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Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia. Journal of Heritage is a peer-reviewed, open-access scientific journal published twice a year. It is jointly published by the City of Gdynia and the Faculty of Architecture at Gdańsk University of Technology. The journal focuses on interdisciplinary research into 20th-century architectural and urban heritage in a European context. Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia. Journal of Heritage explores issues related to the architectural and urban legacy of the 20th century. It continues the publication series initiated in 2009 by the City of Gdynia, and since 2019, co-published with the Faculty of Architecture at Gdańsk University of Technology, now functioning as a formal academic journal.

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|     |       |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | 5     | Anna Orchowska                                                                                                                                                                         |
|     |       | Foreword                                                                                                                                                                               |
|     | 6     | Aleksandra Kosiorek                                                                                                                                                                    |
|     |       | Foreword                                                                                                                                                                               |
| I   | 7–22  | Jörg Haspel                                                                                                                                                                            |
|     |       | ‘Berlin Modernism’<br>Public Buildings of Culture, Science and Education                                                                                                               |
| II  | 23–34 | Piotr Marciniak                                                                                                                                                                        |
|     |       | We rest!<br>Hotels, motels and health resorts in a socialist reality and landscape                                                                                                     |
| III | 35–49 | Maria Jolanta Sołtysik                                                                                                                                                                 |
|     |       | Constitution Square in Gdynia<br>History, spatial layout and architecture                                                                                                              |
| IV  | 50–62 | Petr Vorlik                                                                                                                                                                            |
|     |       | Socialism for Everybody?                                                                                                                                                               |
| V   | 63–80 | Michał Pszczółkowski                                                                                                                                                                   |
|     |       | Modernism in Uniform<br>Investment Activities of the Military<br>Accommodation Fund (Fundusz Kwaterunku<br>Wojskowego FWK) in the Eastern Borderlands<br>of the Second Polish Republic |

3



**Ph.D, Eng., Arch. ANNA ORCHOWSKA**

Editor in Chief | Gdańsk University of Technology

We are pleased to present the first issue of the scientific journal Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia. Journal of Heritage, published by the Faculty of Architecture at Gdańsk University of Technology in cooperation with the City of Gdynia.

This peer-reviewed academic journal, issued twice a year, is dedicated to interdisciplinary research on 20th-century architectural and urban heritage, with a particular focus on its protection, documentation, interpretation, and dissemination. It continues the publishing series Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia, initiated in 2009 by the City of Gdynia and subsequently developed jointly with Gdańsk University of Technology.

The mission of the journal is to create a forum for exchanging knowledge and experience among academic, conservation, and design communities in Poland and abroad, while also raising public awareness of the value of modern architecture as an essential element of Europe's cultural heritage.

The articles presented in this issue were originally published in Polish in the conference volume constituting the ninth tome of the series 'Modernism in Europe – modernism in Gdynia'. We now offer them in a new form – selected texts have been prepared in English, specifically for this journal, to reach the international readership and to align with the journal's academic profile.

These articles were written by participants of the ninth international scientific conference in the series Modernism in Europe – modernism in Gdynia, held in Gdynia in September 2023. They address diverse aspects of public architecture in Central and Eastern Europe, presenting a wide range of approaches – from analyses of individual buildings to reflections on broader structural and societal mechanisms.

Jörg Haspel, in his article 'Berlin Modernism'. Public Buildings of Culture, Science and Education, explores a lesser-known but significant dimension of Berlin modernism – public architecture. Although the city's modernist legacy of the 1920s is usually associated with housing estates, Haspel focuses on cultural, scientific, and educational buildings such as cinemas (e.g., Babylon, Schaubühne), trade union buildings, and the iconic Einstein Tower. Despite their limited number, they form an important chapter in the history of interwar European architecture.

Piotr Marciniak, in We Rest! Hotels, Motels and Health Resorts in a Socialist Reality and Landscape, examines leisure architecture in the realities of the Polish People's Republic. He discusses state policies related to workers' recreation and investments targeted at foreign tourists, presenting examples of hotels and holiday centres in urban and resort locations. The article highlights the need to study, evaluate, and protect this often-underappreciated segment of post-war architectural heritage.

Maria Jolanta Sottysik, in Constitution Square in Gdynia: History, Spatial Layout and Architecture, presents the evolution of one of Gdynia's most important public spaces. She traces the development of Constitution Square through successive phases – from the first railway station, through the interwar modernist urban concept, to post-war transformations. The article concludes with conservation recommendations aimed at restoring the historical and aesthetic values of the square.

Petr Vorlík, in Socialism for Everybody?, examines the dual nature of public architecture in Czechoslovakia during the 'normalisation' period after 1968. Alongside monumental, ideologically driven state projects, he analyses the work of younger architects who, through smaller commissions in the context of mass housing estates, sought to introduce humanist and socially responsible elements into socialist public architecture.

The first issue of Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia. Journal of Heritage marks a new chapter in the documentation, interpretation, and dissemination of 20th-century architecture – both well-established and only recently receiving the scholarly attention it deserves.

Editor-in-Chief

**Anna Orchowska**



**ALEKSANDRA KOSIOREK**

Mayor of Gdynia



<https://bip.um.gdynia.pl/prezydent-miasta,1753/aleksandra-kosiorek-prezydentka-gdyni,596801>

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the inaugural issues of the Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia. Journal of Heritage. This new academic journal, published by the Faculty of Architecture at Gdańsk University of Technology in cooperation with the City of Gdynia, marks the continuation and development of many years of shared commitment to the study and promotion of modernist heritage.

For over a decade, the City of Gdynia has partnered with Gdańsk University of Technology in organizing the international conference series Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia, which has brought together researchers, architects, conservators, and enthusiasts from across Europe. The launch of this journal is a natural extension of these efforts – providing a space for the permanent and open-access publication of high-quality research on 20th-century architectural and urban heritage.

These first two issues continue the mission that has accompanied our previous publications: to support the documentation, protection, and broader understanding of modernist architecture – in Gdynia, in Poland, and in the wider European context. I am especially pleased to see that the journal reflects a truly international perspective, with contributions from authors representing academic institutions in several countries.

Although Gdynia's architectural heritage remains a central reference point and source of pride, we firmly believe that it gains true value when placed in dialogue with other modernist cities and traditions. That is why we continue to support research that builds comparative frameworks and helps define Gdynia's place within the broader history of modernism.

It is also worth noting that the importance of Gdynia's heritage has been increasingly recognized both in Poland and internationally. The Early Modernist City Centre of Gdynia, after its listing in the national register of monuments in 2007, was designated a Historic Monument in 2015, and in 2023 it was selected as Poland's sole candidate for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List – a nomination we believe reflects the city's unique architectural and urban legacy.

I wish to thank all the authors, editors, and partners involved in the creation of this new journal. I am convinced that Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia. Journal of Heritage will become an important and inspiring voice in the international conversation on modernist heritage.

Mayor of Gdynia

**Aleksandra Kosiorek**

Jörg Haspel

Technical University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany

# ‘Berlin Modernism’

## Public Buildings of Culture, Science and Education

### ABSTRACT

The legacy of Berlin Modernism is not limited to the social housing estates and residential complexes of the Weimar Republic, which were inscribed as World Heritage Sites in 2008 or scheduled for extension in 2023. But the new residential neighbourhoods represent the exceptionally high social and design quality standards and the unique achievements of Berlin’s reform efforts in the 1920s more clearly than any other built heritage of the interwar period, both in terms of their size and number as well as of their urban planning and architectural quality. Compared to the social housing complexes that surrounded the historic centre of Berlin from the imperial era (1871–1918) with a loose wreath of new housing estates in the urban expansion areas of the Greater Berlin Act (1920), one would like to attest that the school and science buildings as well as the construction of cultural institutions are only in exceptional cases outstanding significant in terms of quantity and rarely make a striking appearance in the cityscape. The visionary concept of a ‘total theatre’ by Walter Gropius and Erwin Piscator (1925) remained a utopia, a ground-breaking ‘paper architecture’.

It is also noteworthy that public school and science buildings or new cultural centres were only exceptionally oriented towards the topographical distribution of the new social housing estates.

Among those exceptions are some of the cinemas completed in the 1920s in the inner city, a few of which have even survived to this day as functioning theatres or film cinemas with adjacent residential neighbourhoods (Babylon, Schaubühne / Universum Kino). Like the construction of large cinemas and movie palaces that flourished after the 1918/19 revolution, the construction of trade union buildings with cultural and educational training space was one of the great achievements of Berlin’s interwar modernism.

After the National Socialists assumed power in 1933, the planning of scientific buildings and campus facilities was to see an enormous upswing and open up new terrain on the outskirts or outside the big capital, but came to a standstill with the war economy and armaments industry of the Second World War. Mendelsohn’s world-famous architectural icon of the expressionist Einstein Tower (1920–22) near Berlin remains an exception to this day.

Keywords: Berlin Modernism; world heritage; theatre; cinema; school; university; Max Taut; Erich Mendelsohn



Fig. 1. UNESCO World Heritage City Berlin: a) Museum Island listed in 1999; b, c) Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin listed in 1990; d) Berlin Modernism Housing Estates listed in 2008 (source: Landesdenkmalamt Berlin).

### INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee unanimously approved the German application to inscribe six ‘Housing Estates of Berlin Modernism’ on the World Heritage List. Following the inscription of the Bauhaus sites in Weimar–Dessau (1995, extended in 2017) and the heavy industry complexes of the Völklingen Ironworks (1994) and the Zollverein Colliery in Essen (2001), this was the fourth World Heritage Site from the 20th century in Germany.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the World Heritage of Modernism from Germany has also become the subject of the international conference series ‘Modernism in Gdynia – Modernism in Europe’, which was launched in 2007. Works of ‘Berlin Modernism’ also form a point of reference in the international debate on the World Heritage potentials of the 20th century.

In 2019, Poland nominated the ‘Modernist Centre of Gdynia – the example of building an integrated community’ as a candidate for the UNESCO Tentative List. Following the 1979 World Heritage inscription of ‘Auschwitz Birkenau. German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940–1945)’ and the ‘Centennial Hall of Wrocław’, inscribed in 2006, the modern city centre of Gdynia would be Poland’s third World Heritage Site from the 20th century. Anyone who adds the Polish World Heritage Site of the ‘Historic Centre of Warsaw’, inscribed in 1980, which was largely destroyed by Nazi Germany in 1944 and rebuilt after the Second World War, to the achievements of the last century, may find the comparison with the ‘Modernist Centre of Gdynia’ particularly revealing.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, as a large-scale urban heritage site, Gdynia is internationally comparable to urban world heritage sites such as the post-war capital Brasília (1987, Brazil), the newly founded White City of Tel Aviv (2003, Israel), the rebuilt city of Le Havre (2005, France) or the colonial city of Asmara (2017, Eritrea). All of them feature residential and administrative buildings as well as commercial facilities and infrastructure, as well as modernist buildings serving cultural, educational and scientific purpose. The following article gladly accepts the invitation of the hosts and organisers of this year’s 9th International Scientific Conference ‘Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia’ to focus on the role of listed modern buildings of culture, education and science in the World Heritage City of Berlin and to enable a European comparison (Fig. 1).

‘Berlin Modernism’ – under this banner, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed six Berlin housing estates of interwar modernism on the World Heritage List in 2008 – implying a locally specific distinctiveness from other modern world cultural assets in Europe, such as the Bauhaus sites in Weimar, Dessau and Bernau or world heritage sites by Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer the world over. The essay is intended as a contribution to the discussion on current World Heritage debates and World Heritage initiatives such as the conference and publication series ‘Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia’ launched in 2007.

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Centre (n.d.). *Germany*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/de>

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Centre (n.d.). *Germany*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/de>

The article critically questions the term ‘Berlin Modernism’ using the example of the new public buildings and cultural, scientific and educational institutions built in Berlin and the surrounding area between the two world wars, including works by internationally renowned architects such as Erich Mendelsohn (1887–1953). Geographically, the article concentrates on the area of ‘Greater Berlin’, a city formed in 1920 from more than 60 municipalities and rural communities (one of the most populous and largest metropolises in the world in terms of area) and its neighbouring interlinked borderland with Brandenburg.

Thematically, the focus is on analysing buildings that have been preserved as historical architectural testimonies and are legally protected as architectural monuments. Unrealised projects or lost buildings only play a role for comparison purposes. The current on–site evidence is what matters.

The article makes use of printed sources on the history of architecture and urban planning from the interwar period, such as contemporary architecture books and building journals or monographs, as well as the results of more recent architectural and urban planning research on Berlin’s interwar modernism, as has been increasingly published since 1975, the European Year of Monument Conservation. The article is essentially based on an evaluation of the book series ‘Berlin und seine Bauten’ (Berlin and its Buildings), which has been published and updated in several editions since 1877 by the *Architekten– und Ingenieurverein zu Berlin* (Association of Architects and Engineers in Berlin) and which classifies the growing building stock primarily according to building typologies and functional aspects. However, the essay is mainly based on the relevant professional publications of the monument authorities responsible in the Berlin metropolitan region (Berlin, Brandenburg), such as official inventories on individual territorial areas and building types or monument topographies and series of books and journals published by the authorities. In addition, a wide range of monument databases and web–based documentation made available online by the public heritage offices were analysed.

MODERN WORLD HERITAGE BERLIN

*As the second artistic capital of Europe, after Paris, Berlin was clearly likely to produce works of interest, but it contained, in addition, a remarkable group of architectural talents. No other centre in the early Twenties could have boasted, as Berlin could, more than a dozen progressive architects of more than average competence, sufficiently resilient in mental constitution to take in their stride a major aesthetic revolution, from Expressionism to Elementarism, and to design in either style with equal vigour and assurance.*<sup>3</sup>

With these sentences, Reyner Banham (1922–1988) characterised the position of Paris and Berlin as leading art metropolises of interwar modernism in Europe in his standard work ‘Theory and Design in the First Machine Age’, first published in 1960. The renowned

<sup>3</sup> Banham, R. (1960). *Theory and design in the first machine age*. Architectural Press.

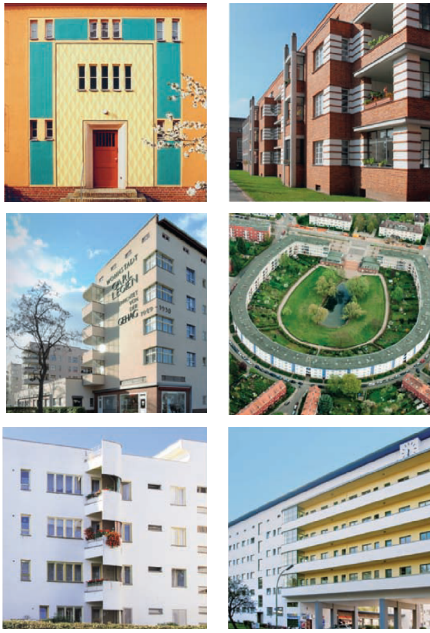


Fig. 2. UNESCO World Heritage City Berlin: a) Museum Island listed in 1999; b, c) Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin listed in 1990; d) Berlin Modernism Housing Estates listed in 2008 (source: Landesdenkmalamt Berlin).

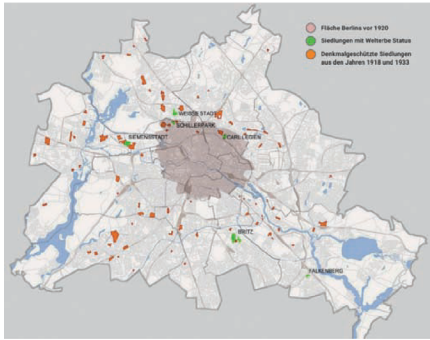


Fig. 3. UNESCO World Heritage City Berlin: a) Museum Island listed in 1999; b, c) Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin listed in 1990; d) Berlin Modernism Housing Estates listed in 2008 (source: Landesdenkmalamt Berlin).

English architecture critic emphasises the unique role played by the city after the First World War as the European capital of architecture, i.e. as the architectural metropolis of modernism. Banham even speaks of ‘The Berlin School’, the eponymous architecture movement that preceded Bauhaus and other modern architecture schools.<sup>4</sup>

On 7 July 2008, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee decided at its 32nd session in Quebec to inscribe six housing estates from Berlin on the World Heritage List, a unanimous decision of all 21 members of the Committee to accept a local serial nomination of half a dozen sprawling residential settlements for nearly 10,000 inhabitants, spread over seven boroughs. This series of six had been distilled from over 300 listed Berlin housing estates from the years between the two world wars. The decision meant that the German capital, united since 1990, had been registered on the World Heritage List three times in less than 20 years and that not only the royal and imperial heritage of Prussian palaces and museums (Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin, 1990, 1992, 1999; Museum Island Berlin, 1999), but also modern cultural achievements and assets of a democratic republic were accorded world status (Fig. 2).<sup>5</sup>

‘BERLIN MODERNISM’

Last but not least, the global media communication that began with the inscription in 2008 probably helped the term ‘Berlin Modernism’ to achieve special recognition as a kind of emblem and quality label for buildings from the interwar period in Berlin. In the following article, the term ‘Berlin Modernism’ will be used in the sense of UNESCO’s World Heritage designation, i.e. limited to the period between the two world wars. One could also speak of Berlin ‘interwar modernism’, in distinction to the numerous researches and publications that have been dedicated to ‘postwar modernism’ in Berlin since 2008.<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, the term ‘Berlin Modernism’ refers topographically to the area covered by the Greater Berlin Act of 1920, which increased the area of Berlin more than a dozen times from 66 km<sup>2</sup> to 883 km<sup>2</sup> and the population doubled from approximately 1.9 million to nearly 4 million. The act made Berlin the second largest city in the world in terms of area – after Los Angeles – and the third largest in terms of population – after London (7.3 million) and New York (5.6 million) (Fig. 3).<sup>7</sup>

In fact, the Berlin world heritage initiative was launched in the English application documents under the title ‘Housing Estates in the Berlin Modern Style’. However, the experts from ICOMOS and UNESCO replaced the original title during the ongoing

<sup>4</sup> Banham, R. (1960). *Theory and design in the first machine age*. Architectural Press.

<sup>5</sup> Hoff, S. (2011). *Berlin: Weltkulturerbe – cultural world heritage* (Beiträge zur Denkmalpflege in Berlin, Vol. 37), Michael Imhof Verlag.

<sup>6</sup> See the introducing remarks in James–Chakraborty, K. (2018). *Modernism as memory: Building identity in the Federal Republic of Germany*. University of Minnesota Press.

<sup>7</sup> Architekten– und Ingenieurverein zu Berlin–Brandenburg e. V. (Ed.). (2020). *Unfinished metropolis: 100 years of urban planning for Greater Berlin*. DOM Publishers.



application process with the designation ‘Berlin Modernism Housing Estates’, to avoid it being misunderstood as a kind of style question.<sup>8</sup>

‘Berlin Modernism’ not only sounds different from ‘Classic Modernism’, ‘White Modernism’ or ‘Bauhaus Modernism’ of the legendary school of architecture and design; the term also explicitly distinguishes itself from the global claim of the manifestos and artistic signature in the oeuvre of Le Corbusier. ‘Berlin Modernism’ and its associated connection of Berlin architects, called ‘Der Ring’ (1924–1933)<sup>9</sup>, rather also stand for the claim to greater diversity, including expressive colourfulness and organic forms, and for collaborative approaches in design work and for co–operative implementation practices in changing formats. Above all, however, by choosing and limiting the nomination to housing estates of the 1920s, we wanted to emphasise a particular flavour of Berlin’s interwar modernism. The term ‘Berlin Modernism’ refers to a modernism aiming to an urban spatial dimension, i.e. does not emphasise solitary buildings or architectural icons, and that stands for the highest social standards, to which architectural practice in the years of the Weimar Republic felt particularly committed in Berlin.

The purposefully planned social and urban quality of the World Heritage settlements usually included convenient connections to the developed network of modern metropolitan public transport (such as trams, light rail and underground lines) as well as the provision of household conveniences such as heating and washing centres and residential facilities for daily needs such as shops.

Above all, however, the embedding of most of the World Heritage sites in the surrounding landscape, in some cases providing them with a direct link to extensive green spaces, created as they were within the framework of the Volkspark (people’s park) movement and for the development of networked green corridors and often equipped with modern sports and leisure facilities (*Schillerpark, Jungfernheide, Schlosspark Britz*), is impressive.<sup>10</sup>

MODERN SCHOOL BUILDINGS

What might be unexpected, on the other hand, is the fact that the construction of housing estates was not necessarily accompanied by a programme to build new children’s and school facilities in the residential areas or in the immediate vicinity. The choice of



Fig. 4. Alexander von Humboldt Gymnasium (former Dorotheen Lyzeum), Berlin–Köpenick (Spindlersfeld): built in 1928–1929, designed by Max Taut (source: Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, photo W. Bittner 2017).



Fig. 5. Max Taut School, Berlin–Lichtenberg (Rummelsburg), 1928–1932, arch. Max Taut (source: Max Taut Schule Berlin, <https://www.max-taut-schule.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Max-Taut-1020.jpg>).

locations for prominent new school buildings from the Weimar Republic was a reaction to the increased demands imposed by the urban expansion and served the goals of a democratic school reform after 1918, but their spatial arrangement did not necessarily follow the settlement programme. Some integrative approaches to urban development and school construction also got caught up in the world economic crisis that began in 1929, the National Socialist regime change from 1933 and the war economy (1939–1945). The project for a comprehensive school, which the architect Bruno Taut had planned for Berlin–Neukölln together with the reform pedagogue Fritz Karsen, came to a standstill in 1928 after the completion of a model pavilion (*Am Dammweg*) and could only be taken up again after the Second World War under democratic auspices with the new construction of the Fritz Karsen School at the World Heritage Site Britz (*Hufeisensiedlung – Horseshoe Housing Estate*) (Fig. 4).<sup>11</sup>

The school buildings of Berlin’s interwar modernism that have become famous and are still preserved and maintained as architectural monuments, such as the school complexes designed by Max Taut in Lichtenberg/Rummelsburg (1927–1932), at the time the largest complex of its kind in Germany,<sup>12</sup> or in Köpenick (today Alexander von

<sup>8</sup> Compare the title wording in the published World Heritage documents: Land Berlin (Ed.). (2007). *Siedlungen der Berliner Moderne: Nominierung für die Welterbeliste der UNESCO = Housing estates in the Berlin modern style: Nomination for the UNESCO World Heritage List*. Land Berlin; Land Berlin (Ed.). (2009). *Siedlungen der Berliner Moderne: Eintragung in die Welterbeliste der UNESCO = Berlin modernism housing estates: Inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List* (2nd ed.). Land Berlin.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Der Ring’ was an architectural collective initiated as the ‘Zehner Ring’ (Ring of Ten) in 1924 by ten young Berlin architects to promote modernist architecture, including expressionist and functionalist tendencies. In 1926, it expanded into a Germany-wide pressure group for the modern movement (‘Neues Bauen’) and was dissolved after the rise of National Socialism in 1933. Greyscape. (n.d.). *Der Ring*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from <https://www.greyscape.com/architects/der-ring/>. As early as 1928, the Berlin-based and Stuttgart-based architectural group ‘Der Block’ (The Block) was established as a traditionalist counter-movement. It represented a conservative architectural conception and anti-modernist positions, thereby anticipating tendencies of the National Socialist conception of architecture. Oxford University Press. (n.d.). *Authority entry (ID 10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095512374)*. In Oxford Reference. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095512374>

<sup>10</sup> Lingenauer, K. (2021). Freiräume und Gartenanlagen in den Welterbesiedlungen. In Landesdenkmalamt Berlin (Ed.), *Sechs Siedlungen der Berliner Moderne: Entwicklungen und Erfahrungen in der UNESCO-Welterbestätte* (Beiträge zur Denkmalpflege in Berlin, Vol. 56, pp. 28–37). Konrad Theiss Verlag.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Heimatmuseum Neukölln (Ed.). (1993). *Schulreform. Kontinuitäten und Brüche. Das Versuchsfeld Berlin–Neukölln 1912 bis 1945 / 1945–1971* [School reform: Continuities and disruptions. The experimental field Berlin–Neukölln 1912–1945 / 1945–1971] (2 vols.). [Publisher not identified]; Bildungsverein Bautechnik. (n.d.). *The Bruno Taut Pavilion Berlin*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from <https://bildungsvereinbautechnik.de/taut-pavilion/>

<sup>12</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Berlin monument database entry (object no. 09095224)*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09095224](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09095224)



Humboldt Gymnasium, 1928–1930),<sup>13</sup> react to the dynamics and speed of city traffic with their curved modernist building forms at street intersections. However, they also announce the republican school system’s claim to want to educate people to become responsible citizens in democracy, against the spirit of subordination of the imperial–era institutions. The school auditorium in Lichtenberg (today called the Max Taut School), which is elevated and inverted out of the curve of the streamlined main body of the building, demonstratively opens up architecturally and in its function beyond the school horizon to the neighbouring residential neighbourhoods as an offer to use it for cultural and social purposes beyond the strictly academic (Fig. 5).<sup>14</sup>

**BUILDINGS OF CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT**

In the following, the term ‘public buildings’ refers to structures for culture and science that are publicly owned and operated by state or municipal bodies and that are open to the general public, but it includes also cultural and scientific sites that are privately financed, maintained and managed, if they are open to the interested public or even intended to be visited by an wider public.

Even before 1918, Berlin was one of the most important cultural metropolises on the continent. Not least as a theatre and opera city, the Prussian and then imperial residence made a name for itself in the 19th century and wrote architectural history with its buildings. Theatre construction experienced a golden period during the Empire (1871–1918). Among these new stages were large, mostly privately financed and operated highly modern theatre architectures.

