

# The Jean-Paul-L'Allier Prize for Heritage

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ST. PETERSBURG  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
ORGANIZATION OF WORLD HERITAGE CITIES (OWHC)



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# Redevelopment of industrial cultural heritage sites and their grounds for public projects

## St. Petersburg, Russian Federation

**The World Heritage Site within the territory of St. Petersburg is a unique serial site that includes the historic centre of the city and suburban areas (palaces, parks, scientific facilities, fortifications). Today, there are some 9000 historical and cultural monuments in St. Petersburg and more than 500 of the monuments represent unique sites of industrial architecture. In 2005, in accordance with the strategy set forth in St. Petersburg's Master Plan, the city started a process to relocate industrial production outside the historical centre.**

Many of the vacated industrial sites are unique examples of industrial architecture recognized as the heritage of St. Petersburg, the Russian Federation and the World Heritage site. Industrial architectural buildings in St. Petersburg are characterized by a unique style involving the use of red brick.

Despite the austerity of the embellishment of industrial buildings, St. Petersburg architects created interesting and distinctive facades for the main buildings and achieved unique designs crafted by skilled tradesmen who completed the desired patterns solely with brickwork. Such sites are valuable elements of the architectural diversity of St. Petersburg.

When the buildings were vacated by industry, an inventory process was launched. Authorities recognized that such empty areas provided a great opportunity for positive city transformation planning and had great economic potential. Ensuring their preservation as examples of the heritage of the city's great architects was one of the most important tasks.

The program was developed based on the principle and necessary measures to preserve the World Heritage property "The Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments."

Accordingly, state authorities decided to move ahead with the integrated development program of these areas. Work started with an analysis of the current state of industrial architecture objects or, as it was termed, the "Gray Belt", followed by an analysis of best practices, foreign practices included, and consultations with leading experts and the citizens of St. Petersburg. In the course of preliminary research, it was established that almost half of the objects could be successfully adapted to public spaces (co-working centres, art spaces, cultural, educational and recreation areas).

Thus, systematic multi-stage work was initiated to develop the Gray Belt. One of the guiding principles behind Gray Belt redevelopment was to preserve the unique characteristics of the environment, monuments and historic buildings. It was stressed that the Gray Belt should become an example of sustainable urban development. Adaptive reuse of cultural heritage is not limited to the conservation of protected buildings. It also includes preservation through the rethinking of the functional purpose of the building.

Based on this, several locations were chosen to create projects of social significance: art spaces (Central Engineering Design Bureau, the building of the former Peter Anisimov Spinning and Weaving Factory), recreation areas (the former Petrovsky Arsenal arms factory, Sevkabel factory), cultural and educational sites (11 cultural heritage sites on New Holland Island, the gas collector of the former Moscow Lighting Society gas plant).

The main purpose of the "Gray Belt Redevelopment Program" was to improve the condition of preserved cultural heritage sites within the boundaries of the World Heritage site. The professional community noted that industrial monuments and their grounds are extremely difficult objects, both to restore and adapt. Preserving authenticity is always a top priority when working with cultural heritage sites in St. Petersburg. The search for a balance between the "old" and the "new" depends directly on the qualifications of specialists, their experience and creative outlook. Firstly, working with red brick while maintaining the amazing features of a facade requires great skill. Likewise, given the loss of the original function of the buildings, many of the attributes and components that impart value to them as industrial monuments require individual consideration as to how to give them a new purpose and breathe new life into them. In addition to individual technical aspects, there is the issue of the buildings' foundations, because some buildings are centuries old.

These tasks did not leave St. Petersburg restoration professionals and young professionals indifferent. As a result, one of the most important outcomes was the growing popularity of the profession of restorer, so important for St. Petersburg, as well as the renewed interest in the unique skills of the St. Petersburg restoration school. It was possible to solve several social and economic problems: increase the number of jobs, and as a result, increase the sources of replenishment of the city budget; increase attendance at historical industrial monuments; and, provide citizens with new points of interest. The redevelopment program drew the attention of city residents and visitors to complex architectural sites and the combination of a unique historical environment and modern spaces.

