

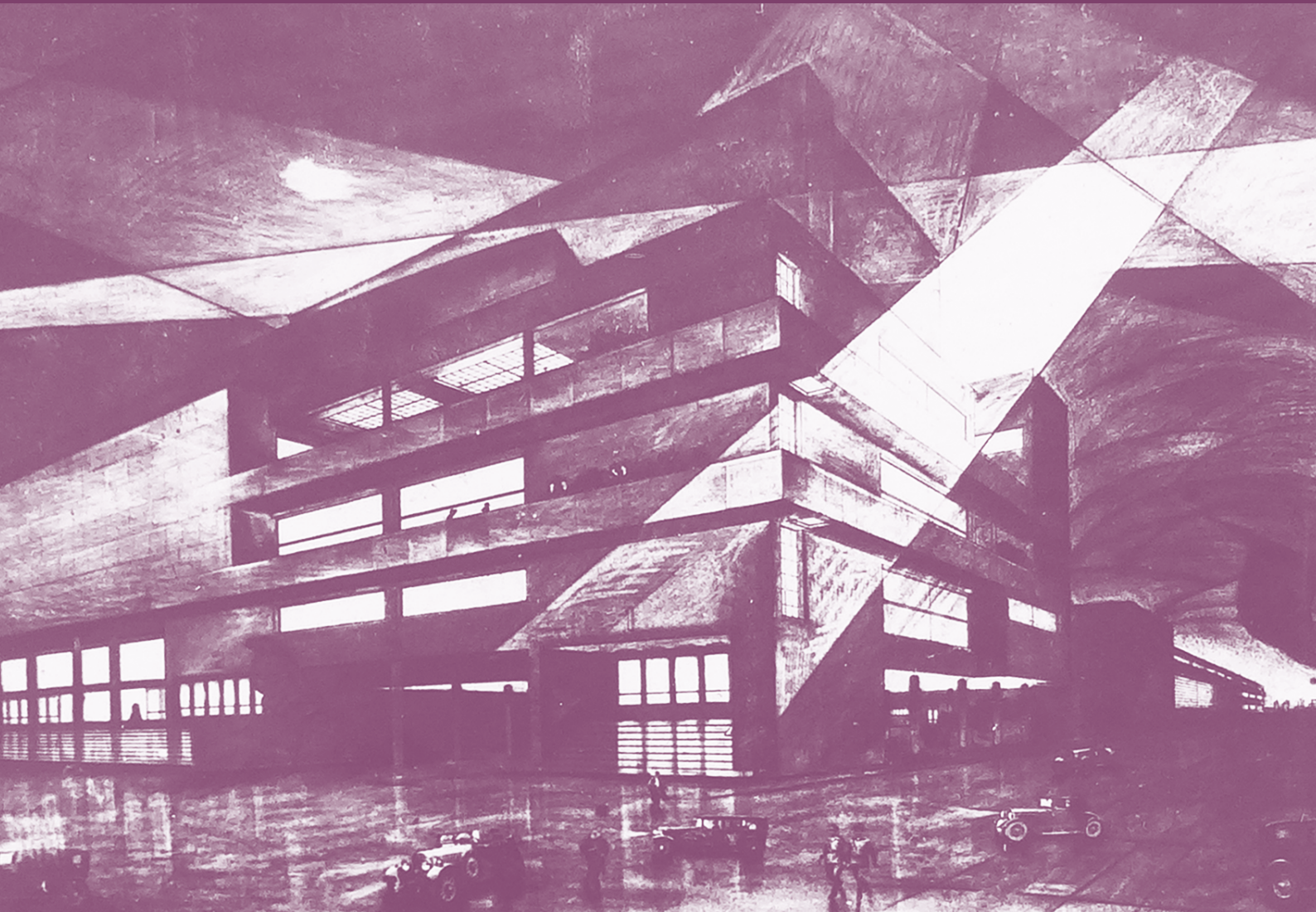
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international committee for  
documentation and conservation  
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the  
modern movement

# journal

Nº 70 — 2024/1

Editors-in-chief: Uta Pottgiesser & Wido Quist



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**FROM CONSTRUCTIVISM  
TO MODERNISM IN KHARKIV**

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# EDITORIAL

Uta Pottgiesser & Wido Quist

Editors-in-Chief

## KHARKIV MODERNISM

More than two years ago, on February 24, 2022, the Russian military invasion of Ukraine started, with the aggression continuing to threaten and destroy human lives, families, cities, and cultural heritage ever since. Docomomo International published the Solidarity Statement on Ukraine<sup>1</sup> and gave the floor to Ukrainian scientists and professionals, which resulted in the Docomomo Journal 67 special issue on Multiple Modernities in Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> We aimed to illustrate the historical context and modern architectural heritage often unknown outside of Ukraine. The permanent shifting of political systems and borders influenced architecture and the architectural discourse. Modern architecture started in the early 20th century and continued to expand in the interwar period from 1921-1939/40. Today, Ukraine, with its huge number of outstanding modern buildings, neighborhoods, and sites, is still suffering from large-scale demolitions of infrastructure, housing, cultural institutions, and artworks.

In 2022, Docomomo International launched a call for papers on Modern Movement in Ukraine together with Docomomo Ukraine. More than 20 proposals were received, most of them from authors based in Ukraine itself—despite the difficult circumstances. The Docomomo Journal 67 presented a first selection of those articles to display regional and architectural particularities and current challenges of archiving, documenting, protecting, and preserving the modern heritage. Nearly 100 examples of Ukrainian modern buildings were presented in a graphical overview. The modern Ukrainian architecture was dominated by Constructivism from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s, with Kharkiv as the epicenter of production, while Socialist Realism with the Stalin Empire emerged from 1932, lasting until 1955, with Kyiv as the capital of Ukraine. From December 1919 to January 1934, Kharkiv was the first capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the cultural, economic, and educational center of the new Ukrainian Republic. The status as new capital led to prestigious master plans and construction projects, among them the world-famous Derzhprom building at Freedom Square—as a symbol of Constructivism—or the Kharkiv Tractor Factory—as a symbol of the industrialization of agriculture. The leading role of Kharkiv as a forerunner and capital of Constructivism is often expressed by the famous State Industry House (Derzhprom) built from 1925 to 1928. Being the only modern ensemble in Ukraine nominated as UNESCO World Heritage, it became and still is the focus of identification and pride—despite the many controversial reflections and discussions about the conservation efforts and changes carried out since the original construction in the 1950s and after the year 2000. This explains the many articles dealing with Freedom Square and Dherzprom as a reaction to the call for papers in

2022 and also Docomomo International's commitment to dedicate this special issue of the Docomomo Journal to Kharkiv under the title *From Constructivism to Modernism in Kharkiv*.

A special word of thanks goes to Svitlana Smolenska, architectural historian and journalist from Kharkiv and a member of ICOMOS, who provides an overview in her article about *Kharkiv in the 1920s-1930s as the Capital of victorious Modernism*. It is followed by three articles discussing the many aspects of Freedom (Svoboda) Square. The first one by Alexander Shilo, elaborating on the concept of modern style, a second by Olena Remizova about the *Composition Methods of the Soviet architectural Avant-Garde*, and finally, the contribution of Mariia Rusanova and Oleksandr Maimeskul about the *Destruction, Restoration, Reconstruction* of Modernist monuments at Freedom Square. All of them approach the topic from different perspectives of architecture theory and praxis.

The second group of articles deals with public buildings exemplified by a revue of *Clubs for People (Worker's Clubs)* by Olha Deriabina, Maryna Pominchuk, and Olena Konoplova, a more detailed investigation of the *Palace of Culture of the Railway Workers* by Błażej Ciarkowski and Maciej Miarczyński, and the research of Svitlana Smolenska about the *International Competition for the Theatre of Mass Musical Action* planned for Kharkiv in 1930 but never built. Finally, Kateryna Didenko elaborates on the *Kharkiv Residential Architecture during the Capital Period*, and Nadiia Antonenko presents her research on the *Kharkiv Mass Housing Estates in Urban Planning of the 1960s-1980s*.

We are also thankful to Kateryna Cherkasova and Olesya Chagovets for addressing the challenging topic of *Authenticity Preservation* by analyzing different objects and sites in Kharkiv. In line with this, Edward van Hevele and Wessel De Jonge shed light on the archival challenges of the World Heritage Property's Redevelopment of the Van Nelle Factory in Rotterdam (The Netherlands). Once more, the important role of archives and the systematic documentation of sources is highlighted. The essay by Oliver Schruoffenegger deals with the potential of city partnerships in preparing a future reconstruction of Ukrainian cities.

We would also like to acknowledge the commitment of many researchers in Ukraine and abroad who shared their work with us: Nadiia Antonenko presents her ongoing research on large-scale *Mass Housing Estates*, Ammar Azzouz reviews Ievgeniia Gubkina's book *Being a Ukrainian Architect During Wartime*, Alex Bykov presents *DIPROMISTO*, the last project institute in Ukraine. Oksana Chabanyuk gives insight into her research on *Foreign Specialists in the Soviet Industry in the 1920 and 1930s*. Olga Mykhaylyshyn has curated an exhibition about *Female Architects who built the City of Rivne*, similar to Liakhovych Myroslava, who presents the *Lviv Modernism Project*.

We are glad to collaborate with Robert Huber and Ben Buschfeld, the organizers of the ETOM/NEB-Lab in Berlin, for hosting the launch of this Docomomo Journal. We are also grateful to our colleagues from within and outside the Docomomo community who critically reviewed the contributions to this journal. We thank Scott Roberson for the support in proofreading and editing and Olga Psarri and Pelagia Spyridonidou for creating the graphical overviews.

We thank all academics, activists, preservation specialists, and other Ukrainian and international experts who contributed to this current issue on Kharkiv despite the terrible circumstances in which many of you are. It is with great pleasure that we present this issue of the Docomomo Journal, published both in print and online via [www.docomomojournal.com](http://www.docomomojournal.com).

1 <https://docomomo.com/international-solidarity-statement-on-ukraine/>, visited March 24, 2024.

2 Docomomo Journal 67, <https://doi.org/10.52200/docomomo.67>.

# KHARKIV CITY GROWTH

1915 -2024



1915



1938



1978



2024 ↗

# KHARKIV CONSTRUCTIVISM

1929 - 1934

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**1 CHEMICAL FACULTY BUILDING OF THE KHARKOV STATE UNIVERSITY**

1928 • S. Kravets  
61000 Universitetskaya str. 16  
49° 59' 19.7802" N/36° 13' 44.6376" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/HEdHkKp59jqEubFA8>

**2 S.P. GRIGORIEV INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RADIOLOGY AND ONCOLOGY**

1930 • V. Estrovich  
61000 Pushkinskaya str. 82  
50° 0' 15.4872" N/36° 14' 54.837" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/u7ukcZdX8RMokWc56>

**3 HOUSE "SLOVO"**

1930 • M. Dashkevich  
61002 Literature str. 9  
50° 0' 42.12" N/36° 14' 3.12" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/t9kWNXtDDYJbDiut7>

**4 HOUSE OF SOUTHERN RAILWAY EMPLOYEES**

1926-1936 • A. Beketov  
61182 Krasnoarmejska str. 8  
49° 59' 21.12" N  
36° 12' 29.16" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/Nt7b6dRZfDEsfekB7>

**5 SVOBODY SQR. ENSEMBLE**

1921-1936 • V. Trotsenko, Kravets, M. Felger,  
M. Zundberg-Serafimova &  
G. Janovitsky  
Svobody Sqr.  
50° 0' 19.08" N/36° 13' 50.88" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/88HENcDfx3kFRrWi7>

**6 RAILWAY WORKERS' PALACE**

1927-1932 • A. Dmitriev &  
engineer N. Aistovy  
61000 Velyka Panasivska str. 83A  
49° 59' 54.7476" N/36° 12' 12.1926" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/BRH8tD89dKE3a3fT8>

**7 HOUSE "TABACHNIK-KNIJNIK"**

1930 • P. Frolov  
61058 Nezalezhnosti Ave. 5  
50° 00' 27.0" N/36° 13' 32.2" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/sRoGuSUomFsvCTGv5>

**8 RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX NOVYJ BYT**

1926-1930 • M. Pokorniy  
61000 Nauky Avenue  
Danylevskoho and Culture Street  
50° 0' 41.04" N/36° 13' 35.76" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/qMBAQPk5JP7YFeV6>

**9 COMPLEX OF THE UKRAINIAN INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS & TECHNOLOGY**

1931 •  
61000 Nahirnyy  
50° 00' 11.3" N/ 36° 15' 07.0" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/DyTaweQXH87nbcbt5>

**10 4TH UNIFIED DISPENSARY (KHARKIV CITY POLYCLINIC)**

1933 • P. I. Frolov  
61000 Moskalivska str. 59  
49° 58' 31.148" N/ 36° 13' 25.636" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/henqD5mwopd8X1f7A>

**11 "RED INDUSTRIALIST" RESIDENTIAL BUILDING**

1928-1929 • S. Kravets & A. Kasyanov  
61058 Nezalezhnosti Av. 5  
50° 0' 31.72" N/ 36° 13' 30.22" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/5Go6NUar8gRxSx4a6>

**12 HOUSE "KOMUNAR"**

1932 • A. Linetskiy & V. Bogomolov  
61002 Girshmana str. 17  
50° 0' 2.88" N/36° 14' 27.96" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/6KT3MM1jZowi7Y9Y77>

**13 HOUSE "DOM SPECIALISTOV"**

1934-1936 • L. S. Lemesh  
61058 Boris Cibanin st. / Romain Rollan st./  
Prospekt of Thruth /  
Velyka Panasivska st. 83a  
50° 0' 30.96" N/36° 13' 36.84" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/p4t5fv2kPeUPmXG99>

**14 AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE STATION**

1930-1932 • P. Frolov  
61000 Svobody str. 9  
50° 0' 13.858" N/36° 14' 16.051" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/KdaaNeNhr9dPPFjd6>

**15 CAMPUS GIGANT**

1928-1931 • A. Molokin & G. Ikonnikov  
61024 Pushkinskaya str. 79 1  
50° 0' 22.68" N/36° 14' 58.56" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/UGDG6BpTfZ9FMLgQ6>

**16 POST OFFICE**

1927-1929 • A. Mordvinov  
61052 Pryvokzalna sq. 2  
49° 59' 26.169" N/36° 12' 22.820" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/SXXIZipfkFt4JbcI6>

**17 HARKOMKHOZ RESIDENTIAL BUILDING**

1927 • M. Movshovich  
61000 Chernyshevska str. 94  
50° 0' 43.16" N/ 36° 14' 50.88" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/xHqELsIT5MrNRCxb8>

**18 RESIDENTIAL BUILDING**

1928 • V. Kostenko  
61000 Sumska & Mayakovskiy str. 4-6  
50° 0' 38.78" N /36° 14' 27.99" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/AvKFF5P8m255JWKA>

**19 RESIDENTIAL BUILDING**

1931 • N. Plekhov, A. Postnikov &  
A. Vatsenko  
61000 Pushkinska str. 40  
49° 59' 50.96" N/ 36° 14' 22.5" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/uh7mc1kMywb1KwJ6>

**20 CLUB CANTEEN IN "NEW KHARKIV"**

1930s • team led by P. Alioshin  
61000 Myru Ln. 3  
49° 57' 7.8336" N/36° 21' 53.193" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/bfnHSXaXqHmai2A7>

**21 CLUB-CANTEEN IN "NEW KHARKIV"**

1930s • Team led by P. Alioshin  
61000 Industrialnyi Ave. 6  
49° 56' 49.2066" N/36° 22' 49.767" E  
<https://goo.gl/maps/5N8GNqaxqolt5k9R8>

**22 NEW KHARKIV', METRO TRAKTORNYI ZAVOD**

1930-1931 • Team P. Alioshin  
Heroiv Kharkova Ave. 275  
49° 57' 17.39" N/ 36° 22' 44.7" E  
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/uTr38x3Bk6Sfih69>

# KHARKIV IN THE 1920s-1930s AS THE CAPITAL OF VICTORIOUS MODERNISM

Svitlana Smolenska

**ABSTRACT:** Documenting and demonstrating (based on material from archives and literary primary sources) the extraordinary growth and development of Kharkiv in the interwar period with an emphasis on the time when it became the first capital of Soviet Ukraine is the main goal of this article. The ideas of modernism were vividly embodied in the architecture and urbanism of the city in the 1920s and early 1930s. Large-scale urban transformations turned it into one of the largest and most significant industrial, cultural, scientific and educational centers of the USSR in a very short period. It became the third most important city after Moscow and Leningrad. And in 1928 modernism was officially recognized as the leading direction in its architecture.

**KEY WORDS:** interwar modernism in Ukraine, the first capital of the Ukrainian SSR, Kharkiv Constructivism, urban planning in the 1920s-1930s.

**INTRODUCTION:** Kharkiv became one of the first cities where residents heard explosions in the early morning of February 24, 2022. For two years, it has been on the pages of newspapers, websites, news with military reports in connection with the destruction that befell the city. But almost a hundred years ago, Kharkiv was also well-known thanks to its active unprecedented construction, its cutting-edge modernist architecture, which was captured, among other things, on the pages of the foreign architectural press. Some modern historians still refer to it as the “capital of Constructivism”, although in the 1920s and 1930s there seemed to be more significant centers of the Soviet avant-garde, such as Moscow and Leningrad. What was the modernist phenomenon of Kharkiv? Finding an answer to this question is *the purpose of the article*. It is necessary to define and document the unique place of the city in the history of the development of modernism in Ukraine.

The study is based on archival documents, materials from original magazines, books, albums and other publications of the 1920s-1930s, and on previous research by the author of this article.

The foundation of the fortress town on the territory subjected to nomad raids dates back to the middle of the 17th century. A favorable, strategically important position for its development as an industrial center was appreciated at the end of the 19th century during the rapid growth of industry in the Russian Empire, with the beginning of the active development of the Donetsk coal deposit and especially after the opening of the railway in 1869, when Kharkiv

became a major railway junction connecting St Petersburg and Moscow with Donbass and southern regions.

But the real realization of the transformation of Kharkiv into an industrial, cultural and educational center began with its capital status in 1919-1934. Having experienced a series of rebellious events caused by the February and October revolutions of 1917, the civil war and the German intervention in 1918, the city became the first capital of Soviet Ukraine in the most difficult time of the country's formation. It was already one of the most significant centers of the USSR along with Moscow and Leningrad in the early 1930s.

The development of Kharkiv in the interwar period can be called unprecedented. Its population nearly quadrupled from 1920 to 1940, and its population density doubled. The territory of the city had reached almost thirty thousand hectares and its housing stock had grown more than four times. Kharkiv then had more than four million square meters of living space, over forty percent of which was in multi-story residential buildings. Dozens of new schools and kindergartens, universities and technical schools, research institutes, hospitals, theaters, clubs and other public buildings were built. The volume of production of Kharkiv industries exceeded the level of 1913 before World War II by more than seventy times (Kasyanov, 1955, pp. 14-15). These figures are taken from the book of the famous Kharkiv architect Alexander Kasyanov, who was a direct participant in the architectural and urban transformations of those years. He led the development of the architectural



01 Plan of Kharkiv, drawn up by the city department of communal services in 1924. The layout of the future new administrative center with a circular square has already been mapped out and is clearly visible in the northern part of the city. © Photo by S. Smolenska from the original.

and planning part of the master plan of Kharkiv in 1931-1938, and then became the chief architect of the city in the post-war restoration period of 1944-1950.

## URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS

The city grew so fast that it was ahead of any plans for its enlargement. Analysis of primary sources (documents and literature of the second half of the 1920s), carried out in the course of the study, revealed previously unknown facts regarding the progress of Kharkiv in those years.