**THEATERS**

The young republic was able to build on this large stock of existing stage constructions from the imperial era, and even the new theatre reform movement, which had been emerging since the turn of the century, was also able to explore new paths in this context. In addition, well–known new stage buildings were opened in the 1920s, so that in 1929 Erich Kästner created the term for Berlin as the ‘city of 30 stages’ (Fig. 6).<sup>15</sup>

An early spectacular theatre conversion was the Große Schauspielhaus, designed by Hanns and Marlene Poelzig in 1918–1919. Transformed from a market and circus hall into an expressionist revue and comedy stage, popularly dubbed the *Tropfsteinhöhle* (stalactite cave), but extensive wartime damage and post–war ignorance saw its demise; it has survived in virtual reality (digital reconstruction).<sup>16</sup> Other visionary designs for a new building and performance space have made architectural and theatre

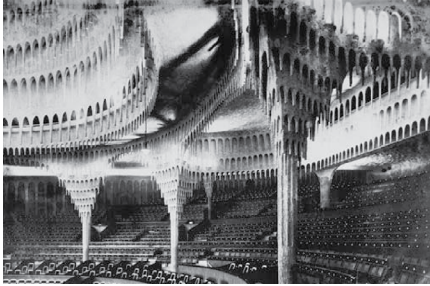


Fig. 6. Auditorium of the Großes Schauspielhauses (called ‘Tropfsteinhöhle’ – ‘Stalactite Cave’), Berlin–Mitte: opened in 1919 after the conversion of a former market and circus hall, arch. Hans and Marianne Poelzig (source: Architecture Museum, Technical University Berlin, <https://architekturmuseum.ub.tuberlin.de/P/117773.php>).



Fig. 7. Auditorium of the Renaissance-Theater, Berlin–Charlottenburg: corner building (‘Motivhaus’) erected in 1902, designed by Konrad Reimer & Friedrich Körte architects, conversion and remodelling in 1926–1927 according to plans by the Jewish Hungarian architect Oskar Kaufmann, 2014 (source: Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, photo W. Bittner 2014).



Fig. 8. Cinema poster by Boris Bilinsky for the expressionist urban film ‘Metropolis’ by Fritz Lang, shot in 1925/26 and premiered in Berlin in 1927, listed on UNESCO’s World Documentary Heritage List since 2001 (source: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, [https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:1927\\_Boris\\_Bilinski\\_%281900-1948%29\\_Plakat\\_f%C3%BCr\\_den\\_Film\\_Metropolis,\\_Staatliche\\_Museen\\_zu\\_Berlin.jpg](https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:1927_Boris_Bilinski_%281900-1948%29_Plakat_f%C3%BCr_den_Film_Metropolis,_Staatliche_Museen_zu_Berlin.jpg)).



Fig. 9. Theater house of the Schaubühne (former Universum Kino) at Lehniner Platz with the neighbouring residential WOGA complex (1926–31), designed by Erich Mendelsohn; rebuilt after WW II, followed by a conversion to a show stage and re–opened in 1981 (Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, photo W. Reuß 2007).

history, such as a revolutionary ‘Total Theatre’ designed in 1926/27 by Bauhaus director Walter Gropius (1883–1969); for theatre director Erwin Piscator (1893–1966) yet despite not being built, but still fascinate us today as a delimitation of ideal performance and building practices.<sup>17</sup>

The most productive and inventive theatre architect in Berlin before and after the First World War was Oskar Kaufmann (1873–1956), a Jewish ‘architect between tradition and modernity’, who came to Berlin before World War I from Hungary/Romania.<sup>18</sup> The Renaissance Theatre, which Kaufmann radically redesigned in 1926–1927, is particularly well preserved. The new auditorium, built into an acute–angled corner building (1901–1902, designed by Reimer & Körte), was given the unconventional designed of a semi–circular porch as an entrance foyer and was clad in reddish rosewood in the auditorium and adorned with a circumferential inlay/intarsia above the balcony, while the foyer and lobby are kept in expressionist décor with strongly coloured plaster surfaces (Fig.7).<sup>19</sup>

**CINEMAS**

The role of the ‘cinematographic theatres’ or ‘living pictures theatres’, which quickly moved out of pubs and back rooms and into their own new buildings after the First World War, proved to be more effective on a wide scale than the cultural education and entertainment offered by the spoken word theatres, musical theatres and variety theatres. ‘*In no other European city,*’ wrote the Hungarian journalist Eugen Szatmari in his 1927 book on Berlin, ‘*can you find cinemas that are so huge and so splendidly, even lavishly, equipped as the huge cinema palaces of Berlin.*’<sup>20</sup> The ‘moving pictures’ of the film and cinema industry probably constituted the most powerful innovation in the cultural sector. Like radio broadcasting with its radio towers and broadcasting halls,<sup>21</sup> the performing art of film acting with its large assembly halls gave rise to entirely new types of buildings with outdoor advertising and illuminated signs that dominated the cityscape. The city had almost 50 cinemas with more than 1,000 seats in the interwar period (Fig. 8).<sup>22</sup>

The Babylon Cinema (Kino Babylon), built in 1927–1929 in connection with a residential building block to a design by Hans Poelzig, is one of the long–standing addresses of Berlin cinema culture. Until today is interior reminds us iof when the cinema had an

<sup>17</sup> Maier, H. (2024). *Markthalle I, Großes Schauspielhaus, Friedrichstadt-Palast: Helmut Maier's Berlin topographies I* [In print].

<sup>18</sup> Hansen, A. (2001). *Oskar Kaufmann: Ein Theaterarchitekt zwischen Tradition und Moderne* [Oskar Kaufmann: A theatre architect between tradition and modernity]. Gebr. Mann Verlag.

<sup>19</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Berlin monument database entry (Motivhaus, today Renaissance Theatre)* (object no. 09096186). Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09096186](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09096186)

<sup>20</sup> Szatmari, E. (2021). *Das Buch von Berlin* (Was nicht im 'Baedeker' steht, Vol. I; 2nd ed.). Milena. (Original work published 1927)

<sup>21</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Berlin monument database entry (Radio Tower at the Berlin Trade Fair Grounds)* (object no. 09040498). Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09040498](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09040498); Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Berlin monument database entry (Berlin House of Broadcasting)* (object no. 09096346). Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09096346](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09096346)

<sup>22</sup> VisitBerlin. (n.d.). *Special cinemas in Berlin: Raise the curtain*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from <https://www.visitberlin.de/en/blog/special-cinemas-berlin>



organ for the silent movies of the golden age of metropolitan cinema culture.<sup>23</sup> The Titania Filmpalast, designed by the architects Ernst Schöffler, Carlo Schloenbach & Carl Jacobi in the style of New Objectivity and Art Deco based on American models, opened at the beginning of 1928 and was considered a sensation.<sup>24</sup> At least the restored exterior of the Titania cinema with its light architecture is a reminder of this in the cityscape, which after 1945 served also as the founding location of the Free University of Berlin (1948) and the Berlinale Film Festival (1951). The cinema of the Roxy–Palast (1928–1929, Martin Punitzer), which was integrated into an office and commercial building and whose continuous window strips in its upper floors were intended to symbolise film strips, can also recall the historical concept of the listed steel skeleton building with its renovated façade after its post-wa and reconstruction.<sup>25</sup>

The urbanistic and aesthetic flagship of modern cinema architecture, however, is probably Erich Mendelsohn’s ‘Universum Kino’, an elegant semi-circular brick building, that slides streamlined into the cityscape and is effectively accentuated by an overtopping advertising tower.<sup>26</sup> The dynamically shaped cinema icon was built in 1925–31 as part of a large residential and commercial quarter, called the WOGA complex and also designed by Mendelsohn, but it soon lost its original cinema function and, in the wake of war and redevelopment, also lost its historic building fabric, before the exterior walls were rebuilt following the original model of the ‘Roaring 1920s’ (1978–1981, Jürgen Sawade) (Fig. 9).<sup>27</sup>

Since the 1980s the public has used this former movie palace a modern event location under the name *Schaubühne* (‘theatre stage’). The film tradition and the cinematic function of the monument were thus finally lost, but not the sensational architecture of Erich Mendelsohn’s *Universum–Palast* has been preserved. The art of acting moved (transferred) into the legendary premiere cinema. The interior reorganisation of the former cinema building however stands as theatre also in the avant-garde tradition of Berlin Modernism. No theatre in the German art metropolis is more reminiscent of the bold vision of the ‘total theatre’ (as postulated by Walter Gropius and Erwin Piscator



Fig.10. a) Expressionist extension of the Veterinary Medicine University by a Surgical Horse Clinic, Berlin Mitte, Hannoversche Str. 23–26, 1923–1926, planned by Walther Wolff (© Copyright: Müller Reimann Architekten Berlin); b) New objectivity extension of the University Women’s Clinic for the Faculty of Medicine in Berlin–Mitte, 1928–1932, planned by Walther Wolff (source: Jörg Haspel, ICOMOS Germany).



Fig. 11. Entrance tower block to the campus of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Brain Research in Berlin–Buch, built 1928–1929 according to plans by Carl Sattler, the institute building on the outskirts of the city was occupied in 1931 (source: Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, photo Wolfgang Bittner).

in 1925) than the playhouse theatre in the architectural icon of a famous metropolis cinema, equipped with three flexibly changeable and combinable stage spaces.<sup>28</sup>

**BUILDINGS FOR SCIENCE AND RESEARCH**

In a certain sense, the decades of the German Empire from 1871 to 1918 also saw a flowering of scientific and research architecture in the German capital. However, after the revolution and abdication of the monarchy, first construction activities in the area of academic research and teaching facilities were limited to conversions and additions to existing buildings that continued to be used for university activities.

In the streetscape of the inner city, the interwar extension layer on the traditional campus of the University of Veterinary Medicine (Hannoversche Straße 23–26 in Berlin–Mitte) is particularly impressively designed and preserved; the traditional complex was completed by a Surgical Horse Clinic (from 1923 to 1926, designed by ‘Regierungs– und Baurat’ Walther Wolff), today in use with the Institute for Sport Sciences. The side façade accentuated by a stepped gable and the passing through arcade motif of pointed gable rows on the ground floor lend the street façades expressionist accents under a traditionally pitched roof; inside, the strong colouring of the stairwells and corridors continued the expressive design attitude (Fig. 10).<sup>29</sup>

The expansion of the University Women’s Clinic at the Medical Faculty, which was built in the city centre between 1928 and 1932, was planned by the same architect, but is stylistically shaped in the unadorned forms of the ‘New Building’ or ‘New Objectivity’ style (‘Neues Bauen’, ‘Neue Sachlichkeit’). In particular, the semicircle of the elegant

<sup>23</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Berlin monument database entry (Residential housing blocks with integrated Kino Babylon) (object no. 09080043)*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09080043](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09080043)

<sup>24</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Berlin monument database entry (Titania Film Palace) (object no. 09096186)*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from <https://www.berlin.de/landesdenkmalamt/denkmaele/highlight-denkmale-der-alliierten/usa/steglitz-zehlendorf/titania-palast-647674.php>

<sup>25</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Berlin monument database entry (Roxy Palace) (object no. 09066236)*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09066236](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09066236)

<sup>26</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Berlin monument database entry (Universum Cinema / Theater Stage in the WOGA housing complex) (object no. 09011464)*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09011464](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09011464)

<sup>27</sup> Haspel, J. (1997). *Das Universum-Kino von Erich Mendelsohn. In Reconstruction in heritage conservation: Reflections, definitions, case studies* (Schriftenreihe des Deutschen Nationalkomitees für Denkmalschutz, Vol. 57, pp. 147–151). Deutsches Nationalkomitee für Denkmalschutz.

<sup>28</sup> Brandt, S., Haspel, J., & Ziesemer, J. (Eds.). (2023). *Sein oder Nichtsein? Theaterbauten in der Sanierung* (ICOMOS – Journals of the German National Committee, LXXX, chap. V, pp. 177–200). ICOMOS German National Committee.

<sup>29</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Berlin monument database entry (Surgical equine clinic, Hannoversche Straße) (object no. 09055040)*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09055040](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09055040)

head end building, which has a striking flat roof, and the sober, fair-faced plaster surface contrast effectively with the neighbouring institute and clinic buildings of the medical faculty from before WWII.<sup>30</sup>

URBAN EXPANSION AND NEW LOCATIONS FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

The vision of moving Berlin universities together and outside the gates of the growing metropolis resulted after the Greater Berlin Act of 1920 in new projects of concentrating scientific and research institutions on the outskirts or in the former surrounding countryside. Thus the first Institute Buildings for Brain Research were executed in the north-east of the expanding metropolis, near the sanatoriums of Berlin–Buch, which had already been developed into a hospital city between 1898 and 1930. Designed by the Munich architect Carl Sattler (1977–1966), the building was considered the world’s largest and most modern brain research centre in 1930s.<sup>31</sup> However, the complex was to achieve sad fame during the Second World War as the site became a main base of the National Socialist euthanasia policy of forced sterilisations and mass killings (Fig. 11).<sup>32</sup>

One of the most innovative contributions in terms of architecture and engineering was the Nazi era expansion of the site of the German Aerospace Centre (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt – DLR), which had already stablished itself at the old Johannisthal–Adlershof airfield before World War I. The aviation complex received new impetus in the course of Germany’s re–armament and preparation for war during the Nazi era.<sup>33</sup> The sculptural concrete shell structures and functional, elegant brick workshop halls (1932–1940, architects Hermann Brenner and Werner Deutschmann) have been preserved. Far beyond Berlin, they are recognized asone of the most impressive architectural and technical monuments for laboratory and test facilities of a military–oriented aerospace research (Fig. 12).<sup>34</sup>

The idea of new and comprehensive university city on the outskirts of the metropolis took off again in the course of the National Socialist plans to transform Berlin into the ‘World Capital Germania’.<sup>35</sup> Inspired by the large–scale campus projects in Madrid and Rome at the end of the 1920s (and following US models) a monumental university



Fig. 12. Reinforced concrete shell buildings of the aerodynamic test facilities of the German Aerospace Research Centre (DLV) in Berlin–Treptow (Johannisthal/Adlershof), built in 1932–1940, designed by Hermann Brenner (1899–1969) with Werner Deutschmann (source: Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, photo W. Bittner 2010).



Fig. 13. Einstein Tower in Potsdam near Berlin, built in 1919–1924 as astrophysical observation tower; hand sketch by Erich Mendelsohn,1919 (source: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstbibliothek).

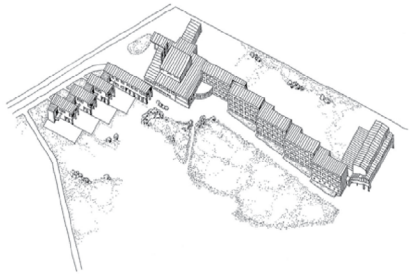


Fig. 14. Isometry of the Federal School of the General German Trade Union Confederation (ADGB) in Bernau by the architect and Bauhaus director Hannes Meyer with Hans Wittwer (1928–1930) (source: Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz – [https://www.denkmalschutz.de/fileadmin/\\_processed\\_/2/d/\\_csm\\_14\\_Bernau\\_BB\\_Bundesschule\\_der\\_ADGB\\_Bild1\\_ADBG\\_e88c8fbf5e.jpg](https://www.denkmalschutz.de/fileadmin/_processed_/2/d/_csm_14_Bernau_BB_Bundesschule_der_ADGB_Bild1_ADBG_e88c8fbf5e.jpg)).

city was planned by the Third Reich adjacent to the 1936 Berlin Olympic grounds. In autumn 1937 the foundation stone was laid for the first building of the new university: the Wehrtechnische Fakultät (Military Engineering Faculty; architect Hans Malwitz) in Grunewald was planned to become the founding structure for the new university and its expansion into the capital of the ‘Thousand–Year Reich’. But work was stopped at the beginning of the war in 1939.<sup>36</sup> After 1945, the unfinished structures of the Third Reich Faculty of Military Technology was filled in with the war rubble of the destroyed city and piled up to become the highest elevation in West Berlin – and the site of a radar station for the US and British Allies (Field Station). In 2018, the artificial hill called ‘Teufelsberg’ (Devil’s Mountain), including the Cold War monitoring station operated by the US and UK as well as the subterranean archaeological remains of the planned Nazi facilities, was listed as a historical monument area.<sup>37</sup>

(Fig. 13) What has become known beyond Germany’s borders are, indeed, two building complexes of interwar modernism that were executed close to the gates of the city of Berlin as research and adult education facilities and can be understood as scientific architecture. Probably the most spectacular building is the Einstein Tower in Potsdam. Designed by the Jewish architect Erich Mendelsohn (born in Allenstein, today – Olsztyn, in Poland) and built between 1920 and 1922 as an observatory with a solar telescope for astrophysical observations on the former ‘Telegraph Mountain’ (*Telegrafenberg*), the innovative research complex was to enter the world history of science and architecture of the 20th century. It became an early modern architectural icon of (i.e. non–decorative) expressionism and a key sculptural building in Erich Mendelsohn’s oeuvre, which made him world–famous (although it has not yet been added to or nominated for the UNESCO’s World Heritage List).<sup>38</sup>

BUILDINGS FOR ADULT AND LABOUR EDUCATION

The former Federal School of the General Federation of Trade Unions (Bundesschule für den Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbund) in Bernau, neighbouring Berlin, underwent better development. Opened in 1930 and designed by the then Bauhaus director Hannes Meyer (1889–1954) as a model complex for trade union education, it was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2017 as an addition to the Bauhaus sites in Weimar and Dessau.<sup>39</sup> What is impressive is not only the comprehensive layout of the seminar and lecture halls as well as recreation and sports rooms, including student

<sup>30</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Berlin monument database entry (Women’s hospital complex of the University) (object no. 09080143)*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09080143](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09080143)

<sup>31</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Hirnforschung mit Direktorenwohnhaus und Mitarbeiterwohnhaus (Berlin–Buch) (Objektnr. 09090541)*. Berlin monument database. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09090541](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09090541)

<sup>32</sup> Schwarzbach, A. F. (n.d.). *Memorial sculpture for the victims of brain research (1939–44) (2000). Anna Franziska Schwarzbach – Arbeiten im Stadtraum*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from <https://www.franziska-schwarzbach.de/arbeiten-im-stadtraum/berlin-buch-mdc>

<sup>33</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Ensemble of the German Research Institute for Aviation (DLV), Adlerhof/ Johannisthal (object no. 09045242)*. Berlin monument database. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09045242](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09045242)

<sup>34</sup> Dunger, M. (2011). The concrete shell structures at the former Berlin-Johannisthal airport as architectural and technical heritage of aviation and aerospace research. In S. Brandt, J. Haspel, & M. Petzet (Eds.), *World Heritage and European Heritage Label in Germany: Potentials and nomination proposals* (ICOMOS Journals of the German National Committee, Vol. 51, pp. 60–64). ICOMOS German National Committee.

<sup>35</sup> Schäche, W. (1991). *Architecture and urban planning in Berlin between 1933 and 1945: Planning and building under the auspices of the city administration* (Die Bauwerke und Kunstdenkmäler von Berlin, Suppl. Vol. 17). Gebr. Mann Verlag; Independent Commission of Historians ‘Planning and Building under National Socialism: Preconditions, Institutions, Impacts,’ in cooperation with the Akademie der Künste. (2023). *Power space violence: Planning and building under National Socialism* [Exhibition catalogue]. Akademie der Künste.

<sup>36</sup> Ebert, H., & Rupieper, H.-J. (1979). Technical science and National Socialist armament policy: The Faculty of Military Technology at the Technical University of Berlin 1933–1945. In R. Rürup (Ed.), *Science and society: Contributions to the history of the Technical University of Berlin 1879–1979* (Vol. 1, pp. 469–494). Springer.

<sup>37</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Mountain of rubble and former listening station Teufelsberg (object no. 09097869)*. Berlin monument database. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09097869](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09097869)

<sup>38</sup> Huse, N. (Ed.). (2000). *Mendelsohn: Der Einsteinurm – Die Geschichte einer Instandsetzung* (Baudenkmale der Moderne). Karl Krämer; Wüstenrot Stiftung. (n.d.). *Einsteinurm by Erich Mendelsohn, Potsdam*. Retrieved January 16, 2024, from <https://wuestenrot-stiftung.de/einsteinurm-erich-mendelsohn-potsdam/>

<sup>39</sup> Brenne, W. (2011). The ADGB trade union school in Bernau near Berlin – an extension of the Bauhaus World Heritage Sites in Weimar and Dessau? In S. Brandt, J. Haspel, & M. Petzet (Eds.), *World Heritage and European Heritage Label in Germany: Potentials and nomination proposals* (ICOMOS Journals of the German National Committee, Vol. 51, p. 35). ICOMOS German National Committee.



rooms and teachers’ houses, but also how the complex is embedded in and opens up to the surrounding landscape. After the National Socialist takeover in 1933, the facility was continued as the Reichsführer School by the Gestapo and SS and served, among other things, as preparation and training centre for the Nazis’ faked raid on the Gliwice (Gleiwitz) radio station on 31 August 1939 (Fig. 14).<sup>40</sup>

In fact, even before the First World War, the trade unions and cooperatives that emerged from the labor movement were able to build or acquire their own facilities.<sup>41</sup> In Berlin, this was a local trade union headquarters (around 1900, extended in 1907, Reimer&Körte), also known as the ‘Red Castle’ after its Mark Brandenburg brick Gothic style. In addition to offices and meeting or seminar rooms are restaurant halls and an event space for lectures and other social or cultural purposes.<sup>42</sup>

Of the trade unions that concentrated their national headquarters in Berlin after 1918, some created quite ambitious modernist buildings that also served to teach and train workers. In 1922/23, Max Taut (1884–1967) and Franz Hoffmann (1852–1932) lead the way to an intentionally progressive trade union architecture / trade union design with the striking reinforced concrete frame construction of the headquarter for the Confederation of German Trade Union headquarters (ADGB) in Berlin–Mitte (*Wallstraße*), a pioneering achievement of modern architecture with expressionist echoes in the façade grid.<sup>43</sup> Taut and Hoffmann also designed the building of the Bundesverband der Buchdrucker (Federal Association of Book Printers), a reinforced concrete skeleton building with brick façades in the New Objectivity style completed a little later (1924–1926) (Fig. 15).<sup>44</sup>

Not far from the ‘Red Castle’ mentioned above is the Transport Workers’ Union headquarters, sometimes referred to as the ‘Taut House’. The work of the architectural team of brothers Bruno and Max Taut with Franz Hoffmann, it was completed around 1930. The reinforced concrete skeleton building, clad with shell limestone panels, stands out from the brick architecture of the Berlin trade union in its choice of materials and colours as well as the elegantly rounded corner that bring a metropolitan touch to the working–class district of Kreuzberg.<sup>45</sup> Not far from the trade union building on Michaelkirchplatz, the towering Consumer Co–operative Department Stores (1931–33, Kaufhaus der Konsum Einkaufsgenossenschaft) on the Oranienplatz was also designed



Fig. 15. The expressionist corner building of the headquarter of the General German Trade Union Federation (ADGB) in Berlin–Mitte (*Wallstraße/Inselstraße*), by Max Taut and Franz Hoffmann (1922–1923) (source: photo Shaun92, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adgb-gebaeude01.jpg?uselang=de%20\(2021\)BB\\_Bundesschule\\_der\\_ADGB\\_Bild1\\_ADBG\\_e88c8fbf5e.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adgb-gebaeude01.jpg?uselang=de%20(2021)BB_Bundesschule_der_ADGB_Bild1_ADBG_e88c8fbf5e.jpg)).



Fig. 16. German Metalworkers’ Trade Union Centre (DMV Haus) in Berlin–Kreuzberg (*Hallesches Tor*), built in 1929–1930, arch. Erich Mendelsohn and Rudolf Reichel: the glazed meeting room on the top floor has a speakers pulpit, which is orientated towards both the interior of the building and the space in front of it (source: Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, photo W. Bittner 2015).

<sup>40</sup> ADGB Trade Union School Bernau. (n.d.). *History of use. Bauhaus Denkmal Bundesschule Bernau*. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from <https://www.bauhaus-denkmal-bernaue.de/en/trade-union-school/usage-history.html>

<sup>41</sup> Hoffsten, A. (2017). *Das Volkshaus der Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland: Gemeinschaftsbauten zwischen Alltag und Utopie*. Böhlau; Blumenthal, W., Keller, E., & Kuba, K. (2013). *Mit den Groschen der Mitglieder: Gewerkschaftshäuser in Berlin 1900 bis 1933* (2nd ed., Schriften der Johannes-Sassenbach-Gesellschaft, No. 2). trafo Verlagsguppe.

<sup>42</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Former trade union building Engeldamm (object no. 09090026)*. Berlin monument database. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09090026](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09090026)

<sup>43</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Trade Union House Complex Wallstraße/Inselstraße (object no. 09035385)*. Berlin monument database. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09035385](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09035385)

<sup>44</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *House of the German Book Printers’ Association, Dudenstraße (object no. 09031131)*. Berlin monument database. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09031131](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09031131)

<sup>45</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *Former headquarters of the German Transport Workers’ Union, Michaelkirchplatz (object no. 09090028)*. Berlin monument database. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09090028](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09090028)

by Max Taut and his partners as a modern accent to the surrounding urban square space (Fig. 16).<sup>46</sup>

But above all, the headquarters of the German Metalworkers’ Association (Deutscher Metallarbeiter– Verband), designed by Erich Mendelsohn (with Rudolf W. Reichel) and inaugurated in 1930, became an iconic building symbolizing the power of the trade union and modern architecture in Germany. With the large assembly room in the attic housed in the head building and the rounded glass bay window of the speaker’s stand, the wedge–shaped corner building was intended to accommodate meetings and speeches in the hall and outdoors at the same time.<sup>47</sup> As they did with all trade union buildings – after 1933 the Nazis expropriated the dynamically streamlined Mendelsohn. And like most trade union headquarters, it was damaged in the World War. However, the headquarters of the metalworkers’ union along with the event hall and the spiral staircase have survived the last few decades comparatively unharmed.<sup>48</sup>

### WORLD HERITAGE RELATED MODERNISM IN EUROPE

For more than ten years, the Polish port city of Gdynia has been making a name for itself as an internationally important address for modern architecture under the motto ‘Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia’.<sup>49</sup> In the process, Berlin has occasionally appeared as a reference site. In 2019, the ‘Modernist Centre of Gdynia’ was included in the Polish Tentative List for UNESCO World Heritage as an ‘example of building an integrated community’. As part of the European ‘Triennial of Modernism’, initiated by the modern World Heritage Sites of Bauhaus and Berlin in 2013, experts from abroad presented the outstanding contribution of Gdynia to the history and legacy of modern movement in Europe, most recently by Marek Stepa and Robert Hirsch who informed in Berlin 2022 about the role of Jewish architects to modern Gdynia.

