

EVALUATION OF THE RECREATIONAL LANDSCAPE POTENTIAL OF THE SOUTH-EASTERN BALTIC SEA SEASIDE RESORTS

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Abstract

Based on the meaning of two separate terms, the recreational landscape is defined as the territorial combination of the natural and anthropogenic components of the earth's surface connected with material, energy, and information, resulting in the recovery of physical and spiritual forces. In the article there are analysing the changes in the recreational landscape of the seaside resorts of the South-East Baltic Sea after 1990 and the recreational potential.

After 1990, when Lithuania and Latvia restored independence and Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast left isolated, the formation of resorts has lost consistency and became fragmented compared to methodological work carried out during the Soviet period. The systematic formation of seaside resorts was hampered by unjustified privatization of state property. The land is usually been returned to former owners without taking into account the long-term planning processes, and therefore the quality of the landscape is affected.

In the context of the development conditions and tendencies of seaside resorts, the theoretical and practical issues of planning and development become relevant. What criteria can be used to form a recreational landscape for seaside resorts?

Keywords: recreational landscape, seaside resorts, South-Eastern Baltic region, beach resort model, Cultural Landscape.

1. INTRODUCTION

The south-eastern Baltic Sea region consists of Latvia, Lithuania and Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast. The object of research is the recreational landscape of seaside resorts near the South-eastern part of the Baltic Sea. The development of the seaside resorts includes the genesis from a small village to a full resort town. The aim of the article is after analyzing the developmental, historical, sociological, environmental factors and potential threats to the selected resorts, to evaluate the recreational potential of the recreational landscape.

There are few regional studies on the Baltic coastline, it's worth mentioning N. Nitavska's survey "Baltic Sea Coastal Landscapes identity in Latvia (2014)" about the Baltic states, but this case study has been prepared for the Latvian region. Nowadays, when conducting a regional analysis of resorts, there is a noticeable lack of continuity of work and links between states. During the Soviet period, scientific works covering the Baltic Sea region were prepared. Most of the works dedicated to the Baltic Sea coastal region were prepared by V. Stauskas (1977, 1985), P. Grecevičius (1981) and continued scientific activities were carried out at the Lithuanian Institute for Research on Construction and Architecture and co-authors of recreational landscape research (Dringelis et al. 1989).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In recent decades, resort morphology research has become interdisciplinary, covering geography, sociology, urbanism, landscape architecture, etc., while the research methodology includes modeling from a historical and spatial perspective. For this article's preparation, analysis of scientific literature, analysis of the development of spa resorts and factors influencing that development (analysis of

developmental data and influencing factors), visual research in the field and analysis of data obtained, analysis of legal texts and methods of generalization was carried out.

Depending on the origin of the resorts, the main activities in the resorts are primarily located in a small area at a safe distance from the sea shore, then expanding along the shoreline, and eventually, due to a limited stretch of coastline, development extends towards the mainland. Progress in resort development, that ranges from a small community or a fishing village to an international tourist center, complicates when its popularity begins to decline (Smith et al. 2011). One of the reasons why tourists start to lose interest, is the uncontrolled expansion and damage to natural factors. Because of this reason R.A. Smith (1991) developed a model for the development of seaside resorts. Although developed at the end of the last century, the model covers the essential aspects of resort development (land use, environmental, socio-economic, public and private) and is suitable for modern-day research. Recent resort development indicators form the basis for research and help identify stages of development and potential threats.

Using R.A. Smith's seaside resort model as a basis, seaside resorts of the Baltic Sea are analyzed. The fact, that Smith's method was used to study processes in the Asia Pacific region (in the equatorial and tropical climate zones), where the focus is on the level of urbanization of resorts, is taken into account. When applying the model to the Baltic seaside resorts, it is adapted to local climatic conditions, as well as social aspects are taken into account. The table below gives a brief overview of the development stages of seaside resorts (Table 1).

Table 1. Beach resort model.

