non-governmental hands allowed slight changes in the course of the development of these areas—new commercial and housing complexes were planned and built. This was reversed again after the Nazi Party took over the city; at that time many new buildings and structures were erected, which were supposed to serve the purposes of building the German navy. Additionally, the shipyard grounds were selected as the place to erect the large People’s Hall (German: Volkshalle), which served as the location for Nazi party meetings and other propaganda-related activities [10]. There is still little information available about the social history of the shipyard under German rule. However, one event has to be noted—the shipyard worker’s strike in the 1920s, which led to the creation of the trade unions and changing working conditions. Some historians argue that this event should be regarded as one of the milestones in the area’s history [8].



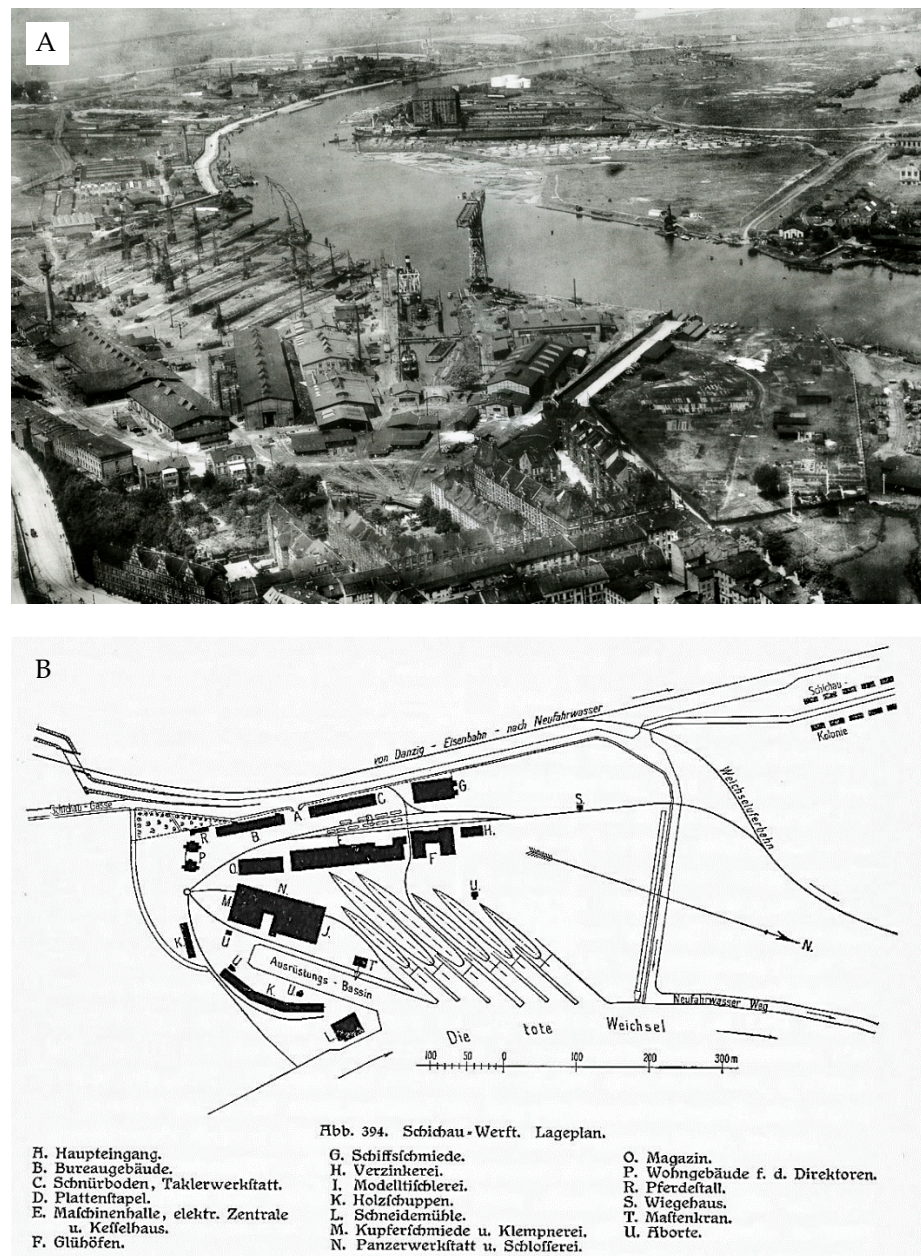
**Figure 2.** The pre-war shipyard period (1840–1945). The Schichau Shipyard (German: Schichau-Werke) and Imperial Shipyard (German: Kaiserliche Werft) were erected between the Gdańsk city centre and the Vistula River. The peak of this development occurred during World War II, just before the city’s siege and destruction. Plan by the authors.





**Figure 3.** (A): the aerial view of the Kaiserliche Werft complex (around 1925) [36]. (B–E): the four stages of the Koenigliche/Kaiserliche Werft urban structure evolution (respectively: (B) around 1844; (C) before 1870; (D) after 1880; (E) around 1908 [15].