We are highly delighted about this growing network of World Heritage–related historical cities and cultural sites of modernity with the hub of Gdynia. The conference series ‘Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia’ as well as the European ‘Triennial of Modernism’ offers an excellent international platform to further intensify the exchange in the spirit of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. We wish the collegial sharing of knowledge between European centres of modern

<sup>46</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). Former department store of the consumer cooperative, Oranienplatz (object no. 09030773). Berlin monument database. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09030773](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09030773)

<sup>47</sup> Landesdenkmalamt Berlin. (n.d.). *House of the German Metalworkers’ Trade Union, Kreuzberg (object no. 09031113)*. Berlin monument database. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from [https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj\\_dok\\_nr=09031113](https://denkmaldatenbank.berlin.de/daobj.php?obj_dok_nr=09031113)

<sup>48</sup> Gutzke, P.–J. (1998). IG–Metall–Haus, Alte Jakobstraße / corner Lindenstraße. In *Reparieren, Renovieren, Restaurieren: Vorbildliche Denkmalpflege in Berlin* (pp. 32–33). Verlagsgruppe Wiederspahn; Haspel, J. (2008). The legacy of Erich Mendelsohn in the Berlin area – a brief assessment. In *The architectural heritage of the avant-garde in Russia and Germany* (ICOMOS Journals of the German National Committee, Vol. XLVIII), pp. 44–50). ICOMOS German National Committee. <https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/icomoshette/article/view/21130>

<sup>49</sup> Nevo–Goldberst, H. (2019). 20th century modern cities – Asmara, Gdynia and Tel Aviv. In *Moderne neu denken: Architektur und Städtebau des 20. Jahrhunderts – zwischen Avantgarde und Tradition / Rethinking modernity: Architecture and urban planning of the 20th century – between avant-garde and tradition* (ICOMOS Journals of the German National Committee, Vol. 69, pp. 152–157). ICOMOS German National Committee. <https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/icomoshette/article/view/74592>



cultural heritage many stimulating meetings and cooperation opportunities in the future. And I wish Poland’s World Heritage initiative every success.

SUMMARY

The legacy of Berlin Modernism is not limited to the social housing estates and residential complexes of the Weimar Republic, which were inscribed as World Heritage Sites in 2008 or scheduled for extension in 2023. But the new residential neighbourhoods represent the exceptionally high social and design quality standards and the unique achievements of Berlin's reform efforts in the 1920s more clearly than any other built heritage of the interwar period, both in terms of their size and number as well as of their urban planning and architectural quality.

Compared to the social housing complexes that surrounded the historic centre of Berlin from the imperial era (1871--1918) with a loose wreath of new housing estates in the urban expansion areas of the Greater Berlin Act (1920), one would like to attest that the school and science buildings as well as the construction of cultural institutions are only in exceptional cases of outstanding significancet in terms of quantity and rarely make a striking appearance in the cityscape. The visionary concept of a “total theatre” by Walter Gropius and Erwin Piscator (1925) remained a utopia, a ground-breaking ‘paper architecture’. It is also noteworthy that public school and science buildings or new cultural centres were only exceptionally in exceptional instances oriented towards the topographical distribution of the new social housing estates.

Among those exceptions are some of the cinemas completed in the 1920s in the inner city, a few of which have even survived to this day as functioning theatres or film cinemas with adjacent residential neighbourhoods (Babylon, Schaubühne / Universum Kino). Like the construction of large cinemas and movie palaces that flourished after the 1918/19 revolution, the construction of trade union buildings with cultural and educational training space was one of the great achievements of Berlin's interwar modernism.

After the National Socialists assumed power in 1933, the planning of scientific buildings and campus facilities was to see an enormous upswing and open up new terrain on the outskirts or outside the big capital, but came to a standstill with the war economy and armaments industry of the Second World War. Mendelsohn’s world--famous architectural icon of the expressionist Einstein Tower (1920--22) near Berlin remains an exception to this day.

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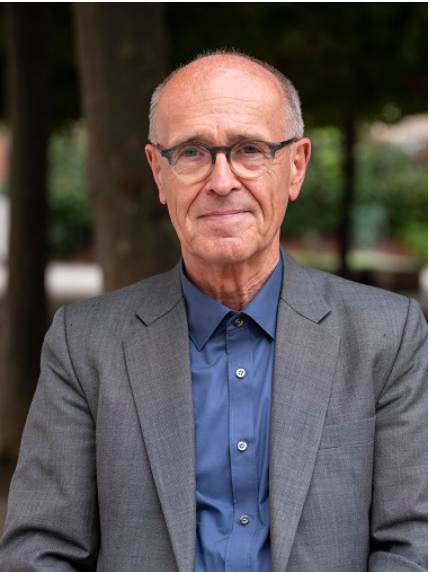
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II

# We rest!

## Hotels, Motels and Health Resorts in a Socialist Reality and Landscape

### ABSTRACT

Leisure for the working masses was one of the main propaganda slogans of the communist authorities. In Poland, as well as in other Eastern Bloc countries, tourism was the exclusive domain of the state. Recreational or spa qualities were decided exclusively by the relevant authorities and institutions, which determined the scale and nature of new investments. Residential and leisure investment policy was associated with traditional tourist destinations such as large cities, as well as the Baltic coast and mountain resorts. Holiday homes located in holiday resorts: by the sea, in the mountains and by lakes, were the realisation of the working class’s demand for leisure. The monopolist in the organisation of tourism in Poland was Union of the Tourism Industry 'Orbis', with a state-owned travel agency and a network of hotels in the largest cities. Already during the Gomulka era, the benefits of financing tourism were recognised. Costly investments in leisure and accommodation facilities became necessary, with the predominance of large hotels managed by state-owned companies. Every foreign tourist, especially those from outside the Iron Curtain, was desirable because of the foreign currency left behind. Hence the numerous investments made in the 1960s and 1970s. The main goal of the article is to outline the most important issues and to show the diversity of the processes related to leisure in a broad sense. The text discusses processes related to the development of the accommodation base and presents architectural solutions of hotel facilities located in Warsaw, Poznań, Kraków, Gdynia, Płock or Wałbrzych. The problem of motels as well as holiday homes and spas built in traditional tourist resorts in the mountains and at the seaside was discussed. The subject of hotel, tourist and spa architecture is also a starting point for discussions on broadening the area of research into the most interesting spatial phenomena in Poland located not only in large cities, but also outside the main centres. A separate issue is the manner of their recognition, as well as the problem of valorisation and protection of the recognised objects.

Keywords: architecture, hotels, tourism, leisure, spas, PRL

### INTRODUCTION

Vacationing and leisure for the working masses was one the main propaganda slogans of the political authorities in communist Poland. Vacations were seen as one of the major strengths of the new state, as well as ‘a conquest of the working class’ won as a result of the transformation of the political system after World Was II.<sup>1</sup> New investments in the vacationing infrastructure, hotels and spas became a part of the social policy focused, at least in theory, on workers. This resulted in the construction of a number of facilities of varying quality and value in well-known towns and holiday resorts. A significant advantage of these projects was their location in the most attractive regions. The architectural solutions differed to a great extent, depending on the combination of many external factors. It is important to examine these solutions due to the numerous changes and conversions as well as demolitions during the intervening years..

The aim of this text is to outline the mechanisms connected to the functioning of this sphere of life in Poland during the communist era, in addition to presenting trends and phenomena relevant to the development and evolution of architectural forms. It is an attempt to discuss the complexity of construction activities of the time within the broad scope of existing needs and capabilities.

Space for vacationing and leisure, namely hotels, motels, health resorts and vacation houses are an interesting albeit poorly researched topic. Tourism and recreational architecture have not been reviewed, so far, in a separate monograph. It should, however, be noted that a number of texts have emerged on specific hotels.<sup>2</sup> Relevant information can be found in other studies, in the form of chapters published in books and in articles of a contributory nature.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, architectural journals from the discussed period are also a rich source of knowledge.<sup>4</sup> The author’s research on the broadly understood operation of tourism services, including hotels, motels, vacation houses and health resorts, was based mainly on archival queries and literature studies, as well as in situ examinations, which are important due to ownership changes, numerous conversions and even demolitions. Furthermore, an interesting source of information were guidebooks published during the previous system.<sup>5</sup> Another key element for identifying the material resources of the tourism and hotel infrastructure is the analysis of the available iconographic data. In addition to drawings and photographs published in literature, accessed to archival illustrations found in research institutions and on websites

<sup>1</sup> Jarosz, D. (2001). Państwowe organizowanie wypoczynku: Fundusz Wczasów Pracowniczych w latach 1945–1956. *Polska 1944/45–1989: Studia i materiały*, 5, pp. 49–108.

<sup>2</sup> The first monograph on a hotel is dedicated to the Merkury Hotel in Poznań; see Krasicka, M. (2024). *Okna z widokiem na świat: Hotel Merkury w Poznaniu i luksus w PRL*. Wydawnictwo Miejskie Posenania.

<sup>3</sup> Zachwatowicz, J. (Ed.). (1968). *Budownictwo i architektura w Polsce 1945–1966*. Interpress; Szafer, T. P. (1972). *Nowa architektura polska: Diariusz lat 1966–1970*. Arkady; Szafer, T. P. (1979). *Nowa architektura polska: Diariusz lat 1971–1975*. Arkady; Szczerski, A. (2015). *Cztery nowoczesności: Teksty o sztuce i architekturze polskiej XX wieku*. DodoEditor; Marciniak, P. (2018). *Konteksty i modernizacje: Studia z dziejów architektury i urbanistyki w PRL*. Wydawnictwo Politechniki Poznańskiej; Cymer, A. (2019). *Architektura w Polsce 1945–1989*. Centrum Architektury.

<sup>4</sup> One of the main sources of information on the subject matter is the magazine *Architektura* published by the Board of the Association of Polish Architects between 1947 and 1991.

<sup>5</sup> Błądek, Z. (2003). *Dzieje krajowego hotelarstwa od zajazdu do współczesności: Fakty, obiekty, ludzie*. Albus, p. 42.



containing systematically collected materials also proved invaluable. Some of these materials were also accessed on dedicated social media.<sup>6</sup>

The discussed topic is a somewhat neglected, though certainly important part of the twentieth-century heritage, which requires further research as well as identification and evaluation. Such research is also necessary to answer questions about the role of this subject matter within the Polish landscape and to consider the scope of its potential protection.

### TOURISM, VACATIONING, AND LEISURE IN SOCIALIST POLAND

Tourism and vacationing in Poland during the socialist period were under the exclusive auspices of the state. Only relevant authorities and institutions were the sole determinants of the recreational quality of specific holiday and health resorts, whereas the maintenance and development of the actual facilities was the responsibility of specific state institutions and holidaymakers' – employers. The monopolist in the organisation of tourism was Zjednoczenie Gospodarki Turystycznej 'Orbis' (Association of Tourism Management), which operated a national travel agency of the same name. Already during the Gomułka era (after 1956) the authorities recognised the benefits of investing in tourism (including the need to build the required infrastructure). Moreover, all foreign tourists (especially from behind the Iron Curtain) were much desired for the foreign currency they left behind in Poland. Another participant in the development of tourist accommodation was Polskie Towarzystwo Turystyczno-Krajoznawcze 'PTTK' (Polish Tourism and Sightseeing Society), which became an investor in some major facilities, including in Chorzów, Kraków, Nowy Sącz, Płock, Sopot and Szczyrk.<sup>7</sup>

One cannot overlook the role of employers in organising their workers' tourism and vacations. The so-called social tourism played a huge role in shaping attitudes to the culture of travelling and vacationing, becoming one of the major accomplishments of the socialist state. The model featured a system of holiday referrals, and the vacations were organised by employers, who managed and invested in their own facilities.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from domestic tourism, another area was international travel. Up until 1956, holidays abroad did not practically exist. However, from the 1960s onwards, international tourism developed steadily, albeit the focus was rather on attracting foreign visitors. In 1963 alone, Poland was visited by approximately 140,000 people from other countries. Forecasts for citizens of Poland travelling abroad in the early 1960s predicted some 330,000 travellers, of which only several thousand sojourned to the West. In the 1970s,

<sup>6</sup> This includes the online photographic databases Fotopolska and Bankfoto.

<sup>7</sup> A considerable portion of the text is based on Marciniak, P. (2018). *Konteksty i modernizacje: Studia z dziejów architektury i urbanistyki w PRL*. Wydawnictwo Politechniki Poznańskiej.

<sup>8</sup> Grabowski, J. (2010). Turystyka społeczna w wybranych zakładach pracy. In A. Stasiak (Ed.), *Turystyka społeczna w regionie łódzkim* (pp. 157–172). Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Turystyki i Hotelarstwa w Łodzi.



Fig.1. The most famous Polish hotels of the 1960s: Warszawa, 'Dom Chłopa' hotel, 1957–1962, arch. B. Pniewski, M. Handzelewicz-Wacławek (source: from the PAP collection /National Digital Archive, ref. pap\_19641001\_00J).

the regulations were considerably relaxed and in 1975 the number of arrivals was approximately 3.5 million, reaching nearly 9.6 million in the late 1970s.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the facilities of major employers (primarily mines and metalworks), the organizing of vacations and leisure activities was also in the hands of Fundusz Wczasów Pracowniczych (Workers' Vacation Fund), which was established in 1945. In accordance with the contemporary doctrine, the fund was to promote and provide vacation places for the 'working class'.<sup>10</sup> Shortly after World War II, the fund managed only seven vacation houses, but by 1945 it had fifty-four facilities situated in various parts of Poland. Over time, its resources significantly expanded, and by 1956 had reached 314 facilities with 37.4 thousand beds.<sup>11</sup>

### HOTEL ARCHITECTURE

In the aftermath of World War II, the priority in constructions was the rebuilding of housing. However, as time went by, the aforementioned prominent character of tourism, as well as the shortage of accommodation for vacationing workers and foreign visitors, made it essential to expand the existing tourist and hotel infrastructure. One of the first facilities was Dom Turysty PTTK (PTTK Tourist House) built in 1962.<sup>12</sup> It was designed by Warsaw architect Marek Leykam, one of the most original postwar designers, who accentuated the building with characteristic 'razorblades,' that is, vertical divisions of the façade. A major architectural feature of the building was its prominent form. With an unusual hexagonal shape overhanging the Vistula River valley, this small facility with 64 beds broke stereotypes and aligned itself with the modern trend of contemporary explorations in the field of new hotels.<sup>13</sup>

An expression of a new view on hotels constructed within historic neighbourhoods was Dom Turysty PTTK in Krakow designed in the late 1950s by Stanisław Spyt and Zbigniew Mikołajewski. Built between 1959 and 1963 on Westerplatte Street in the Old Town, it departed from the existing approach to architecture in historic surroundings. The intriguing composition consisted of two sections. With the front slightly recessed from the street, the five-storey building with a sculpted façade fitted into the historic context of the city centre. At the time of its construction, this was the largest tourist facility of its kind in Poland, providing nearly a thousand beds to visitors. Its extensive functional

<sup>9</sup> All information is based on Sowiński, P. (2002). Turystyka zagraniczna w Polsce w latach 1956–1980. *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 34, pp. 135–145.

<sup>10</sup> Jarosz, D. (2001). Państwowe organizowanie wypoczynku: Fundusz Wczasów Pracowniczych w latach 1945–1956. *Polska 1944/45–1989: Studia i materiały*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Jarosz, D. (2001). Państwowe organizowanie wypoczynku: Fundusz Wczasów Pracowniczych w latach 1945–1956. *Polska 1944/45–1989: Studia i materiały*, 5, p. 91.

<sup>12</sup> Zachwatowicz, J. (Ed.). (1968). *Budownictwo i architektura w Polsce 1945–1966*. Interpress, p. 102.

<sup>13</sup> Mokrzyński, J. (Ed.). (1973). *Urządzenia turystyczne*. Arkady; Mokrzyński, J. (1990). *Architektura wolnego czasu*. Nasza Księgarnia.

programme and relatively high standard (the rooms had individual bathrooms), made the complex very popular among visitors in Krakow.<sup>14</sup>

The shortage of hotel accommodation was especially acute in Warsaw, hence the urgent need to create a hotel base, which was essential for the functioning of the capital city. One of the first notable buildings was Dom Chłopa (Peasant House) built between 1957 and 1962 in Powstańców Warszawy Square (Fig. 1). Erected using public contributions collected by social committees, it was a continuation of a farmers’ initiative from before World War II. The shape of the building with an undulating roof reminiscent of wheat fields was the work of Bohdan Pniewski and Małgorzata Handzelewicz–Wacławek.<sup>15</sup>

A slightly greater openness to the world in the early 1960s resulted in an influx of international visitors. The authorities’ intention and practical need was to build a chain of hotels in every major city run by the state-owned Orbis enterprise, focused on serving tourists from abroad. For these cities, the new hotels often became a symbol of modernity, despite lacking any particularly refined architectural form. Still, in the conditions of the time, higher-class hotels intended for guests from the West served not only as accommodation, but in many cases became synonymous with socialist luxury.

The first of these hotels were built in the largest Polish economic, tourist and commercial centres, becoming from the outset a showcase of modernity and the technical capabilities of the time. One such hotel was the Cracovia in Krakow (Fig. 2). Designed by Witold Cęckiewicz and associates, it was built in a unique location near Kraków’s Błonia Park, opposite the National Museum. The location of the hotel was established in the general masterplan for Kraków and at the time of its construction in 1965 it was the longest (150 metres) and one of the largest and most modern hotel buildings in the country. This was the first time when prefabricated technology was used in the construction of a hotel (which later became almost a standard, as discussed below). The five-storey building offered 510 beds, as well as a restaurant, a conference room, and a casino. The adjacent Kijów Cinema at the rear of the hotel formed a single spatial complex with the hotel building.<sup>16</sup> Its excellent proportions, interesting composition and characteristic staggered layout of the façade made the Cracovia one of the most distinctive buildings of its kind in Poland.<sup>17</sup> Currently, discussions are underway about its future. The purchase from a private owner and the outcome of an architectural competition for its intended use as a cultural institution offer hope for the Cracovia’s second life.

A contrast to the Cracovia was the Forum Hotel in Krakow designed by Janusz Ingarden, located near the Vistula River. The exposed, one can even say brutalist structure housed 278 air-conditioned rooms with automatic controls and all the amenities typical of the



Fig. 2. The most famous Polish hotels of the 1960s: Kraków, 'Cracovia' hotel, 1966–1967, arch. W. Cęckiewicz with team (source: from the PAP collection/ National Digital Archive, photo: Henryk Hermanowicz, ref. pap\_19891000\_00G).



Fig. 3. Warsaw, hotel 'Victoria' 1976, arch. Z. Pawelski, L. Solonowicz, A. Dzierżawski, D. Fraser, K. Hultin, S. Kaim (source: from the PAP collection /National Digital Archive, ref. pap\_19860116\_004).

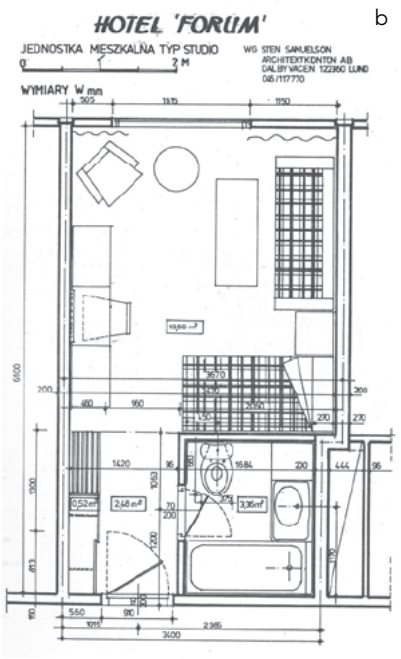


Fig. 4. Warszawa, Orbis 'Forum';1972–1974, arch. S. Samuelson: a) the shape of the hotel, photo Henryk Hermanowicz (source: from the PAP collection /National Digital Archive, ref. pap\_19891100\_03N); b) functional layout of hotel room (source: Z. Błądek, *Kształtowanie programów i funkcji hoteli miejskich*, Poznań 1987).

best hotels. The construction of one of the most modern hotels in Krakow, took ten years and was completed in 1989.

More such high-standard hotels were built in large cities and were targeted at wealthier, primarily foreign clients. The hotels, mostly belonging to the Polish state-owned Orbis chain, were extraordinary places within the austere socialist larger reality. Many accepted only foreign currencies, which effectively limited the number of Polish visitors. Almost all of the hotels housed Pewex stores, which offered goods that were unavailable on the domestic market. Over time, the hotels became a site of an emerging subculture, and the architectural entourage contributed in a way to a semblance of the West in Poland. The new architecture reflected modernisation trends and presented a new attitude and an openness to the world. Many of the solutions represented contemporary trends in hotel construction, which were apparent, for example, in Scandinavian projects.

Among the most famous hotels of the time was the Victoria in Warsaw (Fig. 3), which was part of the InterContinental chain. The hotel was built in 1976 on the site of the Kronenberg Palace, which had been demolished in the early 1960s. This was a problematic location facing Piłsudskiego Square, whilst ignoring the historical context of Małachowskiego Square. A team of Polish and Swedish architects designed a building that immediately became one of the most important monuments of the Gierek era, a symbol of luxury and openness to the world; one that was described in literature and appeared in numerous films and television series. Constructed by Swedish contractors using prefabricated technology, the building featured a covered arcade along the entire length of the façade and repeated rows of square windows of the then-fashionable reflective glass.<sup>18</sup> At that

<sup>14</sup> The former Dom Turysty is now Hotel Wyspiański; see Smaga, M. (n.d.). *Dom Turysty PTTK. Szlak Modernizmu*. Retrieved January 29, 2024, from <https://szlakmodernizmu.pl/baza-obiektow/dom-turysty-pttk/>

<sup>15</sup> Szafer, T. P. (1979). *Nowa architektura polska: Diariusz lat 1971–1975*. Arkady.

<sup>16</sup> Błądek, Z. (2003). *Dzieje krajowego hotelarstwa od zajazdu do współczesności: Fakty, obiekty, ludzie*. Albus, p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> The building has been listed in the register of historic monuments since 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Zieliński, J. (2011, January 25). *Hotel Victoria. Kultura Liberalna*. Retrieved May 4, 2018, from <https://kulturaliberalna.pl/2011/01/25/zielski-hotel-victoria/>



time, it was one of the few hotels that could accommodate royalty and government officials as well as foreign film stars and musicians. It is worth noting that the interiors created an atmosphere that differed completely from the local spaces in the dull reality of the Polish People's Republic.

The aforementioned Scandinavian themes are also evident in another Swedish development in Warsaw, namely the Forum Hotel (now Novotel; Fig. 4). This was built between 1972 and 1974 for the Orbis travel agency, based on the design of Swedish architect Sten Samuelson, a professor at the Lund Technical School.<sup>19</sup> Like the Victoria Hotel, it was built by the Swedish Skanska Cementgjuteriet. At over one hundred meters tall, it was Warsaw's second tallest building at the time of its construction, after the Palace of Culture and Science. Facing Marszałkowska Street, it complemented and subordinated the buildings of the Eastern Wall, lending a cosmopolitan air to this part of the city.

Poznań, home to the annual Poznań International Fair, was a prime location for hotel construction. Although over the years, private lodgings compensated for the severe shortage of accommodation for visitors, private lodgings could not fill the hospitality gap. One of the first and most characteristic hotels associated with the city was the Merkury (Fig. 5). A greater openness to the world following the 1956 Poznań protests contributed to the construction of this distinctive building, designed by Jan Cieśliński, Jan Węclawski, and Jerzy Grochulski. Opened in 1964, it was the most modern hotel in Greater Poland. The building was designed as a two-part body, with a heavily glazed ground floor and a seven-story hotel section, in an unusual Y-shaped configuration. The main entrance was covered with an expressive awning, and the exterior walls were clad with ceramic tiles in a unique checkerboard pattern. Unfortunately, the building's modernisation in the late twentieth century, in addition to adapting it to new hotel standards, altered the original rhythm of the windows in the façades, which led to a complete loss of its original character.<sup>20</sup>

In subsequent years, the chain of hotels in Poznań was expanded with the Polonez and the Poznań, which were of a significantly larger scale, though lacking the elegance and sophistication of the Merkury. The technological domination of residential large-panel architecture supported by the premise of faster construction led to a dangerous tendency of also using the process in hotels. Both the Polonez and Poznań were built using this technology, although thanks to the designers, it did not completely impact on the final effect, allowing for the preservation of an original architectural form. The Orbis Poznań hotel (Fig. 6), whose design was developed by Jerzy Buszkiewicz and Józef Maciejewski at the Poznań-based Inwestprojekt office, was built in a downtown location after the demolition of the remains of former Prussian fortifications.<sup>21</sup> This interesting and distinctive building, with a 21-story residential section in a windmill configuration, was

<sup>19</sup> Błądek, Z. (2003). *Dzieje krajowego hotelarstwa od zjazdu do współczesności: Fakty, obiekty, ludzie*. Albus, p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> Pazder, J. (Ed.). (2008). *Atlas architektury Poznania*. Wydawnictwo Miejskie.

<sup>21</sup> SARP Competition No. 490; see Basista, A. (2001). *Betonowe dziedzictwo: Architektura w Polsce czasów komunizmu*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.



Fig. 5. Hotel Orbis 'Merkury', 1964, arch. J. Cieśliński, J. Węclawski, H. Grochulski (źródło: Herder-Institut w Marburgu, Archiwum Fotografii, Kolekcja Orth, Nr. 206772).



Fig. 6. Orbis 'Poznań' hotel, 1978, arch. J. Buszkiewicz, J. Lenartowicz, J. Liśniewicz, J. Maciejewski (source: from the PAP collection / National Digital Archive, ref. pap\_19890600\_03A).



Fig. 7. Spatial solutions of Polish hotels in the 1970s and mid-1980s: a) Wałbrzych, hotel 'Sudety', 1971 (source: Herder-Institut Marburg, Bildarchiv, Sammlung Arczynski, Nr. 307959); b) Gdynia, Orbis 'Gdynia' hotel, mid-1980s (source: from the PAP collection / National Digital Archive, ref. pap\_19891001\_01X).



constructed of large-panel concrete. Prefabricated elements were also used for the lower section, which included dining areas and an outdoor parking lot.<sup>22</sup> The second large hotel, the Polonez, designed by Czesław Nawrocki, was built at the same time along a post-fortification avenue, also using large-panel prefabrication. In the case of this hotel, located within the former Stübben ring, its height significantly exceeded the scale of the neighbouring buildings.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, thirty-four new hotels were built for Orbis, which at the time owned 60% of the country's hotel accommodations. The vast majority of the new buildings did not depart from the model of a rectangular, high-rise residential section connected directly to dining facilities and service areas. Many such buildings were erected displaying rather typical, repetitive solutions. Some of the examples include the Orbis Hotel in Gdynia, with its famous 'Piekietko' club in the underground part of the building, the Rzeszów Hotel in Rzeszów, the Prosna Hotel in Kalisz, the Cuprum Hotel in Legnica, the Kosmos Hotel in Toruń and the Sudety Hotel in Wałbrzych (Fig. 7).