Of course, the implementation of the program was a time-consuming process that required concerted action from all those involved (authorities, private sector, citizens, public organizations and others). For a successful implementation, it was necessary to work in a coordinated manner at all stages of the project: from the choice of a concept to the beginning of its implementation. At the stage of monitoring and analyzing the situation of the city, a record level of civic activity and participation was ascertained: dialogue with the population was initiated through thematic meetings and public discussions.

Young professionals evinced strong interest in the industrial sites. They were particularly drawn to the search for unique restoration technologies that would make it possible to preserve the monuments and adapt them to new needs, taking account of all necessary modern requirements. Given the unconventional and modern vision of youth in ways to use the sites/grounds, new clusters have become very attractive for citizens and visitors of all ages.

Through the combined efforts of city authorities, citizens, representatives and the private sector, it was possible to achieve such positive outcomes on the development of the industrial sites/grounds. This, in turn, undoubtedly had a positive effect on the state of conservation of the World Heritage property "The Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments" and on quality of life.



Photo: Katya Nikitina, City of St. Petersburg

## 1. New Holland Island

[NEWHOLLANDSP.RU/EN/](http://NEWHOLLANDSP.RU/EN/)

New Holland Island, a historical landmark, is now a multi-use public space that has become an epicentre of cultural and social life.

In 2010, New Holland Development, an affiliate of Roman Abramovich's company Millhouse, LLC, was awarded the tender to restore and renovate New Holland Island. The goal was to create a multi-media complex to serve as one of the epicenters of cultural life not only for St. Petersburg, but for Russia as a whole. To help determine the concept and creative direction of the island's development, Millhouse turned to the Iris Foundation, a non-commercial initiative to support and advance contemporary culture and art launched by Daria Zhukova. This collaboration resulted in New Holland: Cultural Urbanization, a fresh approach to the restructuring and modernization of the territory, a monument of cultural and national historical significance.

Following successful seasonal programming, the project investors decided not to proceed with the original plan to clear the grounds to build a new building. Instead, they chose to organize a full-fledged city park, complete with a modern and convenient infrastructure, adapted to the public at large. The island continues to host cultural programs, as well as grand-scale civic initiatives.



Photo: Katya Nikitina, City of St. Petersburg

In addition to commercial enterprises, future plans for the development of the grounds include cultural and educational institutions, research laboratories and exhibition spaces. Their programming will be overseen by emerging specialists. New Holland: Cultural Urbanization helps recruit a team of architects, designers and urban planners, provides the cultural content for the island's programming and participates in the selection of partners and operators. In August 2016, the first phase of the project was completed with the inauguration of the New Holland park zone and the island began to operate all year long. As of now, three historical buildings have been restored: the Foundry, the Commandant's House and the Bottle House.



Photo: City of St. Petersburg

## 2. Planetarium n° 1

### PLANETARIUM.ONE

Planetarium no1 opened in November 2017. Previously, it was the largest gas storage facility of the 19th century. But when lighting in St. Petersburg was electrified, it was abandoned for a long period of time and had no purpose. Today the Planetarium has the largest projection dome in the world, with a diameter of 37 metres.

The main purposes of the project were to create a new cultural facility in the northern capital and a centre for tourists from around the world, increase young people's interest in science and transform the old building into a modern architectural project. Within the dome, there are 40 high-resolution projectors connected to one system. This is an unprecedented project combining science and cosmic reality under one roof. The Planetarium is visited daily by school groups, residents and visitors to St. Petersburg. Today, it is one of the most popular places where visitors can view the program with full-dome films on achievements in astronomy and space exploration. In addition, the Planetarium is a venue where great festivals interconnect with science, such as technology and art, hackathons in visual programming, conferences, forums, concerts, presentations, lectures, meetings with astronauts and many other events.