The city limits were expanded to an area of 14,200 hectares in 1923. However, as it turned out, this was not enough and the city experienced difficulties in allocating land for new development. The population was 260,367 people in the former old city limits, and in the new – 324,530 people according to the District Bureau of Statistics on January 1, 1923 (Guidebook, 1927, p. 36-37). Kharkiv lagged far behind the major cities of Ukraine – Kyiv and Odessa in terms of its amenities and sanitary conditions at that time. The city department of communal services, under the leadership of chief engineer I. Voitkevich, began to develop a number of preliminary options for the city remodeling and expansion. The planning work undertaken in 1923-1926/27 laid the foundations for the further urban development of Kharkiv. The most significant activities included:

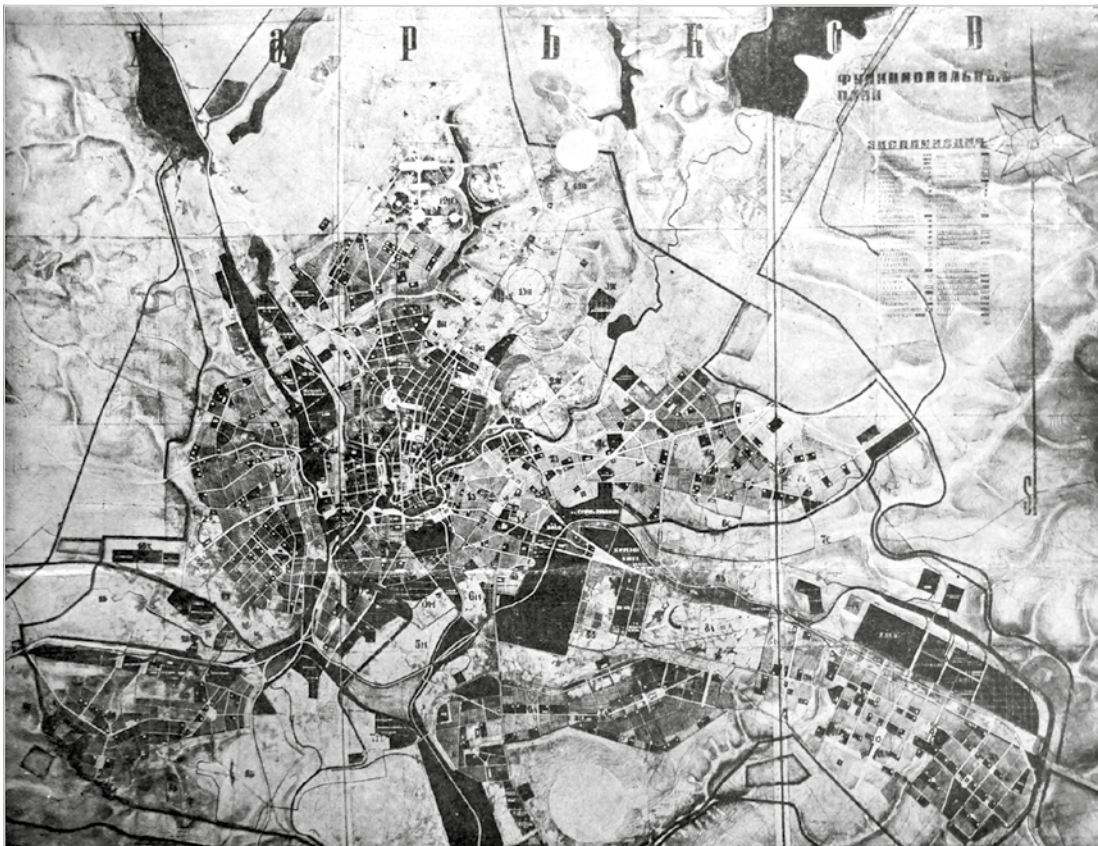
- Conducting research on the geological structure of the city, its demography, studying the existing transport system, traffic, the structure of building blocks, etc.
- Drawing up schemes of a network of city green spaces; highway networks; the laying of slopes to connect the upland part with the lower sections of the city (projects of Klochkovsky and Zhuravlevsky descents); linking the planning project with railway facilities, etc.
- Preparation of planning schemes for individual districts of the city: planning of the center; the village "Red October"; the village on Saltivska road; the layout of the University lands, where a place for the construction of Dzerzhinsky Square (Svoboda Square) as a new metropolitan administrative and cultural center was chosen, and a number of others [FIGURE 01].
- Organization and management of river regulation activities in order to prevent flooding of banks by spring floods.
- Improvement of squares, bazaars, punching of new streets and improvement of existing ones.
- Restoration and creation of new gardens, parks, boulevards, squares; establishment of regulatory data for urban construction.

It was at that time that the main vectors of the future development of the city were determined on previously unoccupied lands. It was planned to concentrate new industrial facilities, mainly in the east and southeast direction, where industrial enterprises already existed,

and where there were a railway line and vacant sites for construction. It was planned to build the Kharkiv Turbine Generator and Tractor Plants there later. The northern direction was mostly intended for the construction of housing and a new metropolitan administrative center. The large green forest area existing in the north (Pomerki) was transformed into a forest park with an area of 2000 hectares – one of the largest in the USSR. It was supposed to serve as a recreation area for inhabitants and provide the city with fresh air. Only holiday homes, pioneer camps, and hospital complexes were allowed to be built there. The construction of an aircraft factory was started in 1926 in the northern part of the city, since there was a place for an airport. The FED plant, which produced electromechanical locksmith equipment, was also located nearby. Its launch took place in January 1932. And in 1933 the first Soviet film camera with the same name FED began to be produced there.

Archival documents found during the study confirm the information that a special planning Bureau was established under the city council in 1929. This bureau developed a scheme for reconstruction of the capital, which is also called the “first general plan of Kharkiv”. Engineer A. A. Main was the bureau chief and the leader of the project. It was assumed that Greater Kharkiv was to be similar to Ebenezer Howard’s social city, consisting of satellite cities, interconnected by economic and cultural interests and gravitating towards the center – the old city.

Industrial enterprises were located in the vicinity at a distance of at least twenty kilometers from the center along radial and ring automobile and railway roads. Each city was created to serve industrial enterprises. Therefore, both in size (from 20 to 100-120 thousand people), and in the features of its construction, and in the way of urban life, it was intended to reflect the characteristics of the production of its industry, i.e. have a certain “specialization”. The average population density in the satellite towns was to be 300 people/ha. A significant part of the urban area was set aside for public green spaces (Smolenska, 2017, pp. 206-211). This plan, submitted for approval in 1930, was criticized. Why? As Kasyanov noted (Kasyanov, 1955, p. 23), it “contained the ideas of deurbanization that were fashionable in those years in Western Europe. Therefore, the scheme of the engineer Main could not be approved and was rejected”. As we see, political considerations turned out to be stronger than urban planning arguments. In addition, Main had a very authoritative opponent – Professor Alexander Eingorn, who was opposed to the ideas of deurbanization. It was he who subsequently led the development of a new master plan of the capital at the Ukrainian State Research Institute for Urban Design DIPROMISTO (it was created at the same time, in 1930). Work on the master plan continued for several years. It was submitted for final consideration to the government only in 1936 [FIGURE 02]. But already in 1932, Eingorn outlined the main ideas of the general plan at a conference



02 Master plan of Kharkiv.  
Functional diagram.  
DIPROMISTO, 1936.  
© Reconstruction of Kharkov,  
1936, p. 1.

in Kharkiv, to which a French delegation was invited for a joint discussion. It is worth citing here his own words about the key provisions of the city planning, which were then developed in the subsequent stages of design work:

"The basic idea of the theme developed for the reconstruction of Kharkiv comes from the analysis of the topo-hydrological, sanitary and hygienic conditions of the locality, the current situation of the essential parts of the city worthy of preservation; according to this theme, it is necessary to divide the housing estates of the city into 5 massifs, located on the highest and salubrious plateaus. The intervals between these settlements are the valleys of the Kharkiv rivers, which are poor in water, with a fairly high level of groundwater. Industrial enterprises, garages, factories-kitchens, electricity and heating plants, etc., as well as green plantations, will be distributed in these zones. At the same time, great works will be carried out to straighten and deepen the bed of the rivers and to raise the water level by building dykes and reservoirs, by drying out the marshy and feverish places, by draining the high underground waters. For each of these 5 housing estates, a whole network of institutions of public interest has been planned. Only the most important cultural and scientific institutions, which cannot be repeated in each radius and can be built only in the capital of Ukraine, scientific institutes, some museums and theaters with 4-5 thousand seats, etc., as well as the administrative and economic institutions, belonging to the region or to the whole republic, keep their place and develop in the old central part of the city" (Architecture, 1932).

### THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER OF THE UKRAINIAN CAPITAL

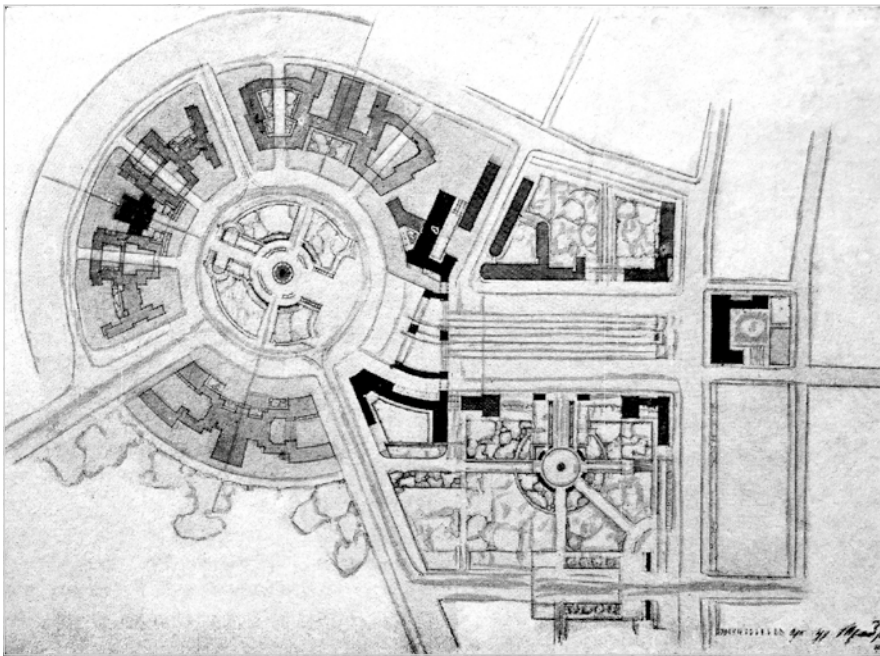
The formation of a new representative metropolitan center proceeded in stages. A competition for a planning scheme for a new residential area started it. The round shape of the square with radial streets for housing and a new wide avenue in the northern radial direction, proposed by the architect Viktor Trotsenko, were taken as a basis. The planning project for the area of the former University lands and Shatilovka on the site of a former wasteland cut by a deep ravine was drawn up in 1923–1924. The main administrative ensemble of Kharkiv was created, not according to a town-planning project, but sequentially, in the process of competitive design of each building. The first of them, erected on the future square, its pearl and constructivist symbol of the city was the State Industry House (Derzhprom). The competition for it was announced in 1925, and its construction lasted only 2.5 years (1925-1928). This giant reinforced concrete high-rise multifunctional complex for many offices of industrial institutions concentrated in the Ukrainian capital (its



03 Pre-war view of the round part of Dzerzhinsky Square (Svoboda Square) with the buildings of Derzhprom and the House of Projects. The new high-rise residential area "Zadepromye" is visible behind Derzhprom. Photo of the late 1930s. © Architecture of the USSR, 1940, 8, p. 65.

volume amounted to 347,000 cubic meters) gained fame far beyond the borders of Ukraine. The Globus magazine wrote about the future new metropolitan center in the year the construction of Derzhprom was completed: "Here ... according to the plan of the architects, 5-6 monumental giant buildings should be built in the style of the latest architectural and artistic structures, sustained in sharply expressive, simple lines, without any frills, with large transparent areas interspersed with iron and concrete. It will be a real embodiment of a new city, a city of the future, a city of iron, concrete and glass" (Babat, 1928, p. 266). Two more high-rise buildings to match Derzhprom were called upon to form a round part of the square. In 1929, the construction of the House of Cooperation began according to the project of architects A. Dmitriev and A. Munts, which they had previously submitted to the competition "House of the Government of the Ukrainian SSR". In the same year, a competition was announced for the House of Design Organizations for institutes that were engaged in the design of large plants (the House of Projects). Its construction was started immediately in 1930 according to the project of one of the authors of Derzhprom prof. S. Serafimov and arch. M. Zandberg-Serafimova [FIGURE 03].

The round part of the square was attached to one of the main city streets, Karl Liebknecht (Sumska street) with a rectangular part. The building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (reconstruction project by Jacob Shteinberg) and the Hotel International (designed by the winner of the competition for a hotel, architect Grigory Yanovitsky) decorated it already in the early 1930s. The unusual irregular shape of the square, its gigantic size and its phased formation without a preliminary urban plan gave rise to certain difficulties. The length of the rectangular part of the area is 750 m, the width is 130 m, the diameter of the round part is 350 m. The difference in the height of the marks along the longitudinal axis is over 11 meters. Derzhprom is located at the lowest point of the square. The highest point is at Karl Liebknecht Street (Sumska St.). The axes of symmetry of the round and rectangular parts do not coincide, they are directed at an angle of approximately 20 degrees to each



04 An unrealized project for the architectural completion of Dzerzhinsky Square (Svoboda Square). Arch. B. Priymak and V. Andreev, early 1930s. The displacement of the axes of the round and rectangular parts of the area is obvious. © Kasyanov, 1934, p. 62.

other [FIGURE 04]. This problem was discussed among architects and in the press of the 1930s: "It must be pointed out that, as a result of uncoordinated actions of individual construction projects, the basement mark of the House of Cooperation is four meters higher than the mark of the basement of the House of State Industry, and the mark of the basement of the latter is 1.20 m higher than the mark of the basement House of Projects. The result of this was the ugliest slopes near the House of Cooperation and the Hotel International..." (Kasyanov, 1934, p. 54). A note is appropriate here: although these slopes really exist to this day, they do not interfere with the perception of the square as an integral ensemble. The "irregularity" of the form and the special relief of the square gives it originality and is a clear confirmation of the extraordinary history of its creation. The ensemble was supplemented and reconstructed in the spirit of socialist realism in the 1950s after World War II (for more on the history of the ensemble, see Smolenska, 2023).

### "NEW KHARKIV"

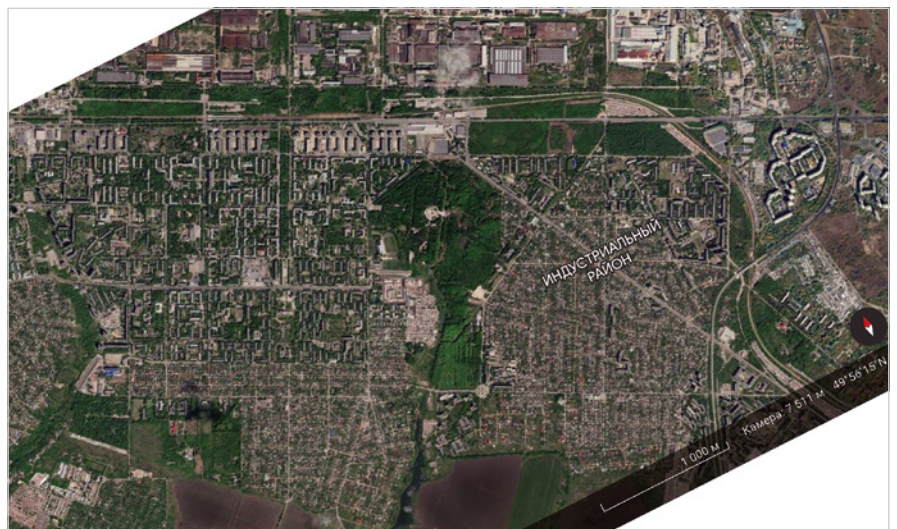
New construction could not wait for the city planners to complete the work on the design of the city in full. At the end of the 1920s, the question arose of building a tractor plant, designed for the annual production of 50,000 tractors, with an estimated number of workers of 25,000 people. Kharkiv and its environs were suitable for its location, both in terms of transportation options and potential labor force. The site for the future plant and the settlement near it was determined 8 km from the historical core of the city to the south-east of it near the Losevo railway station. It was a free territory, allowing the implementation of advanced modernist urban planning ideas: a clear separation of industrial and residential areas with a protective green strip between them, uniform placement of children's institutions, shops, public service institutions in residential

areas, row building. The project of "New Kharkiv" – that was the name of the city for the Kharkiv Tractor Plant (KhTZ) was designed by a group of young architects, headed by Professor Pavlo Alyoshin in 1930, and was intended for 100-120 thousand inhabitants. Analysis of the scheme of the master plan of "New Kharkiv" (Scale 1:5000), which I found during my dissertation research in 2013 in the archives of the project leader prof. Alyoshin, allows us to judge the urban planning ideas of the designers [FIGURE 05].

The industrial zone received linear development along the Chuguev highway and the railway. The placement of KhTZ, Machine Tool and other factories was planned in it, as well as a large food plant to serve the needs of residents. A green sanitary protection strip 500 m wide was laid along the highway and the industrial zone, separating them from residential areas. Seven-year schools were placed in this green strip from the side of residential development, and the tram park – from the side of the industrial zone. A simple rectangular grid of streets, parallel and perpendicular to the Chuguev highway, was the basis for the layout of the town. Two main ones were singled out: a boulevard running in a transverse direction towards the factory area and Losevo railway station, and a wide green central esplanade parallel to the railway track and the highway with public buildings located in it: hotels, cinemas, museums, etc. The city park with the Palace of Physical Culture and the administrative and cultural center: the square for meetings, the Palace of Culture, the City Council, the police, the Opera House, the post office, the department store, etc. were concentrated at the intersection of these two main perpendicular directions. The city was surrounded on all sides by greenery, which entered it in a deep wedge-park. The rest house, which effectively completed the esplanade running from the central square, was moved to the periphery, as well as the ten-year school, next to which an educational complex



05 The scheme of the master plan of "New Kharkiv", Scale 1:5000 (it was found and identified by the author of this article in 2013). © Alosin Pavlo Fedotovych (1881-1961), papers (Fund 8, Inventory 1, Folder 259-265), Central State Archive Museum of Literature and Arts of Ukraine (CSAMLA), Kyiv, Ukraine.

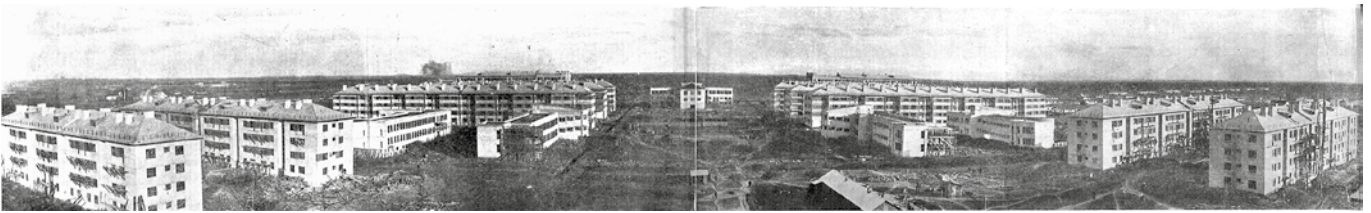


06 Current state of KhtZ settlement. © Google Earth.

was provided: a technical university, a technical school, a factory school. A large complex of children's sanatoriums was located outside the residential area in greenery on the southwestern side. The territory for nurseries and greenhouses was allotted next to it. The city was planned to expand in a southeasterly direction parallel to the development of the industrial zone (Smolenska, 2017).