A certain distinctness could be observed in the style of hotels located in foothills and mountains, if only because of the need to blend in with the existing terrain. In Zakopane, the Kasprowy Hotel, designed by Yugoslav architects, displayed a dynamic, bold

<sup>22</sup> In the early twenty-first century, the building was thoroughly modernised, and the façade was clad with metal panels. The designers of the modernisation were Wojciech Kolesiński, Andrzej Kurzawski, Mariusz Gramowski.

<sup>23</sup> Marciniak, P. (2010). *Doświadczenia modernizmu: Architektura i urbanistyka Poznania w czasach PRL*. Wydawnictwo Miejskie Poznań.



silhouette as a reference to the mountainous landscape. However, the scale of the building clearly departed from the character of local building traditions.

MOTELS IN SOCIALIST POLAND

The construction of motels was closely linked to the level of motorisation. Motels were known primarily in the United States and Western Europe, where they provided a place to rest during long journeys. At the beginning of the communist era, their construction was debatable due to the low car ownership. However, on the wave of the motorisation boom in the 1970s, such buildings also started emerging in Poland. The rapid growth of car transport required not only the development of an entire road infrastructure but also rest areas along the main national routes. The breakthrough came during the Gierek era of mass transport. While in 1946, with all but twenty–three thousand cars, there were practically no paved roads, in 1980 there were already about 180,000 km of roads serving 2.3 million cars. All this necessitated the intensive development not only of the road network, but also of the accompanying infrastructure.<sup>24</sup> One such flagship project, replicated in thirty–four locations, was the construction of ‘inns’ along the main national roads. The largest number of these was located in western Poland and they were known as the ‘Gościńce wielkopolskie.’ Designed in the mid–1970s by renowned Poznań architects Jerzy Buszkiewicz and Jan Kopydłowski, they were a reference to regional architecture, thus departing from the rigour of modern prefabrication (Fig. 8). Initially thatched, and later tiled, they became a characteristic feature of Polish roadsides. In addition, at the exits of some cities, small Orbis hotels also served this purpose.<sup>25</sup>

STATE–OWNED VACATION HOUSES AND HEALTH RESORTS

The earlier–mentioned concept of vacations and leisure for the working masses of towns and villages became not only one of the achievements of socialism, but also an obligatory element of the socialist narrative. One of the first large urban leisure and recreation complexes was Wojewódzki Park Kultury i Wypoczynku (Regional Park of Culture and Recreation) in Silesia, whose construction was initiated by General Jerzy Ziętek. This multifunctional complex surrounded by greenery was located on a huge area of 535 hectares in Chorzów and Katowice. To this day, it remains one of the main recreation centres of the entire Silesian agglomeration. Construction began in 1951 on devastated post–industrial land and continued over a number of years, largely through community efforts. It is impossible to list all the offered attractions, but among the



Fig. 8. Examples of inns/motels built according to the design of architects J. Buszkiewicz and J. Kopydłowski from the mid–1970s: a) inn–motel located on the national road E8 (source: Herder–Institut Marburg, Bildarchiv, Sammlung Orth, Nr. 209387); b) Wielkopolska inn located by the E8 road, 1974 (source: Herder–Institut Marburg, Bildarchiv, Sammlung Orth, Nr. 208426).



Fig. 9. Two types of camping cabins: a) camping cabins in the Water Station PTTK, 1970–1972 (source: fotopolska.eu); b) ‘Brda’ type bungalow at Budexpo exhibition in 1980 (source: from the collection of the National Digital Archive, photo by Rutowska Grażyna, ref. 40–3–166–3, public domain).

most popular were the amusement park, the zoo, the Silesian Stadium, the recently modernised planetarium, the rope park, and a whole range of other facilities.

A separate group of facilities were connected to mountain tourism locations and related auxiliary services. Some of these, especially those located in foothill areas, referred to regional forms, an example of which is Dom Turysty (Tourist House) in Zakopane designed by Wrocław architects Zbigniew Kupiec and Tadeusz Brzoza. Mountain shelters also made references to the characteristic features of regional architecture, where the designers based their work on the Zakopane style. The shelters were built not only in the Tatra Mountains, but also in a number of other places, often departing from the modernist paradigm in favour of exploring local identity. This was a notable exception, as modernism and the associated model of modern architecture had become almost the obligatory way to organise space.

One of the most original projects was the High–Mountain Meteorological Observatory on Śnieżka, the highest peak of the Karkonosze Mountains. Replacing an older building, the extremely original structure consisted of three circular overlapping saucers with diameters ranging from thirteen to thirty metres. Despite its futuristic shape, the new observatory blended in perfectly with the mountain panorama, proving that it was possible to combine avant–garde forms with the natural landscape.<sup>26</sup>

Other tourist locations were mainly linked to the construction of holiday resorts by the largest employers: factories, power plants and mines. Some of these were small–scale premises in the form of rather short–lived plywood and wooden cottages of a somewhat sentimental value, which certainly earned a place in the memory of the holidaymakers of that time. A special example of such facilities was the Brda cottage, a small wooden building of American origin modelled on the Elizabeth Reese House. Starting in 1957, it became popular in Poland, mainly due to its low price and quick assembly from prefabricated elements. The cottages were predominantly built in state–owned holiday resorts, PTTK tourist sites and company–owned vacation resorts. In the 1970s, during the rule of Edward Gierek, private customers were also allowed to purchase Brda cottages, which led to their subsequent enormous popularity (Fig. 9).

Vacation houses were built in resorts largely by the sea and in the mountains, followed by forest and lake areas. These were built by major employers, as well as by the main organiser of vacation and sanatorium stays, namely the state–owned Workers’ Vacation Fund. The investment policy for recreation was linked to the traditional tourist sites on the Polish coast, the Masurian Lake District, the Bieszczady Mountains, the Tatra Mountains and the Beskids. The facilities included large vacation and health resort complexes, as well as smaller hotels and vacation houses. Decisions to build holiday and leisure accommodation were guided by the state’s declared care for workers, in addition to the limited number of health and vacation resorts. The construction of tourist facilities, namely hotels, motels, and sanatoriums, as well as sports and recreation centres, gave architects a great opportunity to implement original design solutions due to their location

<sup>24</sup> Wilk, H. (2017). *Między pragmatyzmem a oczekiwaniami: Społeczeństwo, władza i samochody w Polsce 1945–1970*. Instytut Historii PAN.

<sup>25</sup> Marciniak, P. (2022). Komunikacja, samochód i miasto: Metamorfozy socjalistycznej urbanistyki a historyczna przestrzeń ośrodków miejskich. *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej: Architektura, Urbanistyka, Architektura Wnętrz*, 4, pp. 17–34.

<sup>26</sup> The building has been listed in the register of historic monuments since 2020.



and functional requirements. Some of these have become a permanent feature of the spatial landscape of coastal towns, for example the modernist Vacation House of the Central Council of Trade Unions (Bałtyk Sanatorium) in Kołobrzeg, designed by Halina Gurianowa and Edmund Goldzamt, built in 1964. It is interesting that also in this field attempts were made to push for standardisation and prefabrication, which in many cases had no economic justification.

A significant portion of the new vacation sites were direct investments by state-owned companies. One should note, however, that many tourist developments interfered with the existing non-urbanised landscape. A 1975 guide to construction activity in the mountains raised concerns about the risk of its getting out of control in small mountainous areas. The author also mentioned sites of particularly valuable landscape devastated by construction activity.<sup>27</sup>

A notable example of an area designated for vacationing was Ustroń-Jaszowiec.<sup>28</sup> The decision to build new facilities in Ustroń arose due to the area's very limited accommodation offer, but also to the discovery of rich deposits of therapeutic mud in the region. Another crucial factor was the vast number of people, especially in Silesia, suffering from work-related chronic illnesses, estimated at approximately one million.<sup>29</sup> The numerous new complexes of buildings featured a highly diverse functional and spatial program, as well as a variety of architectural solutions based on strip, block, and cluster layouts. The point of departure for the subsequent projects was a detailed spatial development plan for the Jaszowiec vacation complex near Wisła, developed in 1962 by Jerzy Winnicki, Czesław Kotela, Irena Kotela, and Zygmunt Winnicki. A series of vacation houses of modernist provenance, for example Juhas, Barbara and Gawarek, gracefully integrated into the mountain landscape (Fig. 10).<sup>30</sup> Also in Ustroń-Zawodzie, an unprecedented, grand complex of seventeen multi-story pyramids was erected between 1967 and 1990, picturesquely scattered along the slopes of Równica Mountain. A health and vacation resort, designed by Henryk Buszko and Aleksander Franta, covered an area of 200 hectares. Despite its gigantic scale, this unique project, thanks to the architects' excellent concept and skill, became a permanent fixture in the panorama of the Silesian Beskids (Fig. 11a).<sup>31</sup> Similar facilities were also built in Szczawnica, but fulfilling the functional program did not always guarantee seamless integration with the existing landscape. The Hutnik sanatorium, built in 1963 (Fig. 11b), and the later



Fig. 10. Ustroń-Jaszowiec, holiday house 'Gwarek', 1965–1973 (source: fotopolska.eu).



Fig. 11. Examples of Polish sanatorium designer in the 1960s: a) Ustroń-Zawodzie, sanatorium complex, 1967–1990, Dom Lecznico-Wypoczynkowy 'Narcyz' (source: KAW postcard, photo by J.Malinowski); b) Szczawnica, sanatorium 'Hutnik', 1963 (source: Herder-Institut Marburg, Bildarchiv, Sammlung Orth, Nr. 208517).

<sup>27</sup> Dębski, L. A. (1975). *Górskie osadnictwo wczasowe*. Instytut Turystyki, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Ciarkowski, B. (2021). Integralność a granice interwencji w modernistycznych zespołach zabudowy: Analiza przypadku dzielnic uzdrowskowo-wypoczynkowych w Ustroniu. *Ochrona Dziedzictwa Kulturowego*, 11, pp. 75–86.

<sup>29</sup> For example, arthritis which affected approximately one million people in Silesia.

<sup>30</sup> Winnicki, J. (1969). Jaszowiec – dzielnica wczasowa. *Architektura*, 2–3, pp. 42–47.

<sup>31</sup> Ciupka, M. (2023). *Designing holidays in the Polish People's Republic: Socialist modernism in Ustroń-Zawodzie holiday complex, 1967–1990* [Master's thesis].

Nauczycielskie ZNP and Narcyz sanatoriums, dating from 1978, were decidedly more typical.

In some cases, the bolder forms were an expression of the architects' independence and courage. This was a particular challenge in the landscape of the Tatra Mountains. A good example is the Harnaś Hotel built in 1969 on the slopes of Buńdowy Wierch, designed by Leszek Filar, Przemysław Gawor and Jerzy Piliowski. The spectacular building with its distinctive sloping shape, was a special place during the 'deep communist era,' offering a breath of modernity and the West, and where payment was accepted only in foreign currencies. Despite its strongly defined and dynamic form, it blended seamlessly with the Podhale landscape, and the view from the rooms, directed toward the Tatra Mountains, guaranteed a unique experience for those who stayed there.<sup>32</sup>

### CONCLUSION

The architecture of hotels and vacationing facilities from the communist era varies in terms of value. There exist some particularly outstanding locations that attract new visitors. However, the original standard of most of these facilities does not meet the expectations and needs of current users. Naturally, this necessitates modernisation and conversion. Of course, not everything can and should be protected, but it is too easy to lose the most valuable elements of this heritage. Once modernised, the buildings will irretrievably lose their original layout, character, and features. Unfortunately, the list of examples that have become a wasted opportunity to preserve the original character of valuable buildings is long.

So how can we protect hotels and tourist facilities? In many cases, it will be crucial to add them to regional inventories of historic monuments, whereas the most valuable buildings should be listed in the Register of Monuments. It should be key to correctly identify and evaluate buildings, bearing in mind that apart from their historical value, a significant number of them are important examples of architecture, although their rigid structural layout or the low ceilings of rooms sometimes prevents them from being adapted to new functions.<sup>33</sup> Most of these buildings function within the urban space and are subject to the laws of urban transformation, wherein change and even demolition are natural processes of structural transformation. However, decisions concerning conversion or potential demolition should be guided by the possibility of ensuring worthy successors. It is important for this process to be informed and as far as possible, controlled.

<sup>32</sup> After years of neglect, it was thoroughly renovated and reopened in 2014; see Trzcionka, W. (n.d.). *Legenda Harnasia w nowej odsłonie*. Design Alive. Retrieved December 8, 2017, from <http://www.designalive.pl/legenda-harnasia-w-nowej-odslonie/>

<sup>33</sup> The author has posed these questions in the past; see Marciniak, P. (2014). Niewygodny zabytek czy zła architektura? O kryteriach i sposobach ochrony powojennego dziedzictwa modernizmu. In R. Hirsch & J. Sołtyś (Eds.), *Modernizm w Europie – modernizm w Gdyni* (pp. 157–160). Urząd Miasta Gdyni.

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# Constitution Square in Gdynia

## History, Spatial Layout and Architecture

### ABSTRACT

Constitution Square is one of the most important elements of the City Centre of Gdynia. Both in the pre–War and the post–War times they built there some major buildings of public and social use, which today create a precious heritage of the Gdynia’s architecture. The origins of the square was connected mainly with the construction of the railway station and its layout was defined mainly in the interwar period, but after 1945 it underwent some major changes. Geometry of the square was shaped in few phases, following on the one hand the demands of the urban plans and on the other the layout of the buildings constructed in this place. The first phase comprises the years 1926– 1928 in which the first town–dedicated railway station was built – yet before the first urban plans for Gdynia were prepared. The second phase comprised the years 1928–1930, when the urban planners designed the spatial shape of the square as an important component of the Gdynia’s City Centre. The subsequent phases were marked by the dates of construction of the main buildings situated here: the State Agricultural Bank (1931), the Municipal and County Court (1936), the postwar railway station (1950) and the post–War postal complex (1965). All the objects built here constitute the distinguish architectural creations, and the distinguish realisation of public and social use. Unfortunately, the postal complex created in the 60. was situated outsides the historical building lines, which has a bad influence on the spatial consistency and cohesion to the whole square. Its harmonious, axial and symmetric composition was lost and consequently the square became only the burdensome communication node without any spatial and aesthetic values. The aim of this article was presenting the development of the Constitution Square in Gdynia and its architecture in the particular phases of development, as well as the composition rules which governed it. The research was meant to became a scientific basis to restore the historical and aesthetic values to the contemporary layout of the square. In conclusion of the article the author presented the conservatory recommendations and the conservation project of revalorisation the Constitution Square in Gdynia.

Keywords: Gdynia, Constitution Square, history, development, architecture, railway stadion, Agricultural Bank, court building, post office

### INTRODUCTION

In the interwar period, Gdynia looked like one huge construction site – between 1920 and 1939, both a large, modern seaport and a new city were virtually built from scratch. As soon as the spatial plans had been approved, the construction of seaport basins was commenced, and in the city, the streets and squares were laid out and arranged, and urban development was given a shape. However, the seaport development concept was evolving along with the changing economic situation, and the changes in the layout and size of the seaport basins introduced in 1926–30 had a significant impact on the spatial layout of the entire Gdynia City (Polish: Śródmieście). This was particularly true of the area directly adjacent to the seaport, i.e. the vicinity of the Gdynia railway station. The subject of this article is the creation and spatial development of the square in front of the railway station in Gdynia, i.e. Constitution Square (Polish: plac Konstytucji) initially called Railway Station Square (Polish: plac Dworcowy), as well as the creation and development of its architecture from the 1920s up to the present day.

Constitution Square is one of the most important elements of the structure of Gdynia City Centre. From the very beginning until the present day, important public city buildings have been built there and today they constitute valuable elements of Gdynia’s architectural heritage. The origins of the entire complex were linked to the development of the space in front of the railway station. The spatial form of the square itsel, which was created in several phases was determined both by the buildings erected next to the square and by the changes introduced to the urban concept of the seaport and the city.

The aim of the research is to present the history of Constitution Square and its architecture in its various stages of development, so that this analysis can serve as a basis for restoring the historical coherence of the contemporary layout. The article summary presents the main conclusions drawn from the research as well as main conservation and design guidelines for the restoration of the existing square space. These guidelines were also included in the project of the revitalization of Constitution Square in Gdynia, prepared by the author in 2023 for the city authorities. Research on the subject comprised literature and archival reviews along with inventory and field studies. So far, Gdynia Constitution Square itself has not been the subject of any scientific publications, but some of the buildings standing next to it – two railway stations and the court building – have already been partially presented in the literature, including magazines such as ‘Polski Przemysł Budowlany’ (Eng.: ‘Polish Construction Industry’),<sup>1</sup> ‘Architektura i Budownictwo’ (Eng.: ‘Architecture and Construction’)<sup>2</sup> and in the monograph Gdynia miasto dwudziestolecia

<sup>1</sup> Wołkanowski, J. (1926). Dworzec Kolejowy w Gdyni [Railway Station in Gdynia]. *Polski Przemysł Budowlany* [Polish Construction Industry], 9–10.

<sup>2</sup> Karpiński, Z., Sieczkowski, T., & Sołtyński, R. (1938). Gmach Sądów w Gdyni [Court Building in Gdynia]. *Architektura i Budownictwo* [Architecture and Construction], 14, 43–49.

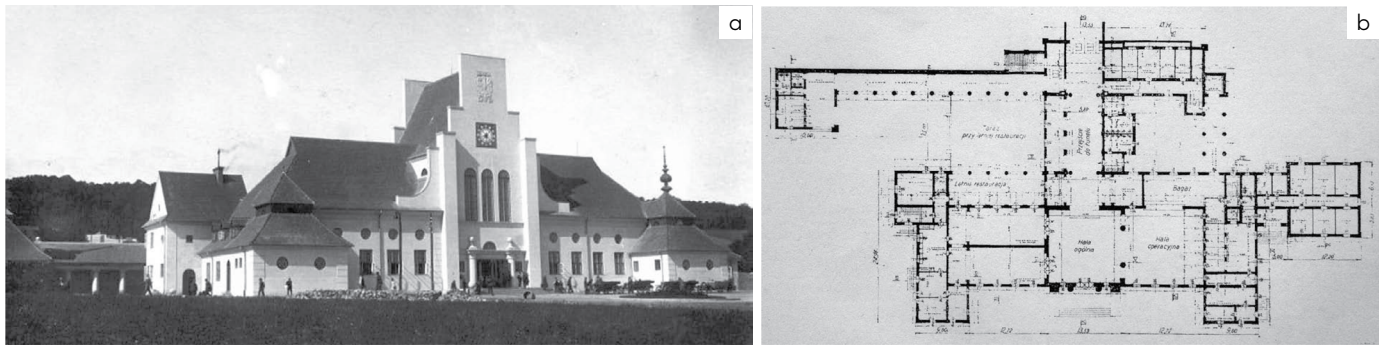


Fig. 1. Gdynia, railway station built in 1926 according to a design by Romuald Miller, destroyed during World War II and no longer extant: a) view from around 1928; source: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Dworzec\\_w\\_Gdyni.jpg](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Dworzec_w_Gdyni.jpg), public domain. In front of the railway station, a small square with a round lawn is visible; b) layout of the railway station; source: J. Wołkanowski, "Dworzec Kolejowy w Gdyni," *Polski Przemysł Budowlany*, 9–10, 1926.

międzywojennego. Urbanistyka i architektura (Eng.: *Gdynia – the City of the Interwar Period. Urban Planning and Architecture*).<sup>3</sup>

### THE FIRST 'URBAN' RAILWAY STATION AND RAILWAY STATION SQUARE IN 1926–1928

The first 'urban' railway station in Gdynia was not actually the first in this area. Temporary railway station barracks had existed here since 1894, when a railway stop was established in the village of Gdynia on the Gdańsk–Szczecin railway route. At that time, it was located not on the eastern but on the western side of the railway tracks, right at Szosa Gdańska (Eng.: Gdańsk Road), and for the next two decades it contributed significantly to the development of a summer resort in Gdynia. The location and spatial development of the Gdynia railway station changed in the early 1920s, when, after Poland regained its independence, the construction of the seaport and the city commenced in Gdynia. However, the new railway station was to be built not on the western side of the railway tracks, but on the eastern side, in immediate spatial contact with the Gdynia settlement.

The new railway station was designed in 1923 by Romuald Miller, a well-known architect of interwar Poland. It was an architecturally interesting design, representing modernised forms of romantic–national historicism, where the Polish Renaissance style met elements of Art Deco. The highly articulated plan and building form were centred around the main entrance hall and the passage to the tunnel running under the tracks, encompassing a spacious operation hall (ticket office) on the north side and a restaurant and internal courtyard with a columned gallery on the south side (Fig. 1a, b). The high roofs presented a variety of forms, from gabled and half-gabled to stepped, decorated with small onion domes. The lofty gable of the front façade was stepped and decorated at the top with a bas-relief of an eagle, along with a square clock face and three arcades of elongated windows, under which a two-column entrance portal was located. The interior details of the station, finished in the mid-1920s, featured early modernist Art Deco forms. The entire project was completed in July 1926, and the press at the time wrote about it in a favourable way, saying that '(...) it has so many

<sup>3</sup> Sołtysik, M. J. (1993). *Gdynia – miasto dwudziestolecia międzywojennego: Urbanistyka i architektura* [Gdynia – a city of the interwar period: Urban planning and architecture]. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, pp. 86, 332–333.

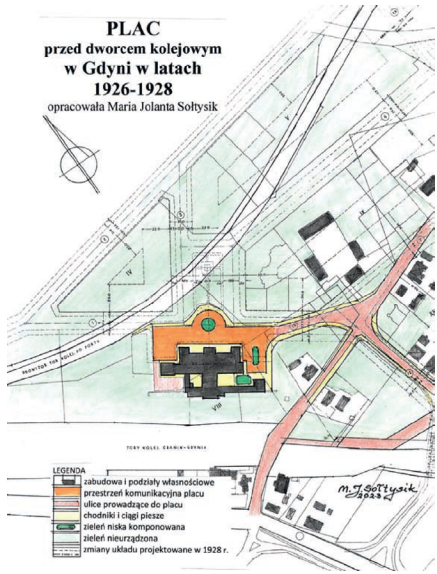


Fig. 2. Gdynia, the square in front of the railway station in 1926–1928, (elaboration and drawing by Maria Jolanta Sołtysik).

outstanding features of Polish architecture that those who know Poland and appreciate the beauty of architectural forms will find here the reminiscence of the monuments of Polish architecture that can be admired in Krakow, Warsaw, Vilnius, Kazimierz nad Wisłą and even in distant Krzemieniec'.<sup>4</sup>

A small square was built in front of the new railway station, which at that time was not yet called Constitution Square, but Railway Station Square (Polish: plac Dworcowy). It took the form of a carefully designed square driveway in the shape of a 'C' rotated by 90 degrees, encompassing the entire front façade and two side façades of the newly erected railway station building. In front of the railway station, the square formed a rectangle approximately 100 m long and 20 m wide (measured to the façade of the building). The axis of the main façade of the station was emphasized by a small, round flower bed (Fig. 2), accompanied by a semicircular road lane with a pavement. From the side of the buildings in Gdynia, the railway station was accessed via a short stretch of what later became Podjazdowa Street, today's Dworcowa Street, and which was connected to Starowiejska Street and 10 Lutego Street. The pavements on both sides of the street led to the main entrance of the railway station and to its side wings with internal courtyards. At that time, on the northern side of the railway station, there was still a temporary railway track to the seaport; that track was dismantled around 1928. The very layout of the railway station complex remained largely unchanged until 1930.

### RAILWAY STATION SQUARE IN THE FIRST URBAN PLANS FOR GDYNIA AND ITS DEVELOPMENT UNTIL 1930

Work on the first urban plan for Gdynia was completed in May 1926 when the railway station and the small Railway Station Square accompanying it were almost finished. However, in their new concept, the urban planners proposed not only a thorough reconstruction of the entire square, including the railway station, but also its significant extension.

The first urban plan for Gdynia was called 'An Outline of the Expansion of Gdynia' (Polish: Szkic rozbudowy Gdyni) and was made by Adam Kuncewicz and Roman Feliński.<sup>5</sup> Its scale was 1:5000, so by its very nature it only showed a general concept of the layout, without any detailed solutions. According to the plan, the square in front of the railway station was to have a new, quite original form, characterised by monumentality. The authors proposed a pentagonal shape for it, geometrically formed by the outline of a rectangle approximately 160 m wide and 80 m deep, with its bottom side based along the railway tracks and with an isosceles right triangle topping it (Fig. 3a) and thus extending the layout to approx. 180 m measuring from the railway tracks. From the triangular apex of the railway square, axially, opposite the railway station, a wide thoroughfare was to run north–east to the seaport, its direction determining the axis of

<sup>4</sup> Wołkanowski, J. (1926). Dworzec Kolejowy w Gdyni [Railway Station in Gdynia]. *Polski Przemysł Budowlany* [Polish Construction Industry], 9–10.

<sup>5</sup> This plan and its significance are discussed in the book: Sołtysik, M. J. (1993). *Gdynia – miasto dwudziestolecia międzywojennego: Urbanistyka i architektura* [Gdynia – a city of the interwar period: Urban planning and architecture]. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, pp. 100–105.



symmetry of the entire development. Next to it, on the southern side of the thoroughfare, the main downtown axis had its beginning, leading east along a wide street called Aleja Wolności (Eng.: Freedom Avenue) – now Wójt Jan Radtke Street – down to the sea and the seaside square. Five streets were to radiate out from the square in front of the railway station: four from the pentagon vertices (including Starowiejska Street and two streets running in opposite directions along the railway tracks) and one being a mirror image of the main downtown axis, although much narrower and shorter.

