

In Romania, the abandoned post-industrial buildings or sites were valued by developers based on a tabula-rasa, top-down approach, by demolishing the existing and building commercial areas or housing units at maximum capacity, even above.

We propose a different approach based on participatory planning, using the Urban Design Management (UDM) methodology. It was developed at the University of Helsinki and brought to us through a Social Challenges EU project.

UDM is based on the concept of integrating as much value as possible into the development process, for most stakeholders. It is an iterative planning approach, aiming to generate a shared vision, development strategy and/or a masterplan solution. It is a participative process including both professional and non-professional diverse perspectives, that far outreaches the requirements of formal planning.

The first two applications of the UDM in Romania were the former Amylon factory (and slaughterhouse) and the Independența industrial site. Both sites are situated at the verges of the intra-muros historical centre of Sibiu, being part of the XIXth century industrial belt that developed on the banks of Cibin river. Amylon is a 4ha site that was demolished in 2008. The participatory planning process unfolded in 2019, leading to a masterplan solution for a balanced, mixed-use development including apartments, offices, commerce, public facilities and public spaces. This represents a novelty in recent Romanian planning practice. Independența industrial site is a 9ha brownfield, the largest in Sibiu. It has over 15 abandoned buildings, some of which are listed as monuments. The participatory process is ongoing.

Both experiences have proven extremely valuable and all stakeholders have well appreciated them. Thus we promote this methodology in brownfield regeneration and other complex projects, as it can be an active instrument in the formation of the New European Bauhaus culture, in Romania.

Participatory Planning for Post Industrial Sites in Sibiu.

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