Compositional harmony and logical clarity, the integrity of the plan, taking into account the terrain, the use of typical row buildings, environmental friendliness is fully inherent in this masterpiece of Ukrainian urban planning in 1930. Its true meaning is revealed only today when the project is applied to the existing planning situation. Only a small fraction of the original grandiose idea was realized by its authors in the 1930s: the main street network was outlined, a park and a wide boulevard to the factories and the railway station were laid, several residential complexes / quarters closest to KhtZ with kindergartens and canteen clubs, a ten-year school (school № 119 now) were implemented. The construction of "New Kharkiv" continued in the post-war period in a different style of

socialist realism, but still with the preservation of the main planning structure. However, it was later broken. The central square with administrative and cultural buildings has not been completed. Urban intervention without taking into account the historical significance of the settlement, its value as modernist heritage, continued and especially intensified in recent decades. The five-hundred-meter green strip between the industrial and residential area, which served as a park, as well as the green zone around the entire settlement and the wide central esplanade are completely built up [FIGURE 06]. The Orthodox Church of the Holy Martyr Alexander was built in 2000-2004 near the Palace of Pioneers at the intersection of Aleksandrivskiy and Industrialniy Avenues (this is the boulevard perpendicular to the Chuhuevske Highway, connecting the settlement with factories) in a very dubious "Ukrainian neo-baroque" style, completely inconsistent with the nature of the surrounding buildings and original urban design. And in 2010, a monument to St. Alexander was erected next to the Church, closing the prospect of the boulevard (Industrialniy Avenue), which also contradicts the original



07 Panorama of the socialist city "New Kharkiv", 1931. © Khitrov, 1931.

urban planning idea. Only a few residential neighborhoods, whose spaces and buildings continue to undergo transformation – rebuild, lose authentic details and proportions – can be called the remnants of this unique urban heritage [FIGURE 07].

To complete the formation of Railway station Square – the main "gates" of the Ukrainian capital was an important urban planning task of the second half of the 1920s. The construction of the Main Post Office on its northern side played a special role in the history of Kharkiv modernism. The building began to be erected according to the project of a student of the Faculty of Architecture of the Moscow Higher Technical School Arkady Mordvinov, who became one of the winners (second prize) of the 1927 competition for the design of the building of the Central Sorting and Distribution Post Office in Kharkiv. Advanced technologies and designs were applied in the project. The dynamic modernist façades contrasted with the classical architecture of the other buildings in the square [FIGURE 08, FIGURE 09].

A letter from a group of engineers and railway employees under the heading "The project of the Kharkov post office should be reviewed" was published on July 28, 1928 in the newspaper "Kharkov Proletarian". It became an occasion for a wide public discussion of questions about the ways of development of Kharkiv architecture. The authors of the letter expressed their categorical disagreement with the project: "We ... protest against the disfigurement of Station Square by a building that violates the architectural ensemble, and we ask the district engineer to raise this issue in all its breadth before a meeting of representatives of the artistic thought of the city of Kharkov" (Gnusyn et al., 1928). The newspaper published a letter from a large group of architects, a response from

the author of the project, Mordvinov, and the opinion of the editorial staff a few days later on August 1. The latter, under the heading "What should be the new Kharkov", contained a proposal to open a discussion on the issue of "artistic design of construction" with the involvement of the public.

The debate on the topic "On New and Old Architecture" took place on August 14, 1928. The editors of the newspaper "Kharkiv Proletarian", the Presidium of the City Council and the district engineer acted as its organizers. The exhibition "Architecture of Kharkiv" was timed to coincide with this day, as well as an exposition of architectural diploma works of graduates of the Kharkiv Art Institute. The topic of discussion aroused great interest from the Kharkiv public. The editors received applications from 200 largest enterprises, universities, construction and other organizations to participate in it. A total of 800 people gathered, including representatives of other Ukrainian cities: Kyiv, Odessa, Poltava. The first speaker was the chairman of the City Council Kozhukhov. He noted how important it is for the capital of Ukraine to have its own architectural face, different from the image of the old bourgeois city. In addition to the author of the project, Mordvinov and his opponents, 15 speakers took part in the debate – workers, architects, and members of the public (B-ov, 1928). The dispute ended with the victory of the new architecture over the old forms, which, according to the decision of the meeting, "should irrevocably leave" (for more on this event, see Smolenska, 2013).

### KHARKIV 1920s-1930s

Unlike the large, densely built-up capital cities of Moscow and Leningrad (it was called the "second capital"), Kharkiv

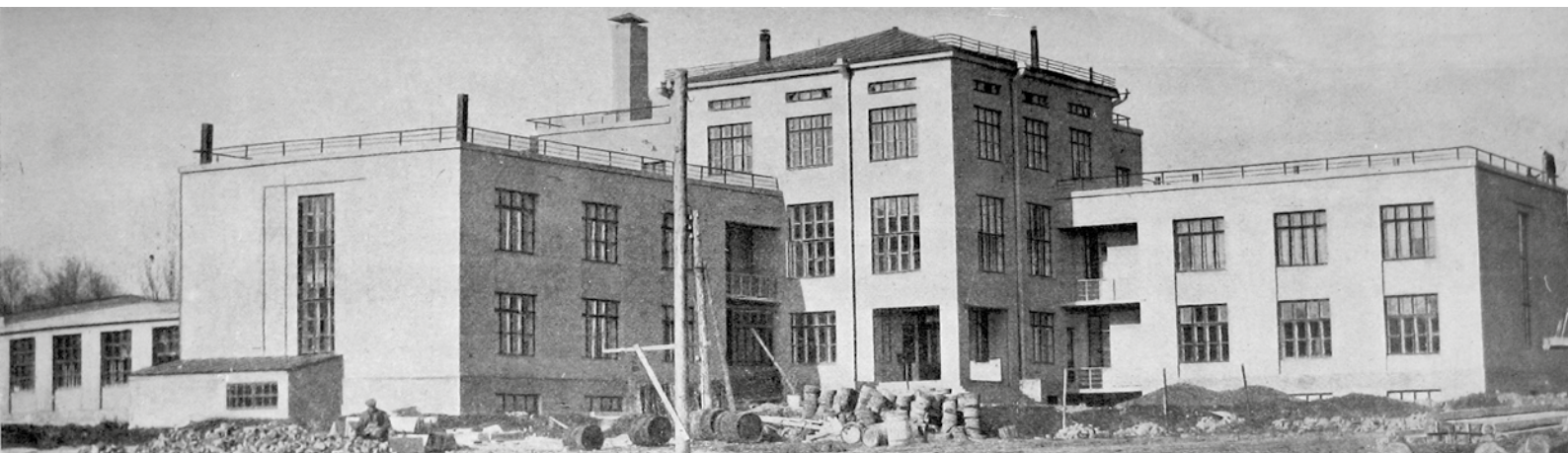


08 The building of the Post Office on the Railway Station Square in Kharkiv. © Postcard from the 1930s.



09 The building of the Post Office on the Railway Station Square in Kharkiv. © Photo by S. Smolenska, 2022.





10 The main building of UPhTI. © Khitrov, 1931.

had a place to turn around - on new, undeveloped lands, "on the previously empty outskirts of the city, or outside it", where "whole new districts, forming in many cases, as it were, separate villages, closely connected with the city" (Peretiakovykh, 1928), made it possible to freely create a new image of the Ukrainian capital.

How did the generation of the 20s-30s see this image? Here is how the writer V. Ivolgin described it in his essay "Kharkov - Kharkiv", published in the journal "Uzh" in 1928:

*"Kharkiv sprawled wide, girded itself with a dense network of railways, crossed the streets with tram tracks, bound the earth with asphalt and cobblestones, rose to the sky with stone giants, chimneys of factories. What was still so quiet and unapproachable not so long ago is now disturbed by the fussy roar of the propellers. Buses, taxis, trams, loudspeakers, multi-colored shop windows, coffee houses, theaters, cinemas, illuminated advertising ... The city is noisy, the city is nervous, the city of plants and factories, the capital of the U.S.R.R. – the cultural and political center of a large country"*

*(Ivolgin, 1928, p. 67)*

In the album "Kharkiv is building", published by the city council in 1931 (Khitrov, 1931), the image of the city appears in the photographs of that time and in scarce but convincing figures. Kharkiv grew into the largest industrial center not only in Ukraine, but in the entire Union literally before their very eyes. Its industry increased by 14 times in comparison with 1913. Large Kharkiv factories "Hammer and Sickle", "Miner's Light" and many others were reconstructed. In addition to them, the "Socialist giant" KhTZ went into operation in the fall of 1931, and the Turbine Generator Plant – in 1932 ("the largest in the world", as stated in the publication). 35 universities, 48 technical schools, 80 research institutes, 13 museums, 10 stationary and 5 mobile theaters, 62 clubs, 76 libraries, 9 cinemas, 2 radio stations, 140 newspapers with a circulation of



11 UPhTI. The laboratory building. © Photo by S. Smolenska, 2020.

1.5 million copies, 125 periodicals with a circulation 1.5 million copies, etc. there were already then in the city.

Kharkiv became one of the three Ukrainian centers for the training of architects and builders along with Kiev and Odessa in 1930. The Kharkiv Construction Institute was formed on the basis of the eponymous faculty of the Kharkiv Technological Institute. Its new building in the spirit of Constructivism, taking into account the characteristics of architectural education (large auditoriums for architectural design, classes for drawing and specialized laboratories) was built in 1930-1933. It was badly damaged during World War II and was reconstructed for the needs of another university in the socialist realism style in the 1950s.

One example of the scientific potential of the capital in those years is the Ukrainian Institute of Physics and Technology (UPhTI), formed in 1929. The large modernist complex of the UPhTI: laboratories, administrative and residential buildings were built in the upland part of the city. Famous physicists A. Walter, L. Landau, K. Sinelnikov, L. Shubnikov and others worked there. The first in the USSR and the fourth in the world cryogenic laboratory was established there in 1930. Liquid hydrogen was obtained at the Institute in 1931 for the first time in the country. The proton accelerator was built in 1932 and the world's second artificial nuclear fission reaction of the lithium nucleus was carried out. The town-planning and architectural ensemble of UPhTI has retained its modernist authenticity thanks

to the long-term closed regime of access to it. It can be restored and recognized as a specific modernist heritage item in view of its special research function in combination with housing [FIGURE 10, FIGURE 11].

The material resources allocated for the new capital, of course, contributed to its rapid development. But an important role in the renewal of the urban environment was played by people attracted by the wide possibilities of a dynamically changing city, hopes for the realization of their efforts and talents. The newly created spaces and buildings were filled with significant events, populated by bright, talented individuals.

The theatrical, artistic, literary, architectural life of the city was seething, reflecting innovative revolutionary trends, coexistence and struggle of creative associations and groups that defended different views on art and architecture. It was they who fueled the image of the city with energy: "Only modern functional architecture based on technical achievements and changed social conditions has won the right to exist. Now the struggle of this new, fresh architectural idea with the remnants of a still strong tradition, borrowing and eclectic, unprincipled decoration is especially felt" (Lopovok, 1928, p. 79).

Innovation in literature influenced the worldview of people, innovation in painting found a way out in

industrial graphics, in numerous printed products – covers of books, magazines that saturated urban life, splashed into urban spaces in the form of street advertising, decoration of city festivities [FIGURE 12]. Experiments in theater directing (in particular, in the Berezil Theater under the direction of Les Kurbas) initiated a search for extraordinary solutions for stage decorations, made new demands on the spatial construction of theater halls, on the architecture of the theater. It is no coincidence that the idea of creating an advanced technically equipped building of a modern theater was born in Kharkiv, and the international competition announced for it gathered so many participants from different countries.

The journal "Zodchestvo" (Architecture), published in Kharkiv in those years, called for a renewal of the old city's appearance: "The architectural appearance of the capital must be reorganized. This reorganization is carried by young modern architecture. It is only necessary not to interfere with this new fresh constructive thought to carry out work on the creation of modern structures, freed from decorative design..." (Lopovok, 1928, p. 81). The image of the first capital of the Ukrainian SSR was exactly like this – a large experimental platform for new modern architecture.

## CONCLUSIONS

The 1920s-early 1930s was a period of struggle between different styles in the architecture of Ukraine. Modernism, supported by the urban community, was officially recognized as the leading trend in the architecture of Kharkiv in 1928. The style of most buildings was predetermined. Were there similar historical precedents in other European capital cities in those years, or does Kharkiv remain the only one of its kind – a unique "capital of Constructivism"?

Urban planning ideas laid down in the 1920s-1930s became fundamental for the development of Kharkiv for many years to come until 1990. Subsequently, the city really grew in the directions planned then. The residential areas of Pavlovo Pole in the north and the Selection Station in the southeast were built in the late 1950s-1970s. "New Kharkiv" became one of the urban areas. Saltivka – the largest residential area in Ukraine (400,000 inhabitants in 2018) was built in the 1960s-1980s in the northeast of the city. Svoboda Square continues to be the heart of the city, its active center.

Not only archival documents and primary sources of the 1920s-1930s testify to the extraordinary development, the grand scale of the transformation, the modernist nature of the architecture of Kharkiv in the interwar period. Existing buildings and urban spaces are the irrefutable proof of this. They have become symbols of the city. They were distorted due to hostility towards them in the late 1930s and



12 Covers of periodicals designed by famous Kharkiv artists: Kharkiv is building (Adolf Strakhov, 1931), New Art and Art Materials. Avangardo (Vasil Ermilov, 1927 and 1929). © Photo by S. Smolenska from the originals.

early 1950s, due to many years of neglect until today, due to destruction during WWII and military operations in 2022-2024. But the modernist heritage of the Soviet avant-garde is still recognizable. It cannot be completely erased from the face of the city, since it is embedded in the urban structure, in key urban complexes, and is an integral part of urban life. The main task is to preserve them, restore their national and international value, make them more visible and significant in the image of modern Kharkiv.

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# GOSPROM ENSEMBLE IN KHARKIV AND THE CONCEPT OF MODERN STYLE

Alexander Shilo

**ABSTRACT:** The ideologists of Constructivism and “production art” of the 1920s put forward the slogan “not style, but method!”. However, the Constructivists-“productionists” movement carried a stylistic charge of great power. The intentions of the Constructivists-“productionists”, their manifestos and slogans are polemically pointed evidence of their awareness of their own place in the Soviet culture of the 1920s. Creative practice continued the development of a certain artistic tradition. It is necessary to reconstruct the development of the problem of style in the concept of “productionists” as a natural and historically determined stage of the movement. The manifestation of the rejection of the idea of style in artistic creativity in the concept of “production art” paradoxically corresponds to its specific conditions in setting the task of creating and identifying the mechanism for the development of modern style. They are analyzed in the article. The “anti-stylistic” orientation of “production art” was paradoxically opposed to the orientation towards a “Constructivist style”. In the late 1920s, it covered a wide range of architects and artists who did not belong to the Constructivist movement and who opposed them. In this regard, the fate of several outstanding monuments of the Modern Movement in the architecture of Kharkiv is indicative — the House of State Industry (Gosprom), the House of Projects and the House of Cooperation. They were the largest and most integral ensemble in their architectural and compositional solution, which embodied the ideas of the Modern Movement in Soviet architecture. The reconstruction of the ensemble after the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) showed the contradictions that were embedded in the Constructivist concept of the modern style. The duality of understanding the art form in it was revealed. On the one hand, it acted as an independent stylistic entity. On the other hand, it could also be considered as a framework, a “draft” of some further work with the form. The concept of modern style defended by the “productionists” was problematized by the practice of “Constructivist stylizations”.

**KEY WORDS:** “production art”; modern style; “Constructivist stylizations”; the architectural ensemble of the House of State Industry (Gosprom), the House of Projects and the House of Cooperation in Kharkiv; mechanism for the development of modern style.

**INTRODUCTION:** Theory and practice of Constructivism and “production art” in the 1920s covered a wide range of plastic arts - from architecture and design to fine and decorative arts. It created and implemented the concept of modern style (see: Ginzburg, 1975).

Many publications are devoted to the comprehension of practical experience and theoretical ideas of Constructivists and “productionists”, their place in Soviet culture (see: Zhadova, 1966; Constructivism in Ukraine, 2005; Kreyzer, 2005; Sidorina, 1978; Sidorina, 2012; Khan-Magomedov, 1981; Khan-Magomedov, 1982; Chekhunov, Dubovis, 2004; Shilo, 2014). In them, issues related to the problems of style among the Constructivists

received their coverage mainly in two directions. On the one hand, this is a stylistic analysis of individual works in order to identify common patterns that allow us to state a certain unified style of time (see: Adaskina, 1980). On the other hand, there is a discussion of the problems of shaping (see: Sidorina, 1980; Sidorina, 1984).

This second direction of research is developing in line with the slogan “not style, but method!”, put forward by the ideologists of Constructivism and “production art”: “We regard the triumph of the Constructivism method as the main feature of modernity,” wrote L.M. Lisitsky (Lisitsky, 1975, p. 138). However, it is also generally recognized that this movement carried a powerful stylistic charge. This

allows us to speak of the Constructivist style of the 1920s (see: Sidorina, 1978). This fixes a certain contradiction between the theoretical views and the artistic practice of the Constructivists.

## STUDY

The pathos of the revolutionary transformation of the world was perceived by the masters, who formed the core of the Constructivists, as an orientation towards a production attitude towards art (see: Sidorina, 1978; Sidorina, 1980), on the design of a new way of life by artistic means, which was based on the ideas of usefulness and rationality (see: Arvatov, 1925, p. 41). V.E. Tatlin put forward the thesis about art "neither right nor left, but necessary" (cit. by: Punin, 1980, p. 26). It was this kind of art that was supposed to form the modern style (see: Ginzburg, 1975, p. 284; Goldzamt, 1973; Khan-Magomedov, 1980).

One of the starting points of the concept of modern style was the judgment about the principle of correspondence between the processes of social and artistic development. The goal of this latter was understood as the creation of "social harmony, the limits and nature of which are determined by the historical development of social relations," as B.I. Arvatov wrote (Arvatov, 1922, p. 69). Proceeding from this principle, the orientation towards development was formulated as the target orientation of the artistic consciousness. Within its framework, the product of the artist's activity is understood only as a stage, a step in his creative development. It strives for harmonic conformity with the "development of social relations": "... a work is another stop on the path of creation, and not a goal," L.M. Lisitsky wrote (Lisitsky, 1975, p. 139).

The creation of the modern style was a long-term and large-scale creative program. As B.I. Arvatov wrote, "the path to the organic style" consisted "not in the dead perfection of established patterns once and for all, but in continuous evolutionary dynamics. From achievement to achievement, constantly changing and improving forms, hand in hand with the successes of technology and the development of social life, this fluid, living, *never-ending style* will be created" (Arvatov, 1922, p. 74, text selection by me. — A.Sh.).

The master, a participant in the movement of Constructivists-"productionists", faced a number of non-traditional tasks:

- 1 Programming the trajectory of social development;
- 2 Correlation of own artistic development with the program of social development;
- 3 Organization of the creative process and management of one's own artistic development.

The prototype for solving these problems was the experience of an engineer. "The organic, 'engineering' entry of artists into production is ... a necessary condition for the economic system of socialism," the theorist of "production art" B.I. Arvatov noted (cit. by: Sidorina, 1984, p. 26).

Engineering experience is projected onto artistic experience, and work with form is interpreted as "the invention of form" (B.I. Arvatov) (see: Blumenfeld, 1925). It takes place in the "laboratory" conditions of art workshops (see: Ginzburg, 1927) and is introduced into practice by the methods of artistic design. They are provided with the same type of tools as scientifically developed in engineering culture - standards, regulations, technical specifications, etc.

B.I. Arvatov in 1925 wrote about the need to involve artists in the development of "normals and standards for products", to demonstrate "inventions of masters, formal and technical achievements, normalized utilitarian forms", to organize art production laboratories "associated with the relevant laboratories of scientific and industrial institutes", "draw the latest and best inventions as standards ... for their popularization and propaganda for utilitarian art" (Arvatov, 1925, p. 4).

The function of organizing and managing art practice provides work with art form. It turns out to be purposeful and dynamic, changing in various sociocultural situations. In this circumstance, it was natural to look for a mechanism for the development of modern style. Its model was described by M.Ya. Ginzburg (see: Ginzburg, 1975).