The urban concept of the 'An Outline of the Expansion....' also envisaged a significant enlargement of the railway station building itself, proposing the addition of two large side wings on both sides, corresponding spatially with the line of the side frontages of the square. In this way, the railway station building was planned to occupy a significant part of the entire square. Compact frontages, filled with 4-storey buildings, were to form all the square walls. The principle of the entire square composition was symmetry and spatial axiality, and the aesthetic and monumental qualities of the layout were emphasised by two prominent sculptural accents in the form of columns or obelisks, placed symmetrically in the central part of the layout and accentuating the front façade of the station.

Unfortunately, the square designed in 1926 has never been built. Due to the unforeseen development of the seaport and the seaport railway junction towards the south, the entire northern part of Gdynia City Centre was reduced in size, and the detailed plans for the square in front of the railway station also had to be changed.

In 1928, Adam Kuncewicz drew up a detailed plan of the northern part of Gdynia City Centre, entitled 'Gdynia, a development plan of the northern part of City Centre. Section one' (Polish: Gdynia, plan zabudowania północnej części Śródmieścia. Sekcja pierwsza) and drawn to a scale of 1:1000.<sup>6</sup> The architect took into account the changes resulting from the expansion of the seaport and the fact that the square in front of the railway station was now practically on the edge of Gdynia City Centre, right next to the seaport border which ran along the current Jana z Kolna Street in this area. As a result, in the detailed urban plan of 1928, the square was significantly reduced in size comparing to the plan of 1926, and its width was readjusted to match the layout of the existing railway station designed by Romuald Miller. The expansion of the railway station building planned in 1926 was also abandoned.

Now, the Railway Station Square designed by Kuncewicz consisted of two parts. The first part comprised the railway station forecourt from 1926 in the shape of an inverted letter C, embracing the building with its side wings, approximately 100 m long and 20 m wide. The second, new part of the square was to be a rectangle adjacent to the first part, 68 m wide and 84 m long, which, counting from the station façade, gave a total length of 104 m (Fig. 3b). The walls of the new part of the square were to be formed by compact building development – three newly designed frontages with five-storey

<sup>6</sup> Detailed plans for Gdynia City Centre are discussed in the book: Soltysik, M. J. (2003). *Na styku dwóch epok: Architektura gdynskich kamienic okresu międzywojennego* [At the turn of two epochs: Architecture of the apartment houses of Gdynia in the interwar period]. [Publisher not identified], pp. 50–51.

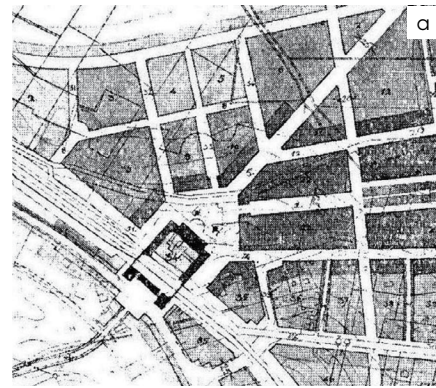


Fig. 3. Gdynia, the square before the railway station in the first urban plans of the town: a) a fragment of the plan 'Szkic rozbudowy Gdyni' by Adam Kuncewicz and Roman Feliński from 1926 (source: 'Architektura i Budownictwo', 1926); b) a fragment of the plan 'Gdynia, plan zabudowania północnej części Śródmieścia. Sekcja pierwsza' by Adam Kuncewicz (source: private collection of M. J. Soltysik).



Fig. 4. Gdynia, the square before the railway station in the first urban plans of the town: a) a fragment of the plan 'Szkic rozbudowy Gdyni' by Adam Kuncewicz and Roman Feliński from 1926 (source: 'Architektura i Budownictwo', 1926); b) a fragment of the plan 'Gdynia, plan zabudowania północnej części Śródmieścia. Sekcja pierwsza' by Adam Kuncewicz (source: private collection of M. J. Soltysik).

buildings, reaching 18 m in height. Pavements with a width of four to five metres and 15-metre-wide traffic lanes were designed along them. Inside the new rectangular part of the square, Adam Kuncewicz designed a spacious green area which emphasised the shape of the square and which was inscribed in a rectangle measuring 24 by 82 metres, not including the surrounding 2.5-metre-wide pavement. The architect clearly separated the green area from the railway station building itself, leaving a large space in front of it for a driveway. The green area designed by Kuncewicz was divided into a Latin cross shape with a square flower bed and a pedestrian walkway in the northern part and a semicircular 'invitation' from the railway station side.

The layout of the streets leading from the square, of which there were now only four, also underwent a fundamental change in relation to 'An Outline of the Expansion of Gdynia' from 1926. The former thoroughfare that used to be the most important of them and which led to the port was, now as a result of changes, blocked by the railway junction within the seaport marshalling yard and, therefore, lost its purpose and was maintained only in a rudimentary form from the northern corner of the square to what later became Jana z Kolna Street. Its direction determined the north-western frontage of the square. The street leading from the north-eastern corner of the square, initially called Aleja Wolności (Eng.: Freedom Avenue) and later Aleja Mościckich (now Wójt Jan Radtke Street), also lost its original significance as the main axis of the city centre. Its width at the exit from the square was set at 21 metres in the new plan. The most important and widest traffic route leading from the square in front of the railway station was a street later called Podjazdowa, today's Dworcowa Street (28 m). The old railway intersection with Szosa Gdańska (Eng: Gdańsk Road), still in use in 1928, located at the end of Starowiejska Street was to be closed, and the crossing to the other side of the railway tracks was to run through a newly designed tunnel under the tracks in the continuation of 10 Lutego Street. The fourth street leading from the square in front of the railway station ran parallel to the railway tracks at the end of Podjazdowa (Dworcowa) Street in a north-westerly direction and connected to the street later called Okrężna leading to Oksywie (now Janek Wiśniewski Street).

The detailed plan for the northern part of the city centre from 1928, approved in the same year by the Ministry of Public Works in Warsaw (Polish: Ministerstwo Robót Publicznych w Warszawie), became the actual basis for the development of this part of the city, including, with only minor changes, the square in front of the railway station. At the time the plan was being approved, the railway station was still the only building in the area,<sup>7</sup> and until 1930, the strip in front of its front façade was the only developed and paved part of the Railway Station Square (Fig. 4).

<sup>7</sup> The building of the State Agricultural Bank, Polish: Państwowy Bank Rolny, shown in the 1928 plan, was not completed until 1930 and must therefore have been added later. Around the same time, a small functionalist building of unknown purpose was also erected next to the railway station, along the then undeveloped street that would later become Okrężna Street, as can be seen in archival photographs.

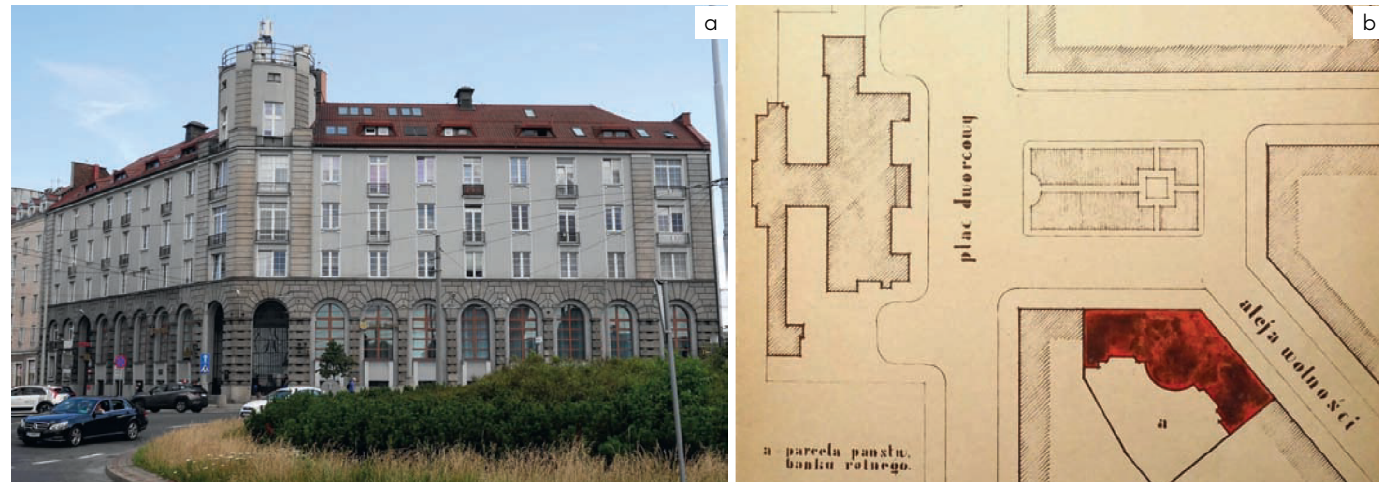


Fig. 5. Gdynia, the former State Agricultural Bank (now the PKO SA Bank Branch), 53 Wóła Radkego Street: a) photo Maria Jolanta Sołtyś, 2023; b) situation plan according to the design by Marian Lalewicz from 1930 (source: Akta Archiwum Budowlanego Urzędu Miasta Gdyni, sygn. 6/53).

### CONSTRUCTION OF THE STATE AGRICULTURAL BANK (POLISH: PAŃSTWOWY BANK ROLNY) AND THE RAILWAY STATION SQUARE IN 1931–1935

Neither the general plan discussed above nor the detailed plan for Gdynia downtown stipulated what buildings were to be constructed in the square in front of the railway station, still officially known as Railway Station Square (Polish: plac Dworcowy). As it turned out soon, the investors themselves decided about this. The State Agricultural Bank was the first one that chose this location for the construction of its headquarters in 1928. The building was to form part of the south-eastern frontage of the square, at the intersection with the prominent Aleja Wolności (Eng: Liberty Avenue), later called Mościckich Street, and today's Wójt Jan Radtke Street. Its façade was to belong half to the square layout and half to the avenue layout.

The first design of the building, strongly historicist in style, was created by Warsaw architect Paweł Wędrzigołski, but it was not approved by the Ministry of Public Works (Polish: Ministerstwo Robót Publicznych) because the building height was lower than the one specified in the urban development plan. Then, in 1930, another representative of Academic Classicism, Professor Marian Lalewicz of the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology, presented his ambitious concept.<sup>8</sup> His design is dated March 1930 and already constitutes a spatial proposal fully adapted to the scale of the city development, although the stylistic costume adopted by the architect was already somewhat outdated in the increasingly modernist Gdynia.

The building architectural composition, maintained in the spirit of Academic Classicism, was based on universal classical principles, practically without ornamentation, with a dominant arcaded plinth storey, continuing the ancient traditions and those of Bramante's traditions. The building wide corner was emphasized by a quasi-turret, but not covered, as one might expect, with a corner dome, but with a flat ceiling, which showed a certain modernisation of the form (Fig. 5a, b). The main interior, clearly already modernised,

<sup>8</sup> Akta Budowlane. Archiwum Wydziału Architektoniczno-Budowlanego Urzędu Miasta w Gdyni, sygn. 6/53 [Construction Files. Archive of the Architecture and Construction Department of the City of Gdynia, ref. no. 6/53].

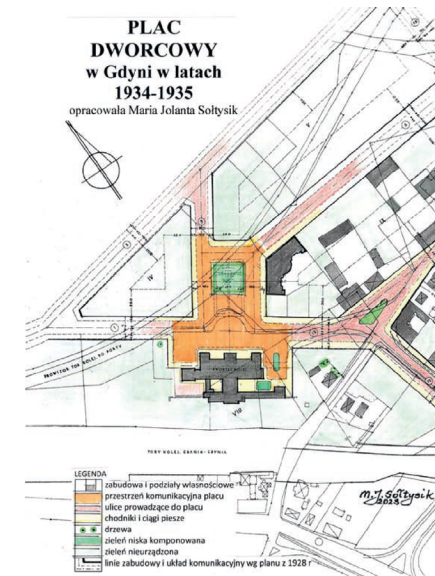


Fig. 6. Gdynia, the square in front of the railway station Dworcowy Square) in 1934–1928, (elaboration and drawing by Maria Jolanta Sołtyś).



Fig. 7. Gdynia, the County and Town Court Building, 5 Konstitution Square, 1938, architects Z. Karpiński, T. Sieczkowski, R. Sołtyński (source: Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa Polona, photo. H. Podębski, sygn. <https://fotopolska.eu/826603,foto.html?o=b3470> public domain).

was outlined in an interesting way by a semicircular columned colonnade. The entrance hall was also attractive, with large windows and a softly outlined staircase.

The State Agricultural Bank, constructed in 1931, was built precisely within the lines of the Railway Station Square designed by Adam Kunciewicz in 1928, and constituted the second implementation that defined its layout.<sup>9</sup> Between 1931 and 1935, the square continued to be developed according to the detailed plan from 1928: there were still four streets leading out from it: Aleja Wolności (later Mościckich Street, now Wójtana Radtkego Street), Podjazdowa Street (now Dworcowa Street) and two short unnamed streets ending at Jana z Kolna Street – one leading north-east towards the seaport, and the other being the continuation of Podjazdowa Street, north-west to Okrężna Street.

In 1934, a new element appeared inside the Railway Station Square – a square green area, located not centrally but leaning slightly towards the north-east. It appeared on the city map for the first time in 1935 but in comparison with the green area designed in 1928 by Adam Kunciewicz it was significantly smaller (Fig. 6). The entire circulation space of the square was probably already paved, and it as well as the pavements followed the building lines defined in the urban development plan.

### CONSTRUCTION OF THE COURT BUILDING AND THE LAYOUT OF CONSTITUTION SQUARE IN 1936–1939

The year 1936 was the decisive one for the history and spatial shape of the square in front of the railway station. First of all, the square was given the new name: Constitution Square, which has been used until today. Secondly, it once more partly changed its form. In 1936, on the north-eastern side of the square, opposite the railway station, a new building was erected, which largely defined the layout of the square – the monumental building of the District and Municipal Courts, and Public Prosecutor's Office. The building was to occupy the entire square frontage, with its side wings reaching Mościckich Street (now Wójt Jan Radtke Street) on one side and Jana z Kolna Street on the other.

The court building design was the result of an architectural competition from 1934. The winners were three young Warsaw architects: Zbigniew Karpiński, Tadeusz Sieczkowski and Roman Sołtyński.<sup>10</sup> Their fully modernist concept represents a trend of moderate modernism, visually striking with the white elegance of the streamlined façade and the almost abstract rhythm of small vertical windows. The wide-arched building was accentuated by the lofty avant-corps of the central part, located on the compositional square symmetry axis, opposite the main entrance to the railway station. The symmetry of the design was emphasised on both sides by slightly lower avant-corps of the side wings, protruding forward (Fig. 7). The interior was dominated by an elegant pillar hall

<sup>9</sup> The building visible on some archival maps from 1931–1932, located on the site of the later Court building, was temporary in character.

<sup>10</sup> Karpiński, Z., Sieczkowski, T., & Sołtyński, R. (1938). Gmach Sądów w Gdyni [Court Building in Gdynia]. *Architektura i Budownictwo* [Architecture and Construction], 14, 43–49.



with expressively designed staircases on its both sides and sophisticated patterns on the floors and benches.

The construction of this building contributed to a significant correction of the layout of the northern corner of Constitution Square. The short, narrow street that ran from here to Jana z Kolna Street was now directed diagonally, further north, increasing the width of the frontage on which the Court building was located (Fig. 8). From there, this short street ran symmetrically to the direction of the former Mościckich Street (now Wójt Jan Radtke Street), opening up a wide view of the new building. In front of its entrance, two trees were planted at the front avant-corps, emphasising the axis of the building. The 'Greater Gdynia' plan (Polish: plan 'Wielka Gdynia') from 1936<sup>11</sup> shows that a short section of the road extending from the former and present Dworcowa Street to Okrężna Street, leading to Oksywie, gained significant importance because a bus line was established (or was planned to be established) along it. It was probably also paved at that time. In 1936, the layout of the green area of Constitution Square and the main streets leading from it (the current Dworcowa and Starowiejska Streets) was also given its 'final' shape, presenting a coherent and geometrically thought-out composition. First of all, trees were planted, which, in accordance with tradition, followed the building development lines, outlining the layout of pavements and, together with the buildings, creating the 'walls' of the square and the neighbouring streets (Fig. 8). A row of trees was also planted along the north-western frontage of the square, which was not yet built up. The very next year, in 1937, trees were planted on both sides of Mościckich Street (now Wójt Jan Radtke Street), leading to the newly built Market Halls (Polish: Hale Targowe). The square green area, developed earlier, in the north-eastern part of the railway square was surrounded by a pavement strip and flower beds, emphasising its central part and each of its four sides separately.

#### CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW RAILWAY STATION AND CONSTITUTION SQUARE BETWEEN 1945 AND 1965

During the German occupation in World War II, Constitution Square remained virtually unchanged, retaining the form it had already had in the interwar period. There was still a square green area with flower beds in front of the court building, and a spacious parking and circulation area in front of the railway station.

However, during the war, the railway station building was severely damaged and burned down, therefore, shortly after the end of the war, a decision was made to demolish the building and erect a new, much larger one in its place. The new station (Fig. 9) was designed by Waław Tomaszewski, and its construction began in 1950. The main body of the building was constructed on the site of the old railway station, and the location of the main entrance and the railway station tunnel remained unchanged. The main hall with ticket offices and a tunnel with entrances to the platforms were put into operation in 1954. From then on, the railway station became operational, although the

<sup>11</sup> *Wielka Gdynia* [The Greater Gdynia]. (1936). Plan, scale 1:15,000. Morska Agencja Reklamowa 'MAR'. Muzeum Miasta Gdyni.

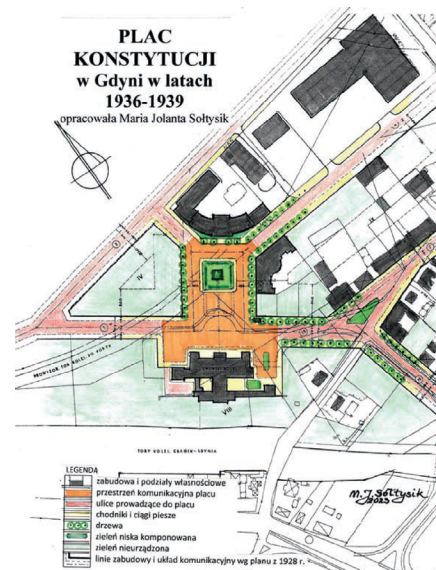


Fig. 8. Gdynia, Constitution Square (the former Dworcowy Square in front of the railway station) in 1936–1939, elaboration and drawing by Maria Jolanta Sołtysik).



Fig. 9. Gdynia, the new railway station, construction 1950, arch. Waław Tomaszewski, (photo Maria Jolanta Sołtysik 2012).

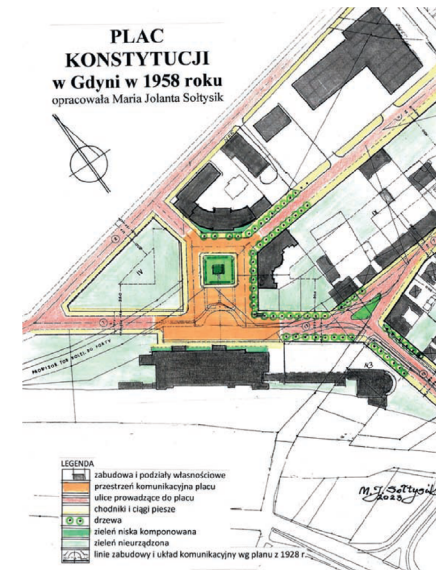


Fig. 10. Gdynia, Constitution Square in 1958, (elaboration and drawing by Maria Jolanta Sołtysik).

multi-storey administrative part, the side hall and the elaborate décor of the restaurant interior were still not ready. At the same time, between 1956 and 1959, from the south side, a suburban railway station was built in the immediate vicinity and was connected to the main railway station building through a pillar arcade, forming a single complex.

The construction of a new railway station, significantly larger than the previous one, brought about a significant change in the layout of Constitution Square. It should be noted that the front façade of the main body of the new building was much longer than that of the old station, extending over 35 metres further to the north-west. It also had not one, but two entrances – one main entrance, in its traditional location, at the continuation of the tunnel under the railway tracks, and the other shifted to the north-west, corresponding to the increased length of the façade and ensuring its symmetry. At the same time, both entrances – despite their functional inequality – were given a uniform, equally attractive architectural design in the form of identical, strongly exposed and protruding two-column porticos. When designing this second entrance, Waław Tomaszewski introduced a new, strong compositional element to the layout of Constitution Square which was unrelated to the traditional compositional axis of the square and shifted approximately 35 m (measured along the axes of both porticos) north-west in relation to it. It was the first compositional breach in the spatial integrity of the square layout. This compositional dissonance was partially compensated by Tomaszewski with two measures: firstly by placing the main entrance portico, the southern one, exactly on the traditional axis of symmetry of the square, in the place of the main entrance to the old railway station, opposite the central avant-corps of the court building. Secondly, the other entrance portico, the one moved to the side, was located opposite the existing pedestrian walkway along the undeveloped north-western line of the square (Fig. 10) – the layout that still functions nowadays.

As a result of these changes and due to the fact that the north-western frontage of Constitution Square, outlined in the plan from 1928, still remained undeveloped, the open space in front of the railway station expanded significantly. Today it is difficult to say whether it was also planned to widen the square itself by moving this undeveloped frontage line further north-west. A photograph from the late 1950s<sup>12</sup> shows that the pavement in front of this line was slightly widened and, just like before 1939, there was still a taxi rank in the roadway along it. The same archival photograph shows the already paved and developed section of the street leading north-west from Constitution Square to Oksywie and the former Okrężna Street (then Marchlewskiego Street, now Janek Wiśniewski Street). At that time, it was of significant importance, as it was used not only by the bus line planned as early as 1936, but also by the trolleybus line, which is clearly visible in the photograph.<sup>13</sup> Densely spaced trolleybus poles were erected along the still

<sup>12</sup> Gdyni przedwojenny i powojenny dworzec na starych zdjęciach [Pre-war and post-war railway station in Gdynia in old photographs]. (2019, June 2). *Gdynia moje miasto*. Retrieved December 3, 2023, from <https://gdynia-moje-miasto.pl/gdynkipzedwojenny-i-powojenny-dworzec-na-starych-zdjeciach/>

<sup>13</sup> Gdyni przedwojenny i powojenny dworzec na starych zdjęciach [Pre-war and post-war railway station in Gdynia in old photographs]. (2019, June 2). *Gdynia moje miasto*. Retrieved December 3, 2023, from <https://gdynia-moje-miasto.pl/gdynkipzedwojenny-i-powojenny-dworzec-na-starych-zdjeciach/>



Fig. 11. Gdynia, the postal complex, 2 Constitution Square, construction 1965, arch. Bogusław Bielecki, (photo Maria Jolanta Sołtysik, 2023).

undeveloped north–western frontage of Constitution Square, as well as on both sides of Dworcowa Street. The transport routes were accompanied by bus shelters, one of which had existed since 1937 in Dworcowa Street at the corner of the square, and the other, new one, on the pavement in front of the non–developed north–western frontage, at the taxi rank.<sup>14</sup> Probably because of the trolleybus line construction, a row of trees was cut down along this undeveloped square frontage, therefore, one cannot see them in the aforementioned photograph from the late 1950s. Cutting down this row of trees was another unfavourable change leading to the spatial disintegration of the Constitution Square layout.

#### RAILWAY STATION POST OFFICE LOCATION AND CONSTITUTION SQUARE AFTER 1965

Starting in the 1960s, the spatial layout of Constitution Square underwent further unfavourable changes. The main cause and catalyst for these changes was the construction and commissioning in 1965 of a new, large postal facility, then known as Separate Railway Post Office (Polish: Wydzielony Dworcowy Urząd Pocztowy) which used a special railway siding leading to the post office dispatch halls. The main designer and author of the project that was completed in 1960 at the Warsaw Office of Studies and Designs for Communications (Polish: Biuro Studiów i Projektów Łączności) was architect Bolesław Bielecki.<sup>15</sup> In 1963 when the construction had already begun, the very

<sup>14</sup> Gdyniński przedwojenny i powojenny dworzec na starych zdjęciach [Pre-war and post-war railway station in Gdynia in old photographs]. (2019, June 2). *Gdynia moje miasto*. Retrieved December 3, 2023, from <https://gdynia-moje-miasto.pl/gdynskipzedwojenny-i-powojenny-dworzec-na-starych-zdjeciach/>

<sup>15</sup> Akta Budowlane. Archiwum Wydziału Architektoniczno–Budowlanego Urzędu Miasta w Gdyni, sygn. 12/2 [Construction Files. Archive of the Architecture and Construction Department of the City of Gdynia, ref. no. 12/2].

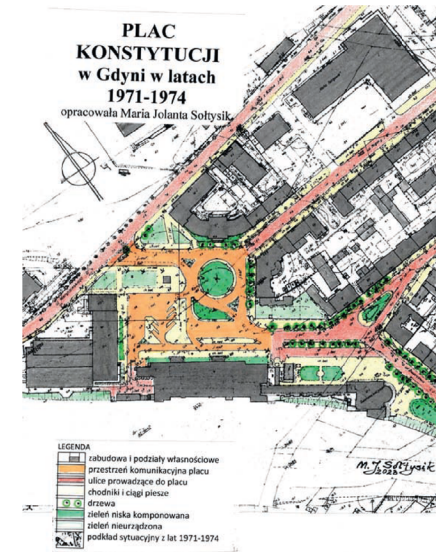


Fig. 12. Gdynia, the postal complex, 2 Constitution Square, construction 1965, arch. Bogusław Bielecki, (photo Maria Jolanta Sołtysik, 2023).

architect introduced minor changes to his concept at the investor's request, including raising the office and residential building by one storey.<sup>16</sup>

The new post office was a complex of buildings located on a large plot of land covering over one hectare, adjacent to the railway tracks on one side and approximately 60 metres from the undeveloped north–western frontage of Constitution Square on the other. The complex consisted of four large interconnected buildings: (1) an 8–storey office and residential building with a post office on the ground floor, originally planned to have had 7 storeys; (2) an adjacent, heavily glazed two–storey hall serving as a Foreign Exchange Warehouse (Polish: Magazyn Wymiany Zagranicznej) connected to the Customs Office, positioned parallel to the undeveloped north–western frontage of the square; (3) a large, single–storey 'railway carriage hall' for postal transshipments, located along the railway tracks, with a special railway siding; and (4) a four–storey sorting office adjacent to the railway carriage hall. The entire structure, shaped like the letter L, sculpted and spatially diverse, was an interesting example of post–war modernist industrial architecture of the 1960s (Fig. 11). Its main façade, composed of contrasting heights, was expressively shaped, and the interiors were particularly impressive due to the interesting roof structure of the railway carriage hall. However, the concept of the building location, which was not related to the historical spatial structure of Constitution Square, contributed decisively to the disintegration of its overall design.