STAGE	CHARACTERISTICS
1 stage: Pre-tourism	Sparsely settled settlements. At this stage, tourism is not significant or is minimally oriented. The road is used to only connect with another nearest city.
2 stage: Second homes	The start of tourism is a form of second housing, giving the owners the opportunity to occasionally use them for rest or rent. This form of development creates the model of a second housing band, connected by a path's along the beach, a linear (ribbon) development model is dominant. Linked to the beginning of tourism at this stage and possibly another model - explorer tourism. Contact between visitors and the constant population is considerable, which has a significant negative social impact, but has some economic benefits for the residents.
3 stage: First hotel	Accommodation in hotels creates conditions for expanding the range of tourism services. This indicates the start of large-scale tourism. The needs of tourists are mainly met by hotel amenities. Total revenue from this segment of visitor will continue to grow until the eighth stage. The number of jobs in the area, related with tourism is increasing. There is no specific resort administration, development is initiated and controlled by private entrepreneurs.
4 stage: Resort established	The success of the first hotel is incentivising the creation of more accommodation establishments. The building of the seaside belt intensifies, new hotels are being built. The increase in the number of hotels and other workplaces encourages employment for the population and immigrants. At this stage of development, tourism is relocated from hotel services to tourism, integrating into the residential area, with perforation of second homes. Local culture is adapted to the consumption of visitors. The settlement becomes a resort.

5 stage: Business districts established	As demand for accommodation grows, hotel development moves from the seaside to further areas. Due to increased job opportunities a large proportion of services sector workers are accommodated in the emerging residential areas. A cosmopolitan culture and the development of recreational services are being promoted, the number of holidaymakers is expanding. Resorts with limited natural recreational resources reach (exceed) recreational beach capacity. Pollution can remain as a potential problem in later stages. Roads are overflowing with traffic.
6 stage: Inland hotels	At this stage, the land next to the beach is no longer used for development, while accommodation services are formed further away from the beach. Traffic flow is redesigned to reduce congestion. The natural environment of the resort begins disappearing due to concentrated development. Development levels on scarce resources encourage projects that can cause environmental problems (beach sand gathering or erosion, floods). The former urban system disappears, as the resort is reoriented for tourism, with business districts merging. The development process of the resort is not controlled, while environmental and other problems threaten the future vitality of the resort. The government starts to regulate the expansion.
7 stage: Transformation	Fast business development takes place away from the beach area and new job creation is increasing. The resort is becoming widely perceived as a recreation center. The resort area is urbanized, but attempts are made to restore the natural environment within degraded beach locations and recreational areas. Political power is being transferred to local government, while the official resort administration is increasingly unable to control the growth of the resort.
8 stage: City resort	This is the most advanced stage of the resort's development as the resort becomes a city. The most likely resort development model is along the coast. The resort is functionally zoned into separate commercial units and secondary recreational service centers. The beach is polluted and overcrowded with water attractions. Governance is taken over by the government. The older general plan can no longer portray the current state, so a new master plan can be prepared.

Source: Prepared by authors based on Smiths methodology (1991) adapted to Baltic Sea region

The methodology assumes that the eighth stage is final, but it does not mean the highest level of urbanization, but only the highest level of urbanization achieved. As the development process continues a number of potential negative situations can be seen if they are left uncontrolled, reducing the recreational quality that holidaymakers receive. These problems occur at various stages, but they can be avoided by proper planning of the resort in the context of evolution. The seaside resorts model helps to understand the dynamics of seaside resorts, by taking into account possible problems, ways to avoid unwanted effects can be anticipated.

When considering the development of the Baltic seaside resorts, the Soviet period should be mentioned, when large-scale recreational objects are formed equal to the first hotel stage, only without the market economy. However, after independence, the rebuilding processes in the Baltic resorts are changing, with the second stage noticeable, conditions for this were provided by land privatization and business development. Based on this model, the Baltic Sea coastal resorts in Latvia, Lithuania and the Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast are analysed.

By classifying the resorts while using the given methodology, the ones with the most common features are distinguished. At this stage, the potential of the recreational landscape of the selected resorts is assessed on the basis of the methodology of assessment of architectural spaces prepared and supplemented by P. Grecevičius (Grecevičius et al. 2013, Lynch 1981).

