

**Negotiating Building Preservation and Urban Redevelopment in
Socialist Romania. The Case of Dimitrov Street in Iași**
(Abstract)

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This article discusses the case of Dimitrov Street in Iași in order to explore the limits of negotiation in urban redevelopment projects concerning historic districts in 1970s Romania. This urban modernization project in Iași envisaged the demolition of most of the late 19th century buildings bordering this centrally-located street, and its reconstruction as a large boulevard equipped with high-rise apartment blocks. It shows how, given the imminence of demolition, preservationists were challenged to reconsider the traditional definition of historic monument, as well as to adopt a more interventionist approach. In an exercise of heritage-making, architects working at the Department for Historic Monuments questioned the modernization plans of the historic center, proposing instead to conserve the area as “architectural reserve”. Although these efforts were in the end defeated by the uncompromising attitude of local authorities, the case study is relevant for the opportunities and limitations faced by the actors involved in urban redevelopment projects in socialist Romania. It also constitutes a good example for understanding the legal, institutional, and conceptual constraints of the preservationist agenda in Romania.