The concept of the post office complex construction was burdened with two major location mistakes:

- 1) the core of the post office complex was located approx. 60 m behind the historical north–western frontage of Constitution Square, completely ignoring the principle of situating buildings along frontage lines, symmetrically to the main axis of the square, which was fundamental to the spatial concept of the square;
- 2) the adopted location of the post office complex eliminated and built up the street running from the south–western corner of Constitution Square to the contemporary Marchlewskiego Street (i.e. the former Okrężna Street), thus blocking the main transport link between Constitution Square and the road to Oksywie.

As a result of these two mistakes, the historical geometry of Constitution Square, based on a rectangular shape with the main axis between the railway station and the court buildings, was destroyed, and the main traffic flow was directed to the interior of the square and ran diagonally from the south–eastern corner at the intersection with Dworcowa Street to the northern corner at the intersection with Jana z Kolna Street. Soon, a large traffic roundabout was built inside the square, accompanied by several amorphous traffic lanes. In front of the post office complex, adjacent to Constitution Square, a bus and car manoeuvring area and parking space, also of a random shape, were created (Fig. 12). All this added to the chaos of the entire layout. In the early 1970s, another 'element of chaos' was added: a substandard, free–standing traffic control

<sup>16</sup> Akta Budowlane. Archiwum Wydziału Architektoniczno–Budowlanego Urzędu Miasta w Gdyni, sygn. 12/2 [Construction Files. Archive of the Architecture and Construction Department of the City of Gdynia, ref. no. 12/2].



centre for the Municipal Transport Company, which was erected on the pavement in the northern part of the square.

Over the next few decades, practically until the present day, the spatial situation of Constitution Square has not changed much from the one described above. The exception to that presumed stability was the gradual removal of trees that had lined the pavements around the square since 1936 and the conversion of the roadside verges into parking spaces for cars, buses and trolleybuses. Of the entire row of trees on the south–eastern frontage of the square, next to the PKO Bank, only one tree (a Swedish whitebeam) has remained until today, and next to it, in front of the court building, only two (also Swedish whitebeams) have survived. The trees along the northern pavement of Dworcowa Street and the southern pavement of Wójt Jan Radtke Street have been entirely cut down, and only two Swedish whitebeams have survived on the northern pavement of the latter. Meanwhile, the small ZKM /Eng.: a public transport company/ traffic control centre building, almost invisible when erected in the 1970s, has grown more than doubling in size and has been surrounded by additional technical equipment, visually ruining the exposed area of the inner part of the square.

**SUMMARY AND DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SQUARE (2023)**

The spatial shape of Constitution Square was defined in its general outline in the interwar period as a geometrically coherent spatial layout with outstanding architectural qualities, a friendly space filled with composed green areas for pedestrians and logically arranged circulation routes. The buildings from that period that form its frontage today, the former State Agricultural Bank and the District Court building, are two prominent elements of the architectural heritage of the 1920s and 1930s. Since 1945, the shape of Constitution Square and its development have undergone significant changes. Although both buildings erected here after the war – the new railway station and the post office complex – constitute successful examples of the style of their times, they both have contributed to the spatial disintegration of the place where they are located – Constitution Square. In particular, the post office complex, built in 1965, destroyed the historical layout of the square because of its location. Today, this situation urgently requires restoration.

The inspiration for restoring the spatial coherence and aesthetic value of Constitution Square should be the continuation of the compositional principles adopted in urban development plans and projects from the interwar period.<sup>17</sup> The resulting design

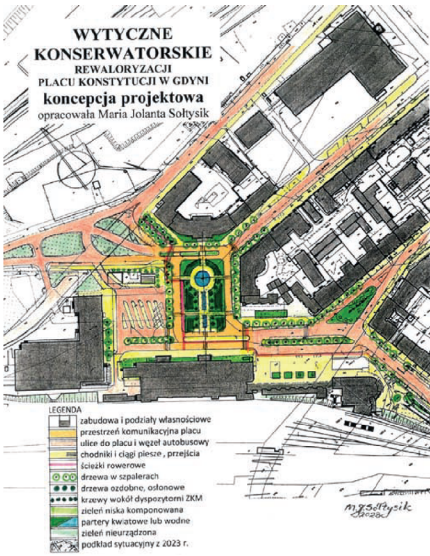


Fig. 13. Gdynia, conservatory recommendations and conservation project of revalorisation of the Constitution Square, (elaboration and drawing by Maria Jolanta Sołtysik).

guidelines for the redevelopment of the square are presented graphically in Figure 40 (Fig. 13), and their main recommendations are primarily as follows:

The functional and visual division of the square into two parts separated by a row of trees: (1) the eastern part, intended mainly for pedestrian traffic and constituting the historical spatial layout of the square, with an internal green area, and (2) the western part, functioning as a transport hub and bus station located in front of the post office complex;

Restoring the symmetrical layout of the eastern, historical part of the square along its traditional axis, running from the main entrance to the railway station to the main entrance to the court building;

Designing the square internal green area in an attractive way, emphasising its historical axis, preserving the principle of symmetry and emphasizing the main place from which the view opens up to the architecture and streets leading out from the square;

Completion of the north–western and part of the south–eastern frontages of the square, left unfinished in the interwar period, in accordance with their historical building lines, including the restoration of the rows of trees that once ran along the pavements. If the completion of these frontages is not currently possible, only the rows of trees along the pavements should be restored.

<sup>17</sup> The design guidelines for the redevelopment of Constitution Square, together with the historical and urban analyses, were prepared by the author in 2023 for the City Council of Gdynia in the study: Sołtysik, M. J. (2023). *Analiza historyczno-urbanistyczna i wytyczne konserwatorskie dla rewaloryzacji placu Konstytucji w Gdyni* [Historical and urban analyses and conservation guidelines for the revitalisation of Constitution Square in Gdynia]. City Council of Gdynia.

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## IV

# Socialism for Everybody?

### ABSTRACT

The concept of a socialist state system was originally based on the idea of an egalitarian, caring society. But during the so-called normalisation era in Czechoslovakia (after the occupation in 1968) the reality rather deviated from the initial proclamations. The architecture of public buildings split roughly into two more or less independent and very different lines.

The first line is represented by politically high-profile showcase pieces, existing or planned, that served to promote the regime internationally or acted as an ideological ‘mask’ in the media. These included, in particular, buildings connected with cultural and historical identity (e.g. the Palace of Culture or the New Stage of the National Theatre), ones that provided evidence of the ‘world-class’ quality of the country’s architecture (often these were built for important international sports events, such as the Štvanice tennis stadium, the ski jump(s) in Harrachov, the rowing canal in Račice), and ones that demonstrated the country’s technological sophistication (e.g. Prague Metro, Žižkov TV tower). A specific group of structures was consisted of buildings that were often spectacular and prominent, but in their actual use were less well-known by the public and were sometimes almost a secret (e.g. recreational and medical facilities for leading figures of the regime or the international hotels). These buildings usually had strong political support, a more individual approach by designers, the exclusive supply of structural components and materials, and, last but not least, pressure to meet deadlines.

Compared to these ‘triumphs’ of ideological representation, however, everyday reality offered a joyless environment and grim hope for the future. With the onset of normalisation, public investment priorities were reduced mainly to panel housing estates and fulfilling the requirement to build as many apartments a year as possible. There was little energy left for quality public amenities. At the same time, however, for architects in the younger and middle generations, small- and medium-scale public buildings presented a way to brighten the bleak environment of the newly built housing estates and neglected city centres and for these architects to fulfil their own visions of better architecture. Luckily, prefabricated concrete frames developed for these purposes and the ‘percent for art’ was introduced at the end of the 1960s. Architects were able to modify standardised structural systems and cover the buildings with more creative façades (mainly by applying ceramics, glass, or coloured paints and cladding. Such efforts, combined with a touch of postmodernist or high-tech features and executed in collaboration with artists, allowed architects to fulfil their dream of creating humanised, socially responsible architecture. In addition, these buildings were supposed to blend with the local historical or landscape context, and, over the course of the 1980s, they came to address the broader challenges in society as well (e.g. the construction of comprehensive housing for the disabled and for seniors, and attempts to save energy with the use of insulation, solar panels, or shapes efficiently adapted to local weather conditions, etc.).

Keywords: public buildings, socialist architecture, 1980s, normalisation, late modernism, high-tech, postmodernism

### Introduction

The architecture of the 1980s has for a long time been wrongfully overlooked. It is, however, a very interesting period, when there occurred a fundamental rethinking of the concept of modernism and its tools. The state-socialist regime in Eastern Europe had appropriated these tools and sought to defend the often exceedingly simplistic and technocratic application of them by citing the need for rational, central state management. All of this was in the service of a vision of a socially equitable society in which citizens’ everyday material needs would be fully provided for. The 1980s were a time when it had already become more than clear that this vision and the instruments of social engineering intended to achieve it had failed.

A five-year research project that was conducted under the NAKI II programme of the Ministry of Culture focused on examining the various aspects of the architecture of the 1980s in the Czech Republic and the perspectives from which to approach it. The project explored the transformations of various typological categories (in the book *(A)type*, 2019) and the never built visions of architects (the book *Unbuilt*, 2020) and the researchers conducted interviews with contemporaries (the book *Interviews*, 2020), mapped the typical strategies employed by architects in the 1980s (set out in an exhibition and in the book *Improvisation*, 2021), and, last but not least, looked at political and social movements (the book *Ambitions*, 2022). The research was based on the study of contemporary literature and sources in public and private archives, the use of oral history methods, and the study of individual buildings in situ. There is overlap between the individual sections of research and their published outcomes; they flesh each other out, and, ultimately, are designed to provide the most comprehensive account of a complicated and ambiguous time in our history and of the role of the architect in modern society.

The most interesting area of architectural production in the 1980s involved public buildings, which are compelling reflections of the problems of the late, unintelligible socialist (totalitarian) society and the failure of the technocratic line of the modernist idea but are also outstanding illustrations of the ambitions of the architects that sought an alternative path.

### CONTRADICTIONS

The concept of a socialist state system was originally based on the idea of an egalitarian, caring society. In 1961 Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, still optimistically and confidently announced that by 1980 his country would possess the basic features of communism. Here he was certainly referring not just to the Soviet Union but to the whole of eastern, socialist Europe. But the reality of the 1980s was quite different. The Eastern bloc was contending with massive economic and social problems and countries had to adopt partial reforms, most notably transferring some responsibilities from the central planning bodies to smaller entities. However, decentralisation occurred in a society in which many actors,

after the experiences of recent years, had already found ways to bend and exploit the system to their own advantage. The result was not just a looser economic and power structure more amenable to change, but also an opaque environment that historian Petr Roubal has called an unequal ‘competition for scarce resources’ and that ultimately led to the collapse of socialism.<sup>1</sup>

However distorted and inhumane the social system of normalisation was, the regime’s gradual disintegration and loss of absolute control also offered many architects unexpected alternative opportunities and strengthened their ambition to alter the shape of domestic architecture in the interest of higher values. Public buildings became the perfect image of these changes and of the conflicts between political goals, social needs, and the theoretical ideas of architects. The architecture of public buildings essentially split into three largely independent branches. The first branch consisted of politically high-profile projects that served to promote the image of the regime at home or internationally and, not rarely, to benefit prominent political figures. The second branch was the very opposite and was made up of purely utilitarian architecture that was primarily concerned with quantity and the mechanical satisfaction of citizens’ everyday needs. The third and, from an architectural perspective, most interesting branch was represented by public buildings of moderate size that were usually intended for large urban areas.

#### FOR SELECT SOCIETY ONLY

The state-socialist regime carefully cultivated its reputation and image abroad. Although it was a society shut off behind the ‘Iron Curtain’, this obstacle was only impenetrable on one side. Official and unofficial guests from abroad were welcomed because their presence improved the country’s image in international circles and, above all, because they brought with them valuable foreign currency, which was used to import scarce goods. Starting already in the 1960s, growing international trade was accompanied by the construction of spectacular international hotels and the Foreign Trade Enterprises building (which centrally managed bilateral trade and oversaw the opening over time of the famous Tuzex shops that offered selected Western goods to local citizens). Characteristic features of the international hotels included their luxurious interiors and a level of service comparable to exclusive facilities in the West, something that could not have been achieved without extensive cooperation with foreign suppliers, for example, in Yugoslavia. The hotels often occupied a prominent location and visual role within the structure of a city – for example, the towers of Hotel Forum (Jan Trávníček, 1982–1988) and Hotel Panorama (Alois Semela, Vlado Alujevič, 1977–1983) built on Pankrác Plain in Prague and offering impressive views of the historic city. Accommodation intended for foreign political delegates was of an even higher standard and included most notably Hotel Praha (Jaroslav Paroubek, Arnošt Navrátil, Jan Sedláček, Luděk Todl, Radko Černý, Jaroslav Švec, Josef Polák, Květoslav Příbyl, Věkoslav Pardyl, Zbyněk Hřivnáč, Milan



Fig. 1. Prague, Metro station vestibule, Palackého Square, arch. Zdeněk Drobný and Petr Kouřimský, 1979–1987 (photo. Josef Moucha).

<sup>1</sup> Roubal, P. (2022). Postmodern architecture in a premodern system. In *Ambice / architektura osmdesátých let: Ambitions / the architecture of the eighties* (pp. 58–68). České vysoké učení technické v Praze, Fakulta architektury.

Reichl, Jiří Turek, Karel Fořtl, 1971–1981), a large, terraced structure located in the middle of the Hanspaulka garden city in Prague. The hotel’s construction was followed in the architectural press, but the high-end interior furnishings were naturally kept secret from the general public. The refined interiors coupled a modernist airy spatial quality with hints of classical compositional principles, the most up-to-date technical equipment with high-grade artisanal materials, and the cool distinguished character of international hotel services with impressive works by leading domestic visual artists and designers.<sup>2</sup>

Works connected to ‘national’ culture and history were, by contrast, the object of major (and regime-mandated) attention from the media. The totalitarian authorities embraced selected events and figures of importance in the history of the Czech nation as a way of anchoring their power and portraying themselves in the popular political narrative as the natural outcome and culmination point of the nation’s historical struggle. Construction projects in Prague that attracted this kind of heightened attention included the restoration of the Royal Coronation Route near the Old Town Square and Celetná Street (Stanislav Hubička, SÚRPMO, PŮDIS, 1986–1988), the renovation and extension of the historic building of the National Theatre (Pavel Kupka, Ivo Loos, Markéta Lierová, Jana Hrdličková, Jan Matyáš, Karel Prager, Zbyšek Stýblo, 1962–1983), and the extensive reconstruction of St Agnes Monastery (Karel Kunca, Josef Hlavatý, Karel Fantýš, 1982–1984). The legitimacy of forging a link between the past and the present was reinforced by the fact that these historical buildings were not just being restored but were being extended with the addition of contextual new buildings (cf. the New Stage of the National Theatre and the roof of the Church of St Francis). It is important to add that the political support and attention showered on these projects secured them good conditions, the supply of high-quality materials, the involvement of excellent architects, and, last but not least, pressure to meet deadlines. There was undoubtedly also some frustration amongst the public and professionals that this kind of support was only directed at a small and select number of heritage sites. Local investment and political planners likewise adopted this strategy of focusing attention on just some of the most visible buildings and public spaces given the limited possibilities at the time. In the media, a few churches and pedestrian zones in the historic centres of cities showcased successful examples of the treatment of heritage sites, while just down the street ordinary historic buildings were falling into a state of disrepair because construction activities were focused entirely on quantifiable and architecturally banal housing developments and selected heritage sites.

It is certainly no surprise that the poor physical condition of the buildings in the valuable historic city centres, explained as the result of their irreparability, became the impetus for demolition (and for the relocation of residents to the newly built prefabricated buildings) and the subsequent construction of politically favoured buildings. Among such projects a special place was occupied by the buildings of the Communist Party headquarters, the role of which increased with the onset of normalisation in the 1970s, when the number of

<sup>2</sup> Karous, P. (Ed.). (2019). *Hotel Praha*. BiggBoss; Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová v Praze; Galerie výtvarného umění v Chebu.



staff in the political apparatus increased and there was no longer sufficient space in the ordinary administrative buildings. In addition, the Communist Party needed visible and very distinct and tangible symbols of its power. Headquarter buildings were thus usually built on demolition sites on the outskirts of urban centres, and their architectural designs were definitely not intended to be modest. This meant involving top local architects. In this already divided era, however, the architects paradoxically opted, often in reference to the given context, for contextual forms and designed party headquarters as ‘only slightly better’ and, in terms of their layout, essentially universal administrative buildings (thanks to which they are today usually well suited for use as municipal offices, universities, or libraries). The budgets for building these headquarter sites were surprisingly just slightly above average, which meant that high-quality materials and features were judiciously used only on the façades or in the entrance foyers. Among the many such buildings of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia we can mention the headquarters in Příbram (Jiří Merger, Jan Nováček, Stanislav Franc, 1980–1984), Hradec Králové (Jan Třeštík, 1989), Pardubice (Jan Třeštík, 1978–1983), Pelhřimov (Naděžda Dvořák, Antonín Dvořák, 1986), and Trutnov (Vladimír Vokatý, Petr Skála, 1980–1985).<sup>3</sup>

Sports facilities for international events and especially for the country’s most popular sports received special attention from the regime. They were designed to impress not just foreign guests and the media by showcasing the impressive success of the socialist economy, but also the domestic public, who in sports competitions found stimulation and a more cheerful, brighter counterweight to the everyday struggle for human dignity and the fulfilment of basic needs. The architects were thus presented with political support and were also given rigid deadlines (the start of a sporting event) that put pressure on contractors and, because of the specific nature of large sports buildings, sufficient room in which to engage in some artistic and structural experimentation. Among the many unique structures, we can name the multifunctional palace of culture and sport in Ostrava (Vladimír Dedeček, 1974–1986), Štvanice tennis stadium in Prague (Josef Kales, Jana Novotná, 1982–1986), the buildings and floating equipment of the man-made rowing canal in Račice (Tomáš Kulík, Jan Louda, Zbyšek Stýblo, LO–TECH, 1977–1986), the ski-jump centre in Harrachov (Jiří Špikla, Jaromír Syrovátko, Jiří Prskavec, Jan Suchánek, 1976–1982), and the Velká Chuchle horse racetrack in Prague (Antonín Buchta, Jan Jirka, 1985–1991).

Infrastructure projects were likewise ostentatiously used to make a display of the country’s successes and especially the regime’s advanced level of technological development. The media reported extensively on their construction. The names of prominent figures in the communist regime usually appeared in the title of such projects and opening ceremonies served as great opportunities to increase the visibility of functionaries. It is important to add that these were projects that were of exceptionally high architectural quality, were essential to the economy, were often initiated in the more economically successful preceding decades, and, above all, genuinely benefited the public. Examples

<sup>3</sup> Pavel, M. (2019). Odkud vládla strana. In (A)typ / architektura osmdesátých let (pp. 88–94). České vysoké učení technické v Praze.

of exclusive projects in this area were the motorway built from Prague to Bratislava, the Prague Metro system, nuclear power plants, a gas pipeline (Transgas Dispatch Centre in Prague, Ivo Loos, Jindřich Malátek, Václav Aulický, Jiří Eisenreich, 1966–1978),<sup>4</sup> and structures relating to telecommunications (the telephone exchange buildings designed by Spojprojekt), newspapers (Rudé právo publishing and printing house in Prague, Jaroslav Hošek, Miroslav Koukolík, 1982–1988), and television (Žižkov television tower in Prague, Václav Aulický, Jiří Kozák, Alex Bém, 1984–1992).<sup>5</sup>

In connection with regime-favoured projects, mention must also be made of the services provided to (politically) prominent figures and their family members and friends. It was this interest that prompted the construction, for example, of Homolka Hospital (Petr Kutnar, Jana Ježková, Svatopluk Zeman, 1982–1989), which was designed to have state-of-the-art technological equipment and experienced staff, and the conversion of an interwar villa in Prague-Košíře into a children’s clinic offering above-standard care (Martin Rajniš, Luboš Jíra, Mikoláš Vavřín, Lev Lauermann, 1983–1987), where there were works by artists that were supposed to help create a fun, non-clinical type of environment. Excellent conditions and a cheery, non-socialist atmosphere also awaited selected dignitaries and foreign guests in the historic spa towns, with their restored historical complexes (Fučík Spa Sanatorium in Teplice, Lubomír Košek, 1980–1982) and public spaces (Spa Promenade in Mariánské Lázně, Otakar Kuča, Peter Lehocký et al., 1981–1988; the Colonnade of the Culture House in Teplice, Karel Hubáček, Michael Brix, Martin Rajniš, 1977–1986).

EVERYDAY ARCHITECTURE

After the collectivisation of the professional architectural practice in 1948, typification and prefabrication became some of the fundamental goals of the state and the centrally controlled work of building design. The Research and Standardisation Institute and the Research Institute of Development and Architecture were to play a key role in this process. Initially, in the spirit of scientific functionalism, typification focused mainly on effective operational design, i.e. optimal building layouts, divided up into several different size categories according to the number of residents served. Over time, however, there arose the question of the appropriate up-to date design of façades and there were increasing efforts to maximise the use of prefabricated building components, which inevitably led to the rapid obsolescence of the proposed solutions. By the 1960s, the rigid process of centrally planning ‘ideal designs’ had already reached its limits. The architects of the Lesná housing estate in Brno (František Zounek, Viktor Rudiš, Miroslav Dufek, Ivan Veselý, Ladislav Volák, 1962–1970) consequently refused to use in their Scandinavian-style, modernistically conceived complex the prescribed design types for the schools, with their outdated Socialist-Realist concept, and employed their own design instead.

<sup>4</sup> Goryczková, N. (Ed.). (2020). Transgas / areál řídicí ústředny Tranzitního plynovodu a budova FMPE v Praze: Historie, architektura, památkový potenciál. NPÚ, generální ředitelství.

<sup>5</sup> Aulický, V., & Potůček, J. (Eds.). (2020). Žižkovská věž. Výzkumné centrum průmyslového dědictví Fakulty architektury ČVUT v Praze; Nakladatelství Jonathan Livingston.

The successful school design from Lesná was immediately proclaimed a new model, suitable for use in housing estates in the South Moravian region.

But even this strategy was unable to meet the rapidly changing demands and, above all, the need for a universal tool for the rapid construction of all civic amenities on housing estates. It had become apparent by the 1960s, when the mass production of prefabricated panels was finally introduced and the design of housing estates was quickly adapted to their use, that civic amenities were falling well behind the construction of residential units. This was the result of ambitious economic plans that prioritised the productivity aspect of production and the number of flats that were being completed in Czechoslovakia each year. There was no will on the part of either the panel manufacturers and construction companies or the client – investment officials – to interfere with the numbers the economic plans were calling for – not even in the higher interest of a quality environment. The prescribed number of flats had to be completed and there was no time or money left over for civic amenities. The economic plans were fulfilled, but discontent grew among the professional community and the public. A solution was seen to lie in the use of universal prefabricated reinforced concrete skeletons.

The plan was to mass produce frame ‘construction sets’ that had been tried and tested, were easy to use and easy to manufacture, were sufficiently universal, and could be applied in all kinds of public services buildings on housing estates. The Research and Standardisation Institute tested experimental frames in several projects and in cooperation with selected manufacturers – for example, the T–MS–61 (a standardised prefabricated frame, developed in 1961), followed by the improved T–MS–63 and T–MS–66. This progress culminated with the development of the highly successful T–MS–71 frame (more often known as the MS–71 or MS 71), which was created and tested in cooperation with Pozemní stavby České Budějovice. Another common system was the MS–OB frame from Ostrava. Finally, there was the Konstruktiva frame, developed in Prague, and first used in 1962–1963 in the residential halls at Kavčí Hory in Prague and then again in the giant Xaverov poultry factory buildings. These three most successful frames were based on a simple concept of a repetition of 1.2–metre modules (most of these spans were 6 or 7.2 metres in length, but impressive 9– or 12–metre spans were occasionally used). The module made it possible to combine these frames with the regular, mass–produced glass façade systems (especially Boletice panels) and prefabricated ceiling components. The main beams incorporated into the depth of the ceiling also allowed designers a freer hand in laying out the space of the interior.

The original plans that accompanied the introduction of the MS–71 and MS–OB envisioned that they would primarily be used for the urgent construction of schools and health facilities, and that in the 1980s they would then be replaced with a dramatically innovated version, along with more specialised and therefore more efficient prefabricated frames for specific building functions. The gap between ambitious state–socialist planning and the inertia of the country’s ossified economy, however, grew ever



Fig. 2. Prague, Seniors’ home in Bohnice, arch. Jan Líněk and Vlado Milunić, 1972–1981 (photo. Josef Moucha).



Fig. 3. Prague, Daycare centre Letná, arch. Vladimír Štůlc and Josef Vrana, 1980–1984 (private archive of Vladimír Štůlc and Josef Vrana).

wider. The introduction of newly developed systems into production continued to be very slow, however, and the original MS–71, MS–OB, and Konstruktiva systems ultimately remained the ones that were prevalently used in construction up to the change of regime in 1989.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, the buildings built to house civic amenities – especially schools, polyclinics, and shopping centres – were not of particularly high quality architecturally and, as in the case of the prefabricated apartment buildings, the main concerns were speed and quantity.

Nevertheless, architects studied manuals looking for loopholes in the rigid systems and gradually learned to overcome the limitations they had to work with. As a result, they managed to extract from frames a great range of spatial and artistic designs. It was with the aid of the ordinary MS–OB frame that it was possible to build the sober rectangular block that is the Odra Shopping Centre on the Nové Výškovice housing estate in Ostrava (Renáta Májková, 1978–1984), as well as the contextually conceived shopping centre with oblique–angled roof pieces on the main square in the small town of Tišnov (Olga Drápalová, Jaroslav Drápal, 1981–1982).