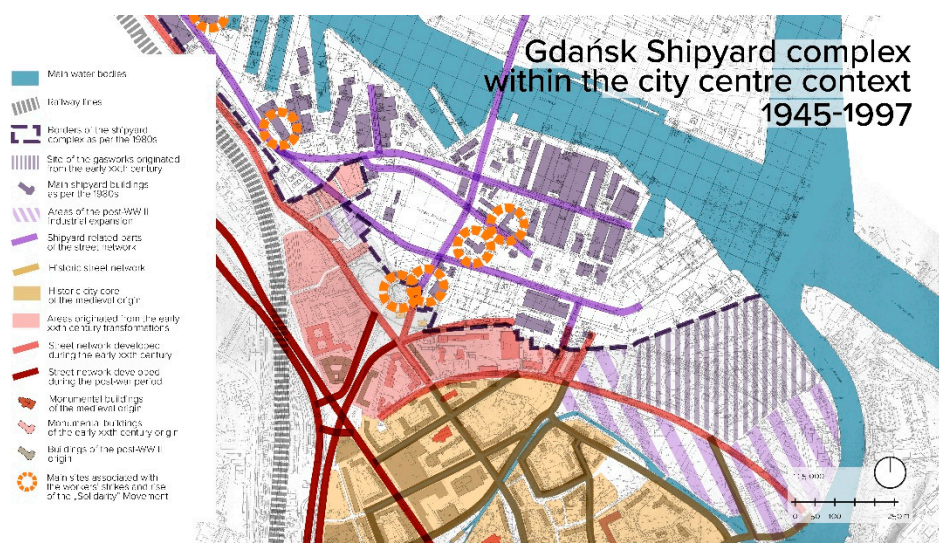


**Figure 4.** (A): the aerial view of the Schichau Werft complex (around 1925) [36]. (B): the urban structure of the Schichau Werft (around 1908) [15].

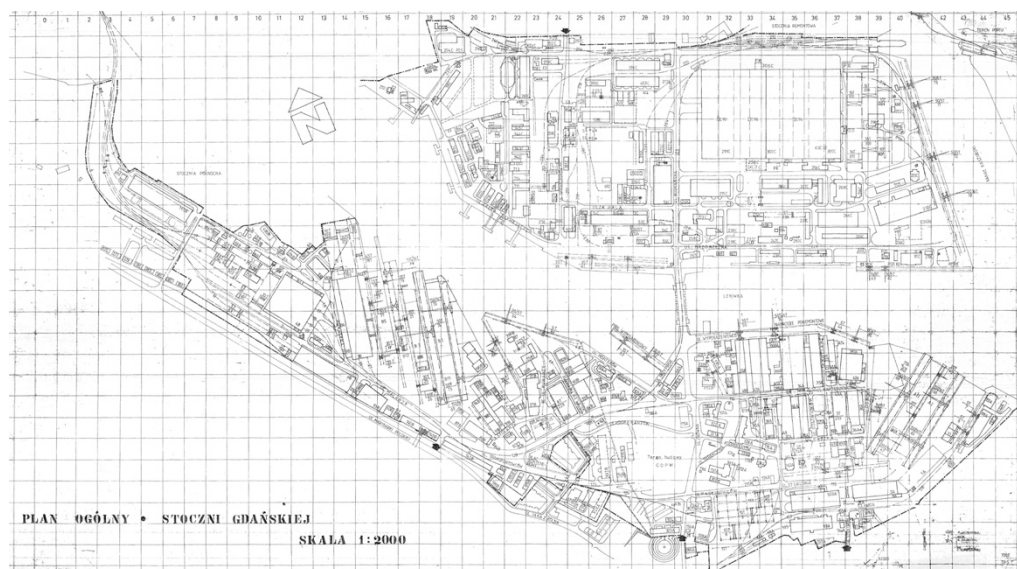
### 2.2.3. The Post-War Shipyard Period (1945–1989–1997)

The German rule in Gdańsk ended in March of 1945, when the city was captured by Russian and Polish troops. As a result of the siege and intentional destruction of some parts of the city shortly after it was captured, the historic city centre of Gdańsk was almost completely destroyed (it is estimated that 90–95% of the buildings located within the historic city centre were affected). Surprisingly, the shipyard complexes were not heavily affected by this tragedy—shortly after the end of the war shipbuilding activities resumed in the Gdańsk Shipyard, later (in 1967) named as the Lenin Shipyard. Due to the extensive demand for new ships, the entire facility continued to grow and at its heyday it employed approximately 20 thousand people. Named as the economic engine of the city, if not the entire region, it occupied every inch of land available for its expansion (Figures 5 and 6) [10].





**Figure 5.** The post-war shipyard period (1945–1989–1997). The pre-war infrastructure has been incorporated into a new industrial plant. Plan by the authors.



**Figure 6.** Official plan of the Gdańsk Shipyard in the 1980s. Source: authors' archive.

At the same time, this large group of employees—like most of the Polish society in the 1960s—was underpaid and suffering from a lack of political and social freedom. This led to the first major outbreak of political unrest in December of 1970, which resulted in a few casualties and, at the same time, a major change in the political and economic course of the country. These riots were the foundation upon which the Solidarity movement was built (Figure 7), created in 1980 and led by the charismatic leader, Lech Wałęsa (a Noble Prize winner and, after 1990, the President of the Polish Republic) [2].