He argues that two components stand out when the style is folded. Firstly, these are the formal elements that appear as a result of working with the form. Secondly, these are the methods of their organization, as a result of which a composition appears (see: Ginzburg, 1975, p. 282) The compositional system determines the style. It manifests itself in the correspondence of composition techniques to the elements of form (see: Ginzburg, 1975, p. 280).

Each of the processes - work with form and organization of composition - has its own development intentions. The mechanism for changing styles is the uneven development of shaping and organization of the composition. As a rule, the emergence of new form elements is often associated with the emergence of new materials or designs. It happens faster than compositional techniques change. This discrepancy stimulates the search for new compositional techniques. Ultimately, there is a change in the existing compositional system, and the style changes with it (see: Ginzburg, 1975, p. 282).

The attitude towards the invention of form adopted by the Constructivists-"productionists" becomes a stimulus for the renewal of compositional techniques and the development of modern style [see: Ginzburg, 1975, p. 282].

This process is reconstructed as follows:

**1st phase** — style development programming:

- creation of the concept of social development. "We do not imagine new forms in art outside the transformation of social forms ..." — L.M. Lisitsky wrote (Lisitsky, 1975, p. 138);
- setting an artistic task corresponding to the created "image of the future". It is solved, as noted by M.Ya. Ginzburg, "in connection with a certain goal, a certain material, a certain situation of action" (Ginzburg, 1927, p. 164).

**2nd phase** — style development step:

- the invention of formal elements corresponding to the task;
- bringing compositional techniques in line with the newly obtained elements of form. "The question was: what are the initial impulses of shaping, on the basis of which then, in the course of the formation of a particular style, the artistic and compositional system of techniques and means of expression 'grows'," S.O. Khan-Magomedov notes (Khan-Magomedov, 1982, p. 30).

**3rd phase** — the formation and dissemination of style:

- approbation of the solution in the "laboratory" conditions of an art workshop;
- wide distribution of the obtained solution with the help of a system of standards, regulations, standard projects, etc.;

**4th phase** — criticism of the established style and the prerequisites for its development:

- determination of the compliance of the realized solution of the artistic task with the actual level of social development;
- creation of a new concept of social development; etc.

The development of the modern style is constantly carried out by "throwing into the future" its goals "one step forward", taking this "step", reflecting the correspondence of its results to the set goal, adjusting it, "throwing into the future" the corrected goal, etc. (see: Shilo, 2014).

At the same time, the artistic development of style in the traditional sense turns out to be a secondary task in comparison with the implementation of the new function of the artist, who has mastered the method of development: "... we see it in the new economy, and in the development of industry, and in the psychology of contemporaries, and in art" L.M. Lisitsky wrote (Lisitsky, 1975, p. 138). The consequence of mastering this method was a fundamental rejection of the certainty of the object of artistic creativity: "It's not about the thing ..., but about working with it," A.M. Gan noted (cit. by: Sidorina, 1980, p. 10).

Accordingly, architectural and artistic creativity itself began to be interpreted as the possession of a method (and a potential opportunity) for solving unique problems. The artist, on the other hand, was understood as the bearer of mastery — mastery of the method "in its purest form": "... one can be an artist in anything — in politics and science, in shoemaking and engineering, in a turning shop and in a statue maker's studio, in a textile workshop and in the attic of a nature morte specialist"; "an artist is no more, no less than a qualified organizer," B.I. Arvatov emphasized (cit. by: Sidorina, 1984, p. 25).

Thus, the concept of style was on the periphery of architectural and artistic consciousness. This was understood as a compromise of the very idea of style. It was perceived as a rejection of stylistic ideology in general. Subsequently, it was reinforced by the winged formulas of Ch. Le Corbusier: "Styles are lies," and W. Gropius: "Method, not style" (cit. by: Kaplun, 1985, p. 12).

The Constructivists-"productionists" becomes an enterprising creator of models and ways of life of the future. The implementation of such a program is seen on the scale of the processes associated with the social reorganization of society. It is carried out in the conditions of a social upheaval, oriented towards planned and predictable social development. Therefore, Constructivists-"productionists" constantly appeal to the development of social life by means of art, because in their concept it was the development of social life that acted as a means of developing art in general and, in particular, working with the art form: "We approach the form by deploying a social goal," M.Ya. Ginzburg argued (cit. by: Goldzamt, 1973, p. 141).

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The "anti-stylistic" orientation of "production art" was paradoxically opposed to the orientation towards "Constructivist style" (see: Khan-Magomedov, 1980).

In this regard, the fate of several outstanding monuments of the modern movement in the architecture of Kharkiv is indicative (see: Constructivism in Ukraine, 2005).

Kharkiv at the turn of the 1920-30s. was the capital of Ukraine. During this period, there is a rapid construction. A new administrative center is being created, which was supposed to give the former provincial city a look corresponding to its new capital status. A grandiose complex of the House of State Industry (Gosprom), the House of Projects and the House of Cooperation (now the buildings of V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University) is being designed and built. These huge structures, as they were designed and built, formed an ensemble of one of the largest squares in Europe [FIGURE 01].

Briefly, the history of the creation of this ensemble is as follows. In May 1925, the Council of People's Commissars of Ukraine announced an open competition for the design

of the House of State Industry (Gosprom). The first prize was given to the project under the motto "The Uninvited Guest" [FIGURE 02]. It was made by Leningrad architects S.S. Serafimov, S.M. Kravets and M.D. Felger. In 1928, the House of State Industry (Gosprom) was fully commissioned [FIGURE 03] (see: Zvonitsky, Leibfreud, 1992).

In 1930-32, from the south, the round part of the square was closed by the House of Projects (now the main building of V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University), built according to the competition project of S.S. Serafimov and M.A. Zandberg-Serafimova [FIGURE 04]. In 1929-34, on the northern side of the square, the construction of the House of Cooperation began (project by A.I. Dmitriev and O.R. Munts). This complex (now the northern building of Kharkiv University) was completed after the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) [FIGURE 05].

Both complexes continue the development of the compositional theme set by Gosprom. Radially oriented volumes are placed in the plan along the arc of the rounded border of the area. They create a stepped distribution of the masses united among themselves and with Gosprom as the center of the composition.

The ensemble organizes into a single whole the vast space of the square — its round and rectangular parts. On the north side of the rectangular part in 1933-36 designed by Kharkiv architect G.A. Yanovitsky, the "International" Hotel (now the "Kharkiv" Hotel) was built [FIGURE 06, FIGURE 07].



01 Ensemble of Freedom Square. Kharkiv, Ukraine. © Photo by V. Bysov, 2003. <http://www.kharkov.ua/about/svobody.htm>.

In the late 1920s - early 1930s the square was the largest and most integral ensemble in its architectural and compositional solution, which embodied the ideas of the Modern Movement in Soviet architecture.

These are the general pieces of information that usually precedes the analysis of the style and artistic form of the ensemble. However, one should pay attention to the fact that even before the start of the competition, work was carried out, which allows us to say that the formation of the art form carried out in the projects was preceded by the procedures for folding the style of the ensemble.

The terms of the all-Union competition for *the best project of the House of State Industry* were developed in 1924-25 by the famous Kharkiv architect-teacher Professor A.G. Molokin and civil engineer Ya.I. Kensky and approved collectively by the leading architects and builders of the country.



1. Дом štátného priemyslu na námestí Dzeržinského v Charkove (1925-1928). Celná inštitúcia a páborys. Architekti: S. Serafimov, S. Kravets, N. Felger

14 strana  
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**projekt**



03 S.S. Serafimov, S.M. Kravets, M.D. Felger. Gosprom building. Kharkiv. Ukraine. © Kharkiv, Gosprom Museum, early 1930s. <https://kharkov-future.com.ua/ru/pervyj-sovetskij-neboskreb-istoriya-gosproma>.



06 G.A. Yanovitsky. Hotel "International". Perspective. Kharkiv, Ukraine. Grand Prix of the World Exhibition of Arts and Technology 1937 in Paris. © Kharkiv, Gosprom Museum, 1933—36. <https://sfw.so/1148783049-gosprom.html>.

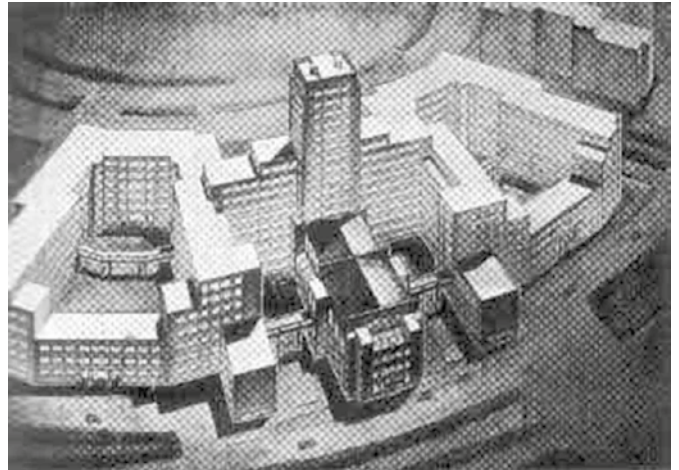
The conditions of the competition set out not only technical, but also artistic requirements for the composition of the future building. In particular, they say:

*... The view of the building will be open from all sides, and, in addition, its silhouette will be dominant for the viewer from the side ... of the lower part of the city due to the steep drop in terrain to the west of the plots allocated for development.*

*... The building must be of a reinforced concrete frame system, partial use of natural stone is*



04 S.S. Serafimov, M.A. Zandberg-Serafimova. House of design organizations. Kharkiv. Ukraine. © Kharkiv, Gosprom Museum, 1932. <https://sfw.so/1148783049-gosprom.html>.



05 A.I. Dmitriev, O.R. Muntz. Project of the House of Cooperation. Kharkiv. Ukraine. Axonometry. © Kharkiv, Gosprom Museum, 1927—30. <https://sfw.so/1148783049-gosprom.html>.



07 G.A. Yanovitsky. Hotel "International". Kharkiv, Ukraine. © Kharkiv, Gosprom Museum, 1936. <https://sfw.so/1148783049-gosprom.html>.

*allowed on the facades. ... If possible, narrow, well-shaped courtyards should be avoided.*

*... When designing, it should be possible to expand the building by adding or building additional buildings ...*

*(Knowing how the entire ensemble of the square subsequently developed, the creation of which was not yet envisaged by this competition, we can say that at this point in the conditions the idea of continuous development of the modern style was consolidated in technical and technological formulations. — A.Sh.)*



... The nature of the facades of buildings is left to the discretion of the drafter of the project, but, reflecting the idea of Soviet industry, it should be distinguished by clear lines, a logical distribution of simple architectural masses with an abundance of light and air. The building can end with a glass chamber with a radio, a clock, a spotlight for illuminated advertisements, etc.

... In addition to indents in the plan from the red line, partial indentations of the facades into the depth of the site and in the vertical direction at the level of various floors with the arrangement of open terraces are also allowed, if their rational use is possible, and flat roofs are also allowed. Provision should be made on the main facades for arrangement of balconies for speakers to speak and for the installation of radiotelephone loudspeakers, as well as places for light screens.

... it is necessary to provide for the correct movement of the public ...

(cit. by: Chekhunov, Dubovis, 2004, p. 114-119).

One involuntarily suggests a comparison of the competition conditions with the legendary five principles of Le Corbusier, formulated in 1932-35 (see: Le Corbusier, 1970, p. 121-133, 300). They became a formula forming, according to A.A. Tits, the plastic "molecule of style" of modern architecture of the 20th century. (see: Tits, Vorobyeva, 1986, p. 209).

The principles of the artistic solution of the Gosprom complex were outlined in the conditions of the competition in a generalized form. It opened up opportunities for the manifestation of various artistic intuitions and author's ideas directly in the process of designing a building. This is evidenced by the artistic diversity of the presented projects.

In the competition projects (see: Chekhunov, Dubovis, 2004, p. 14-21) motifs of Ukrainian folk architecture (architect D.M. Dyachenko), and elements of the "skyscraper

style" (architect N.V. Vasiliev) were used. There were reminiscences, although very veiled, of modernity (architects A.M. Ginzburg, A.V. Linetsky) and neoclassicism popular before the First World War (Y.A. Steinberg, A.E. Belograd, A.I. Dmitriev ). I.A. Fomin developed in his project the ideas of "proletarian", "new" or "reconstructed" (see: Ilyin, 1946, p. 27) classics. V.A. Shchuko, V.G. Golfreich, A.N. Beketov, N.A. Trotsky, A.V. Shchusev, S.S. Serafimov created solutions that demonstrated the various possibilities of working with form in the style of modern architecture.

This variety of artistic moves was proposed by outstanding masters, many of whom created wonderful works in previous years, marked by the dominance of ideas and techniques of modernity, neoclassicism, eclecticism. Their participation in the competition showed that professional architectural thinking easily assimilated new stylistic principles and adapted the plastic language corresponding to them.

Thus, at the level of direct implementation of the design, it was found that the Constructivism method declared by the theorists of the new architecture to a greater extent determined the competition program and partly linked its principles and norms with the creation of basic compositional schemes. The development of the artistic form was carried out relatively autonomously at the design stage.

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During the competitions, it was found that Constructivist artistic vocabulary can be used in those traditional ways of working with form, which were mastered in the practice of stylizations back in the eclecticism of the mid-19th century. This contradiction was clearly manifested in the course of the post-war reconstruction of the buildings of modernist architecture that made up the Kharkiv ensemble. During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 it was destroyed. Only the reinforced concrete skeletons of the buildings and the enclosing structures of Gosprom survived.

The restoration and reconstruction of the ensemble took place at a time when the tendencies of historicism,



08 S.S. Serafimov, S.M. Kravets, M.D. Felger. Gosprom. Kharkiv. Ukraine.  
© Designed by A. Lipinsky. Postcard. Kharkiv, PP "Folio Plus", 2003. <https://www.ebay.com/itm/255434628780>.



09 V.P. Kostenko, V.I. Lifshits and others. The main building of V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (KhNU) (Reconstruction of the former House of Projects). Kharkiv. Ukraine. 1953—63.  
© Ryzen, 2008. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Place\\_de\\_la\\_libert%C3%A9.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Place_de_la_libert%C3%A9.jpg).



10 P.E. Shpara, N.P. Evtushenko and others. Northern building of KhNU (Reconstruction of the former House of Cooperation). Kharkiv. Ukraine. 1954. © K. Brizhnychenko, 2020. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Будинок\\_кооперації,\\_Харків\\_DJI\\_0050.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Будинок_кооперації,_Харків_DJI_0050.jpg).



11 G.A. Yanovitsky. Hotel "Kharkiv". Kharkiv. Ukraine. 1974. © by R. Yakimenko, Postcard, 1977. Kyiv, Radianska Ukraina, <https://oldpostcards.biz/product/gostinica-harkov-harkov-1977-god/>.

eclecticism and the development of the classical heritage, which were clearly embodied in the richness of traditional decor, dominated in Soviet architecture.

The original design was returned only to Gosprom. In the late 1950s, a television antenna was placed above one of its central buildings. Some researchers argue that it distorted the original intention of the authors of the project (see: Novikov, 2003, p. 36). It is difficult to agree with this. The antenna completed the structure's silhouette so successfully and became so organic in its composition that today the Gosprom complex is unthinkable without it [FIGURE 08]. In addition, we can recall those fragments of the competition program, which talk about the possibility of using various technical devices in its composition.

The buildings of the House of Projects and the House of Cooperation, where Kharkiv University is now located, were completely rebuilt. Only the general compositional scheme of high-rise stepped volumes has been preserved. The reconstruction of the former House of Projects was carried out in 1953–63 according to the design of a team of architects led by V.P. Kostenko and V.I. Lifshitz [FIGURE 09]. The former House of Cooperation was completed already in 1954 according to the project of a team of architects led by P.E. Shpara and N.P. Yevtushenko, who were advised by the original architect A.I. Dmitriev [FIGURE 10]. Both complexes were decorated using the forms of traditional order architecture and adapted for higher education institutions.

The hotel "Kharkiv" was reconstructed by the original architect, G.A. Yanovitsky (completed in 1974). He also used the Classical Orders in his reconstruction [FIGURE 11].

At the same time, it is difficult to resist the temptation to interpret the metamorphosis that has taken place as a consistent, albeit paradoxical, implementation of the concept of modern style formulated by the theory of Constructivism.

In fact, the ensemble was created in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It was a period of modernization and industrialization of the country. In accordance with these priorities, the "invention" of Constructivist elements of the artistic form was carried out and the compositional techniques

corresponding to them were created. Reconstruction was carried out in different historical conditions, in the post-war period. During this period, completely different values were actualized in the culture of the USSR. In architecture, an orientation towards the development of the classical heritage was proclaimed. Accordingly, other methods of organizing the art form were also updated. The compositional system that was originally created turned out to be receptive to this new understanding of the artistic form.

The loss of the formal unity of the individual elements of the ensemble did not cancel the compositional subordination of its parts. Subsequently, new elements appeared. A square was arranged on the round part of the square. Today, a huge fountain has appeared on its territory. With the help of various landscape architecture and design solutions, a more complex compositional structure was created. A sophisticated combination of different scales of form was realized in it. They work differently at different distances of perception. And today the ensemble actively lives and develops in the environment of the city center [FIGURE 12].

## CONCLUSIONS

The practice of creating and subsequent reconstruction of the ensemble of Svobody Square in Kharkov revealed the duality of the Constructivist understanding of form. On the one hand, lapidarity brought to the level of schematism acted as an independent, self-sufficient, "stylish", "pure" Constructivist form. The possibilities to vary it, as it turned out, are quite limited. On the other hand, it could also be considered as a framework, a "draft" of some further work with the form. In this case, the lapidary Constructivist form became the same subject of decorative stylizations, like any other stylistically characterized form.

Thus, the concept of modern style, defended by the Constructivists-"productionists", turned out to be problematized by the practice of "Constructivist stylizations".



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Photo by an unknown photographer from 1931 from the original of one of the three first prizes at the Kharkiv competition, labeled "Ukrbudob'ednannya": Design team: Architects Yu. Afanasiev, V. Kostenko, M. Movshovich, R. Fridman, Ya. Shteinberg and artist V. Meller with the participation of: Anatoliev, acoustics, sanitary engineer A. Zlatopolsky, layout designers D. Ivanov and Sonichkin, constructor S. Freyfeld, artists V. Shirshov, and M. Shteinberg; Ukraine, Kharkiv.



# COMPOSITION METHODS OF THE SOVIET ARCHITECTURAL AVANT-GARDE

## Svoboda Square in Kharkiv

Olena Remizova

**ABSTRACT:** This paper explores the composition logic of the creativity of the Avant-garde masters and to identify the principles of the composition language of the architecture of modernism. To characterize the composition language of Avant-garde architecture, systemic, historical-genetic and semiotic methods of research are used. Architectural composition is interpreted as an activity that has its own semantic, morphological and syntactic features. In the example of Svoboda Square (the former Dzerzhinsky Square) in Kharkiv, the logical methods of artistic activity and thinking of the architects of the Soviet Avant-garde of the 1920-1930s are studied. At the beginning of the 20th century avant-garde movements were created artificially, consciously, by an act of will, and they strove to dictate their ideas, concepts and principles as universal and general. The architectural language of the Avant-garde is normative, ascetic and rigidly organized. Distinctive features of the artistic movements of the Avant-garde are the deep analyticity of thinking and the normativity of the declared requirements, abstract concepts and symbols. The logical principles of composition are often repeated thanks to stable semantic associations and are reflected in geometric structures and forms. Thus, the methods of compositional thinking of the Avant-garde form a monological system, i.e. they are internally holistic and normative, not allowing alternatives. It was possible to identify and show that the Avant-garde, as a monological language system, is characterized by the following features: internal integrity, self-sufficiency, normativity; stability of figurative language devices; restriction of freedom of artistic expression with the help of a concept, declaration, slogan, clear conceptual system. Researchers and designers should treat the phenomenon under study not as a "closed", stylistically defined object, but see it as a complex historical process of structure formation based on an even more complex process of development of thinking and activity of architects and builders of a particular period.