Another challenge was trying to conceal the poor quality of the support structures using a more artistically and uniquely designed façade. Ceramic tiles figured importantly in this. The production of ceramic tiles was modernised in the 1970s and their mass use was inspired by examples from Scandinavia. Architects liked to work with artists to design the ceramic tiling on the facades and this collaboration was supported by the ‘percent for art’ in project budgets. Architects used these funds to give the façade a distinct look, rather than to introduce works of art which had no relationship to the building or ideologically motivated ones. The way of using ceramic tiles was most commonly applied to the large window–less surfaces of shopping centre façades, which were meant to be suggestive of optimistic temples of consumerism and affluence. For example, in the case of Prior Department Store in Prague–Prosek (Anděla Drašarová, 1981–1983) the ceramic artist Antonín Stibůrek used just several basic tiles and combined them to produce a surprisingly playful work of art and architecture.

Many (and especially young) architects took advantage of the unified joints and simple modularity that prefabricated systems offered and mixed different ones to create a comprehensive, almost artistic bricolage. Jan Líněk and Vlado Milunić, employed this approach to achieve a more humanistic environment in the seniors’ homes they built in Bohnice, Háj, Malešice, and Chodov in Prague (1972–1981, 1976–1994, 1979–1987, 1983–1989).<sup>7</sup> They used and blended different standard prefabricated elements and animated them with colours, and steel profiles. The architects worked consistently with a hierarchy of intimacy, the topography of the site, and the complex’s integration into the life of the housing estate. But they also played with the formal elements on the façade, which the architects themselves considered an extension and more up–to date version

<sup>6</sup> Vorlík, P. (2021). Frames – systems as an invitation to improvise. In *Improvizace / architektura osmdesátých let: Improvisation / the architecture of the eighties* (pp. 92–100). ČVUT.

<sup>7</sup> Poláčková, T. (2019). Ohnout panel pro spokojené stáří. In *(A)typ / architektura osmdesátých let* (pp. 149–157). České vysoké učení technické v Praze.



of technicist functionalism, though we can also observe clear signs of the influence of postmodernism and the need for an archetypal legibility (the tower, clocks, portal). A similar approach involving the extensive modification of ordinary prefabricated reinforced concrete panels had to be used by Pavel Stiborek and Miroslav Mikula when they designed apartments for the disabled in the South City housing estate in Prague (1983–1987).

This same strategy of combining generally widespread and inexpensive prefabricated frames with atypical building components and masonry structures (difficult because good quality craftsmen were hard to find) was also necessarily applied to building projects in the mountains, where it would have been impossible to use the ordinary frames and square-type structures found in the city, and where it was important to blend with the mountain environment, which could only be achieved with atypical shapes and (natural) materials. This strategy was especially used in the holiday resorts built by company trade unions as part of the benefits granted to select employees (ones who were scarce or whom companies wanted to hold on to for their valuable experience), which were intended to offer a higher standard of accommodation and services on almost an urban level (ROH Pochodeň, Krausovy Boudy resort in Špindlerův Mlýn, Karel Schmied, 1980–1985).<sup>8</sup>

Conversely, one surprising area in which full typification and prefabrication was successfully applied in the 1980s was smaller sports buildings. For example, the hugely widespread steel sports halls, many of which are still in use today, that were designed by architect Jiří Siegel working with the popular and de facto only lightweight steel prefabrication system KORD (manufactured by Rudné doly Jeseník), the wooden BIOS sports halls designed by Jan Nováček, and the steel halls housing swimming pool that were designed by Pavel Marek (manufactured in cooperation with Prague shipyards).

#### FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS AND AGAINST ALIENATION

Like the Communist Party headquarters and the department stores mentioned above, culture houses were likewise assigned to select locations, such as a demolition site or at least a very prominent lot near the city centre. Since the 1950s, culture houses had served as a key instrument in the regime's consolidation of power – with the proclaimed aim of creating a sophisticated environment – and from their prominent locations they were supposed to promote the correct ideological narrative through a carefully controlled form of culture. Culture houses also offered impressive settings in which to hold political meetings and Communist Party congresses (like the grandiose Prague Palace of Culture, Jaroslav Mayer, 1975–1981). The evolution of the architecture of culture houses, however, is not so black and white. In the early days, culture houses were mainly associated with the earlier Sokol movement and (Soviet) workers' clubs. In the 1950s some thought was given to creating uniform designs for culture houses in relation to the size of the city. Because culture by nature is rooted in time, and because

<sup>8</sup> Kracík, M., & Savická, P. (2022). Social infrastructure, standard and non-standard civic amenities. In *Ambice / architektura osmdesátých let: Ambitions / the architecture of the eighties* (pp. 283–300). České vysoké učení technické v Praze, Fakulta architektury.



Fig. 4. Liberec, Swimming pool, arch. Pavel Švancer, 1968–1984 (photo. Josef Moucha).



Fig. 5. Česká Lípa, Culture house, arch. Jiří Suchomel, 1974–1990 (photo Jiří Suchomel).



Fig. 6. Benešov, Swimming pool, arch. Tomáš Turek, 1985–1986 (private archive of Tomáš Turek).



Fig. 7. Jakartovice, Bus stop, arch. Jan Kovář, 1976 (photographer Jan Kovář).

the requirements for the auditoriums were variable, the culture houses were able to resist the use of such instruments, and from the 1960s on it was cultural houses that became an unexpectedly experimental building type with a wide range of spatial and artistic designs. Excellent local architects were involved in designing the buildings and they inevitably took both the local context and current developments in architecture into account. Given the unrelenting political support, they were also able to attain higher-standard furnishings and finishes. (Who would dare not to support culture in a socialist world that at least officially distanced itself from corrupt Western capitalist consumerism and flaunted its cultural sophistication and continuity with historical traditions?) It was thus the culture houses (despite their ideological overtones) that offered a refined form of architecture right in the historic centre of cities and acted as a deliberate counterweight to the undesirable traditional meeting places (the church and the pub). Examples of the many outstanding culture houses built include the impressive buildings in Uherský Brod (František Jelínek, Jiří Sniszczoł, 1978–1985), Teplice (Karel Hubáček, Otakar Binar, Václav Bůžek, Zdeněk Patrman, 1977–1986), Prague–Dáblice (Viktor Tuček, Vilém Hes, Jiří Kulišťák, 1979–1983), and Česká Lípa (Jiří Suchomel, 1974–1990).

Another area in which it became possible to pursue higher creative ambitions was the construction of municipal sports facilities, which were often combined with accommodation, restaurants, and facilities devoted to health and fitness. Attempts to develop uniform designs for sports buildings failed (e.g. the prototype for a reproducible municipal swimming pool in Nový Jičín, František Šaman, 1970–1975), and until the regime's collapse they offered architects a unique opportunity to experiment with the new large-span constructions and their effects on a structure's external appearance. Such experiments included, for example, the use of arches made of glued wooden lamellas (the ice rink at the Prague Exhibition Grounds, Karel Koutský, Jan Kozel, Vladimíra Leníčková, 1983–1985; and in Strakonice, Miloš Kopřiva, 1983), various types of steel trusses (sports hall in Chomutov, Martin Kubricht, 1981–1988), and the first attempts at an environmentally responsible design (swimming pool in Tachov with Trombe wall towards South, massive insulation on North and solar panels set on the roof, Eduard Schleger, Lukáš Liesler 1983–1992) or a poetically small-town or neoclassical style of architecture (swimming pool in Benešov, Tomáš Turek, 1985–1986; Riviera swimming pool in Brno, Petr Hruša, 1985–1990).

Smaller-scale public services outside the focus of political control, projects that were done with the considerable involvement of young architects, artists, and often local residents as well, were a superb way of escaping the unpleasantness of everyday reality. And that's what made it possible for two small gazebos, Chrámek přírody (Nature's Little Temple) (Tomáš Brix, 1985–1988) and Stodůlka (Little Barn) (Jiří Mojžíš, 1986), to appear in the middle of one of Prague's biggest housing estates, where their romantic appearance offered a sharp contrast with the 'soulless architecture of prefabricated houses';<sup>9</sup> or for a post office, a scrap materials collection centre, and

<sup>9</sup> Bukačová, J., & Vorlík, P. (2021, March 17). Interview with Jiří Mojžíš [Interview]. Nebušice.

the Na Brance restaurant (Tomáš Brix, 1979, 1982–1986; Tomáš Brix, 1978–1984; Václav Králíček, Tomáš Brix, 1976–1984) to be built with façades that apply a mix of inspirations from postmodernism, functionalism, high–tech, and the neo–styles of the 19th century to ordinary prefabricated building components.<sup>10</sup>

The surprising construction of spiritual funeral halls (in a supposedly secular society) occurred entirely outside the sphere of political oversight. Such structures were usually built in an existing cemetery and, moreover, in the midst of an impressive landscape (in Klenčí pod Čerchovem, Josef Batelka, 1971–1974; in Kunčice pod Ondřejníkem, Lubomír Hruška, 1987; in Kamenice nad Lipou, Miloslav Kadeřábek, Jaroslav Zbořil, Jaromír Jakeš, 1974–1980).<sup>11</sup> One remarkable area of work that made use of the traditional craftsmanship and materials ignored by big architecture and not supported politically involved the construction of small projects such as the sausage stand on Letná in Prague, which the author nicknamed the ‘Temple of the Banal’ (Jaroslav Kosek, 1987–1988), the bus stop in Jakartovice, built by a fresh graduate of the Faculty of Architecture and local carpenters (Jan Kovář, 1976), and the pavilion covering Antonín Spring in Mariánské Lázně (Michal Brix, 1986–1991), the architecture of which unexpectedly incorporates a wooden structure inspired by the spa’s romantic history and supported by columns made from stainless steel tubes, leftovers from the construction of a nuclear power plant.

CONCLUSION

It is nothing new in history to see the division of the architecture of public buildings into three groups – 1) prominent and to some extent exclusive in a higher state or political interest, 2) an everyday and not very ambitious standard, and 3) creatively conceived and sensitively situated public services buildings of a moderate size. We find the same stratification of public services in the late 19th century, in the interwar era, and indeed in the present day. It follows naturally from what is involved in managing and investing in a socially responsible modern state, from the availability and targeted use of financial and human resources, and, ultimately, from the expectations that society assigns to the public sphere.

At the same time, however, these investments in the past entail an obligation for the present and the future. In the case of prominent buildings of significance for society, their spectacular designs, more sophisticated materials and details, the great size, and, last but not least, the higher expectations attached to them as sites of crucial significance for society naturally means also that they require demanding and expensive care. In the case of everyday standard and ordinary buildings, by contrast we are overly accustomed to not ‘see’ the gradual degradation until major renovations or demolition

is required, during which usually little account is taken of the vestiges and values of the past, let alone of the nostalgic and essential memories of local residents.

The buildings that offer the greatest potential therefore are the ones of moderate size, which were already the targets of exceptional care and creativity from their designers, were not subject to excessive economising and consequently boast a surprisingly good quality design, and still offer a spatial standard that would be politically difficult to obtain in the economic and social circumstances of the present day. The stumbling block, however, is their management, which is usually the responsibility of the local councils, whose leaders often change after elections and with them also the council’s priorities. As a result, these buildings are often only partially restored and lack a long–term strategy for their use and conceptual care that would take into consideration their architectural and social qualities. A surprisingly large number of these buildings have thus succumbed to demolition or insensitive redevelopment (often intended to blot out their socialist origins or simply as a result of the lack of understanding of the architectural value) or have been lost because the local councils cannot find a suitable use for them. Unfortunately, this attitude of indifference is also observed among conservation authorities. Of the 47,000 buildings registered as immovable heritage in the Czech Republic, only 76 date from 1945–1989, and more than two–thirds of them are buildings and monuments from the 1950s. Public buildings of exceptional architectural quality that date from the period between the 1960s and the 1980s will have to wait to see their quality confirmed and for better care. Just as society is waiting for an appropriate and truly responsible use of this valuable heritage from the recent past.

<sup>10</sup> Beran, L. (2019). Fragmenty městského prostoru: Střediska obchodu a služeb. In *(A)typ / architektura osmdesátých let* (pp. 116–120). České vysoké učení technické v Praze; Směták, P. (2019). Drobné služby na sídlišti. In *(A)typ / architektura osmdesátých let* (pp. 198–204). České vysoké učení technické v Praze.

<sup>11</sup> Vicherková, V. (2019). Na rozloučenou. In *(A)typ / architektura osmdesátých let* (pp. 168–173). České vysoké učení technické v Praze.



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ABSTRACT

The subject of the article is the investment activity of the Military Accommodation Fund in relation to the so-called Kresy Wschodnie / Eastern Borderlands (eastern territories of interwar Poland). The aim of the research was presenting these investments, their functions and locations, focusing on issues related with the architectural stylistic forms, with quality of the implemented facilities and with the current state of preservation. The need to discuss these issues is justified by the importance of the MAF investment as an element of Polish cultural heritage abroad, as well as the threat related to the current political situation in Eastern Europe. In 1925, the Sejm adopted an act under which every officer and married non-commissioned officer was entitled to a service apartment. In July 1927, the MAF was established, the purpose of which was the construction of residential facilities for servicemen, their maintenance and conservation. The MAF construction stood out from the interwar investments not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of quality. Reliability and professionalism of workmanship, large apartment sizes and high quality of finishing works meant that MAF housing construction a very good reputation, and the projects were treated as models for residential buildings designed at that time. The MAF did not formulate precise guidelines on the stylistic character of the designed facilities, so their buildings represent different architectural tendencies, functioning in parallel in the first years. It was only in the 1930s that modernist solutions came to the fore. To streamline the construction process, it was decided to develop repeatable designs, following the example of solutions used in the 1920s. Independently of this, individual solutions and architectural concepts were also designed, each time obtained through public competitions. The eastern voivodeships were the most neglected in terms of housing, so the construction of facilities in the borderland garrison towns was treated as a priority. Of the 219 objects completed in the years 1928–1937, 130 – i.e. 60% – were built in the Eastern Borderlands. They included 17 repeatable projects, 11 individual projects, as well as a large MAF housing estate in Trauguttowo near Brest. Some of these facilities were destroyed as a result of the war or in the post-war period. Most of them have been preserved to this day, but their current condition vary.

Keywords: Military Accommodation Fund, Eastern Borderlands, officers’ houses, non-commissioned officers’ houses, housing estate in Trauguttowo

INTRODUCTION

On 10 December 1933, in the halls of the garrison casino on Aleja Szucha in Warsaw, the opening of the exhibition Military Construction took place. Among the many objects on display—historical buildings taken over by the Polish Army as well as new investments of various kinds—particular attention was drawn to the modern residential blocks for officers and non-commissioned officers, built by the Military Accommodation Fund (*Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego*, FWK). They were described as: *generally following the line of modern simplicity, rejecting the burden of unnecessary ornamentation (...). In each designed building, there is a sound tendency to combine functionality with beauty, or perhaps, more precisely, to bring out beauty through a creative and artistic treatment of that functionality.*<sup>1</sup>

The investment activity of the Military Accommodation Fund (FKW) has not yet been the subject of a monographic study and is rarely addressed in historical research—disproportionately so, given the institution’s significance as the largest investor in Polish residential construction of the interwar period.<sup>2</sup> The issue has also received only scant and incidental treatment with regard to the so-called Eastern Borderlands (*Kresy Wschodnie*).<sup>3</sup> The need to discuss this aspect of the FWK’s work, even within the scope of a single article, is fully justified in light of its importance for Polish cultural heritage beyond the country’s borders as well as the threats posed by the current political situation in Eastern Europe. This is also the primary aim of the present article.

The text focuses on issues related to the architectural quality of the completed buildings and their current state of preservation. For the purposes of developing the topic, printed source materials were used—above all, the richly illustrated reports of the Military Accommodation Fund (FKW) from successive stages of its activity.<sup>4</sup> These are an exceptionally valuable resource from the perspective of architectural history, as they include design drawings, professionally taken photographs, and detailed information about the designers and construction timelines. However, it was necessary to confront this material with other sources due to errors and inaccuracies that tend to appear in such publications. The study also draws on relevant literature (including works

<sup>1</sup> Mańkowski, B. (1935). Recenzje i krytyki: 'Domy mieszkalne Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego'. *Czasopismo Techniczne*, 9, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Among others: Łobocki, J. M. (1989). *Architektura militaris polona 1918–1978*. In W. Puget (Ed.), *Architektura i urbanistyka w Polsce 1918–1978* (pp. 93–107). Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.; *Klucz do kwatery: Historia mieszkalnictwa wojskowego w Polsce*. (2014). Wojskowa Agencja Mieszkaniowa.; Wagner, A. A. (2021). *Architektura mieszkaniowa Warszawy w okresie międzywojnia na przykładzie realizacji Spółdzielni Budowlano-Mieszkaniowych, Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego i Warszawskiej Spółdzielni Mieszkaniowej, powstałych w rejonie Pola Mokotowskiego. Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki*, 2, pp. 70–74.; Szmelter, A. (2022). *Wielorodzinnny dom mieszkalny Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego dla oficerów przy ulicy Koszykowej w Warszawie projektu Romualda Gutta i Józefa Jankowskiego, 1931–1933: Urbanistyka i architektura. Studia do Dziejów Architektury i Urbanistyki w Polsce*, 5, pp. 87–113.

<sup>3</sup> Pszczółkowski, M. (2016). *Kresy nowoczesne: Architektura na ziemiach wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej 1921–1939*. Księży Młyn Dom Wydawniczy.

<sup>4</sup> *Domy mieszkalne Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego: Sprawozdanie 1927–1930* [Hereafter: *Sprawozdanie 1927–1930*]. (1930). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego; *Domy mieszkalne Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego: Sprawozdanie 1930–1933* [Hereafter: *Sprawozdanie 1930–1933*]. (1933). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego; *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* [Hereafter: *Sprawozdanie 1927–1937*]. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego.



in Ukrainian and Russian).<sup>5</sup> The issue of preservation was addressed on the basis of photographic documentation prepared during study visits in recent years.

THE MILITARY ACCOMMODATION FUND – HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL  
CONTEXT

In the first years of independence, the military construction service did not undertake housing projects, as investment priorities lay in meeting operational needs: military fortifications, barracks, warequarterss, and depots for materials and military equipment. It was only in 1925 that the Sejm passed a law granting every officer and married non-commissioned officer a service apartment.<sup>6</sup> Due to the impossibility of fully meeting this obligation using existing resources, a decision was made to launch a state program for the construction of appropriate housing. In July 1927, the Military Accommodation Fund (FKW) was established within the Ministry of Military Affairs. The Fund’s purpose was to construct residential buildings for military personnel, continue projects already started with other Ministry funds, and maintain and preserve completed properties. The first projects were completed in 1928, with further buildings systematically put into service in the following years. In total, between 1928 and 1937, more than 2 million cubic meters of residential space were built (Fig. 1), of which over 460,000 m<sup>3</sup> were completed in the peak year of 1929.<sup>7</sup> Investments continued without interruption until the end of the interwar period; however, data for 1938–1939 is missing, as the last report was published in 1937.

The construction projects of the Military Accommodation Fund stood out among interwar investments not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality. Private construction companies, commissioned through a tendering process, strove for the highest standards, recognizing not only the representational significance of these projects from the perspective of the state, but also the prestige and financial reliability of the investor–factors that promised the prospect of further lucrative cooperation. The solidity and professionalism of the workmanship, the spacious layouts of the apartments, and the high quality of finishing works contributed to the excellent reputation of FKW housing projects. These developments were often regarded as models for contemporary civilian residential buildings. It is worth noting that the principles governing construction



Fig. 1. Investments of the Military Accommodation Fund in the years 1927–1937 (source: Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937, Warszawa 1938, p. XXXVII).

<sup>5</sup> Михайлишин, О. (2009). Розвиток типології житла на Волині у 1920–30-х роках на прикладі забудови кварталів для військовослужбовців. In М. Дьомін (Ed.), *Сучасні проблеми архітектури та містобудування* (pp. 380–390). [Publisher not identified]; Кивачук, С., & Березюк, А. (2021). Траугуптово в Бресте (1938–1939 гг.): Градостроительные и архитектурно-планировочные особенности. In *Архитектура во времени и пространстве: Материалы международной научно-практической конференции, 29 апреля 2021 г.* (pp. 64–67). [Publisher not identified]; Панченко, Т., & Кивачук, С. (2023). Жилые планировочные образования 1930-х гг. в западных регионах. In А. Сардаров et al. (Eds.), *Архитектура: Сборник научных трудов* (pp. 58–64). [Publisher not identified].

<sup>6</sup> Ustawa z dnia 15 lipca 1925 r. o zakwaterowaniu wojska w czasie pokoju. (1925). *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 97, poz. 681.

<sup>7</sup> Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 20, 23.

management and the financial policies applied by the FKW were evaluated positively even in the postwar period.<sup>8</sup>

To streamline the construction process, it was decided to develop standardized designs—that is, specific types of residential buildings that would later be implemented in multiple locations. This decision was inspired by design models applied in the 1920s, including those used in school construction and in housing for civil servants (for example, in the official housing colonies in the Eastern Borderlands: Jerzy Beill's design for a starost's quarters was used in Nowogródek, Baranowicze, Nieśwież, Słonim, Drohiczyn, Stołpce, Wołożyn, and Lida, while Juliusz Kłos's design for a semi-detached quarters was implemented in Duniłowicze, Braśław, Głębokie, Plissa, Zalesie, Hermanowicze, and Szarkowszczyzna). Alongside these standardized projects, individually designed solutions were also created, with architectural concepts obtained each time through public competitions.<sup>9</sup> It should be emphasized that these were the first competitions in the country devoted to standardized residential construction. The buildings were usually designed as detached structures and, in terms of functional layout, represented the sectional type of housing—typically composed of two sections, each containing two to four apartments per floor, grouped around a central staircase. The distinction between officers' and non-commissioned officers' apartments lay primarily in their size (officers' families were allocated apartments with three rooms, while NCOs' apartments had two rooms, each type including a kitchen and a bathroom with a toilet), but also in the standard of finish: for officers' apartments, parquet floors were planned and bathroom walls were clad with glazed tiles, whereas in NCOs' apartments the floors were made of planed pine boards, the bathtubs were shorter, and the bathroom walls were painted with oil-based paint.<sup>10</sup>

The FKW did not formulate precise guidelines regarding the stylistic character of the buildings to be designed, operating on the assumption that creative thought cannot be forcibly confined within the framework of even the most carefully developed doctrine, and that any template can only be sustained for a very short time—nothing can halt the human mind in its forward striving toward the ideal.<sup>11</sup> They limited themselves to general recommendations for maximum cost-effectiveness and the greatest possible standardization of apartment types and building elements.<sup>12</sup> The design community was diverse, as Edgar Norwerth wrote: In the army, in all its branches, wide layers of the architectural profession are currently at work – from the oldest and most renowned to the youngest, imbued with a great supply of fresh creative energy and vigorous ideas – all, regardless of their stylistic creeds.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, among the more than one hundred

<sup>8</sup> Chęciński, J. (1966). *Budownictwo wojskowe w Polsce (1918–1939)*. Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny, pp. 142–173.

<sup>9</sup> Działalność budowlana Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego. (1929). *Architektura i Budownictwo*, 2–3, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Chęciński, J. (1966). *Budownictwo wojskowe w Polsce (1918–1939)*. Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny, p. 157.

<sup>11</sup> *Domy mieszkalne Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego: Sprawozdanie 1930–1933*. (1933). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> *Domy mieszkalne Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego: Sprawozdanie 1927–1930*. (1930). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> Norwerth, E. (1933). *Budownictwo wojskowe*. *Pion*, 10, p. 4.