**Figure 7.** A crowd gathered under Gate No. 2 to support the striking workers. August 1980. Author: Stanisław Składanowski. Source: pomorskie.eu.

In an attempt to commemorate the shipyard workers killed by the police in 1970, the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers 1970 (unveiled on 16 December 1980) was erected in front of the main shipyard gate (Gate No. 2). This gate, along with the BHP Hall (which served as the place of negotiations between the striking shipyard workers and the Polish governmental delegation in 1980) and a few other locations around the vast facility, played an extremely important role in the mass imagination of the people of the city. Since then, these buildings and constructions have been associated with the most important events in Polish history and world history at the end of the 20th century: the collapse of the communist system and the transition to democracy and a market economy system. Unfortunately, the political and economic transition was not favourable for the Gdańsk Shipyard as an economic entity, as its organization and technologies were outdated, and this also related to the over-extensive usage of land. After a series of attempts to save the company, it went bankrupt in 1997, which marked the end of the major shipbuilding activities in the area now called again the Young City.

#### 2.2.4. Recent Transformations (Post-1997)

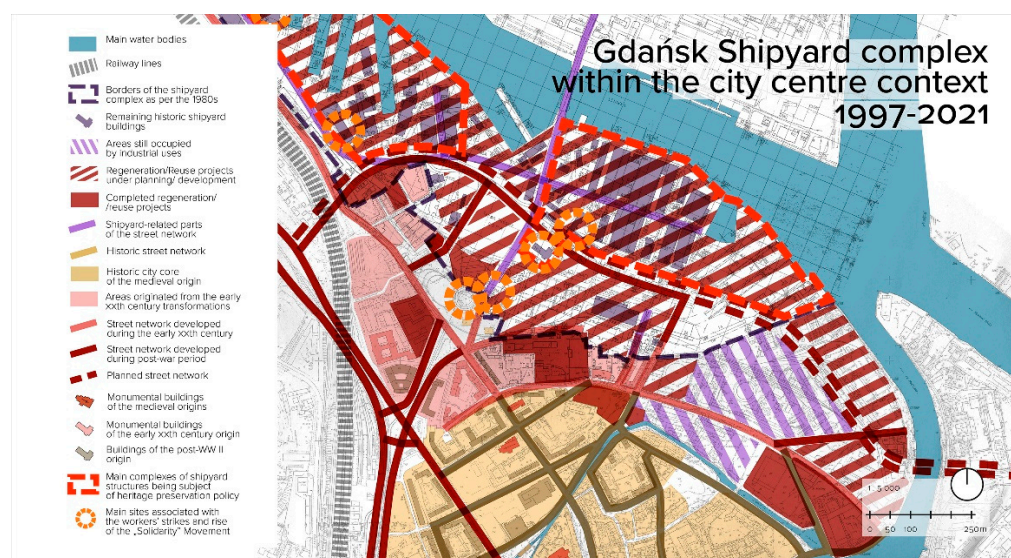
The bankruptcy of the Gdańsk Shipyard resulted in a refreshing of the pre-war ideas regarding the development of a new part of the Gdańsk city centre north of the historic core. The first studies on this matter were developed as early as 1995–1996, so still before the final collapse of the shipbuilding company. These plans assumed the reuse of the historic shipyard areas as new commercial and housing structures, although at that stage little attention was paid to the architectural and technical heritage of the area [37]. Shortly after the site was privatized, the new owner (Synergia 99 Ltd. Poland, Gdańsk) decided to plan for an in-depth transformation of the site. This was possible due to the specifics of the transformation process—the entire Gdańsk Shipyard complex was purchased by the Gdynia Shipyard Group (the already privatized, large-scale shipbuilding enterprise) as it required new spaces for the expansion of shipbuilding processes. Shortly afterwards, it became clear that only part of the huge Gdańsk Shipyard complex would be used for this purpose—referring mostly to the areas located on the Ostrów Island, on the north bank of the Vistula River. Therefore, the new owner, in partnership with development funds



provided by US-based companies, decided to establish a new special-purpose development company, Synergia 99 Ltd., which was supposed to serve as the land developer for the already conceptualized Young City project [10]. Subsequently, the first Vision Master Plan by Sasaki Associates was developed, which was followed by other studies and project proposals [38–42].

Only after the new local plan for the area was developed by the Gdańsk City Council in 2004 were the first redevelopment activities started [43]. These included the elimination of numerous technological installations and sheds, as well as the liquidation of some of the historic buildings [38]. At the same time, new parts of the transportation infrastructure were developed, and numerous activities associated with reinventing the area were initiated. These included, e.g., inviting artistic groups to use some of the buildings as their places of activity [44]. All of these actions created an interesting scenario within which, on one hand, the transformation of the site progressed, but on the other, the site authenticity and identity were endangered. The latter issue was spotted by some of the artists, who (like Michał Szłaga) started to document the transformation process and argue for the preservation of the original structure [45]. This process was also embedded in the ongoing touristification of the city, further accelerated by the selection of Gdańsk as one of the host towns for the EURO 2012 football championships. As a result, Gdańsk had become one of the European cities that represented the typical undisrupted growth of a tourism economy before the COVID-19 outbreak [46].