3. THE IMPACT OF LAND PRIVATIZATION ON THE SEA REGION'S RECREATIONAL LANDSCAPE

While performing a study it is important to evaluate existing factors affecting the development of resorts. An important factor in shaping a recreational landscape is land reform. Land reforms (valak, monotone, soviet, late 20th century) changed the landscape on a regional scale. Land reform processes also took place in the seaside landscape. It should be noted that during the Soviet period, the recreational landscape of the resorts was supplemented by large recreational infrastructure complexes, such as holiday homes, camps, tourism bases, campsites, sanatoriums and military sites, which compacted the urban historical zones and formed urban territories in the natural landscape.

According to the Law on Land Reform adopted in 1991 in the Republic of Lithuania, which, together with the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Procedure and Conditions for Restoration of the Rights of Ownership of Existing Real Estate of Citizens (which as of July 7, 1997 is no longer valid), partially restores the ownership of real estate (land) owned until 1940, until the Soviet Union's uncompensated nationalization, there is a similar situation in the Republic of Latvia.

For land owners in Lithuania, land is returned in kind or equivalent in kind, usually without taking into account long-term planning processes. The process of restoration of property rights was not properly regulated, so in practice many obstacles - logical, legal and bureaucratic - have emerged, while the management of private land and buildings has had a significant impact on urban fabrics in cities and settlements. The situation of planning factors affecting the formation of landscape spatial structure after the restoration of Lithuanian independence is summarized based on the work of P. Kavaliauskas and co-authors (2013).

Since the restoration of independence, the planning system that was created during the Soviet period, was seen as outdated, and in the first five years of restored independence, without a clear science-based development strategy and a rational natural and cultural landscape plan, the new planning system was formed slowly.

Some of the plans and projects that were prepared during the Soviet Union period were abandoned because land was returned to its previous owners. Territories are divided into small plots for construction, which has affected the potential of recreational landscapes in resorts. In the returned plots, construction of second homes is often carried out which is used only during one season, and in other seasons the home is often not used. So far, the land reform continues, with the complementing of land in an equivalent kind, that is, the returned land is in another part of the country. These circumstances have created a situation where planning activities, especially those that are aimed at satisfying the public interest, become inefficient and the realization of the landscape and the use of natural resources are carried out spontaneously, non-harmoniously.

After the restoration of Latvia's independence in 1990, Soviet soldiers left their seaside zone bases (Liepaja, Ventspils). There were no inhabitants in the abandoned coastal zone, only missile bunkers, military port infrastructure, Soviet cultural and historical monuments that had previously served for the army. At the beginning of the 1990s, collective farms were transformed into joint-stock companies or liquidated, collective farms and army territories were left without legal owners, which contributed to the deterioration in the state of these territories, vandalism and destruction of natural and historical objects, while new laws had not yet been developed. (Nitavska 2014).

A sudden abandonment of Soviet laws, without the creation of new ones, was impossible, so reforms had to be undertaken to swiftly change the legal relationship of ownership. Thus, if ownership rights were not changed, the transition from a planned to a market economy and from the model of totalitarian state governance to the democratically organized system of public administration would be unlikely (Lazdinš 2015). This process was made easier by the goal of restoring historical justice, which was ignored during the Soviet occupation. The consequence of the Communist regime was the nationalization of citizen's assets in the occupied (connected) state. The process of privatization (denationalisation) has also been facilitated by the need to coordinate ownership with EU requirements. The state therefore had the following tasks:

- 1) “Denationalize property, restore property rights to former owners, from which the Soviet authorities took assets;
- 2) Transfer state assets to municipalities so that local authorities can fulfil their assigned functions;
- 3) Privatize state and municipal assets in order to abandon the planned economy implemented by the Soviet Union and ensure the transition to a free market economy” (Lazdinš, 2005).

In order to ensure a fair return of property rights, several important principles have been incorporated into the reform laws. One of the most important provisions was to not violate the rights of former owners or their heirs in the process of denationalization and privatization. Real estate reforms began in 1990 June 13 “Latvian Agricultural Reform”, which were followed by other laws.

The right to property may be limited by environmental protection needs. “Until 1940 The ecological situation in the world and in Europe was not as sensitive as at the end of the last century, so special laws were drawn up in the process of restoring the statehood of Latvia in this field, taking into account the experience of democratic European states. Their goal is the sustainable development of the state – to coordinate the interests of economic development with the protection of cultural objects and the protection of the environment” (Lazdinš, 2015). As private ownership of land and other natural resources in the state has not been established, these draft laws have not encountered strong contradictions, except in cases where the ownership rights of former landowners (their heirs) were in protected areas (e.g. reserves, restricted areas, national parks, and elsewhere).