**KEYWORDS:** language of avant-garde architecture, monologue in architecture, compositional logic, constructivism, Kharkiv, Derzhprom.

### FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

The architecture of the Soviet avant-garde, although it has reached only 100 years of age, is already history that requires reflection and puts forward the task of a thoughtful security policy. At present, the architecture of modernism in Ukraine is undergoing active destruction, often caused by a misunderstanding of the traditions of the place and the logic of its design, which ultimately leads to the destruction of the appearance of the monument. Since February 24 2022, Ukraine has been subjected to

brutal destruction as a result of Russian military aggression. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the problem lies in two planes: the first one is in the field of "stones", that is, material values, and the second one is in the sphere of consciousness, finding practical and theoretical means of protecting the modernist urban environment and its architectural landscape. Another important aspect is the awareness of the regional originality of the interpretation of the ideas of the modernist movement.

## ANALYSIS OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Docomomo attaches great importance to this problem. Within Docomomo International an exchange of views on the protection of monuments of the Modern Movement has been conducted for many years: Docomomo Journal № 67 (2022): Multiple Modernities in Ukraine; Docomomo Journal № 59 (2018): An Eastern Europe Vision. Recent studies have shown that the analysis of this problem has attracted the attention of a number of scientific conferences of Docomomo in Ukraine (Regional dimension of the Avant-Gard architecture: Ukraine and Europe 2018; Returning the lost: research, documentation and restoration of the damaged and rebuilt monuments of modern architecture, 2020; «Social condensers of the era» — space innovations in the architecture of modernism, 2021; and others) as well as publications of Ukrainian researchers (Bouryak, A. & Kreizer, I. 1999); (Nikolenko, T. & Gorozhankin, V. 1984); (Remizova, E. 2005); (Cherkes, B. 2008); (Didenko, C., Bouryak, A., et al. 2015); (Ivashko Y., Remizova O., et al. 2022); (Konoplyova O., Deriabina O. 2019) and others.

The humanization of the human environment sets the task of creating a polysemic and diverse urban environment that does not lose its old meanings, but also acquires the qualities of modern democracy. The main characteristic of a modern city is its ambiguity, which should be the subject of reflection for an architect who invades such a complex organism as the architecture of modernism, since the future of the place and the people living in it depends on the depth of understanding of the mechanisms of formation of the cultural landscape (Cherkes, B. & Petrishin 2014); (Remizova, O. 2014); (Cherkes, B. 2008); (Didenko, C., Antonenko, N., et al. 2021); (Ivashko Y., Remizova O., et al. 2022).

The purpose of this article is to show that in the urban environment, the original and multi-temporal logical principles of its organization are preserved and interact over time, and a modern architect must be able not only to read, but also to develop, and not destroy the logic inherent in them. In the modern urban environment, it is necessary to track the dialogic and polylogical relationships between eras, styles, forms, methods of forming spatial structures, and especially emerging semantic connections. Each significant building or complex carries a message about its ideas and values. The proximity of objects of different times creates a dialogic relationship between them. Unawareness of all this multi-level polyphonism leads to the impoverishment and destruction of the historical environment, and ultimately to the degradation of one of its components - the architecture of the Avant-garde.

Actual methods of research are historical-genetic and semiotic approaches, which make it possible to identify

the most important meanings and senses corresponding to the stages of evolutionary transformations of the urban environment of the era of modernism, which were laid in it by the authors.

## THE MAIN MATERIAL OF THE STUDY

The line of development of avant-garde ideas can be traced on the example of the events that took place in the architectural life of the young Soviet state and, in particular, one of its cities, Kharkiv.

The period of 1924-1930, when the government complex named after F. Dzerzhinsky, now Svobody (Freedom) Square in Kharkiv, was conceived and implemented, can be called transitional in many respects. It is distinguished by political, economic and artistic instability. The revolutionary ideas of the new state, and the Ukrainian SSR in particular, are looking for their aesthetic embodiment in many different artistic approaches. Avant-Garde Groups (such as Association of Modern Architects - OSA Group, Association of New Architects - ASNOVA, Association of Urban Architects - ARU, etc.) get ahead and defeat the followers of traditional architecture (Moscow Architectural Society and St. Petersburg Society of Architects, etc.). Their rationalistic slogans capture many, even followers of the classics, but only for a while. Intra-professional struggle goes on all the time (Khazanova, V. 1970). And in the midst of this struggle, there is a competition for the formation of a new government center in the city of Kharkiv - the capital of the Ukrainian SSR. The key words of the contradiction of this struggle could not but be reflected the final result.

The fetishization of technological achievements has become the most widespread poetic symbol of architecture and art of the 20th century. The idea of "industrial paradise" proclaimed by Saint-Simon, asserting the power of the human mind and its rational and perfect application in the engineering and technological fields of human activity, in the twentieth century led to the cult of the "perfect machine" that serves for the benefit of mankind. New social utopias in art were embodied in machine images of people, houses and cities. A striking example of such a phenomenon is Freedom Square (former Dzerzhinsky Square) in Kharkiv, which included the House of Projects and the House of Cooperation, and its central building of state industry - Derzhprom. Arranged in a circle, they formed a centric composition that extended to the surrounding residential buildings.

The Derzhprom building was built in 1925-1929 according to the project, which received the first prize at the All-Union competition (architects S. S. Serafimov, S. M. Kravets, M. D. Felger). Let's start with the semantic component, namely from the idea and the name. The



01 Aerial view of the Freedom Square complex in Kharkiv. © V. Bysov, 2002.



02 Central entrance to Derzhprom in Kharkiv, architects S. S. Serafimov, S. M. Kravets, M. D. Felger. © O. Remizova, 2021.

name "Derzhprom" is ambivalent at its core. On the one hand, it is a proper name. But on the other hand, there is nothing personal in this name, it is immense and personifies the image of industry as such, and the system of its management as a universal law. In the era of the crystallization of Soviet power, everything individual had to be erased and turned into a collective. S. S. Serafimov, one of the authors of the project, speaks about this: "I tried to solve the State Industry House in Kharkiv as a part of the organized world, to show a factory, a plant that has become a palace." "Before the eyes of contemporaries, revolutionary romantic visions took on their visible flesh. ... Streets, movement, air pierced through the building, hung in different levels with bridges and passages, demonstrating the spatial thinking of a new era, declaring a new aesthetics of the continuity of architecture..." (Nikolenko, T. & Gorozhankin, V. 1984, p. 103).

Although the shape of the square arose in the process of its competitive selection in 1923-24 (before the announcement of the competition for Gosprom) and was largely dictated by the urban situation, its cosmic scale of new architecture evokes images of ideal Renaissance cities, in the structure of which architects sought to reflect their understanding of the structure of the world. The universal vision is reflected in the concentric rings of buildings surrounding a round square with radial axes of streets running to infinity [FIGURE 01]. This cosmogonic picture shows the Renaissance model of the world - the heliocentric system of planetary rotation around the Sun. However, here it seems to be turned inside out. The center of rotation is not marked by anything, and this is very symbolic, because for the Soviet avant-garde the key word was "space", i.e. emptiness. But, in this spatial model, the idea of a hierarchy of centralized power are expressed as an ideals of the

integrity and unity of the state (Remizova, E. 2005). This expressed the dictatorial monologism of the new way of thinking, its clear code, artistic law.

However, a certain duality can be traced in this grandiose structure. When designing Derzhprom, two ways of development of architecture appeared, expressed in two artistic languages. The loud, screaming, declarative avant-garde was looking for a new abstract language, renouncing the figurativeness and layers of the past, asserting hitherto unseen technicalism. Knowing its worth and self-confident traditionalism calmly appealed to history and classics. Outwardly declaring the Constructivist method, Derzhprom has a decorative character. Two languages - Constructivist and retrospective-decorative - are fighting in these work and in architecture in general.

This can be seen by examining how architectural vocabulary and syntactics were practiced not on paper and wooden models of Vkhutemas students, but in concrete and glass of Derzhprom.

The multi-axis composition of the building contains a multiple order of symmetry, which is a common law of world harmony. Each part of the building is symmetrical in itself and symmetrical about the central axis. The facades inside the passages seem to face each other. Many details are symmetrical within themselves. All these methods of construction bring Derzhprom closer to classicism and its heir - Art Deco (Bouryak, A. & Kreizer, I. 1999). It would seem that the general structure is clearly and easily guessed, but it is precisely here that another contradiction lies. There is no such point of view from where all this complex construction would be perceived symmetrically. Derzhprom is always perceived dynamically and asymmetrically, which is typical of the Soviet Avant-garde. This is the effect of cinema, or rather cinematography,





03 View of Derzhprom from Svobody Square in Kharkiv, architects S. S. Serafimov, S. M. Kravets, M. D. Felger. © O. Remizova, 2021.



04 Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Large part of the magnificent doorway. Engraving, 1749-1750. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Parte\\_di\\_ampio\\_magnifico\\_Porto\\_all%27uso\\_degli\\_antichi\\_Romani.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Parte_di_ampio_magnifico_Porto_all%27uso_degli_antichi_Romani.jpg).

which developed rapidly in the 1920s. On the one hand - absolute organization and multiple symmetry, and on the other - a variety of views, angles, plans, spatial permeability [FIGURE 02, FIGURE 03]. While the nature of the perception of Derzhprom pushes us to think about the Avant-garde, the geometric order inherent in it gravitates towards the emerging Art Deco (Remizova, E. 2005).

The vocabulary of Derzhprom consists of elementary units: identical windows assembled into ribbons, vertical stairwells, flat roofs of different heights - all this corresponds to the language of the "Modern Movement". At the same time, the classical mirror symmetry of the passages, marked by the verticals of the staircase glazing, is broken by the asymmetry of the height of the parts of building, as if growing towards the center, but sharply falling when approaching the central axis. The middle part of the facade is not raised, but collapsed both vertically and horizontally. So in a separate monument there is a dialogue between constructivism and Art Deco.

The futuristically gigantic scale and almost abstract geometry bring this work closer to the historical fantasies of G. Piranesi [FIGURE 04] and the abstract industrial drawings

of Y. Chernikhov (Chernikhov, Y. 1933) at the same time, which gives it even greater duality [FIGURE 05].

The search for a new universal language was reflected in the abstract geometric forms of Derzhprom, as well as in the buildings of the Merchants' Bank, now the Conservatory [FIGURE 06], the Donugol Trust [FIGURE 07], and the Railwaymen's Club [FIGURE 08] in Kharkiv. Kazimir Malevich's Black Square (Malevich, K. 2008) became the ultimate expression of this idea, since it was both "absolute everything" and "absolute nothing". The cosmic primordial matter is expressed in Malevich's Suprematist paintings. Achieving absolute and total harmony did not imply further development. The world and creativity should, according to the authors, stop, because there is nothing beyond this perfection. Derzhprom demonstrates such an absolute system [FIGURE 09].

Derzhprom was conceived as an ensemble within an ensemble. Circular Dzerzhinsky Square was formed by three buildings: the first skyscraper in the USSR, Derzhprom (1925-1929, architects S. S. Serafimov, S. M. Kravets, M. D. Felger), the House of Projects (1930-1933, architect S. S. Serafimov jointly with M.A. Zandberg-Serafimova, completely rebuilt in the 1960s) [FIGURE 10] and the House

05 Yakov Chernikhov. Fantastic composition of the organization of space No. 28. © Chernikhov, Y. *Architectural fantasies*, Leningrad 1933 (without page numbers).



06 Commodity exchange on Constitution Square, 11/13 in Kharkiv, architect A. V. Linetsky, 1925. © O. Remizova, 2013.





07 "Donugol" Trust on Pushkinskaya street, 5 in Kharkiv, 1925, architects A. I. Nossalevich, I. A. Lomaev, sculptor I. P. Kavaleridze. © O. Remizova, 2021.



08 Palace of Culture of Railway Workers in Kharkiv, 1928-1932, architect A. I. Dmitriev. © O. Remizova, 2009.

of Cooperation (architect A.I. Dmitriev, O.R. Munts, project 1928, construction 1933-35 also rebuilt after the war) [FIGURE 11]. The original composition of the last two objects had more Constructivist poetics before the postwar reconstruction. The composition triumphantly ascended in ledges to the central elevated risalit, the windows flew apart in horizontal ribbons, the glass ribbons of the flights of stairs rose upwards, the reinforced concrete frame emphasized the novelty of the appearance. The project of the House of Cooperation had more features that brought it closer to the American skyscrapers of the Art Deco era than signs of Constructivism. Asymmetric facades, functionally organized plans, intersection of large geometric volumes



09 Panorama of Derzhprom from V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, architects S. S. Serafimov, S. M. Kravets, M. D. Felger. © O. Remizova, 2021.



10 Project House in Kharkiv, 1930-1933, architects S. S. Serafimov, M. A. Zandberg-Serafimova. Photo 1930s. © Unknown, private archive of A. Bouryak.



11 House of Cooperation in Kharkiv (on right), project 1928, architects A. I. Dmitriev, O. R. Munts, construction began in 1933-35, rebuilt after the Second World War. Photo from the early 1950s. © Unknown, private archive of A. Bouryak.

in space, contrast of large glass planes and blank wall surfaces, dynamic compositions became the characteristic features of the new code (not only in Kharkiv, but the whole constructivist one) as well. All these features were possessed by buildings created in Kharkiv in the 1920s to the early 1930s by members of the Moscow OSA - the society of contemporary architects - or Ukrainian OSA, established in 1928 (Society of Contemporary Architects of Ukraine, 2023). Among them are the hotel "International" on Dzerzhinsky Square, (1931-34, architect G. A. Yanovitsky, the member of the OSAU (Yanovitsky, Grigory Oleksandrovich, 2023), (Kharkiv (hotel), 2023), a group of buildings on Rudnev Square – now Square of Heroes of

the Heavenly Hundred (1928, authors I. A. Steinberg, I. I. Malozemov and I. F. Milinis, one of the key figures of the OCA and co-author of M. Ginzburg), the post office on the railway station square (1930, architect A. G. Mordvinov), residential buildings at the Pushkin entrance (architects R. M. Fridman and I. A. Steinberg, 1929-1932). All of them are marked by characteristic "Suprematist" shifts in volumes, stepped tops, emphasized dynamism even at small sizes, etc. And this has become a universal rule that has spread throughout the world. Here it is important to make a digression and emphasize that the ensemble of Freedom Square has undergone significant changes in the post-war years and during the period of independence of Ukraine. Its architectural language was violated by the Art Deco style during the reconstruction of the House of Projects and the House of Cooperation, and only Derzhprom retained its avant-garde constructivist look. The further invasion of the Palace Hotel demonstrated a deep misunderstanding of the language and logic of the avant-garde design of the entire ensemble (Remizova, O. 2014, p. 315).

Modernist currents created "architecture in general", "architecture for everyone, but for no one personally". The dictatorial aspirations of these concepts were expressed in the monologism of architecture, which asserted the only possible path of development.

The first Manifesto of the De Stijl group in 1918 stated: "There is a new and an old consciousness of the era. The old is directed towards the individual. The new is directed towards the universal. The conflict between the individual and the universal was reflected both in the world war and in contemporary art... The new art demonstrated the essence of the new consciousness of the era: the balance between the universal and the individual. The new consciousness is ready to be realized in everything, including the objects of everyday life" (Frampton, K. 1990, p. 208). These words can be attributed to any pictorial and architectural work of the 20s, in which the artist strives for maximum generalization, universalization and even internationalization.

The architectural avant-garde embodied the idea of a machine paradise in "universal planning", Corbusier's five principles: house on pillars, strip glazing, universal plan, horizontal roof and roof garden, which were realized from Alaska to Australia and from Russia to the USA with kilometres of monotonous reinforced concrete panel standard houses and micro-district settlements that do not notice either a person, or a place, or time. In fact, this was the new language of modernism. Mies van der Rohe said that "Language can be used for everyday needs like prose if you can speak very well - like great prose. And if you really speak well, you can be a poet. But in all cases it is the same language, and its character remains the same,



12 Saltovka residential area in Kharkiv. Modern look. © Unknown, private archive of O. Remizova.

and it has the same possibilities" (Ikonnikov, A. 1972, p. 381). The idea of an "ideal society", for which a new refined language was most welcome, ultimately failed. The liquidation of CIAM was proof of this, but it left traces terrifying in its dullness and facelessness in the form of endless micro-districts of socialist cities and towns [FIGURE 12].

Perhaps it is thanks to this monologism that the innovation of the Modern Movement very quickly exhausted its resources. The artistic language was cleansed to the limit and by the 1950s it had become primitively simple. The universality of this language has crossed all the boundaries of the possible, and architecture and art have become simply uninteresting, boring. In 1960-70s there is an avalanche of critical speeches against modernism and its artistic language. The main reproach to modernism was that its architecture had become meaningless. The break with history and cultural memory led to the loss of artistic content, and no technical means of improving the form could save "modern architecture".

Now, when Modernism is recognized as one of the many historical movements and styles, and after it we noted Brutalism, High-tech, Postmodernism, Deconstructivism, etc., the novelty of modernist trends seems to be something transient. The creators of the modernist movement (Le Corbusier, W. Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and others) assumed, or rather affirmed, the enduring nature of their truths. They believed that they were discovering the general universal laws of peace-making! And a person with his character, psychology, world outlook is only a grain of sand in the world ocean, unable to influence this process, and therefore unimportant, not valuable and uninteresting for the "creators of history". Hence the impersonal character of most works of modernism. The cold crystals of skyscrapers and villas by Mies van der Rohe. Le Corbusier's Marseilles unit is a machine for living and a man is a cog in this mechanism, a sign, an automaton in the paintings of Corbusier himself and Fernand Léger, Rene

Magritte and J. de Chirico, P. Filonov. Hence the idea of "paper architecture" as architecture that does not require implementation, intended only to awaken the mind. Hence the analytic attitude to the world, hence the destructive principles of creativity, which were actively developed in the postmodern artistic culture of the late twentieth century.

The monologue of the Avant-garde differs significantly from the monologue of canonical language systems. First of all, by the fact that it is formed artificially, that is, by a volitional act of a group of creators, by declaring a universal idealistic idea, which never happened in antiquity. Despite the absence of a canon that has been developing for a long time, the Avant-garde very quickly forms the rules of artistic thinking on the basis of a strictly defined conceptual apparatus, with the help of which it normalizes the creative process. The language of modernist architecture is distinguished by asceticism, a limited set of iconic forms, and strict regulation of compositional rules. This is due to the approval of the only possible point of view, the certainty with which the masters of the avant-garde spoke and asserted their position.

One of the newest ways to develop the monologue can also be considered digital architecture, which claims to be universal, similar to Avant-garde. Many digital projects are also abstract, geometric, non-scale and irrespective of the environment in which they are placed. The mathematical logic of their creation is subject to the parameters entered into the program.

## CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing the results of the study, it is important to note that the monologue as a form of thinking and activity is characteristic of the Avant-garde. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, for the first time, style and artistic movements were created artificially, consciously, by an act of will. Avant-garde movements tend to dictate their ideas, concepts and principles as universal and general. Distinctive features of the artistic movements of the Avant-garde are the deep analyticity of thinking and the normativity of the declared requirements, abstract concepts and symbols. Each artistic direction puts forward its own key concept, on the basis of which new meanings and rules for creating a form are formed. On the one hand, through the destruction of what they depicted, they were looking for an inner meaning, invisible to the eye, but comprehensible and cognizable, of the existence of form. On the other hand, they demanded to strictly observe the abstractness of form and space, to exclude any historical associations.

The fetishization of technological achievements and the cult of the "perfect machine" became the most common poetic symbols of architecture and art in the first half of the 20th century. On their basis, the concepts of functionalism

and constructivism were formed, and then the whole rationalism of modernism. The architectural lexicon and syntactics of modernism are marked by the characteristic features of the new rationalistic code: dynamic intersection of large geometric volumes in space, asymmetric facades, functionally organized plans, contrast of large glass planes and blank wall surfaces, dynamism of horizontal and vertical glazing strips, "suprematist" shifts of volumes, stepped tower tops, the impersonal nature of most works.