However, the real change for the site was brought by the development of the new building of the European Solidarity Centre (ECS, opened for the public in 2014), which marked the start of the new urban future for the area. Well embedded in the proposed structure of the area (Figures 8 and 9), the ECS building to some extent set the architectural standards for the entire area. At the same time, along with the historic shipyard Gate No. 2 as well as the Monument of the Fallen Shipyard Workers (Figure 10), it formed the core of the new “identity area” associated with the Solidarity movement. Moreover, this set of structures was supposed to be further accompanied by the public space called the “Road to Freedom”, which was not yet developed.



**Figure 8.** Recent transformations of the shipyard area (1997–2021). The process of urban regeneration is ongoing in almost the whole area of the historic shipyard. Plan by the authors.





**Figure 9.** Model of the proposed urban structure of the area. Source: authors' archive.



**Figure 10.** Building of the European Solidarity Centre together with its context: Gate No. 2 (bottom right) and the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers of 1970 (left). Source: Grzegorz Mehring/ECS archive.

Over 20 years of planning for the new future of the Gdańsk Shipyard — and especially for its historic part — resulted in multiple general and detailed concepts. These varied from the development of the new Central Business District for the city through the implementation of multi-use, city-centre-like structures up to the preservation of the site as a large-scale, open-air museum. At present, the final concept has not yet been clarified, although numerous redevelopment projects, based on various aspects of the adaptive reuse concept, are being implemented. Even more projects are still in preparation, including the most discussed master plan for the redevelopment of the historic core of the Imperial Shipyard complex [47]. At the same time, the entire redevelopment process is leading to the reinstatement of the long-forgotten Gdańsk ring road complex [35].

### 2.3. Multi-Layered Urban Structure

As it can be derived from the description of the stages in the development of the Gdańsk Shipyard, as well as from the analysis of the socio-economic implications for both the city of Gdańsk, Poland and, finally, for the entire world, the area in question has experienced complex development and transformation processes which have resulted in a multi-layered history and heritage. One can state that these may be classified under three categories: the spatial transformation of the facility itself (source of the tangible heritage), the evolution of the generally understood urban structure of the northern part of Gdańsk city centre, and finally, the intangible (but localized in particular spaces) heritage associated with historical events and long-forgotten traditions and stories.

Among the stages in the spatial evolution of the Gdańsk Shipyard, understood as the shipbuilding facility, one can indicate the following main elements:

- Development and gradual growth along with the spatial restructuring of the shipbuilding facility (initiated in the 1840s, transformed after 1871, and completed with the end of World War II);
- Complete reshaping of the entire facility, which was the result of the post-WWII integration of the historic Imperial Shipyard, Schichau Shipyard, as well as neighbouring areas (including some former city areas);
- Contemporary transformations of the historic shipyard area, including the liquidation of some of the heritage objects and structures.

At the same time, one can point out a number of urban development processes occurring in the vicinity of the analysed site [48]. In many cases, these are correlated with the evolution of the shipbuilding facility itself, although some of these have been conceptualized in separation from the shipyard transformation processes; also, some of these have remained in the stage of planning or were only partially implemented. Among these, most notable are:

- Development of the shipyard facility independently from the rest of the city—due to the separation of both complexes by the line of the city fortifications—resulting in a lack of any spatial relation between the historic city and the original facility;
- Development of the “ring road” concept at the end of the 19th century and its partial implementation, which led to the creation of the first attempts at developing spatial connections between the city and the facility;
- Totalitarian (Nazi) plans for expansion of the shipyard facility, which (although implemented only to a very small extent) contributed to the re-separation of both areas;
- Totalitarian (communist) plans for developing the new city in the area occupied by the shipyard (never implemented except one building on the city side);
- Separation of the city and the shipyard being the result of the post-war development of the facility and its encroachment on the vacant city lands;
- The second stage of integration of the city and shipyard area, as a result of the implementation of the brownfield redevelopment project.

Finally, one can also point out the evolution of the situation concerning the localization within the space of the Gdańsk Shipyard of the traces of intangible heritage. Among these are the following notable key parts:

- Traces of the histories associated with original shipbuilding activities (i.e., the place of the launching of the biggest ships that were constructed in the analysed shipbuilding facility before WWII, such as the ocean liners “Columbus” and “Columbus II”);
- Places associated with pre-WWII shipyard workers’ strikes and social activities;
- Stories associated with the manufacturing of the German submarines during WWII (the so-called U-boats);
- Places associated with the housing of the forced labourers during WWII (these labourers played an important role during the war-time operation of the shipyard);

- Parts of the shipbuilding facility structure associated with various professions employed in the post-war shipyard (i.e., internal streets and squares named after such professions as tool-makers, carpenters, etc.) [49];
- Sites associated with the shipyard workers' strikes of 1970 and 1980, and 1988 and 1989, as well as places related to the important moments in the history of the Solidarity movement and—at the same time—to contemporary Polish history and politics.