4. ANALYSIS OF SOUTH-EASTERN BALTIC SEA SEASIDE RESORTS

In the 1990s, when the socio-economic factors changed, the recreational landscape of the Baltic seaside resorts developed chaotically. Based on the model of the Smith’s seaside resorts, Southeast Baltic seaside resorts in Latvia were chosen for analysis: Saulkrasti, Jūrmala, Ventspils and Liepāja; In Lithuania Palanga and Neringa; Russia’s Kaliningrad Oblast – Svetlogorsk (Figure 1).

Figure 1. South-eastern Baltic seaside resorts



4.1. Latvian seaside resorts

Saulkrasti is 50 km from the Latvian capital Riga, on the east coast of the Gulf of Riga. The seaside stretches 17 km. It has been a popular vacation destination for a very long time, however, this seasonal resort attracts mostly local tourists, mostly from Riga, foreign tourists have independent routes and seek close contact with the visited culture in this city.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the first summer cottages were built. The new bathing place, was named Neubad (Neibāde), but this city has no official resort status so far. The Saulkrasti seaside strip is natural, the buildings are concentrated in the southern-northern directions of Riga-Ainaži street, that intersects the town and between the latter street and the railway. The urban system consists of three centres with intensive construction (former settlements) with natural territories located between them. According to Saulkrasti Territorial Planning Documents (Saulkrastu novada... 2017), continuous urbanization is planned alongside Riga-Ainaži Street. Considering the increasing number of tourists in Latvia since 2010 (Gatis 2017), as well as in resort areas, the development potential is high. The current stage of Saukrasti can be named between the Second house and third First hotel stage.

Jūrmala is located on the peninsula between the Lielupe River and the Gulf of Riga, stretching about 26 km. Jūrmala consists of two historic resorts – Jūrmala Rīga (seaside resort) and Kemeris (hydrotherapeutic spa resort), which were merged into a common city in 1959. In the Soviet era, Jūrmala was being developed as a famous rest and medical resort in the Soviet Union. After the restoration of Latvia's independence, the emptied Jūrmala became a sleeping district of Riga. Now the city is becoming an internationally competitive resort. On 19th of November, 2013, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia granted the status of resort city to part of Jūrmala's administrative territory, except Bražciems, Priedaine and Vārnukrogs.

The densest building concentration of Jurmala is between the coastal strip and the railway crossing the city in the south-east-north-west direction. Natural areas – parks, forest parks (Jūrmalas pilsētas teritorijas... 2016) intervene in the continuous building areas. The largest natural areas are in the northern part of Ragakapa Nature Park and in the southern part of Kemerī National Park. In the area closest to the coast are dense urban territories for accommodation and tourism services. Jurmala is a seasonal resort, where the number of tourists grows every year during the summer season, with the number of tourists significantly increasing (23%) compared to the data for 2017 and 2018. Mainly during the summer season, mostly foreign tourists from Russia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland and Germany, use tourism services. Local tourists visit the resort during the cooler seasons, as well as a stable number of Swedes and Estonians. When evaluating the attitudes of the locals towards the resort, there is a negative view of overcrowded beaches and the central part of the city, and the large property taxes in the resort city. Most locals live in more remote areas away from the sea. The analysis of the state of Jurmala resort shows the development models 6 stage – Inland hotels.

Ventspils is the sixth largest city in Latvia, located at the mouth of the Venta River, it is an ice-free port as well. In the 19 century, trade and shipbuilding were the main drivers of urban development. During the Soviet period, Ventspils became an oil export port of the USSR. After independence restoration Ventspils has been working hard to get tourists attention.

Liepāja is the third largest city, formed as an industrial and port city. In 1930, in the Liepāja General Project, created according to the example of the Riga General Plan, the territory of the city was planned to be divided into industrial, commercial and residential areas and the green seaside resort area, as well as to create the necessary engineering links and reserve zones (Krastinš 1992). During the Soviet era, the occupied and severely destroyed Liepāja became home to a military port, and the city became closed. It was only in the last decade of the last century that Liepāja became accessible to the public, but no development of the resort was planned. The Parliament of Latvia adopted the law of Liepāja Special Economic zone on 18th February, 1997 for the period of twenty years. Liepāja Special Economic zone was created for the development of trade, industry, shipping and air traffic, as well as for the exchange of international goods through Latvia (Ozola 2018).