The architectural avant-garde refers to monologue language systems that arose by consciously declaring a new concept. The language of Modernism is monological because it was formed not by the natural path of evolution, but artificially, by the conscious assertion of a doctrine or concept. It relied on a strictly defined logic of artistic creativity and a strictly limited conceptual apparatus.

An architectural monologue is characterized not only by the unity of logical, i.e., compositional methods of building a form, but also by the unity of the forms themselves, which is very important for architecture. The mechanism for implementing the unity of forms is the activity aspect, that is, the possession of certain skills in constructing forms.

Avant-garde as a monological language system is characterized by the following features: internal integrity, self-sufficiency, normativity; stability of figurative language structures; artistic language does not borrow the means of other cultures; restriction of expressive means with the help of a concept, declaration, slogan, clear conceptual system (restriction of freedom of expression).

## OFFERS

Knowledge of compositional logics is extremely important in the reconstruction and restoration of monuments, which, of course, include the Avant-garde. Turning an object into a museum is not always the best way to preserve it. It is much more important to find a way to further extend the life of the monument, fill it with really necessary processes or functions, or preserve its original function. In accordance with this requirement, it is important to emphasize that researchers and designers should treat their object not as a "closed", stylistically defined phenomenon, but see it as a complex historical process of structure formation, based on an even more complex process of development of thinking and activity of architects and builders of a particular period. At the same time, the object under consideration enters into a complex relationship with the environment, which could arise as a result of other requirements and criteria, a change in artistic tasks and aesthetic criteria. The development of knowledge about compositional logics and their translation into the monument protection system can contribute to a deeper understanding of urban problems and their resolution.

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# MODERNIST MONUMENTS OF FREEDOM SQUARE IN KHARKIV

## Destruction, Restoration, Reconstruction

Mariia Rusanova, Oleksandr Maimeskul

**ABSTRACT:** Since February 24, 2022, the architectural heritage of Ukraine has been exposed to dangerous destruction. The government center on Freedom (Svoboda) Square in Kharkiv - the largest urban development of early modernist architecture and its pearl, included in the Tentative UNESCO World Heritage List (2017) and provisionally inscribed on the International List of Cultural Property under Enhanced Protection (2023) - Derzhprom (The State Industry Building), were hit by a missile attack on March 1, 2022. In the conditions of non-cessation of hostilities and non-priority, the only means of protecting monuments in the city for months were, and in many places still are, sandbags, adhesive tape and plywood. The architectural research community and Government of Ukraine, together with international organizations, must take all possible actions to protect and restore the damaged architectural monuments. The article deals with the modernist monuments of Freedom Square, the chronology of their reconstruction since the Second World War and the damage received over the past almost two years. The paper raises important questions regarding their future fate with the possibility of restoring some objects of the square to their original appearance of the modernist era.

**KEYWORDS:** Kharkiv constructivism, Avant-garde, Ukrainian Modernism, monument protection



01 Freedom Square (the former Dzerzhinsky Square) in Kharkiv. In the foreground (from left to right): North building of Karazin University (former House of Cooperation), Derzhprom, Karazin University (former House of Projects), at the far end of the square - the building of the Kharkiv Regional Administration, on the left at the bend of the square - the Kharkiv Hotel building (former International). © Air Production, 2021.



02 The building of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration after the bombing. © Andrey Maiaenko, UNIAN: News of Ukraine, 2022.



03 The building of the Kharkiv RSA (architects V. Kostenko, V. Orekhov) before the shelling. © STATUS QUO. <https://www.sq.com.ua/>, 2020.

**INTRODUCTION:** The government center on Freedom (Svoboda) Square [FIGURE 01] (the former Dzerzhinsky square) in Kharkiv, Ukraine, was mostly completed in the 1930s. At that time, it was the world's largest, unique, integrated architecture complex of early modernism – its outline can fit the complex of the Roman Cathedral of St. Peter four times and twice the palace in Karlsruhe. The complex of Freedom Square included the gigantic buildings of the House of State Industry (Derzhprom, 1931), the House of Project Organizations (1932), the House of Cooperation (from 1929, it was not completed until the outbreak of World War II), and the Party Central Committee (1932). In addition, the "International" Hotel (1936), the largest in Ukraine at that time, was erected on the square (Khan-Magomedov, 1996).

These objects and the area itself survived the war, recovery and reconstruction after the Second World War and a number of transformations in subsequent years. But even after all the changes, this complex of the interwar period remains a valuable heritage item: all the objects on the square, as well as the square itself, are included in the State register of immovable monuments of Ukraine as architecture and urban planning monuments of local and national significance. The pearl of the square – the world's largest building in the Constructivist style (Derzhprom, 2022) – the House of State Industry (Derzhprom) in 2018 was included in the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List<sup>1</sup> and in autumn of 2023, due to the war, it was provisionally inscribed on the International List of Cultural Property under Enhanced Protection among 20 cultural properties in Ukraine as the only object of modernist architecture (Ukraine, 2023). The Freedom Square complex is a difficult rebus in terms of possible strategies for its protection and further use and in recent years many Ukrainian architects and researchers raised this issue, among them: A. Bouryak (Bouryak & Kraizer, 2007), N. Antonenko and O. Deriabina (Antonenko & Deriabina, 2020), O.

Shvidenko (Shvidenko, 2014), I. Gubkina (Gubkina & Hatherley, 2017) and others. Today there are many more questions and tasks related to the restoration and preservation of the Kharkiv main square complex.

On March 1, 2022, Freedom Square in Kharkiv was hit by a rocket attack. As a result of the strike, absolutely all the buildings on the square, as well as on streets adjacent to the epicenter of the explosion, received damage to varying degrees. The building of the Regional State Administration [FIGURE 02] sustained the worst damage – the rocket hit in front of the monument. As a consequence, ceilings of the architectural monument collapsed, destroying everything and everyone inside the building, windows shattered, walls were partially destroyed. On August 28, 2022, there was a repeat attack on the main square of the city. The bomb fell under the very walls of the main facade of the Kharkiv RSA, while the other hit the building from the opposite side, damaging nearby buildings in the process, including a pure example of modernist architecture, the building of the Automatic Telephone Exchange, built as part of the government complex (architect V. Frolov, 1929-1930).

## THE BUILDING OF REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATION

The building of Regional State Administration (RSA) was built on Sumska street, the main street of the city, in 1954, by Ukrainian architects V. Kostenko and V. Orekhov [FIGURE 03]. This object was built as part of the global post-war rebuilding of the city on the site of the modernist building of the Central Committee (1932, architect J. Steinberg) that was almost totally destroyed during World War II.

The lost unique Steinberg building was built as part of the government complex. In the design of the Central Committee building of the CP(b)U, Steinberg included a two-story volume of the former residence of the Kharkiv



04 The Central Committee building of the CP(b)U (1929-32, architect J. Steinberg). © Photo from the authors archive, 1930s.



05 The building of the Central Committee during WW2. © Photo from the authors archive, 1944.

provincial zemstvo (1900, architect A. Minkus), and a three-story mansion (1914, architect V. Velichko) attached to it. The resulting volume was built on three more floors receiving a large-scale “forehead”, made in the best traditions of functionalist architecture, and expanded to the intersection of Sumska and Veterinary (now Svoboda) streets [FIGURE 04]. The main entrance to the new huge building was arranged on the corner of these two streets. Thanks to its simple and expressive modernist shape, it confidently completed the composition of the rectangular part of the square. A unique research development, undoubtedly innovative for its time, was lost from another missile strike, now only photographs and J. Steinberg’s paper (Steinberg, 1931) remain from the building.

The new building of the Regional State Administration corresponded to its predecessor; however, it was dramatically different stylistically: the facade was made in the style of the solemn neoclassicism characteristic of the first post-war years. The massive columns of the modernized five-story warrant have nothing to do with the Steinberg project. Although in the urban context the scale and position of this object as part of the ensemble of the square was preserved.

It seems fateful that the building of the Regional State Administration was destroyed in much the same way as the building of its predecessor almost 80 years ago. Since at that time the architecture of modernism was not considered as historical and architectural heritage and therefore was not the subject of preservation – so the unique object of an incredible experimenter architect was dismantled [FIGURE 05].

The same fate overtook another no less interesting object by Jacob Steinberg – the building of the Kharkiv Institute of Civil Engineering (KhICE, now KhNUCEA. Completed in 1930-1932), located on one of the new axes laid out by the square - Nauki Avenue. This huge building was built for a new institute (created on the basis of the architecture faculty of the Kharkiv Art Institute and the construction faculty of the Kharkiv Technological Institute (now the National Technical University “KhPI”)) as part of the general plan of the “Kharkiv socialist reconstruction”, as the capital of Soviet Ukraine. During the Second World War

this unique building was badly damaged and rebuilt much later in a different style (Maimeskul et al., 2019). Due to the urgent need in the reconstruction of cities in builders and engineers, the Institute moved to another more intact building of the modernist era at Sumskaya, 40 - located 350 meters from Freedom Square. As in the case of the RSA the KhNUCEA building was also subjected to rocket attack by the occupiers in early March, 2022.

The Regional State Administration as well as the KhNUCEA building and many other objects affected by the attack should be restored as part of the overall Kharkiv reconstruction program<sup>2</sup>. Relating to the predecessor of the RSA building - the constructivist building of the Central Committee, it should be at least restored as a graphic reconstruction (based on the preserved photographs and drawings of the monument) and included in a full 3D model of the pre-war square in the context of the return of the Freedom Square ensemble to its historical authenticity.

## THE STATE INDUSTRY BUILDING (DERZHROM)

The State Industry Building (Derzhprom) - the most valuable object of the square complex received the least damage in the last 15 months. Being in the opposite part of the area from the explosion, Derzhprom has lost a noticeable, but replenishable, part of the windows and stained-glass windows in the stairs. All the broken windows of the building were only covered with plywood to avoid further damage from the weather and new blast waves.

Derzhprom is the only building in the architectural ensemble of the square that has almost completely preserved its original appearance [FIGURE 06]. This huge building is a masterpiece of Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Russian architects Mark Felger, Samuel Kravets, Sergey Serafimov – representatives of the Petrograd Architecture Schools. The Derzhprom building is the world’s largest monument of interwar modernism (Bouryak & Kraizer, 2007). Its volume is 347,000 m<sup>3</sup>, a total area – 67,000 m<sup>2</sup>. This office complex, in the Avant-garde style, consisting of 3 blocks, connected by 6 bridge-transitions at different levels, was constructed in only 3 years (in the period 1926-29).



During World War II there were several unsuccessful attempts to blow up and set fire to the building, however the powerful reinforced concrete structures of Derzhprom survived. The building, which was burnt and lost all the glass, still received the least damage of all the objects of the square and already in 1944–47 was restored and put back into operation.

In subsequent years, the monument was repeatedly subjected to unsuccessful reconstructions. Terrazite plaster, an exquisite decoration of the facades of Derzhprom, survived the war, but later, in the 60s and 70s, was hidden under layers of rough cement spray. Such repeated barbaric “redesign” of facades turned out to be fatal for Derzhprom. The heavy multilayer cement cake lost its adhesion to the concrete wall, and began to exfoliate in thousands of square meters. The giant building, which was not afraid of a direct hit by a heavy aviation bomb, turned out to be an easy victim of ignorance [FIGURE 07].

Long-term operation and unsuccessful post-war repairs in 2001 forced the beginning of the reconstruction of the building. The reconstruction consisted in the complete replacement of plaster (over 74,000 m<sup>2</sup>) and filling of window openings (glazing area 17,000 m<sup>2</sup>).

Due to the modernization of technology and the lack of materials that were used at the beginning of the 20th century the original high-quality decorative plaster with mica slabs has not been restored. The facades of Derzhprom are now covered with fine-grained plaster according to the patent of the German Henkel company.

Double oak window frames were replaced, while preserving the binding pattern, with modern single-pane frames equipped with double-glazed windows. The original double steel stained-glass windows of stairwells with fine-meshed glazing were replaced by single-layer double-glazed windows. Overhead gratings, which were supposed to imitate the fine-mesh frames of the original stained-glass windows, were placed behind the stained-glass windows. This significantly influenced the perception

of the building composition. Nevertheless, in 2018, the Derzhprom building was included, by the efforts of Kharkiv Regional Department of Architecture and Urban Planning and with the assistance of the Ukrainian DOCOMOMO Chapter, into the preliminary list of UNESCO World Heritage and on September 7, 2023 at an extraordinary session of the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, at Ukraine’s request, The UNESCO Committee decided to provisionally inscribe Derzhprom on the International List of Cultural Property under Enhanced Protection.

Architectural and artistic perfection, huge size, and world fame of Derzhprom are so significant, that sooner or later its original appearance will be reproduced in full detail. Scientific analysis, methodological guidance and an international program of protection and support could accelerate this process and make it more effective.

## THE HOUSE OF PROJECTS

Another, even more perfect masterpiece of Serafimov and his wife M. Zandberg-Serafimova – the House of Projects (1930–1932, [FIGURE 08]) – in 1941, at the beginning of the war, was badly damaged by fire and stood dilapidated for many years. In the early 1950s restoration of the building began in order to accommodate the Kharkiv State University. The huge building (about 50,000 m<sup>2</sup>) was planned to be rebuilt in the triumphal style similar to Moscow high-rise buildings or to the Warsaw Palace of Culture and Science. This plan did not succeed: after the death of Stalin, the reconstruction project was radically simplified. But the building restored in 1961 had completely lost its original appearance [FIGURE 09]. False pilasters, cornices, lined with ceramic tiles were pasted on the elegant modernist composition, and later a pompous multi-column portico was added to the entrance. For the sake of enhancing the monumentality of the image, a deep courtyard from the side of the city garden was built up; this closed the amazing view of the movement of elevators in



06 The House of State Industry (Derzhprom), arch. Serafimov S., Kravets S., Felger M., 1926-28.  
© Photos taken by a German agronomist student, 1932 (from the authors archive).



07 The House of State Industry before reconstruction. © Photo from archive of A. Bouryak, 1990s.



08 The House of Projects, arch. Serafimov S., Zandberg-Serafimova M., 1931-32.  
© Photo of the 1930s, the archive of A. Bouryak.



09 Kharkiv National University named after V.N. Karazin (was opened after reconstruction in 1957).  
© Mariia Rusanova, 2019.

four transparent prisms, especially spectacular in the evening hours. The soaring visor was removed from the central tower; therefore, its height was reduced, and the overall dynamics of the spatial composition was weakened.

In its current form, the building has ceased to be a modernist monument and has lost its architectural value. The only opportunity to feel the true spirit of this object appeared when the Center for Contemporary Art named after Kharkiv constructivist Vasil Ermilov was opened in a part of the university's vast cellars. Then the powerful monolithic structures of the underground part were bared and exposed, and it became obvious that the fundamental possibility of reviving the authentic appearance of the masterpiece still remains, and requires only human determination.

Of the three giants of the modernist ensemble of the round part of the square, the University building is closest to the RSA building and to the epicenter of the explosions, therefore, it received more damage - most of the windows of the monument were damaged by the blast wave. As in the case of Derzhprom, the broken windows were covered with improvised means.

The object needs to be reconstructed with a preliminary assessment of its condition and, not least, an assessment

of architectural value in order to adopt a restoration strategy. The House of Projects has every chance to revive its original appearance of the period of the modernist era. This will require preliminary research, the implementation of graphic reconstruction, a skillful promotion campaign, the development of a restoration task and reconstruction project, fundraising efforts etc. But the ambitious task of rebuilding, next to the magnificent Derzhprom, its historical counterpart, can become for Ukraine a cultural feat of European scale.

### THE HOTEL "INTERNATIONAL"

The Hotel "International" (1932-1936, architect G. Yanovitsky) received similar destruction from a missile attack, but to a much worse extent. The decoration of the facade of the building has fallen off in some places, almost all the windows on the side of the square have been broken out. Due to the lack of owners, many windows are still not closed in any way, leaving the building unprotected from all weather conditions and more [FIGURE 10].

Hotel "International" was also burned during WWII, lost its roofs and glazing. The famous interiors, which in 1937 at the world exhibition in Paris received the Grand Prix of the Architecture section, were completely

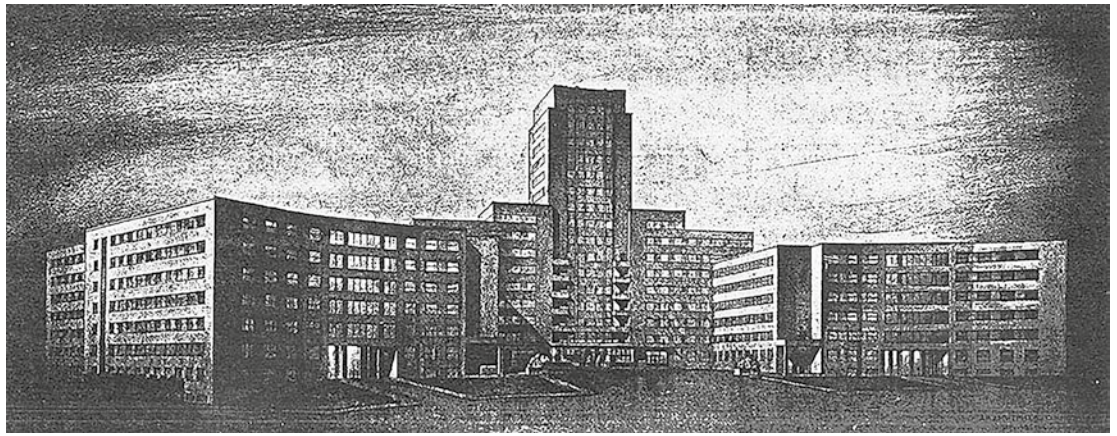


10 Hotel "International", arch. Yanovitsky G., 1932-36. © Album: From the history of Freedom Square, 1930s.



11 Hotel "Kharkiv", reconstruction by arch. Yanovitsky G. © Photo of the 1990s, the authors archive.

12 The House of Cooperation, arch. Dmitriev A., Munts O., 1929-54, perspective. © Photos from A. Bouryak's archive. North Building of Karazin University.



13 North Building of Karazin University © Mariia Rusanova, 2019.



lost (Protsenko, 2012). Just like the House of Projects, the hotel after the war was rebuilt in another, classicizing post-war style. The difference was that this building was restored by its author, Grigory Yanovitsky, once the head of Ukrainian Constructivists (Bouryak & Rusanova, 2020). He has changed and simplified the shape of the lower floors, enlarged the ledge of the crowning cornice and built a new, larger and more expressive entrance portico. After restoration the hotel (now the hotel "Kharkiv") has received a new architectural expressiveness, but has become a monument of another architectural era [FIGURE 11]. In 1976, a 16-storey building was added to the main building of the hotel. In 2008, another reconstruction of the hotel was carried out, but already as an architectural monument of the 1950s. Today, its appearance is considered one of the hallmarks of the city of Kharkiv, and only the well-disguised composition of the volume of the building reminds us of the style of the capital period.

The building is very dilapidated and again needs reconstruction. Despite understandable nostalgia for Constructivism, the hotel should still be restored to the forms that were imposed during the post-war reconstruction.

Paradoxically, the post-war "Kharkiv" was more expressive, more harmonious, more beautiful than the pre-war "International". But at the same time, it needs to return all the elements of architectural decoration that were lost "in the dashing nineties", in particular, the balconies on the main facade. That were cut to stretch advertising banners across the entire vast area of the facade. Of course, the original modernist appearance of the building should be reliably restored in graphic reconstruction and 3D models.

