

CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE IN THE HISTORICAL URBAN CONTEXT. ABANDONED BUILDINGS

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Abstract: The evolution of architecture from the first houses built by primitive man to modern monumental structures have constantly undergone many changes. Plethora of these buildings have deteriorated for various reasons while those that have managed to be preserved are not properly maintained either. Conceptually, the building renovation process is directly related to a well-thought-out architectural conceit; generated in way that the architectural monument can add value both in esthetic and monetary terms in long run.

Unfraternally, one of the drawbacks of the legal framework on the protection of monuments does not allow entrepreneurs to make any interventions or change the appearance of architectural monuments.

The history of architecture follows its evolution from the primary houses built by primitive man and follows to modern monumental structures. These architectural styles have various forms, that largely depend on the geographical space and the historical period concerned. On a very grounded level, the cultural heritage protection system ideally should be envisaged on three pillars: central public authorities, local public authorities, and civil society. An efficient cooperation between these ensures the existence and capitalization of architectural monuments.

The truth is that the restoration of an architectural monument is a difficult process which requires considerable investments. The restoration of any architectural monument can add substantial value in long run; however the law about the protection of monuments does not allow entrepreneurs to make any interventions or change the appearance of architectural monuments. This enables some flaws which result in those who take responsibility to engage in this burdensome activity, choose to disrespect the rigors of intervention on the monuments.

The common problem found in historical monuments is that they are neither properly maintained nor preserved:

As monuments degrade, it is practically impossible to restore them. This, with time, turns them into abandoned architectural monuments. Thence, the renovation of a building is more about architectural concepts.

An architect can capitalize on:

- the slope of the land and the relief.
 - the shape of the land.
 - neighborhoods, close constructions, their form, and architecture (historical, local monuments, constructive traditions).
 - existing vegetation.
 - opening to the street, public space, landscape.
- The concept is the central idea, which serves as a source of inspiration for an architect. The quality of the concept is directly related to the culture, intuition, and inspiration of the architect. Many of these ideas remain only virtual, immaterialized, sometimes becoming unique...

States such as Romania, Spain, Poland, Japan, USA have approached different techniques for reviving historical monuments.

In this context, the building of Union of Architects in Bucharest, Romania (Fig.2) has become a representative tourist attraction for the capital due to its nonconformist architectural style. The building inaugurates as a historical monument and culminates with a construction made in the most modern style which combines the old and the new by mixing bricks and glass. At a distant view, it looks like an office building of the skyscraper type, nothing unusual among contemporary s Bucharest's streets. As one approaches, they realize that the building has an element distinct from other buildings in Bucharest.

The glass parallelepiped is built from ruins loaded with architectural and historical value.

The building itself, represents a historical monument in which belongs to the List of Historical Monuments. It currently houses the headquarters of the Union of Architects in Bucharest and preserves historical events that are not yet nuancedly understood.

The house was built by Grigore Păușescu, a party member, at the end of the 19th century; then it served as the headquarters of the Austro-Hungarian embassy, before the First World War. (Fig.1) Built-in an architectural style of the French Renaissance, the building still preserves the imposing building's two facets that manage to arouse the interest of architectural loyalists that regard the appearance of the building from Păușescu's time. The modern part of the building was restructured in 2003, which generated modern addedndum with an elevation up to the 7th floor. The building complies with the norms allowed in this area, the building measuring 28 meters with 2 meters and 60 centimeters low windows.

Because it was a historical monument, the ruin of the Păușescu House could not be demolished. As a result, it was solidified, by a steel and glass tower that was built behind it.

Various controversies appeared around the building designed by architects Dan Marin and Zeno Bogdănescu, according to which the new construction appeared as a result of the demolition of the historical monument.

Foreigners are attracted by the originality of the building despite all the scandals that broke out as a result of the execution of this building. The headquarters of the Union of Romanian Architects in Revolution Square is one of the strangest buildings in Romania. The building attracts the attention of passers-by who stop to study it, and most of the foreigners take it to their country through photographs.

According to the architect, the intervention was made with considerations and respect for the house that represents a historical monument, that is why the appearance of the building is preserved from the memories of Păucescu's house.



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Fig. 1 House was built by Grigore Păucescu, Bucharest, Romania.

Fig. 2 The building that houses the Union of Architects, Bucharest, Romania.

Such concept could be used for the Yeshiva Rabbi Tirilson building, which is an architectural monument in Chişinău, Republic of Moldova. This building has undergone many changes of destination. Initially, this asylum for the elderly belonged to the Jewish community in 1899. After the end of the Second World War, the building being under state management was used as the headquarters of the central printing house, until May 1977.



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Fig. 3.4 Elements of the Yeshiva Rabbi Tirilson building, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova.

The massive damage to the building occurred on March 4, 1977, following an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.5 on the Richter scale, which led to its permanent abandonment, despite its presence in the list of architectural monuments. (Fig. 3, 4).

The Faculty of Radio and Television at the University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland, developed by BAAS Architecture (Spain), demonstrates how a building in the city center can be innovative and, at the same time, a guardian and an interpreter of the past.

Historically and architecturally, Katowice is a richly stratified city, but with a dark past. In the 19th century, coal mines, steel mills, and large brick producers paid for the construction of large boulevards. Besieged by the Nazis and Soviets in the 1940s, the city was devastated and the old streets with many attractive buildings were demolished.

Here in Chiaroscuro, the center of the city, an impressive new building has been rehabilitated that combines the history of Katowice with the future of the city. A surviving brick apartment building has been renovated and framed with a brick facade that houses the new Faculty of Radio and Television.

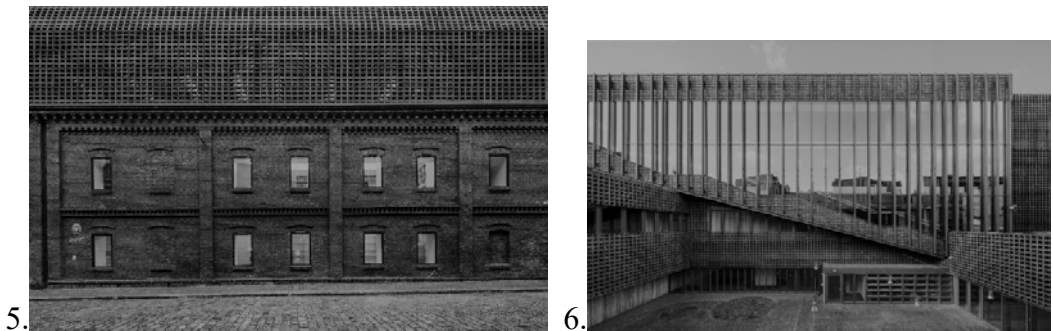


Fig. 5 Residential building, Katowice, Poland.

Fig.6 Faculty of Radio and Television, University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland.

This idea is quite representative of a historical brick monument that we can see in Chișinău, Republic of Moldova - Red Mill (the building of the former steam mill). Initially, the mill was built of wood and had three levels, and in 1884 it was rebuilt of stone. The added floors were lined with red brick (fire-resistant), hence the name “Red Mill” has its roots from the appearances.

The mill is a massive building, on four levels, built on a rectangular plan. The building is in a damaged condition: the walls are ragged, the windows old, the roof damaged, the doors chained and locked with padlocks. Currently, the Red Mill

is on the territory of a construction company, after it was ceded to it by the City Hall.



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Fig. 7.8 Red Mill, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova.

In conclusion, I mention that a good solution for abandoned architectural building, would be to review the entire system and increasing the number of specialists employed in the field of cultural heritage. Only if they work in a team, they could solve this problem.

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