Although the recreational areas of Ventspils and Liepāja are characterized by long beach stretches and hotel offerings, they attract tourists and the resort's infrastructure is also expanding, but these cities cannot be valued according to the seaside resort methodology, because recreation is not the most important area of development.

4.2. Lithuanian seaside resorts

Two seaside resorts are distinguished in Lithuania – Palanga and Neringa. **Neringa** is a resort located on the Curonian Spit, which was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000 as a cultural landscape object. The town of Neringa consists of separate settlements – Nida, Preila, Pervalka, Juodkrantė and Alksnynė, which occupy less than 1% of the built-up area, while most of it are forests, and the whole city is in the Curonian Spit National Park. Today's landscape of the Curonian Spit is based on human ecological wisdom, enormous physical effort and financial costs, when during the 19 century in the sandy wilderness a cultural landscape was formed (Bučas 2007). Considering that the Neringa resort is made up of small settlements, one can see the second stage: second homes, but tourism and services are the most important activity, and the local culture is adapted to the consumption of visitors – a visible fourth stage: Resort established.

Palanga resort, which stretches 24 km along the Baltic Sea, is the most popular resort in Lithuania. The number of holidaymakers increased by 12% compared to 2017 and 2018. After evaluating the historical development of the resort, after the Second World War, holidaymakers came not only from Lithuania, but also from Belarus and mainland Russia. Palanga became an important Soviet resort in the Baltic Sea, with intention to reorganize it into a year-round medical resort. The construction of the resort area has intensified, the scale of the buildings has increased, and the large residential resting blocks that have changed the resort image have increased. During the first years of restored independence, the process of Palanga's development stopped. Only after 1995, during the land privatisation process, the construction of residential buildings began, which in many cases became second homes, and the building up of

territories continuous to intensify. According to the Palanga City General Plan (2008), the development of the resort is envisaged by continuous urbanization in the north-south direction. After the Palanga Bypass (Klaipėda-Liepāja section of the highway) was installed, traffic pollution was reduced, and one-way traffic was re-planned at the central Vytautas Street in the historical part of the city. The locals live in residential areas formed further away from the sea. When evaluating the key development aspects of Palanga resort, development stage 6 stage – Inland hotels is observed.

4.3. Russian Federation seaside resort

19 century the **Svetlogorsk** becomes famous as a resort. The area is quickly covered with summer houses and pensions. In 1947 Svetlogorsk became part of the Russian Federation. 1999 March 29 by decision of the Government of the Russian Federation, Svetlogorsk was granted the status of a federal resort. Since then, besides the main development direction of the resort and tourism, the city has started to establish itself as a cultural and business centre. According to 2017 data, about 600 thousand people visited Svetlagorsk (that's 46 tourists per capita). Today Svetlogorsk is with a wide network of health centres, preventoriums, pensions and holiday homes. The railway, which divides the city of Svetlogorsk in the south-north direction, serves as an urban axis. The axle separates the eastern part, which is dominated by natural and recreational (including forests, parks, squares, boulevards, green areas, common areas) and agricultural areas; and the western part, where recreational, rest and service areas are most intensively developed. Recreational infrastructure is developed closest to the seaside (Архпроект Групп 2011). Residential areas are evenly distributed within the resort. The resort stage is close to 5 stage: Business districts established, but there is no sense of overcrowding. This is influenced by more complex entry conditions (visas required outside the Schengen area).

The analysis of selected Baltic Sea seaside resorts shows a tendency that the development of the resorts depended on the prevailing function of the city during the Soviet period. Jurmala and Palanga reached the highest development stage (Inland hotels). After 1990, the development of these resorts due to social and planning factors was stalled for almost a decade, and now resorts are popular internationally. However, there are threats that may affect the future viability of the resort. Natural resources are one of the most important features of resorts, but due to the intensity of development, the natural environment suffers. The former urban system gets redesigned, more densely built up, and cultural heritage is lost. The locals get pushed to more remote areas of the resort. Resorts lose their originality, they become cosmopolitan, and consequently interest in them may disappear.