All of the above-mentioned structures and sites tend to overlap, which has contributed to the formation of a specific form of urban palimpsest [50]. As a result, within the shipyard area, one can find a lot of memories and heritage-related elements, objects, and structures, which are often disconnected spatially from others or do not form any coherent form of narration [51]. Therefore, one can conclude that the identity of the analysed site is very much complicated yet fragmented, as it is the result of the overlapping of many different types of heritage and their transformations [52,53]. A special part in this palimpsest is played by the elements that were destroyed during the restructuring and transformation process [54,55].

#### 2.4. Complex Memories

The complexity of the history and heritage (both tangible and intangible) of Gdańsk Shipyard is ambiguous and difficult to embrace [56]. To attain some simplification, and to emphasize the multi-layered character of this area's urban structure, it has been described in the form of four basic periods. Although the presented complexity of different layers should result in the recognition of the very diverse heritage of the Gdańsk Shipyard, from the perspective of the collective memory of the local community—which consequently is further fuelled by current policy-maker decisions—it is in fact much more homogeneous than we could expect [57].

Within the overview presented above of the Gdańsk Shipyard heritage and multiple identities, the area's predominant role is as a post-war shipbuilding facility. During the post-war period of the Polish People's Republic—the imposed-by-force communist dictatorship of Poland (1945–1989) [2]—the Gdańsk Shipyard was one of the most important industrial plants in the country, although its scale was not fully justified from an economic point of view. In its development peak the shipyard itself employed approximately 20 thousand workers, not counting those who worked in accompanying plants. As such, it was the main employer of the region. Up to date, the Gdańsk Shipyard remains deeply connected with the past of most Gdańsk inhabitants, who either worked there, have someone in the family who worked there, or know someone else who did in the past. Therefore, for contemporary inhabitants of Gdańsk, it seems obvious to identify themselves with the Solidarity movement (its main memory referring to 1980 and 1981, as well as the liberation of Poland in 1989, which is recognized as the consequence of earlier events). As such, this collective memory is mainly rooted in the post-war history of the city, especially as regards the ongoing social transformations [22].

Consequently, due to the typical characteristic of heritage planning theory—the selectivity of an official narrative—the basic story of the Gdańsk Shipyard has in the past ignored inconvenient history and enhanced chosen issues. As was mentioned before, there is already explicit commemoration of the Solidarity movement. This includes some relics and monuments, as well as a newly erected institution (such commemoration has already occurred and the European Heritage Label has been awarded as a result of this). It is however very hard to manage such a recent memory. The heritage of the Solidarity movement is still a part of the current political debate (as an area of scuffle between some major political parties), which is proof that it is still a very emotional issue. However, from a political point of view, there is no need to ask hard questions about history. It is much simpler to address the Solidarity movement heritage if it is bereft of any competitive context. Although, fully understanding the workers' strikes in communist Poland is impossi-



ble without understanding the wider context. Indeed, the latest example of such an attempt is the UNESCO WHL application [6,7], which intends to merge both dimensions of the Gdańsk Shipyard: the socio-political dimension as the birthplace of the Solidarity movement, and the urban-landscape dimension as an industrial area lasting almost 200 years.

Most of the material that still exists of the heritage of the Gdańsk Shipyard relates to its pre-war period. Although, the collective memories of that past are gone altogether with the pre-war inhabitants of Gdańsk who either fled from the approaching Red Army or were forced to move out after WWII. However, it is still impossible to recognize the current Gdańsk Shipyard identity without its pre-war past. Nowadays, it is rather remembered as a part of the interwar history of the Free City of Gdańsk (Polish: Wolne Miasto Gdańsk, German: Freie Stadt Danzig), with the brave defence of the Polish Post Office and Westerplatte during the first days of WWII. This is particularly visible within the new policy of the nearby Museum of the Second World War, prepared by an international scientific committee and opened in 2017, and then taken over by new management imposed by the current government. Therefore, in both the collective memories and the official narration of the Gdańsk Shipyard, there is no place for different memories like the pre-war U-boat construction for German Kriegsmarine or one of the many strikes in the shipyard just after the Great War, carried out by the communist worker union to stop the French military supplies for Polish troops fighting with the Bolshevik invasion in 1920.

One can conclude that the history of the Gdańsk Shipyard is much more complex than our memories related to it. Paradoxically, the most popular narrative related to this area (identified as the birthplace of the Solidarity movement) is incompatible with the material heritage of the area, which exists far beyond the current political dimension. However, it is not purposeful to negate the still living memories belonging to many thousands of shipyard workers, as well as the many more nostalgic memories of their families (authorized and unauthorized heritage [58]). However, it is important to combine these with the pre-war past of the site. The specific style of its architecture is also an important source of the phantom pain that reminds many of the Prussian heritages of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century that were cut off from other parts of the city. Therefore, the current value of the area—its central location within both a geographical and mental dimension—leads to a typical tension that exists between conservation and development needs.