### THE HOUSE OF COOPERATION

The third giant of the government center – the House of Cooperation (project of architects A. Dmitriev and O. Munts, 1929) was not completed before the war [FIGURE 12]. This building, with a total volume of 115,000 cubic meters, was supposed to be the tallest in the city, overtaking the House of Projects located opposite. In the pre-war period, only the two side six-story buildings were completed, and the dominant central one, which was planned to be 16-storey, was completed according to a new project, losing 4 floors in height [FIGURE 13]. In 1935, the unfinished building was transferred to the military academy and was

completed after the war, also in a classic triumphal style (1954, architects P. Shpara, V. Dyuzhikh, N. Lineckaya, D. Yevtushenko). Since 2004, the building has been used as the second, "northern" building of Karazin University. In its current form, it is, of course, a monument of architecture of the post-war period. Facades and a significant part of interiors of the monument have been preserved and are subject to protection (Grigoryev, 2012). As a result of the explosion on March 1, the building lost some of its windows, but being "around the corner" received the least damage.

## CONCLUSIONS

Military destruction each time poses the problem of choosing a strategy for restoring objects: updated or in their original form. In the case of the RSA building, a few weeks after the strike, the head of the Kharkiv administration, Oleg Sinegubov, publicly made an assumption about the impossibility of restoring this object. In this case, careful consideration of the issue is necessary, since, firstly, the city administration has no right to decide the fate of an architectural monument - in order to legally dismantle an object, it must be excluded from the lists. Secondly, there are a number of successful restoration examples of both individual objects and entire cities in Ukraine and abroad: Rotterdam (Netherlands), Warsaw and Gdansk (Poland), Berlin (Germany) and others. Ukrainian and foreign experts have already begun collecting information and working on projects for the restoration of cities in Ukraine. The Ukrainian public organization "Urban reforms" has launched a project to collect up-to-date information about the experience of restoring cities that suffered during wars. A joint group of practicing Ukrainian architects, led by the British office of Norman Foster and Partners, is currently working on the draft general plan of Kharkiv, but there is a danger that such work will not include the interests of the city's monuments or, even worse, will simply "bypass" them. The architectural research community of Ukraine, as well as international organizations, should state their position regarding the fate of the affected architectural monuments and come together to come up with the best strategy for their protection and restoration. Taking into account the fact that in the course of any reconstruction there is a modernization of objects, which is already very expensive, it is logical to consider the possibility of restoring the original appearance of some objects.

In the context of the return of the Freedom Square ensemble to its historical authenticity, the problem of identity is exacerbated by the new five-star hotel "Kharkiv Palace" (2012, architect S. Babushkin), built on a site between the former House of Cooperation and the former hotel "International". In the architecture of the hotel, which

was built in connection with the holding of the European Football Championship, in Kharkiv in 2012, a pompous monumentalism oddly combines with attempts at Deconstructivism. The building was fairly removed from the square so as not to spoil the integrity of the complex but, even so, showed the problem of introducing a new object into the unique historical environment. A separate problem is a large mass of greenery, planted on the circular part of the square by 1963, simultaneously with the erection of a monument to Lenin. Now the monument is demolished according to the law on decommunization, and the square has finally become open, transparent and spacious again, as it was intended when it was founded. In the course of recent reconstruction, a Splash pad was laid in the center of the round part of the square, which made this place a point of attraction for citizens, especially during the warm season.

After the Second World War, many interesting examples of early modernist architecture were lost due to the lack of a mechanism for the preservation and conservation of monuments and because the architecture of this period has not yet been recognized as heritage. It is very important now, again in a war-afterwar period, that these processes should be established so that architectural heritage has a chance to exist. The Modernist Ensemble of Freedom (Svoboda) Square, with the central building of Derzhprom - a symbol of industrial Ukraine of the 20th century, both for residents of the country and abroad, as well as the square itself, including the destroyed RSA building - the closing part of the largest urban development of early modernist architecture - should be protected as one of the most important aspects of world heritage.

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In October 2023, Oleksandr joined the Ukrainian army, deciding to defend what is dear to him on the front lines. On December 11, 2023, Oleksandr was declared missing. Come back alive.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 All information about these monuments is publicly available: Historical and architectural basic plan of Kharkiv city. Designation of the inter-historical area. (2018) UKRNDIPROEKTRESTAVRATSIYA, Kyiv.
- 2 Jacob Steinberg's objects were decades ahead of their time. The mentioned monuments and other Kharkiv objects of the Ukrainian architect are considered in more detail in another article by Rusanova M. and Maimeskul O. "Innovative concepts in the Kharkiv projects of J. Steinberg of the capital period." In the article, the authors determine the significance of projects unique for their time and their influence on the development of style.

# PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF UKRAINIAN MODERNISM

## Workers' Clubs

Olha Deriabina, Marina Pominchuk, Olena Konoplova

**ABSTRACT:** Among the avant-garde monuments preserved in Kharkiv and creating its unique architectural character, the buildings of workers' clubs occupy a special place. The construction of buildings with such a function began in Kharkiv at the beginning of the 20th century, but after the October Revolution, workers' clubs became almost the main symbol of the era, because they symbolized the desire for a new life and the creation of a new person. In the works of avant-garde architects, the club became a favorite design theme. During the architectural competitions of the early and mid-1920s, a typology of club buildings was compiled and original compositional and artistic solutions formed, which reflected a creative discussion about the development of Ukrainian architecture: the struggle against the revival of baroque trends ended with the victory of a new direction — Modernism. The architecture of Kharkiv workers' clubs in the 1920s and 1930s reflects the development trends of Ukrainian modernism, but it has its own characteristics related to both regional features and the individuality of the masters who took part in their design. Kharkiv's clubs reflect the diversity of views of, and approaches to, form-giving by architects with different views and experience, whose buildings constitute a unique architectural heritage. The purpose of this study is to identify the characteristic features of Kharkiv workers' clubs and determine their place in the general picture of Ukrainian modern architecture for the further development of a program for their preservation. The research uses the methods of historical-architectural, functional-structural and stylistic analysis, which includes traditional general scientific approaches. The material collected, analyzed and systematized in this article can be used for further scientific research in the field of the development of historic architecture, for the implementation of project proposals for the restoration and conservation of individual monuments, and in education.

**KEY WORDS:** Ukrainian modernism, public buildings, avant-garde architecture, Kharkiv workers' clubs.

**INTRODUCTION:** The architecture of Ukrainian modernism developed in line with global changes in architectural design. The rejection of the aesthetic norms of the past, the desire to change the attitude towards space, form and construction clearly reflected in the architecture of public buildings, in particular, workers' clubs. A significant part of the heritage formed by buildings of this type is located in Kharkiv, which was the capital of Ukraine at that time (1919–1934s).

The architectural features of these monuments (the vast majority of which were granted monument status only in the mid-1990s.) and their contribution to the development of avant-garde architecture are still not sufficiently

researched. This article is devoted to the addition of existing data and their further systematization at a new level.

Questions related to the new attitude to architectural shape became the subject of study as early as the 1920s. Gan (1922), Ginzburg (1924), Golosov (1933), and Leonidov (1930) worked on the development of the theoretical principles of Constructivism. The main theorists of the Rationalists were Ladovskyi (1926), Dokuchaev, Krynskyi, Melnikov, Gegello, Turkus, and Lamtsov (middle of 1920–1930s).

The research of Aleksandrov (1971), Astafieva-Dlugach & Volchok (1989), Lavrentiev (2010), Khazanova (2000), Khan-Magomedov (1966, 1967, 2001), and the stages

of formation of avant-garde architecture, its artistic features, development and influence on further architectural practice are considered.

The works of Bouryak & Kreizer (2000), Bouryak et al., (2009), Cherkasova (2005), Lagutin (1953), Milashevska (1970), Ryabushyn & Shishkina (1984) and Rychkov (2008) are dedicated to the three-dimensional form, structure and artistic solutions of buildings and structures of this period.

Among the foreign researchers of avant-garde Cohen et al., (2011), whose research is mainly devoted to the problems of preserving the architectural and theoretical heritage of modern architecture.

The purpose of this article is to present the contribution of the architecture of public buildings, in particular workers' clubs, to Ukrainian modernism. The peculiarities of this process and the significance of the creative work of Kharkiv architects in the general context of avant-garde architecture will be explained.

The research uses the methods of historical-architectural, functional-structural and stylistic analysis, which includes traditional general scientific approaches. A comparative analysis of materials obtained from archival and literature sources will be held, together with a morphological analysis of objects using the grapho-analytical method. A historical approach is used in the study of the formation of avant-garde architecture and its role in the development of twentieth-century architecture. A study of the heritage of the period under consideration will be carried out, as well as the systematization of data on various concepts of avant-garde architecture. On-site surveys and photo-fixation of preserved objects of avant-garde architecture in Kharkiv were done.

Revolutionary transformations and the policy of the national revival in Ukraine created the conditions for a turbulent artistic and architectural life in the 1920s. A whole constellation of young and talented Ukrainian artists and architects affirmed new social ideals with their creativity (Khan-Magomedov, 2001; Konoplyova & Deriabina, 2019).

All types of fine arts developed, represented by such personalities as V. Yermilov, M. Boychuk, A. Petrytskyi, V. Palmov, D. Burluk, O. Bogomazov, B. Kosarev, and others (Ginzburg, 1924). The works of those years showed a synthesis of the national and a revolutionary approach. Artists participated in the development and design of tribunes, kiosks, billboards, posters, books and packaging (Sbitneva, 2003).

The creative discussion about the ways of development of the architecture of Ukraine, which unfolded in the early 1920s, and during which there was a struggle against the revival of baroque tendencies, ended with the victory

of a new direction, to which a number of experienced architects, who previously focused on the development of traditions or search for a "national style," ascribed (Yasievich, 1988). However, the nature of this struggle also depended on the specific conditions or the various cultural centers of the republic. The traditionalists had the strongest positions in Kyiv. Odesa experienced a violent fascination with left-wing art already in the first half of the 1920s. In Kharkiv, where large-scale construction took place in the 1920s, the influence of the architectural avant-garde was already evident in the mid-1920s.

Until the end of the 1920s, there were two competing organizations in Ukraine that united avant-garde architects. The Society of Modern Architects of Ukraine (SMAU 1928–1932s) and the All-Ukrainian Society of Proletarian Architects (AUSPA the mid 1920–1930s). SMAU fought for the revival of national features in architecture, and AUSPA — for modern architecture, the International Style.

Three main stylistic directions can be distinguished in the architecture of Kharkiv of this period. The first one is characterized by the use of the forms and techniques of folk timber architecture and Ukrainian Baroque, with typical forms of roofs, windows and timber carvings for folk dwellings. The second direction is characterized by the use of forms of Classicism. The third is the architectural avant-garde, the ideas of which were promoted mainly by creative youth (Konoplyova & Deriabina, 2020). This direction is characterized by rational construction and planning solutions with the use of the newest construction materials. Another group of architects formed the "Business Club", whose head was O. Linetskyi. Considering their main concern — holding exhibitions, organizing contests, etc. — this group did not participate in ideological disputes and discussions. Thus, despite differences in theoretical views, all Kharkiv architects to one degree or another were involved in the new architecture. This also applies to representatives of the "old school" (O. Linetskiy, O. Molokin) and academics (O. Beketov).

In practice, the manifestos and principles of the avant-garde were mainly implemented in industrial architecture, residential constructions, and in the architecture of workers' clubs (Lahutin, 1953).

The brief period of avant-garde architecture in Kharkiv is represented more than in other large cities of Ukraine, which was facilitated by the status of the capital city. In the late 1920s – early 1930s, the construction of public buildings based on the projects of supporters of innovative currents gained a large. Workers' clubs represent a significant part of this heritage (Rychkov, 2008).

An event in the architectural life of the city is the construction of workers' clubs and palaces of culture. The appearance in Kharkiv of buildings specially designed

for meeting and club events dates back to the first third of the 19th century. Until the moment when Kharkiv was declared the capital of Ukraine, the House of the Nobles' Assembly, the Commercial Club, the Officers' Assembly, the Assembly of Ensigns, etc. functioned in it. By the beginning of the 20th century, they were gradually replaced by clubs based on interests.

The People's House and the Workers' House are the prototypes of numerous workers' clubs. The People's House building was built in 1900–1902 in the neo-Renaissance style according to the project of O. Vincent under the direction of I. Zagoskin. The People's House was meant to house cultural and educational activities, whereas the Worker's House, built in 1903–1909 according to the project of the architect I. Zahoskin, was one of the centers of the revolutionary struggle of the Kharkiv proletariat.

After the October Revolution, about 15 new clubs were opened in Kharkiv, which carried out active cultural, educational and propaganda work. The clubs used different buildings, cooperating, mostly on a trade union basis, gathering workers from several enterprises of similar specialties (Cohen et al., 2011).

At the end of the 1920s, the construction of special buildings intended for club work also began in Kharkiv. At that time, the most common type of club was a "two-part club" with a separation of the show-part and club parts, which could have different architectural solutions.

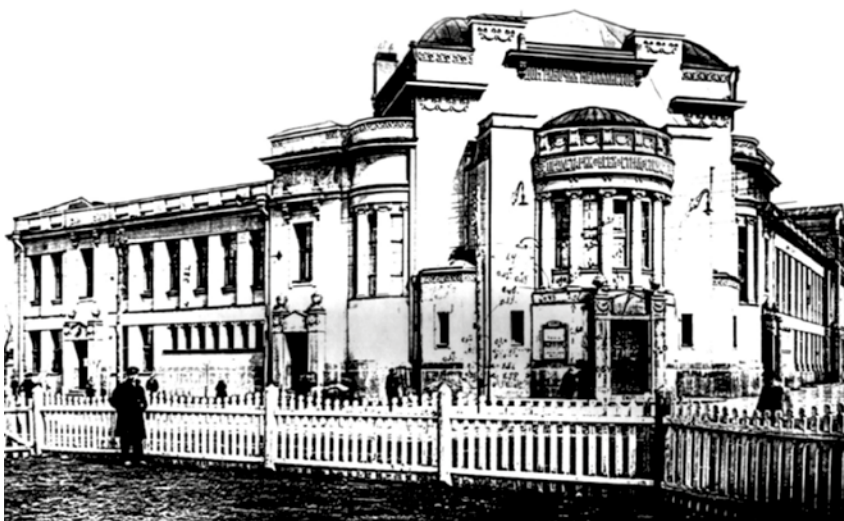
Modernist ideas in Kharkiv architecture had their own characteristics. The search for new approaches to form fascinated Kharkiv architects, but it was not as radical as in Moscow and Leningrad. The interpretation of the general programmatic attitudes of Kharkiv avant-garde architectural theorists formed the basis of original artistic and compositional decisions of the city's workers' clubs (Bouryak et al., 2009).

A number of reasons influenced the degree of "avant-garde" architectural solutions to Kharkiv clubs. Architects like O. Beketov, O. Linetskiy, O. Dmitriev, P. Alyoshin, and O. Molokin, before starting work on the projects of the Kharkiv clubs, were already established masters, whereas Ya. Steinberg, I. Malozyomov, I. Milinis, M. Lutskiy, V. Pushkarev, and V. Trotsenko were just starting their architectural activity. Young masters more easily accepted innovations in architecture, since they had no experience of working in other styles, and the older generation more often used their own vocabulary of forms and techniques.

Another important factor that influenced the nature of artistic decisions was that many architects who worked in Kharkiv were educated in other cities: O. Beketov, O. Dmitriev, P. Alyoshin, and O. Molokin, studied in St. Petersburg; I. Milinis, I. Malozyomov, and Ya. Shteinberg — in Kyiv; M. Lutskiy, V. Pushkarev and V. Trotsenko — in Kharkiv. The environment in which they were formed as architects was reflected in the stylistic characteristics of their work (Deryabina, 2013).

O. Beketov was an eclectic and used artistic techniques of various styles in his works. He was skeptical about Constructivist architecture. However, the building of the Electromechanical Faculty of KhPI characterizes his efforts in the field of avant-garde architecture. The competitive design of the State Industry Building (1925) was an attempt to create a building in a new aesthetic, made of new materials, based on academic composition techniques.

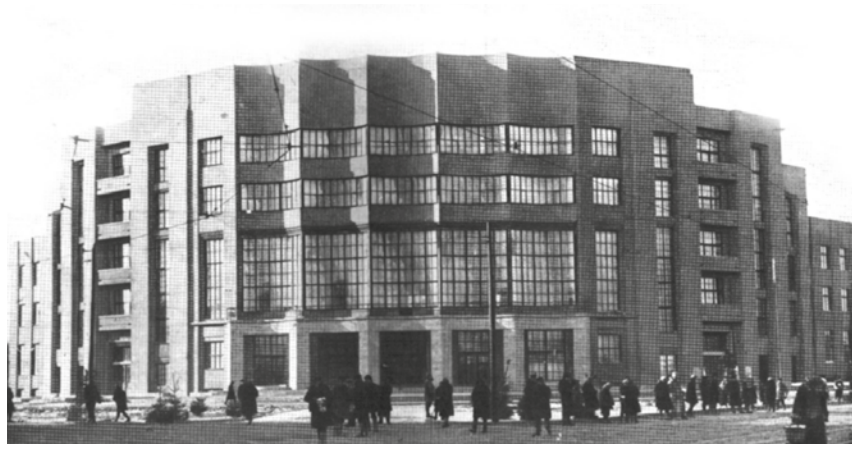
Analysis of the creative heritage of O. Beketov, in his numerous Kharkiv buildings, allows us to trace the origins of the author's attachment to certain compositional schemes and details. The connection with Classical and Baroque ensembles of St. Petersburg is undeniable. For all of his life, Beketov studied and admired the St Petersburg



01 The Central Club "Metalist", 1923, architect O. Beketov. © Kharkiv City Archive.



02 The Communication workers' club, 1927, architect O. Molokin.  
© Kharkiv City Archive.



03 Railway Workers Palace of Culture in Kharkiv, 1928–1932,  
architect O. Dmitriev.  
© Kharkiv City Archive.



architecture. Many compositional techniques and details of this architecture were transferred to the architecture of Kharkiv and creatively reinterpreted by the master.

All these features were reflected in the architecture of the Central Club "Metalist" (the former Workhouse), the reconstruction of which Beketov began in 1923 with the participation of architect M. Zelenin. At that moment, Beketov could not rely on any examples of avant-garde solutions for club buildings, but he was certainly familiar with the program statements of both Constructivists and Rationalists. Therefore, he set the main task of creating the image of a "palace for workers". Keeping Zagoskin's idea as much as possible, the architect gave the club monumentality, using the artistic techniques of the previously erected building of the Kharkiv Medical Society in the design of its facades [FIGURE 01].

In 1927, the construction of the Communications Workers' Club began. The building was allocated a site in the center of the city, which determined its solution in the spirit of new architecture. Architect O. Molokin created an asymmetrical building composition that corresponded to the size and configuration of the site. The size and massing of the auditorium section of the building was emphasized by the vertical glazing between simplified and stylized

columns contrasted with the other section of the façade which grouped vertically proportioned windows in horizontal bands tied together with a projecting balcony which had a metal balustrade. The simplified Classical Order elements on the facade acted as a connecting link with the historical environment and also testified to the master's classical education. The vertical stairs, the nature of the balustrades on the balconies indicate that the author was well acquainted with the works of the leaders of avant-garde architecture [FIGURE 02].

O. Dmitriev in his work on the project of the Palace of Culture of Railway workers also used the motifs of his earlier work — the Palace of Culture of Metallurgists in Donetsk. In the planning decision of the building, a connection with the clubs of K. Melnikov (Rusakov Club, Porcelain Factory Club and Kauchuk Club). In addition, there is information that Dmitriev participated in the development of the project of the House of Culture of the Moscow-Narva District of Leningrad (co-authors O. Gegello, D. Krychevskiy, 1927), which used similar methods of composition formation. In general, the building of the railway workers' club gravitates towards the concept of Rationalists — a "sculptural" volume that ensures the development of the space inside [FIGURE 03].



04 The "Kharchosmak" club, 1927, architect O. Linetskiy. © Kharkiv City Archive.



05 The buildings of dining clubs in the "New Kharkiv" social city, 1929–1933, architect P. Alyoshin and others. © Kharkiv City Archive.