5. EVALUATION OF THE POTENTIAL OF THE RESORT RECREATIONAL LANDSCAPE

The application of the seaside resorts model reveals the development trends of the resorts and possible problems, but it is difficult to make a visual assessment based on the model. Territory identification requires perceptual knowledge, which examines the conditions of spatial sensory perception of the landscape, mostly visual, and the information-emotional potential of the landscape. When evaluating the resorts, the methodology of cultural landscape evaluation was chosen, which was prepared in 1985 when carrying out urban and architectural research of Lithuanian resorts (Grecevičius 1981; Stauskas 1985). This methodology was updated in 2013 (Grecevičius et al. 2013). The aesthetic evaluation of the landscape from the selected viewpoints is done by identifying specific objects of visual pollution, potential objects that can aesthetically improve the landscape, and other factors, which can be used to develop aesthetic quality improvement measures (Table 2).

Table 2. Identification of landscape-forming elements and their visual value

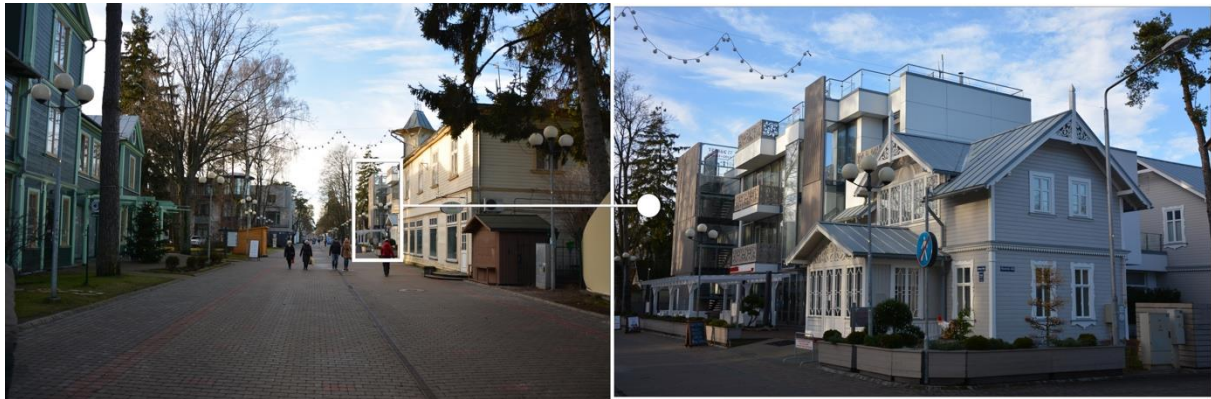
Element Group	Current condition	Condition sought
Dominant elements	The natural and anthropogenic elements that are dominating the landscape are described, describing their quantitative and qualitative indicators.	The dominant natural and anthropogenic elements shaping the valuable properties of the landscape are described, describing their quantitative and qualitative indicators.
Assistant elements	The natural and anthropogenic elements assisting in the landscape are described, describing their quantitative and qualitative indicators.	The assisting natural and anthropogenic elements forming the valuable features of the standard landscape are described, describing their quantitative and qualitative indicators.
Accents	Describe the landscape accents (if any) and their exposure conditions.	Describe the landscape accents (if any) and the possibilities to improve them.
Sources of Visual Pollution	Elements or objects that reduce the visual value of the landscape are specified.	Describes the possibilities of reducing the visual pollution of the landscape.

Source: Grecevičius et al. 2013, *Kraštovaizdžio architektūros tyrimai. Dalis: Urbanizuoto kraštovaizdžio analizės ir vertinimo metodika*, Klaipėda: KU leidykla.

Using the methodology, the aesthetic assessment of landscapes of Palanga and Jurmala resorts is presented. The choice of location was determined by the local popularity factor, where the largest flows of holidaymakers are observed. The evaluation is done by analyzing specific views of the selected areas from selected viewpoints.