### 3. Adaptive Reuse Policies and Practices in the Heritage Context

The theoretical background of adaptive reuse is still in the process of being shaped: from a scientific point of view it is a newly emerged discipline rather than a rigidly defined framework [59]. However, from the perspective of contemporary development needs, its sustainable character is pivotal and has been in use almost forever. This concept has been further developed within the European Cultural Heritage Green Paper [60], the European Quality Principles for EU-funded Interventions with potential impact upon Cultural Heritage [61], the Leeuwarden Declaration on Adaptive Reuse of the Built Heritage: Preserving and Enhancing the Values of Our Built Heritage for Future Generations [62], and some consequent projects [63], to name just a few. Therefore, the wise extension of a building's life—through its adaptive reuse—seems to be the solution [64]. The literature on the topic has developed across decades [65]. Many studies present the relationship between adaptive reuse and issues of cultural heritage management [66,67]. However, the most relevant for understanding the diversity of policies and practices are numerous examples of previously conducted adaptive reuse projects related to the redevelopment of industrial heritage that can be used as an interesting reference for any further work on similar topics [68,69]. However, the relation between adaptive reuse policies and practices in the heritage context is still in need of further elaboration within new frameworks. This need could not be more noticeable than in the case of the Gdańsk Shipyard (or similar), which is a challenge not only because of the scale of this post-industrial area and its significance as



the birthplace of the Solidarity movement, but also because of the complexity of its multi-layered history, which is rooted in the very embroiled heritage of Gdańsk as a city existing on borderlands.

There are diverse models of adaptive reuse policies and practices that are in clear relation to the heritage context. However, in dealing with the complexity of the Gdańsk Shipyard history, heritage, and memories it is necessary to propose a rather basic framework. Indeed, it is important to highlight that the presented site complexity requires a very simple and intuitive method of elaboration. At this stage of the redevelopment project, it seems to be counterproductive to introduce an overly sophisticated framework of study, which in some other cases has been already performed successfully in diverse forms [59]. Therefore, we have decided to limit ourselves to a brief review of as many examples of adaptive reuse (or related) activities in the context of the site's heritage. Those examples are based on the dichotomy that appears according to their specific character: commercial usage/non-commercial usage, temporary reuse/permanent reuse, and new development/non-development (Table 1). Such a division is not ultimate, unabridged, or unambiguous. Although the presented table is a very simple model, it is strictly related to mixed-use development, redevelopment processes, as well as museum and art gallery activities. Therefore, it enables further comparison concerning the already described characteristics of the Gdańsk Shipyard redevelopment process.

**Table 1.** The adaptive reuse policies and practices.

	<b>Commercial Usage</b>	<b>Non-Commercial Usage</b>
Temporary reuse	To arrange a fashionable space—gastrology, music clubs, gyms, urban activities, etc.	To intervene in public space—create studios for artists, initiate art-based interventions like sculptures, mural, paintings, etc. To create guided paths/viewpoints across the whole area, share interesting remains, etc.
Permanent reuse	To create food halls, shopping galleries, co-working spaces, offices. to arrange hotels, apartments, lofts.	To erect new cultural institutions (museums, art galleries, etc.)
New development	To supplement existing structure with new residential buildings, offices, shopping malls. To create a new urban structure—especially housing, offices, etc.	To create new public buildings that attract movement to the new part of the city (often conduct by the usage of iconic architecture).
Non-development	To abound the possibility of commercial usage.	To abound the possibility of non-commercial usage.
	Economic justification: the attraction of new inhabitants; creation of new workplaces; shaping of new public spaces; adding new functions.	Heritage management: greater market/tourism attractiveness; connection with the rest of the urban structure; urban-change initiation.



Currently, the intended outcome of adaptive reuse policies and practices is strictly related to the mixed-use development concept. It is based on a synergy between the economic justification assured by commercial usage and the heritage management provided by non-commercial usage (Table 1). Although these tasks are not clearly divided between commercial and non-commercial actors, the elementary division has to be pointed out: the commercial usage is typical for real estate investors and the non-commercial usage is rather a task of municipality-driven factors.

#### 4. The Potential of the Gdańsk Shipyard Adaptive Reuse

In the case of the Gdańsk Shipyard, there are a number of interesting examples of adaptive reuse that could be used as a useful illustration of the proposed model. At the same time, the vast area of the Gdańsk Shipyard, divided among diverse investors (commercial and non-commercial), ensures some complexity of this study. Finally, it is important to emphasize that there are two main dimensions of the project: urban and architecture.

##### 4.1. Temporary Reuse/Commercial Usage

Before the actual initiation of the redevelopment, a series of smaller interventions occurred which resulted in the creation of very popular spots in the area. Consequently, some alternative functions occurred in the area, which also allowed new activities. It might be relevant to list a few of them, for example “100cznia” —gastronomy served from a small complex of containers (Figure 11); “Buffet” —the music club that accompanies one of the cultural centres; “Cross Fit Stocznia” —a gym oriented to one of the most popular (nowadays) styles of exercise; “Ring3city” —the boxing club; “Bio-market” —a health food market; and “Przystań Cesarska” —the yacht marina constructed in the place of a former dock basin. These primary interventions have successfully brought new life into the post-industrial area of the Gdańsk city centre. However, all of those activities—basically related to everyday life, relaxation, or leisure—are not strongly related to the heritage of the site. The Gdańsk Shipyard is just theatrical scenery for these activities.