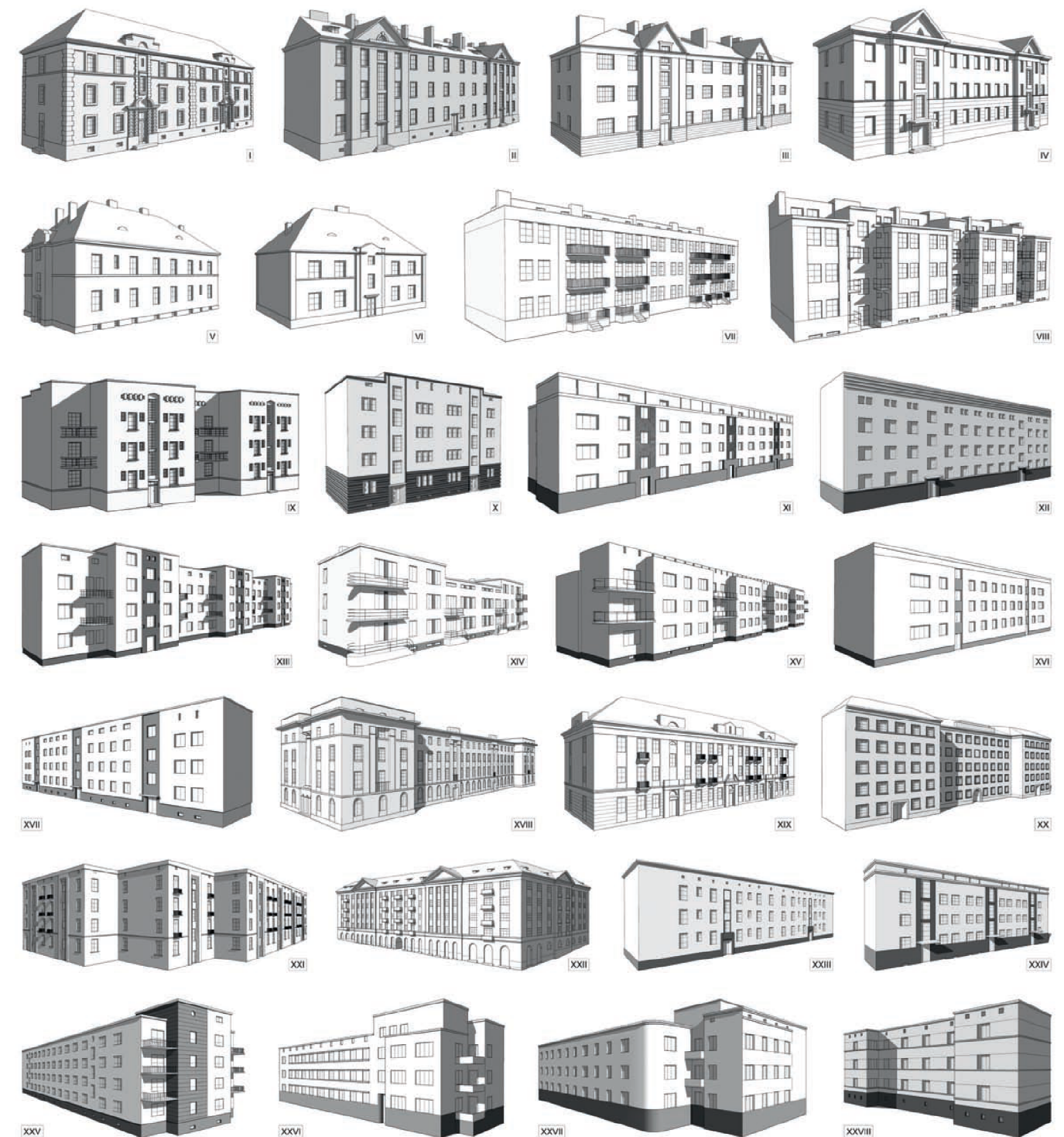


Fig. 2. MAF investments in the Eastern Borderlands (prepared by Michał Pszczółkowski).



and sixty architects engaged in the collaboration were both representatives of the older generation, holding conservative views on the form of architecture, and members of the younger generation with modernist convictions.<sup>14</sup> The diversity of this heterogeneous group of designers was reflected in the variety of architectural forms, which, in the Fund’s early years, coexisted side by side; it was only in the 1930s that modernist solutions came to the fore. In designs rooted in the traditionalist trend, elements such as rustication, simplified engaged porticoes, pediments, and gables were employed, while modernist designs featured varied combinations of materials and, in the most radical variant, extremely simplified, rectangular forms relying solely on diverse arrangements and shapes of window openings. A characteristic and frequently used material in modernist solutions was grey cement brick, which became something of a trademark of FKW projects. Gable–end façades were usually left without window openings, allowing the building’s volume to be increased by adding further modules. More complex solutions were applied less frequently.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS IN THE EASTERN BORDERLANDS

The most underdeveloped in terms of housing were the eastern voivodeships, as in the territories of the former Russian partition there were very few military residential buildings—mainly within fortresses and larger barracks complexes—and these were generally of low quality. The Russian officer corps most often lived in quarters rented in private civilian quarters. Consequently, the construction of facilities in the garrison towns of the Eastern Borderlands was treated as a priority.<sup>15</sup> In the 1937 report, a list of localities and facilities completed up to that time was published.<sup>16</sup> Among the 60 localities listed, 24 were located in the Eastern Borderlands, and by 1939 this number had risen to 29 (the list did not include projects undertaken in the last years in Chortkiv, Kolomyia, Kremenets, and Slonim). Thus, towns in the Eastern Borderlands accounted for roughly half of the entire list. When comparing the number of individual projects, out of 219 buildings, 130 – that is, 60% – were constructed in the Eastern Borderlands. The concepts of particular types of designs are discussed below in the order of their creation, for clarity assigned Roman numerals corresponding to those shown in Fig. 2.

**Type I** – Twelve–unit officers’ quarters, designed by Tadeusz Obmiński, 1928 (Fig. 2, I). It was designed in a traditional style, featuring corner rustication, windows framed with surrounds, entrances accentuated by portals with Baroque–inspired pediments, and a high, hipped roof with stepped gables aligned with the stairwell axes. The Military Accommodation Fund used this building type six times: in Baranovichi (present–day 16 Lenina Street), twice in Nowa Wilejka (no longer extant), and three times in Lviv, where it formed a small military housing estate (present–day 276–280 Horodotska Street). Two

<sup>14</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. XXVI–XXVII.  
<sup>15</sup> *Domy mieszkalne Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego: Sprawozdanie 1930–1933*. (1933). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 30.  
<sup>16</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 1–14.

buildings from this estate (nos. 276 and 280) were extended with an additional, third section, thus creating eighteen–unit blocks.<sup>17</sup>

**Type II** – Eighteen–unit non–commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Bruno Zborowski and Aleksander Sygietyński, 1928 (Fig. 2, II). It was given a simplified Neoclassical appearance, with a gable roof and stairwell axes emphasized by wall–adjoining, giant–order porticoes topped with triangular pediments. This design was implemented nine times: once in Baranovichi (present–day 1 Fedko Street), once in Krasne (present location without address) in a twelve–unit version reduced by one storey, twice in Vilnius (present–day 15 and 19 Kazliškių Street), where the buildings were enlarged to thirty–six apartments; twice in Nowa Wilejka (present–day Vilnius, 1 and 3 Parko Street), and three times in Molodechno in the twelve–unit version (present–day 9 and 17 Chkalava Street, the third no longer extant).<sup>18</sup>

**Type III** – Twelve–unit officers’ quarters, designed by Bruno Zborowski and Aleksander Sygietyński, 1928 (Fig. 2, III). In formal terms, it follows a layout similar to Type II, featuring paired pilaster strips in the wall–adjoining porticoes and a horizontally rusticated ground floor zone. It was built ten times: in Vilnius (present–day 33 Rinktinės Street, in a sixteen–unit version raised by one storey), Pruzhany (present location without address), Kobryn (most likely no longer extant), Brest–on–the–Bug (present–day 15 Bresckih Dyvizij Street), Rivne (present–day 7 Dubenska Street), Berezhany (present–day Lepkyh Street, number not identified), Dubno (present–day 79 Grushevskogo Street) and Zolochiv (present–day 1 Shuhevycha Street, both in sixteen–unit versions), as well as twice in Volodymyr Volynskyi (present–day Ustyluzka Street, number not identified; the second building no longer extant).<sup>19</sup>

**Type IV** – Eighteen–unit non–commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Władysław Polkowski, 1929 (Fig. 2, IV). The building, featuring a horizontally rusticated high ground floor, is also similar to Type II. It was implemented seven times: in Ternopil (present–day 29 Khmelnytskoho Street) and Zolochiv (present–day 26 Sichovykh Striltsiv Street, both in twenty–four–unit versions raised by one storey), in Dubno (present–day 3 Semydubska Street), twice in Rivne (present–day 4 and 5 Dubenska Street), and twice in Hrodna (present–day 34 and 36 Zaharova Street).<sup>20</sup>

**Type V** – Eight–unit non–commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Wacław Borowiecki, 1929 (Fig. 2, V). This was a small, modestly designed building, with stylistic features limited to a hipped roof and a gable emphasizing the vertical line of the staircase. In this case, a different functional layout was adopted, placing the entrance

<sup>17</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 1, 6; *Działalność budowlana Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego. (1929)*. Architektura i Budownictwo, 2–3, pp. 50–52; contemporary address locations based on the author’s own research, also hereafter.  
<sup>18</sup> *Sprawozdanie 1927–1937*, op. cit., pp. 1, 6, 7, 8, 13.  
<sup>19</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 1, 6, 7, 8, 13.  
<sup>20</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 3, 4, 10, 11, 13.

to the staircase in the gable façade. The design was implemented four times: twice in Pinsk and twice in Sambor (all most likely no longer extant).<sup>21</sup>

**Type VI** – Four-unit officers’ quarters, designed by Waclaw Borowiecki, 1929 (Fig. 2, VI). Architecturally, it was similar to Type V and was also implemented in the same towns. Together with Type V, it formed small housing estates in Pinsk and Sambor (all most likely no longer extant).<sup>22</sup>

**Type VII** – Twelve-unit non-commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Bohdan Lachert, Józef Szanajca, and Włodzimierz Winkler, 1928 (Fig. 2, VII). The building was designed in the modernist spirit, featuring, among other elements, a flat roof and balconies with metal railings. It was constructed in Kovel (no longer extant).<sup>23</sup>

**Type VIII** – Eighteen-unit non-commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Bohdan Lachert, Józef Szanajca, and Włodzimierz Winkler, 1929 (Fig. 2, VIII). This modernist building consists of interpenetrating cubic volumes with flat roofs, enlivened by balconies with metal railings. The design was executed twice: in Kovel (no longer extant) and in Stanisławów (now Ivano-Frankivsk, 1 Natsionalnoi Hvardiï Street).<sup>24</sup>

**Type IX** – Twelve-unit non-commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Włodzimierz Padlewski, 1929 (Fig. 2, IX). A modernist building with stairwells illuminated by ‘thermometer’ windows, it was enhanced with Art Deco elements. It was built in Stanisławów (now Ivano-Frankivsk, 117 Chornovola Street).<sup>25</sup>

**Type X** – Sixteen-unit non-commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Kazimierz Tołłoczko, 1929 (Fig. 2, X). This modernist building, with its ground floor and stairwell bays accentuated by brick cladding—arranged in a striated pattern at the ground floor level—was constructed three times: once in Lida (most likely no longer extant) and twice in Brześć nad Bugiem (now Brest, 6 Krasnogvardeyskaya Street; the second building has not survived).<sup>26</sup> Due to an error in the source material,<sup>27</sup> this design has also been incorrectly identified in the literature as being located in Vilnius.<sup>28</sup>

**Type XI** – 21-family non-commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Jan Henryk Kukulski, 1933 (Fig. 2, XI). The design was executed in a modernist spirit, featuring a flat roof and stairwell shafts accentuated with striated clinker cladding. It was built five times: in Postavy (present-day 4 Stankevicha Street), Baranovichi (most likely not

<sup>21</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 3, 4, 10, 11, 13.

<sup>22</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 3, 4, 10, 11, 13.

<sup>23</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 5, 11.

<sup>25</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 2, 6.

<sup>27</sup> Król, A. (Ed.). (1935). *Budownictwo wojskowe 1918–1935* (Vol. 2). Departament Budownictwa Ministerstwa Spraw Wojskowych, p. 470.

<sup>28</sup> Małachowicz, E. (1989). Architektura dwudziestolecia międzywojennego w Wilnie. In W. Puget (Ed.), *Architektura i urbanistyka w Polsce 1918–1978* (p. 135). Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

preserved), Brest-on-the-Bug (not preserved), and twice in Maladzyechna (present-day 2 and 17 Masherava Street).<sup>29</sup>

**Type XII** – 21-family officers’ quarters, designed by Leopold Toruń, 1935 (Fig. 2, XII). This was a modernist building with a flat roof, clinker cladding on the ground floor, and a striated crowning cornice. This design was implemented five times: in Lutsk (present-day 12 8-ho Berezhnya 12 Street) and Horodok (most likely not preserved), as well as three times in Brest-on-the-Bug (present-day Zhukava Street, exact numbers unidentified).<sup>30</sup>

**Type XIII** – 36-family non-commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Bronisław Handelsman-Targowski, 1935 (Fig. 2, XIII). This layout type represents a modernist concept composed of interpenetrating volumes, with stairwell shafts accentuated by clinker cladding. It was implemented in Vilnius (no longer extant).<sup>31</sup>

**Type XIV** – 10-family non-commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Jan Lucjusz Szperling, 1936 (Fig. 2, XIV). Characteristic elements of this modernist design include interwindow spaces faced with clinker brick and rounded balconies with metal railings wrapping around the corners. It was implemented in Pastavy (present-day 3 Stankevicha St).<sup>32</sup>

**Type XV** – 36-family non-commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Jerzy Makowiecki, 1936 (Fig. 2, XV). This modernist concept, composed of interpenetrating volumes with rounded balconies at the corners, was built in Lida (no longer extant).<sup>33</sup>

**Type XVI** – 24-family non-commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Tadeusz Baum, 1937 (Fig. 2, XVI). This modernist building, with stairwell bays accentuated by clinker cladding, was implemented four times: once in Kobryn (most likely no longer extant) and three times in Brest-on-the-Bug (present-day ul. Zhukava, without identified numbers).<sup>34</sup>

**Type XVII** – 27-family non-commissioned officers’ quarters, designed by Kazimierz Tołłoczko, 1937 (Fig. 2, XVII). In this case, the stairwell bays were accentuated with cladding in a different bond. This modernist concept was implemented four times: once in Lutsk (present-day ul. 8-ho Berezhnya 24) and three times in Brest-on-the-Bug (present-day ul. Zhukava, without identified numbers).<sup>35</sup>

It should be noted here that the aforementioned repeatable designs were also used in other parts of the country. Tadeusz Obmiński’s 1928 design (Type I) was applied in Biała Podlaska, Chełm, and Radom. The design by Bruno Zborowski and Aleksander Sygietyński (Type II) was used in Biała Podlaska, Radom, Piotrków, and Częstochowa.

<sup>29</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 1, 2, 7, 9.

<sup>30</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 2, 4.

<sup>31</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 2–6.

<sup>35</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937* (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 2.



The most frequently used was the 12-family officers' quarters design by Bruno Zborowski and Aleksander Sygietyński (Type III), which was implemented in Biała Podlaska, Włodawa, Puławy, Sandomierz, Jarosław, Kutno, Brodnica, and Inowrocław. Also popular was Kazimierz Tołłeczko's design (Type X), applied in Suwałki, Grajewo, Lublin, Jarosław, Warsaw, Skierniewice, Toruń, and Bydgoszcz. The remaining solutions were less in demand: Type IV is found in Kutno and Puławy; Types V and VI were used in Kielce; Types VII and VIII in Płock; Type IX in Przemyśl; Types XIII and XV in Modlin; Type XIV in Kielce; and Type XVI in Legionowo.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the repeatable standard designs, the Eastern Borderlands also saw the construction of individual designs intended for one-time use in specific locations. Here, too, a variety of stylistic solutions appeared. The 40-family officers' quarters in Lviv at present-day 42 Horodotska Street (Fig. 2, XVIII), designed in 1928 by Rudolf Indruch,<sup>37</sup> was executed in a traditional spirit, with entrances accentuated by giant-order pilasters with stylized capitals and strong features in the form of corner projections topped with attics. In a similar stylistic vein was the 18-family officers' quarters in Ternopil<sup>38</sup> at 6 Gogolya Street (Fig. 2, XIX), designed in 1928 by Leopold Karasiński, with a rusticated ground floor and three entrances emphasized by portals and dormers aligned with their axes. The most monumental of the conservative-style buildings was the 33-family officers' quarters in Vilnius at present-day 9 Vilniaus Street (Fig. 2, XXII), designed in 1934 by Władysław Polkowski<sup>39</sup> – neoclassical, only slightly modernized, with a flatly rusticated ground floor and wall-adjacent Ionic porticos on the façades.

The spirit of moderate Modernism was more clearly expressed in two projects in Lviv. The 40-unit officers' quarters at present-day 30 Rustaveli Street (Fig. 2, XX), built as part of a frontage development, was designed by Marian Nikodemowicz and Wilhelm Sawczyk in 1930.<sup>40</sup> It features a rather austere, symmetrical façade without decorative details, articulated by two outer avant-corps and entrances framed by portals. A similar character can be seen in the 56-unit non-commissioned officers' quarters at present-day 34 Bortnyanskogo Street (Fig. 2, XXI), designed in 1930 by Stefan Bryła – laid out on an L-shaped plan, with a recessed corner forming a setback and stairwell bays framed by profiled surrounds.

Most individually designed buildings, however, represent fully Modernist solutions. Examples include the 24-unit non-commissioned officers' quarters in Pruzhany, present-day Dachnaya Street, no established number (Fig. 2, XXIII), designed by Stanisław Wojciechowski in 1935,<sup>41</sup> with vertical circulation cores and the ground floor accentuated by brick surrounds; the 16-unit non-commissioned officers' quarters in

<sup>36</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, pp. 1–14; address data there as well, pre-war.

<sup>37</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 11.

<sup>39</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 9.



Fig. 3. Trauguttowo, MAF housing estate, designed by Kazimierz Tołłeczko, 1936–1938 (source: Central Military Archives, Department of Construction of the Ministry of Military Affairs 1918–1939, sign. I.300.63.176).



Pastavy, present-day 3 Stankevicha Street (designed by Jan Lucjusz Szperling, 1935)<sup>42</sup> (Fig. 2, XXIV), Modernist in style, with stairwells and ground floor faced with clinker cladding; and the 52-unit non-commissioned officers' quarters in Lviv, present-day 24 Kleparivska Street (designed by Kazimierz Tołłoczko, 1936)<sup>43</sup> (Fig. 2, XXV), composed of two interpenetrating volumes with façades contrasted through the use of different materials (grey brick and rusticated clinker).

Two strictly Modernist buildings were erected in 1937 in Chortkiv, both designed by Adam Knauff.<sup>44</sup> Built of white silicate brick, with ground floor areas clad in clinker, they differ in detail: the 12-unit non-commissioned officers' quarters at present-day 2 Lesi Ukrayinky Street (Fig. 2, XXVI) consists of interpenetrating volumes with a rounded corner, whereas the 30-unit non-commissioned officers' quarters at present-day 4 Lepkogo Street (Fig. 2, XXVII) achieves visual effects through varied brick bonding patterns.

The review of Modernist FKW housing is concluded by the 24-unit non-commissioned officers' quarters in Kolomyia, present-day Mozart Street, no established number (Fig.2, XXVIII), built in 1937 and designed by Jan Bagieński<sup>45</sup> – featuring corner avant-corps, horizontally articulated façades, and a ground floor faced with clinker cladding.

The construction of multi-family buildings was the primary domain of the Fund's activities; however, barracks, military hospitals, warehouses, and the like were also built, as well as single-family quarters intended for garrison commanders. In the Eastern Borderlands, at least two such quarters were erected – in Maladzyechna and Pastavy – both designed in 1935 in the spirit of avant-garde Modernism: abstract, interpenetrating volumes with asymmetrically composed façades, partly faced with clinker cladding. The quarters in Maladzyechna, at present-day 1 Buylo Street, was designed by Aleksander Kafarski,<sup>46</sup> while the one in Pastavy (most likely no longer extant) was designed by Czesław Wolff.<sup>47</sup>

Residential buildings were usually constructed near military units, though most often they were integrated into the existing urban fabric. Large-scale residential urban complexes were not planned, with one exception—the housing estate in Trauguttowo near Brest—on—the—Bug, where, at present-day Zhukava Street (Brest), the Anti-Aircraft and Anti-Gas Defence Training Centre was established. Between 1936 and 1938, a school complex and residential buildings for the staff were built there<sup>48</sup> (Fig. 4) – this was the only development of its kind in the entire country. The completed residential complex, designed in the style of a modernist housing estate, consisted of two clearly distinct sections: apartment blocks for officers and blocks for non-commissioned officers. In

<sup>42</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> *Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937*. (1938). Fundusz Kwaterunku Wojskowego, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Кивачук, С., & Березюк, А. (2021). Траугуттово в Бресте (1938–1939 гг.): Градостроительные и архитектурно-планировочные особенности. In *Архитектура во времени и пространстве: Материалы международной научно-практической конференции, 29 апреля 2021 г.* (p. 203). [Publisher not identified].



Fig. 4. MAF investments – current condition: a) Pastavy, non-commissioned officers' house, 3 Stankevicha St., designed by Jan Lucjusz Szperling, 1936 (photo Uładzimir Sadouski, 2013); b) Brest, non-commissioned officers' house, 6 Krasnogvardeyskaya St., designed by Kazimierz Tołłoczko, 1929 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2018); c) Ternopil, non-commissioned officers' house, ul. 29 Hmelnyckogo St., designed by Władysław Polkowski, 1929 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2019).

addition to housing for military personnel, the plan also included an officers' and an NCO hotel, residential buildings for the school's civilian staff, a shop, and sports facilities. The individual buildings were arranged along streets with a free, undulating layout. The simple, cubic volumes were designed in the modernist spirit, employing a variety of building materials, with particular emphasis on grey brick and clinker cladding. The estate has survived in relatively good condition – the vast majority of the residential buildings still exist today, although post-war construction on the site has blurred the original urban design concept to a considerable extent.

#### STATE OF PRESERVATION

Some of the FKW buildings in the Eastern Borderlands were destroyed as a result of wartime events or in the postwar period. These include, among others, quarters in Nowa Wilejka (Type I), Włodzimierz Wołyński (Type III), Kobryń (Types III and XVI), Pińsk and Sambor (Types V and VI), Kowel (Types VII and VIII), Lida and Brześć (Type X), Baranowicze and Brześć (Type XI), Vilnius (Type XIII), and Lida (Type XV). Most, however, have survived to the present day, although their current condition and state of preservation vary. Some buildings are well-maintained and in good condition and retain their original form. Examples include the quarters in Vilnius at present-day Vilniaus Street 9 (Type XXII) and in Pastavy at present-day Stankevicha Street 3 (Type XIV, Fig. 4a). Others have survived intact in terms of form, but decades without regular



Fig. 5. MAF investments – current condition: a) Lutsk, officers' house, 12 8-go Bereznya St., designed by Leopold Toruń, 1935 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2018); b) Lviv, non-commissioned officers' house, 34 Bortnyanskogo St., designed by Stefan Bryła, 1930 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2018); c) Molodechno, commander's house, 1 Buylo St., designed by Aleksander Kafarski, 1935 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2019).





Fig. 6. MAF investments – current condition: a) Ivano-Frankivsk, non-commissioned officers' house, 1 Nacjonalnoi Gvardiyi St., designed by Bohdan Lachert, Józef Szanajca and Włodzimierz Winkler, 1929 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2021); b) Lviv, non-commissioned officers' house, 24 Kleparivska St., designed by Kazimierz Tołłoczko, 1936 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2021); c) Chortkiv, non-commissioned officers' house, 2 Lesi Ukrayinky St., designed by Adam Knauff, 1937 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2021).

upkeep (aside from occasional, makeshift repairs) mean that their technical condition leaves much to be desired. Examples of this group include the buildings in Brest at present-day Krasnogvardeyskaya Street 6 (Type X, Fig. 4b) and in Ternopil at present-day Hmelnyckogo Street 29 (Types IV and XIX, Fig. 4c).

The technical state of most remaining buildings can be described as fairly good, but their architectural quality has been negatively affected by phenomena typical of countries of the former Soviet Union, such as the widespread addition of modern plastic canopies over entrances, external air conditioners and satellite dishes, exterior staircases, and especially enclosed balconies converted into winter gardens—often using random building materials (Figs. 5a–c). Such alterations are undertaken individually by residents without coordination at the building scale. This issue affects nearly every FKW structure; the modernist, minimalist forms, lacking decorative detail, are generally not perceived as having heritage value, rarely appear in registers of historic buildings, and therefore are not subject to local heritage protection laws (which in any case have limited effectiveness). Their architectural worth is also not recognized by the occupants, with the result that such modifications are carried out very frequently.

FKW buildings still usually serve as multi-family residential quarters, and therefore display conservation issues typical of this type of development. Among these are, for example, varied types of window joinery, resulting from individual replacements carried out by different occupants—a phenomenon present in perhaps the majority of cases (Figs. 6a–c). As with the enclosure of balconies, these interventions are undertaken without coordination with neighboring apartments. The only windows that are rarely replaced are usually those in stairwells—considered communal property, they are effectively treated as ‘belonging to no one.’ Consequently, if they were not replaced in the postwar period, they remain original elements from the time of construction.

Comprehensive thermal modernizations of external façades, commonly practiced in Poland, are not frequent in Belarus and Ukraine due to the relatively high cost of such investments. They are, however, undertaken in Lithuania—in recent years, two blocks in Naujoji Vilnia, at present-day Parko Street 1 and 3 (Type II, Fig. 7a), have undergone such treatment. In the remaining territories of the former Eastern Borderlands, thermal modernization is sometimes carried out on individual apartments, as in the case of the housing estate in Lviv at present-day Horodotska Street 276–280 (Type I), the block in



Fig. 7. MAF investments – current condition: a) Naujoji Vilnia, non-commissioned officers' house, 1/3 Parko St., designed by Bruno Zborowski and Aleksander Sygietyński, 1928 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2020); b) Ivano-Frankivsk, non-commissioned officers' house, 117 Chornovola St., designed by Włodzimierz Padlewski, 1929 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2021); c) Lutsk, non-commissioned officers' house, 24 8-go Bereznya St., designed by Kazimierz Tołłoczko, 1937 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2018).



Fig. 8. MAF investments – current condition: a) Molodechno, non-commissioned officers' house, 17 Masherava St., designed by Jan Henryk Kukulski, 1933 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2019); b) Baranavichy, officers' house, 16 Lenina St., designed by Tadeusz Obmiński, 1928 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2018); c) Brest, officers' house, 15 Brestskih dyvizij St., designed by Bruno Zborowski and Aleksander Sygietyński, 1929 (photo Michał Pszczółkowski, 2018).

Volodymyr at present-day Ustyluzka Street (Type III), in Ivano-Frankivsk at present-day Chornovola Street 117 (Type IX, Fig. 7b), or in Lutsk at present-day 8-ho Bereznya Street 24 (Type XVII, Fig. 7c).

Painting façades is also practiced as a cheaper alternative to cleaning. In the case of originally brick façades, this process erases the original quality of the form, despite attempts to refer to the original effect by covering gray brick with gray or white paint, or cladding with red or pink to imitate clinker—resulting at best in a superficial imitation. An example is the block in Maladzechna at present-day Masherava Street 17 (Type XI, Fig. 8a). In some cases—such as the buildings in Baranavichy at present-day Lenina Street 16 (Type I, Fig. 8b) or in Maladzechna at present-day Chkalava Street 9 (Type II)—façades are painted in colors unrelated to their original palette, with the aim of ‘postmodernizing’ the architectural form, much as is done in Poland with postwar large-panel housing blocks.

Complete reconstructions or extensions are rare, though not entirely absent. An example is the building in Brest at present-day Bresckikh dyvizij Street 15 (Type III, Fig. 8c), which was extended by two stories and supplemented with avant-corps in a contemporary style. While the addition shows an intention to refer to the original form, the achieved effect falls far short of satisfactory.

## SUMMARY

A certain summation of the FKW's activity, and at the same time an emphasis on the architectural value of the buildings constructed by the Fund, can be found in the words of Edgar Norwerth: With the utmost economy, while always remaining within the framework of strict and limited utility, [this architecture] managed to break free from the gloomy pre-war templates onto the broad road of light and lively, varied and flexible architecture, adapted to its time and place — truly functional architecture. In the complete absence of any preconceived doctrine, dead dogmas, or rigidly established types, one can feel a living stream of constant exploration, the careful introduction of new and fresh forms, which are never and can never be finally and definitively found.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Norwerth, E. (1933). Budownictwo wojskowe. *Pion*, 10, p. 4.



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