Photo: © Alex Fedorov, Wikimedia Commons



Photo: City of St. Petersburg



Photo: City of St. Petersburg

## 3. Sevcable Port

### SEVCABLEPORT.RU

Sevcable Port is a project to transform the historical "Gray Belt" of industrial heritage sites into a multifunctional public and business space. It consists of opening a new sea embankment in St. Petersburg. The project is based on the Sevcable industrial complex, the first cable manufacturer in Russia, Siemens & Halske, located here on the Neva and the Gulf of Finland.

The complex of buildings is divided into various functional areas to house different projects, for work, to spend free time, become involved in the creativity process and practice sports.

In the long term, the main developmental goal is to create one of the most friendly and advantageous urban spaces and cultural infrastructures of the 21st century in St. Petersburg and improve the quality of the environment in the harbour of Vasilevsky Island in St. Petersburg.

The basic values of the project are:

- Complex transformation of the "Gray Belt" territory and the creation of a public and business space that meets modern standards.

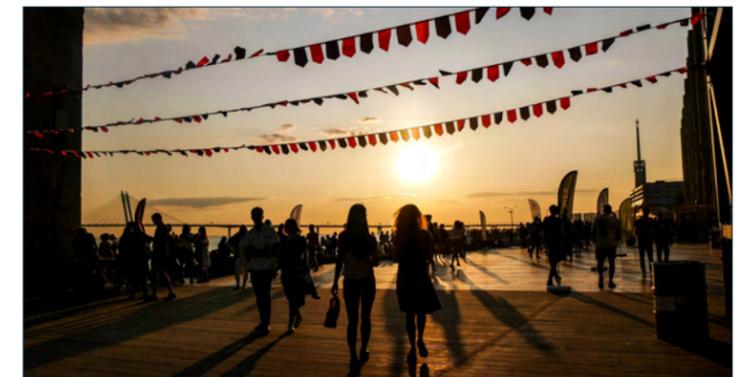


Photo: City of St. Petersburg

- Creation of conditions for the development of new creative and entrepreneurial initiatives.
- Generation and development of products in the field of services, education and entertainment.
- Community of residents and partners of the project.

During the modernization of production, Sevkabel chose another location for its factory and freed 20% of its total area for a cultural and business project. At the present time, the public space is under development and partially at the stage of landscaping, renovating buildings and preparing for the introduction of new projects.