**Figure 11.** The “100cznia” area: one of several new meeting spots at the Gdańsk Shipyard. This is a very popular place created by containers and beer gardens. Source: authors’ archive.



#### 4.2. Temporary Reuse/Non-Commercial Usage

At the very beginning of the redevelopment process some cultural institutions were erected in the area of the Gdańsk Shipyard. The most renowned is Instytut Sztuki Wyspa (English: Art Institute “Island”), which organised a series of exhibitions entitled Alternativa—International Contemporary Visual Arts Festival (2010–2016) that were presented in one of the shipyards halls, Hall 90B. The other type of similar initiative was the invitation of several art circles to WL4—Mleczny Piotr (English: Milky Peter), which became a conglomerate of art studios and art galleries offering vernissage and numerous public exhibitions. The whole area has been the grounds for various open-air sculpture exhibitions. Two of them are particularly of note: “Gates” by Grzegorz Klaman and “Shipwrecked” by Czesław Podleśny (Figure 12). Finally, there are also a number of different guided trips around the Shipyard. The most interesting are the bus tours (the bus used originates from the historic period) that are guided by former shipyard workers. Currently, there is also a sightseeing path around Imperial Shipyard that guides you through one part of the area owned by a single investor. Although every single listed initiative has a different connection to the site’s heritage, in the end, all of them are highly inspired by the surrounding area.



**Figure 12.** The “Shipwrecked” by Czesław Podleśny are emerging from one of the shipyard’s dock basins. Photo author: Jerzy Pinkas/gdansk.pl.

#### 4.3. Permanent Reuse/Commercial Usage

The already mentioned, gastronomy and other lifestyle activities are not only related to the temporary reuse approach. A few examples have already been located inside some selected shipyard halls (but maybe those spots still fall somewhere between temporary and permanent usage). It is possible to mention some food-halls, yoga and dance studios, etc., that have appeared around Elektryków Street. The main entertainment in this part of the area is the B90 concert venue. The other most recent example of such a place is “Montownia”, located inside the 89A hall in the building erected between 1936–1938 that housed the U-boat assembly plant. Nowadays this building houses multi-functional activities. On the ground level, there are planned restaurants, an open gastronomic space, boutiques, and spaces for conferences and cultural events. Additionally, serviced apartments are planned for the higher levels. However, permanent reuse refers rather to the

case of new offices in the former main administration building of the Imperial Shipyard—The Dyrekcja Office Building. The direction of those projects is clear: using the unique scenery of the Gdańsk Shipyard to provide high-quality products in an attractive package.

#### 4.4. Permanent Reuse/Non-Commercial Usage

The consequence of the Instytut Sztuki Wyspa activity—including the success of a series of exhibitions entitled Alternativa—International Contemporary Visual Arts Festival (2010–2016)—was the erection of a new department of the National Museum in Gdańsk. The seat of NOMUS—New Art Museum in Gdańsk is located in one of the buildings accompanying the production part of the shipyard. However, new plans for the exhibition location are in preparation. The main exhibition is planned in one of the biggest halls of the Gdańsk Shipyard. Unfortunately, the final realisation of this project is still some way away. However, this initiative does not show a clear relation to the industrial heritage of the Gdańsk Shipyard, rather, its purpose is to fill a void in the area.

#### 4.5. New Development/Commercial Usage

Currently, the leading project that can be recognized as a new development is the DOKI investment (Figure 13). It is a complex of new buildings containing both housing and offices. It is also the first new development on such a scale in the Gdańsk Shipyard area. Only with such development has the real beginning of the actual transformation of the area been initiated (at the very moment its construction process has already started). The investment area is located along the important connection between both the west–east and the north–south axes. The first axis (W/E) connects two main public buildings of the northern part of Gdańsk city centre: the European Solidarity Centre and the Museum of the Second World War. The second axis (N/S) infills the empty area located between the city and the former buildings of the Imperial Shipyard. Besides that, it is worth mentioning that there are many other, clearly smaller, ongoing projects taking place in the area. Moreover, those are mainly related to both housing (like Youniq) and offices (like Eternum (Figure 14)). Even if these new developments do not have a clear relationship to the site’s heritage (sometimes thematized, sometimes not), they continue to create an important connection with the rest of the city in shaping new public spaces.



**Figure 13.** The construction of the DOKI investment became possible after the demolition of some barracks. The project scale is large. The new development is going to infill the area between the ECS (bottom left), the Bastion Wałowa (very densely erected four towers on the upper right—



characterised by a questionable quality of architecture), and former shipyard halls (upper left—on the riverbank). Source: press material of the investor.



**Figure 14.** Eternum offices has been constructed just nearby the European Solidarity Centre (the part of the building on the right). It is important to notice the contrast between the new building and the old buildings from the 1970s (on the left) that housed a workers' hotel. Source: authors' archive.