The first view is in Jurmala resort (Latvia). Photo fixation was made in Jomas pedestrian street (Figure 2). The street is continuously buildup, with 1-3 story buildings with attic. In the presented photo, the view is dominated by resort architecture typical of the early 20 century, as well as modern buildings that do not blend with the environment. The two adjacent buildings in detail were constructed during different time periods, there are attempts to mask the new building using color expression, the fragmentation of the façade and with the replicated openwork decoration elements, but the size of it overwhelms the old wooden building. On the opposite side of the street, the two modern buildings generally blend into the environment, with their size and assistive elements (greenery), but their flat roofs are not typical in resort architecture. There are fewer visual pollution objects in the off-season, but the commercial kiosks of different stylistics and bright colors do stand out.

Figure 2. Picture of the sight of Jomas street and sight's detail.



Source: photo by A. Jankauskaitė

An alternative was chosen in Palanga resort (Lithuania), Jonas Basanavičiaus Street is for pedestrians. During the summer season, this street is one of the busiest, this is the main axis leading to the sea promenade (Palanga bridge). The location for photo-fixation is in a middle-density street building area, it is dominated by a harmonious connection of closed and open spaces (Figure 3). The dominant object is a two-story building with an attic built somewhere between the end of the 19 and the beginning of 20 century. The Swiss style villa's composition is asymmetrical, all facades are different, creating playfulness. The adjacent commercial kiosks mix into the composition. The next building is of modern architecture and fits into its environment (properly scaled, with sloping roof). On the other side of the street, is a one-story carcass building (A detail), which visually pollutes the street outside the season and obstructs the wooden architecture of the spa resorts (B detail). Also, the negative emotional impact is formed by the bright and colorful pedestrian street cover and garbage containers turned into accents.

Figure 3. Picture of the sight of Jonas Basanavičius street and sight's details.



Source: photo by A. Jankauskaitė

The results of the research carried out according to the methodology of the cultural landscape, suggest that the landscapes of the investigated territories are attractive enough. However, there is a need to enrich, use and protect options for development. The methodology is universal in analyzing the aesthetic qualities of the landscape, but in order to assess the resort's recreational landscape, the methodology could be supplemented by a resort element study, which would include:

- Emphasis on the amount of scientifically researched and recognized therapeutic healing factors (mineral waters, healing mud, health-friendly climate, recreational greenery, water bodies);
- Development of recreational infrastructure;
- Supply of services;

- The intensity of cultural life (music festivals, exhibitions, plein-air, scientific conferences, etc.);
- Development of beach infrastructure;
- Distinguish uniqueness according to the characteristics of the resort.

When evaluating seaside resorts that could be connected with the tourist route system in the South-eastern Baltic region, it is important to identify distinctive features that would dominate within the resort and be distinguished from other resorts. This assessment of cultural landscapes and resorts would help to identify and emphasize the key features of the resort's uniqueness.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Political, planning or social factors have left their mark on the recreational landscape of the South-eastern Baltic Sea resorts. In today's resorts there are principles, that were seen in the end of the 19 century and the beginning of the 20 century (the ideal resort option), the perception of a resort as a health care facility complex, which is arranged within gardens or parks, a legacy from the Soviet-era – the emergence of large volume buildings, sanatoriums, and new urban sites in the natural landscape. The reforms in the end of the 20 century (privatization of land) led to the second housing model, the rapid de-ecologisation and commercialization of urbanized landscape structures, manifested by increasing building densities and the gradual liquidation of common public areas or objects and green spaces (natural frameworks), prioritizing new residential and commercial areas construction.

According to R.A. Smith's methodology when evaluating selected seaside resorts in the Baltic Sea overall developments across seaside resorts can be seen – overuse of coastal strips, erosion of social values and loss of natural resources, movement of local populations away from the seashore. That is why there are doubts about the viability of these existing resorts in the future as they become more like cities.

The selected Methodology for Cultural Landscape Assessment is suitable for identifying specific objects of visual pollution, potential objects for aesthetic improvement of the landscape, and other factors that can be taken into consideration in order to improve aesthetic quality, but in the case of resorts, it is necessary to supplement the group of evaluation elements with the aspect of resorting, which would help to identify and emphasize the most important features of a resort's uniqueness.

The amount and emphasis of scientifically researched and recognized therapeutic healing factors (mineral waters, healing mud, health-friendly climate, recreational greenery, water bodies);

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