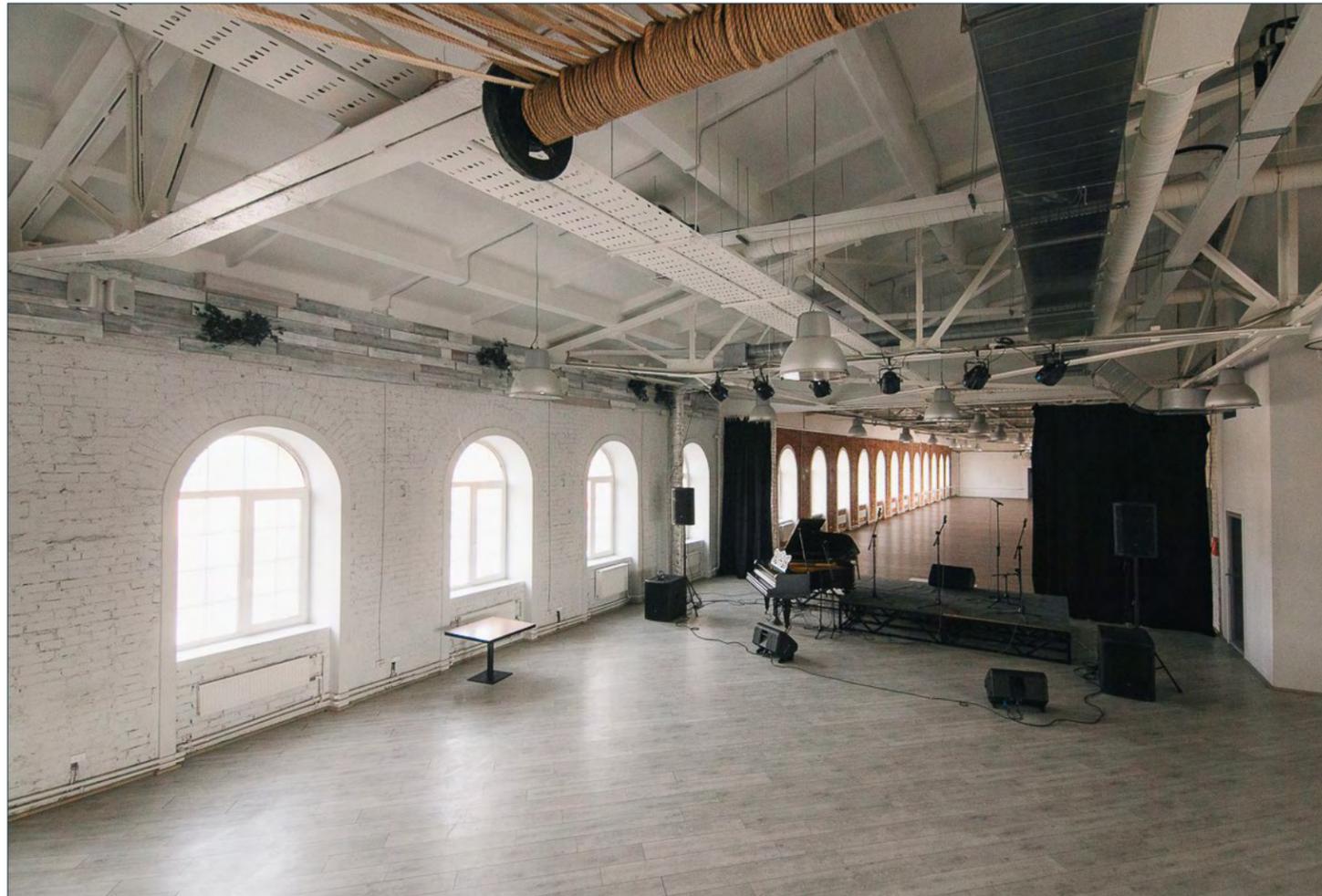


Photo: City of St. Petersburg

## 4. Tkachi

[TKACHI.COM](http://TKACHI.COM)

“Tkachi Creative Space” is one of the largest creative clusters in St. Petersburg. It is located in the historical city centre in the reconstructed weaving factory on the Obvodny Channel embankment. The total area of the building is more than 10.000 square metres + the adjoining grounds.

Tkachi is an important place for St. Petersburg’s creative industries. There are shops and showrooms, offices and lecture rooms, as well as almost 1000 square metres of open public space, the “Tkachi Open Space”. Residents of Tkachi are among the most successful and creative entrepreneurs of the city. “Tkachi Open Space” venue hosts art exhibitions, charity events, children’s parties, concerts, theatrical performances, fashion shows, concerts and music parties, educational seminars, master classes and corporate events.

“Tkachi Creative Space” is an independent private project that showcases the possibility of a harmonious combination of cultural significance, social mission and economic efficiency.