#### 4.6. New Development/Non-Commercial Usage

The obvious example of a non-commercial new development is the already mentioned European Solidarity Centre, erected in 2014, whose main goal is to keep and further disseminate the Solidarity movement myth (Figure 15). As such, this development acts not only as an archive and museum, but also as an agora of thoughts. The European Solidarity Centre is situated on the straight axis marked out from the Main Railway Station to the Shipyard, where (just before Gate No. 2) the Solidarity Square with the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers of 1970 is localized (Figures 10 and 13). It is the beginning of the so-called Road to Freedom (Polish: Droga do Wolności), which is marked from the Solidarity Square up to the Vistula River. The architecture of the European Solidarity Centre is a very powerful example of monumental and iconic objects. Covered by rusty material, it is a clearly skewed shape resembling a ship in construction. Although it is a new development, its respect for the surrounding environment is very clear.

Furthermore, it is crucial to notice that without new infrastructure it impossible to effectively integrate new post-industrial areas into the city's urban structure. Therefore, a new road system had to be introduced. Together with the construction of Popiełuszki Street, the first stage of this process has been finalised. This street partially repeats the former transport system of the shipyard, and partially creates new connections. Interestingly, it is in relation to many previous projects, beginning with the city ring concept from the turn of the 19th and 20th century.





**Figure 15.** The main hall of the European Solidarity Centre (presented before in its urban context in Figures 10 and 13) is very green inside. Source: Grzegorz Mehring/ECS archive.

#### 4.7. Non-Development (Both Commercial and Non-Commercial Usage)

The final two categories of non-development are very hard to describe and as such, they are only mentioned here. However, this approach might be crucial from a conservation point of view. Only abstaining from intervention—sometimes just limiting actions to those necessary for maintenance—can lead to the actual preservation of an area or object (although this theory seems to have already become outdated). Especially in the case of urban structures, only a very limited area can be left in this category. In the case of the Gdańsk Shipyard, this approach may be best related to the problematic issue of the area's cranes. Having been taken out of operation, their maintenance is a challenge. However, these objects are very important dominants in the city landscape, and as such, it is possible to use some of them as viewpoints (Figure 16).



**Figure 16.** The M3 crane has been transformed into a panoramic viewpoint. It is located in the middle of the whole area. Source: press materials of Stocznia Cesarska/Imperial Shipyard.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

The information presented in this paper—based on the descriptive model of possible adaptive reuse policies and practices in the heritage context—is not very focused nor interchangeable, but instead enables the clear presentation of the actual interventions that have taken place in the area of the Gdańsk Shipyard. Although the ongoing redevelopment process of this area is in its early stages, it is already clear how during the latest period (post-1997) of transformations this area has become a very attractive part of the city centre. However, it is not so obvious what the role of industrial heritage during this process was, is, or might be.

The complexity of the Gdańsk Shipyard heritage eludes typical theoretical frameworks. It seems to be a very specific variation of already very well-described concepts, such as dissonant heritage [70] or conflicting memories [71]. In the case of contemporary Gdańsk, it is almost impossible to construct one homogenous identity—understood as “invented tradition” and described by Eric Hobsbawm in 1983 [72]. Although Europe is often perceived as memorylands [73], its level of diversity is various and depends on the actual area. In this case, the dramatic and intense history of Eastern Europe dominates, which Timothy Snyder pungently described as “bloodlands” [74]. Additionally, the area’s urban dimension—related to massive migrations forced just after the second world war—has been aptly presented by Maria Lewicka [75] through current ethnic bias and further developed as the “city of changed blood” concept (Polish: miasto o wymienionej krwi) presented in her subsequent book [76]. However, it is possible to oversimplify the circumstances surrounding the pre-war shipyard infrastructure (mainly its warehouses) becoming the scenery for the birth of the Solidarity movement. This tangible heritage is mainly protected as such with emphasis on its intangible characteristics [6,7].

The current transformations draw more and more from the diversity of the site’s past. Although the memory of the Solidarity movement is very strong among Gdańsk inhabitants, it is also an important political issue, a great resource to elaborate the so-called Authorized Heritage Discourse, which is dominated by “concepts of monumentality and aesthetics” [58]. At the same time, the memories related to the Solidarity movement are becoming obliterated by current changes after the Gdańsk Shipyard ceased to operate in the area. The value of the scenery (mainly pre-war architectural structures) has become more interesting for contemporary users than the intangible memories of a former generation and seems to invoke the memories of a seemingly forgotten past. Therefore, the presented adaptive reuse practices—especially according to the above-listed diverse approaches to adaptive reuse policies and practices in the heritage context—make it clear that the management of multi-development projects in post-industrial areas is a very complex operation. Several different actions are to be undertaken at different stages of the project. Some are strictly related to the site’s heritage as their most important point of reference and some are just being played out in the attractive scenery.

We argue that the industrial heritage of the Gdańsk Shipyard is not only at the very centre of public interest but has also become (together with the mechanisms and policies of categorization, safeguarding, and management) a major factor affecting the urban regeneration processes. Within this context, the case study of the Gdańsk Shipyard provides a host of suitable solutions that can be represented as model examples. At the same time, it does not provide the final answer to the most urgent question: how to manage the complexity of a site’s memories, heritage, and history? However, this question is relevant in the case of the authorised heritage [58,77] context—especially in the case of the UNESCO WHL description—but not so much in the case of urban redevelopment processes that are strictly related to the economic justification of conducted actions.

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