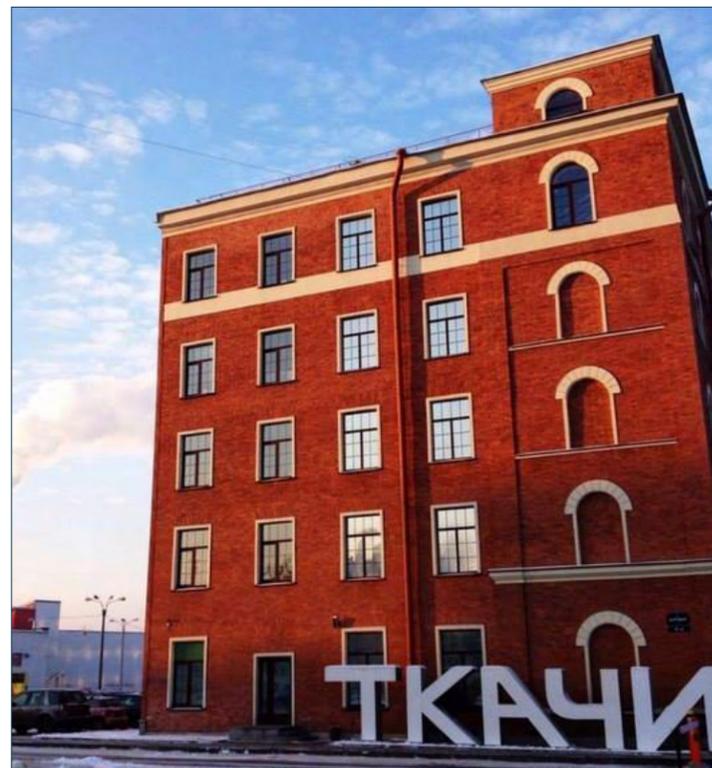


Photo: City of St. Petersburg



Photo: City of St. Petersburg

## 5. Petrovsky Arsenal

[PETROVSKYARSENAL.RU](http://PETROVSKYARSENAL.RU)

In the summer of 2014, in the suburbs of St. Petersburg in a historically significant place - the Sestroretsk Instrument factory - a unique recreational suburban project “Petrovsky Arsenal” was inaugurated as a new cultural space for residents and visitors to the city. Covering a total area of two hectares, it is located within the picturesque territory of the historical industrial site of the era of Peter the Great.

The long-standing brickwork of the buildings and the courtyards of the Petrovsky Arsenal are authentic and reflect many years of history. In the picturesque surroundings of the industrial grounds, there are walking spaces and an extensive recreation area with grass, comfortable sunbeds and free wi-fi access, a summer cinema and a library with an open-air reading room, an eco-market, a gallery and various cafés. For outdoor enthusiasts, bicycles and sports equipment are available for rent. There are football and volleyball fields, tennis tables, air hockey, pétanque tracks and a playground in town, in addition to a petting zoo and a large entertainment area for other activities. The project includes many plans for future development and the preservation of basic historical planning decisions within the area.

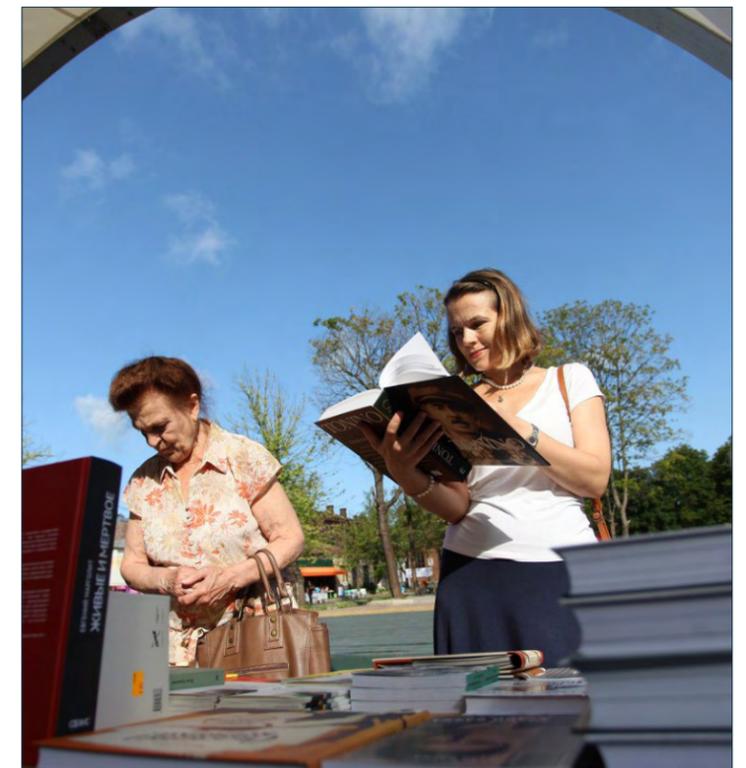


Photo: City of St. Petersburg



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