The author of the reconstruction of the Noble Assembly O. Linetskiy, before the revolution worked in the neoclassical style. His first post-revolutionary works also gravitate towards this style: the building of the Commodity Exchange (1925) and the third model polyclinic for workers (1927). However, the project of the "Kharchosmak" club already utilizes other forms. Obviously, the composition of the building was influenced by the new function of this object. However, the desire to create monumental forms characteristic of Linetskiy was also reflected in this project. The building contains both elements typical of Constructivists (contrast of the verticals of the cylindrical volumes of the stairs to the elongated parallelepiped of the building itself) and Rationalists (integrity of the composition) [FIGURE 04].

In the buildings of dining clubs designed by P. Alyoshin (with the participation of architects O. Aly, O. Tarusov) in the social city "New Kharkiv", one can find the most features that correspond to the concept of form formation

of Constructivists: "striped" glazing, a house on supports, the juxtaposition of a cylinder and a parallelepiped. The architect used his favorite method of combining red brick and white reinforced concrete elements, which emphasizes national features in the new architecture (an analogy with a towel) [FIGURE 05].

The most striking work of avant-garde architecture among club buildings in Kharkiv is the builders' club of architects Ya. Shteinberg, I. Milinis and I. Malozyomov, 1927–1929. The pavilion scheme promoted by the Constructivists was rethought with originality in the building: the main rooms of the club are grouped around an inner courtyard, on each side of which there are different functions. The entrance leads to the courtyard, which serves as a distribution lobby. The composition includes favorite techniques of Constructivists: the stair cylinder is contrasted with the horizontality of the main facade, which resembles a transition between buildings. Characteristic

for Constructivists, there are also details of this building: round windows, “tiled” glazing, tubular railings on corner balconies [FIGURE 06].

Of great interest for study and restoration is the Rope Club in New Bavaria, built according to the design by M. Lutskiy in 1932. The club building underwent post-war reconstruction, but it still features elements characteristic of Constructivist architecture: the powerful cylinder of the entrance group, raised on pillars, the cylinders of the stairs on the side and courtyard facades, round windows, “tiled” glazing and a characteristic juxtaposition brick wall elements from reinforced concrete [FIGURE 07].

In 1931, on the site of the People’s House by architect V.I. Pushkariv, the construction of the Chervonozavodsky Theater began (later — the KHEMZ plant Palace of Culture). During construction, the project was significantly changed (arch. V.K. Trotsenko). The need to place a fully-fledged theater hall with the stage fly tower determined the grandiose scale of this building. The composition is built on a contrasting juxtaposition of volumes of different scales, vertical and horizontal glazing, and a trumpet shape of the plan. The building Constructivist and Rationalist architectural features [FIGURE 08], (Deryabina, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

Due to the fact that the design (or reconstruction) of club buildings took place under different initial conditions (task, design year, urban planning situation), their architectural design was influenced by the presence of prototypes, as well as the individual handwriting of the master, which was formed on the basis of the leading concepts of avant-garde masters (Deryabina & Pominchuk, 2020). The design method also influenced the final result of form creation: stylization or construction — two diametrically opposed approaches were often intertwined in the process of finding a form, which reflected both general trends in avant-garde architecture, and the master’s use of his own palette of artistic and compositional tools.



06 The Builders’ club, 1927–1929, architects Ya. Steinberg, I. Milinis, I. Malozyomov. © Khan-Magomedov S.O. Architecture of the Soviet avant-garde: In 2 books. — M.: Stroyizdat, 1996. — Book. 1: Formation problems. Masters and movements, P. 593.



07 The Rope Club in New Bavaria, 1932, architect M. Lutskiy. © Kharkiv City Archive.

As a result of the study, it was established that, in the architecture of the Kharkiv clubs, the principles of form formation of the Constructivists were intertwined with those of the Rationalists. One of the important factors that influenced the originality of the artistic and compositional solutions of the Kharkiv clubs was the individual interpretation of the general program settings in the work of individual architects. The creative path and design signature of every avant-garde architect as well as their previously developed methods of organizing the artistic form, turned out to be organically included in the new solutions.



08 The Chervonozavodsky Theater (later — the KHEMZ plant Palace of Culture). 1931–1938, architects V. Trotsenko, V. Pushkarev. © Kharkiv City Archive.

The material collected, analyzed and systematized in this study can be used for further scientific research in the field of the development of the historical architectural process, for the implementation of project proposals for the restoration and conservation of individual monuments, as well as used in the educational process of for architectural students.

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International competition for the State Ukrainian Theatre  
Mass Musical Stage: project for the interior of the auditorium.  
Architects Kravetz, S. M. & Gerasimov, V.A., Kharkiv,  
Ukraine. Prize VII, 1930. © L'Architecture Russe en U.R.S.S.  
Troisième série. Extrait de "l'Architecture Vivante", III, p. 33.

# THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION?

## The Palace of Culture of the Railway Workers in Kharkiv

Błażej Ciarkowski, Maciej Miarczyński

**ABSTRACT:** The future reconstruction of Ukrainian cities from wartime devastation will require an extensive discussion on strategies and concepts of preservation of cultural heritage – including the heritage of the Modern Movement. It should involve not only the technical aspects but political and historical issues as well. The history of the Palace of Culture of the Railway Workers in Kharkiv (architect Alexander I. Dmitirev, 1927-1932) provokes a number of questions on the essence of Ukrainian pre-war Modernism and Constructivism, the idea of the Sovietisation of the theater against the Great Theatre Reform movement or the role of Workers' Clubs and Palaces as social condensers. Thus, its analysis cannot be limited to the form and content of the edifice itself, but should be perceived in the broader context of similar projects (for example the Kharkiv Opera House) and views on architecture in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Palace of Culture in Kharkiv can be considered as an example of "architecture in transition" where evolving trends in art as well as a dynamic socio-political situation left their marks and created a multi-layered palimpsest. Dmitriev's design included the Constructivist spirit as well as conservative monumentality. It seems to become a legacy of a revolution (in architecture, theater and society) which has never been really completed.

**KEYWORDS:** Constructivism, palace of culture, modernism in architecture, Kharkiv

**INTRODUCTION:** In times of war, the Muses fall silent. The buildings fall down. On the official UNESCO website the list of damaged cultural sites in Ukraine verified by the Organization consisted of 137 (as of May 23rd) and still counting.<sup>1</sup> The Orthodox churches and World War II Memorials, Baroque palaces and Art Nouveau department stores share a common fate as Russian artillery turned them into rubble. Among numerous assets, one can easily indicate important examples of Modernist and Constructivist architecture with the former Palace of Culture of the Railway Workers in Kharkiv at the forefront.

The analysis of the history of one of the finest examples of Ukrainian modernism and its social, political and cultural background reveals that its values do not only lie in the exceptional quality of architecture itself, but its history and the role of "lieu de memoire" as well (Nora, 1989). It also provokes many questions on architectural heritage identity and its future fate.

### THE CONSTRUCTIVIST CAPITAL OF UKRAINE

The popular term "Soviet legacy" "prevents us from seeing the phenomenon's breadth and contradictions", wrote

Jewhenija Hubkina (Hubkina, 2017). In fact the Soviet era was not homogeneous and different periods pursued different goals and ideologies. The early period, before the proclamation of "socialism in one country" doctrine, cannot (and should not) be equated to Stalin's era – neither in terms of politics, nor culture. At the same time, one can easily indicate several ideas which withstood the Great Terror, purges and political torments. Growing centralization of the Soviet state did not eliminate completely the decentralization concepts of Mikhail Bakunin or Peter Kropotkin, it just give them different forms. Within the system based on central planning, there was a space for local centers' development. Once peripheral towns changed their status – new factories being constructed and increasing number of inhabitants entailed development of public services such as schools, cinemas, theaters, workers' clubs and palaces of culture.

Kharkiv, proclaimed the capital of Ukraine in 1917 and named "Kharkiv City" by those who wanted to compare it to London (Cohen, 2021, 245) was apparently the embodiment of Kropotkin's dream of factories among the fields (Kropotkin, 1901, 183). The father of anarchism



01 Alexander Ivanovich Dmitriev, The Palace of Culture of Railway Workers, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 1927-1932. Front façade. © Błażej Ciarkowski, 2017.

would have been enchanted watching enormous KhTP tractor factories, the linear city of New Kharkiv (team led by architect Pavel Alyoshyn, 1929-1931), monumental complex of Derzhprom (architects Sergei Serafimov, Samuel Kravets and Mark Felger, 1925-1928). The Constructivist architecture was a manifestation of progress and, at the same time, a catalyst of change as avant-garde designers contributed to the modernization project of building the communist state. The so called "Red Modernism" built the identity of the Capital and is still abundant in the cityscape today (Chechyk, Mudrak and Pavlova, 2016).

Alexander Bouryak and Maria Rusanova warn against being hasty in generalizing and classifying Ukrainian modernism and early Modernism as Constructivism, as only a few assets in Kharkiv, designed by the Moshe Ginsburg's group, can be described as "pure constructivist" (Bouryak and Rusanova, 2019, 72). The Palace of Culture of Railway Workers in Kharkiv [FIGURE 01], designed by Alexander Ivanovich Dmitriev and built between 1927 and 1932, can be considered as a case study of the architecture in transition and hence the monument of its volatile times.

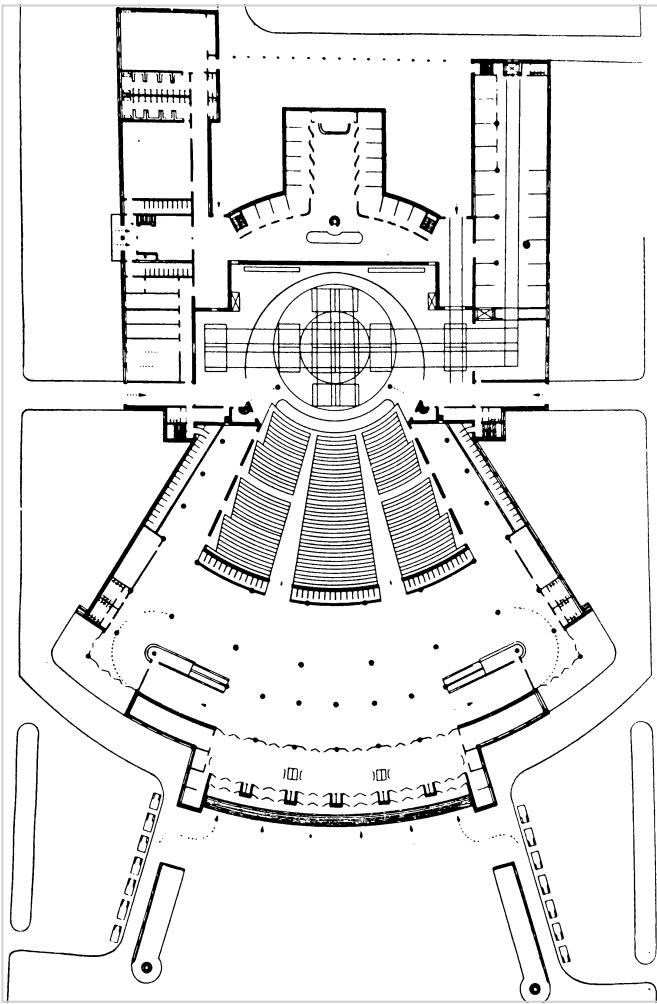
### THE CLUBS, THE PALACES AND THE THEATERS

The idea of workers' club concerned as a social condenser emerged from Constructivist architects in mid-1920s (Bokov, 2017). It was supposed to become a new type of architectural space for the new type of society – collective

and classless. A space which would overcome an alienation and privation and replace them with equality and empathy. A shrine for secular rituals with its own liturgy and scenography (Murawski and Rendell, 2017).

The houses of culture, the palaces of culture or the clubs associated with specific enterprises offered educational and cultural programs, fulfilling the task of "culturalization of the masses". The most recognized, such as Rusakovs Workers Club (architect Konstantin Melnikov, 1927-1928) or Gorbunov Palace of Culture (architect Yakov Abramovich Kornfeld, 1929-1938) became icons of modern architecture (Khan-Magomedov, 1975, 105). The political and social importance of clubs resulted in codification of general "guidelines" concerning their design. Nikolai Luhmanov, author of the "Architecture of Clubs" book analyzed several examples of workers' clubs and Palaces of Culture describing their location, form and functional distribution (Luhmanov, 1930).

The parallels between the palaces of culture and theaters were indisputable, as the main part of each of them was a great auditorium with the proscenium and backstage, preceded by the spacious lobby and accompanied with adjoining rooms. "What is characteristic," wrote Mykola Kholostenko, "is that in every club the auditorium occupies from 50% to 80% of the entire usable area of the club and the hall is designed as a theater hall and a cinema hall" (Kholostenko, 1928). However, the clubs' auditoriums and



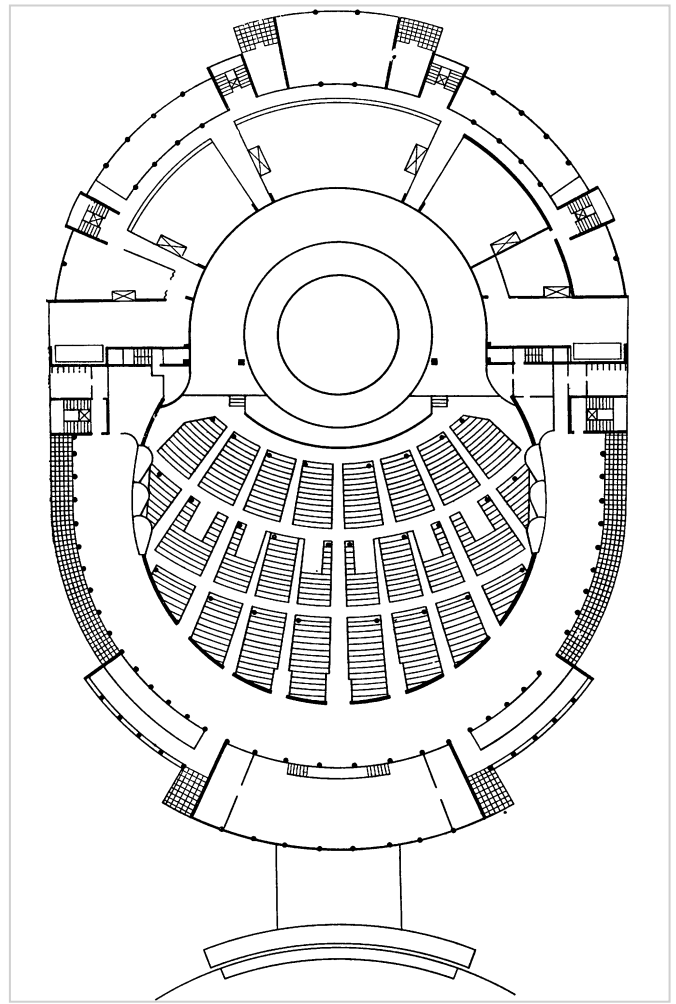
02 Walter Gropius, Theater, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 1930-1931. Theater of mass musical action - competition project. Ground floor plan. © A. Busignani, Walter Gropius, Firenze, 1972.

stages were too small for traditional theatrical productions and too large for the needs of amateur circles working within the club. The revolution in culture gave birth to the reformed "new theater" which was supposed to be closer to the mass audience. "Three or four years ago, when our theaters were insufficiently Sovietised, not connected with the demands and needs of the working audience, the clubs then assumed the tasks of the workers' theater," admitted Holostenko in 1928, who also described the arrangement of club halls similarly to theater halls as "unnecessary and harmful" (Kholostenko, 1928).

### UNREALIZED SOVIETISATION OF THE THEATER

The correlations between the archetype of the Soviet club and the archetype of the Soviet theater were not limited only to the similarities in design of the floor plan. Both of them were supposed to serve as landmarks in the urban space and social magnets which attract people and catalyze changes. Thus, the history of the Palace of Culture has to be set against the background of similar initiatives in Soviet Ukraine.

The most significant was the competition for the Theatre of Mass Musical Action announced in 1930, almost three years after the commission for the Palace. It was one of



03 Aleksander Vesnin, Leonid Vesnin, Viktor Vesnin, Theater, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 1930-1931. Theater of mass musical action - competition project. Ground floor plan. © N. V. Baranov, Architecture of the USSR, Moscow 1975.

the last high-profile international competitions organized in the Soviet Union before the shift to Socialist Realism and this status was confirmed by the number of entries – 142, comparing to only 19 entries in competition for Derzhprom in 1925. Study of the submissions reveal mass fascination in new type of theater shared among architects as most of them presented their own versions of the idea of *Totaltheater*. The original concept, developed by Erwin Piscator and Walter Gropius in 1927, was based on the use of the latest technological improvements to achieve simultaneity and unity of stage and audience. It was probably the most "constructivist" concept made by the director of Bauhaus, with multimedia projections and mobile stage platforms. [FIGURE 02] Also another architect from school in Dessau, Marcel Breuer, was inspired by *Totaltheater* presenting a concept of a wedge-shaped, steel and concrete auditorium with a curved glass façade and a stage connected directly with the space of the spectators. On the other hand, the American architect familiar with the ideas of Soviet theater (Maffei, 2018, 52), Norman Bel Geddes, submitted a project of the enormous complex including three auditoriums: indoor with 4000 seats, an open air stage of half this size and an outdoor auditorium for mass meetings with a stage for 5 000 actors and 60 000 audience members.



None of them won the first prize, as in May 1931 the jury announced the winners Alexander, Leonid and Victor Vesnin (Maffei, 2018, 112-118). [FIGURE 03]

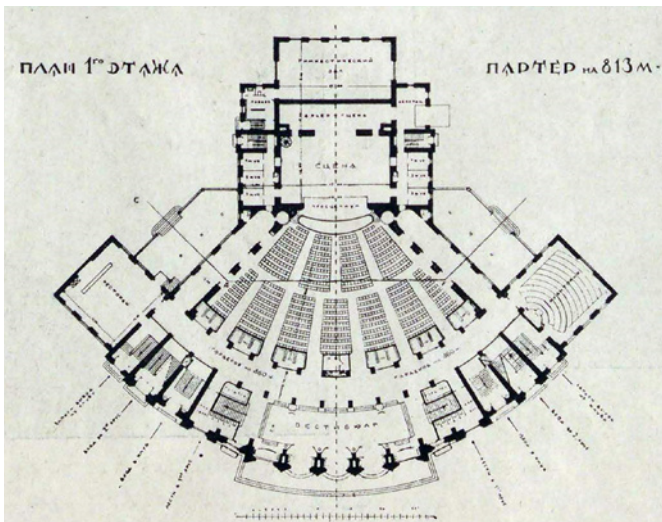
Their project never materialized and so neither did the authors' goal to create a theater which would become a catalyst of change towards the democratization of culture. The Sovietisation of theater, mentioned by Kholostenko, remained more on the conceptual level as a Constructivist dream. The reality was much more complicated and determined by the political conditions. The Clubs and Palaces of Culture were stuck between "the old" and "the new". Just like the Palace of Culture of the Railway Workers in Kharkiv.

## THE PALACE OF CULTURE

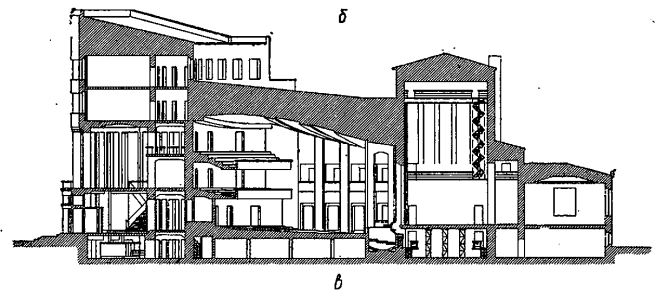
During the celebration of the 10th anniversary of Great October Revolution, Grigory Ivanovich Petrovsky the chair of the Ukrainian SSR (Soviet Socialist Republic) Central Executive Committee, laid the foundation stone of the new Palace of Culture of Railway Workers in Kharkiv. The old Russia was known for its churches, but "the new proletarian society would be defined by its clubs," he said

(Sigler, 2009, 201). The official inauguration took place five years later, in November 1932.

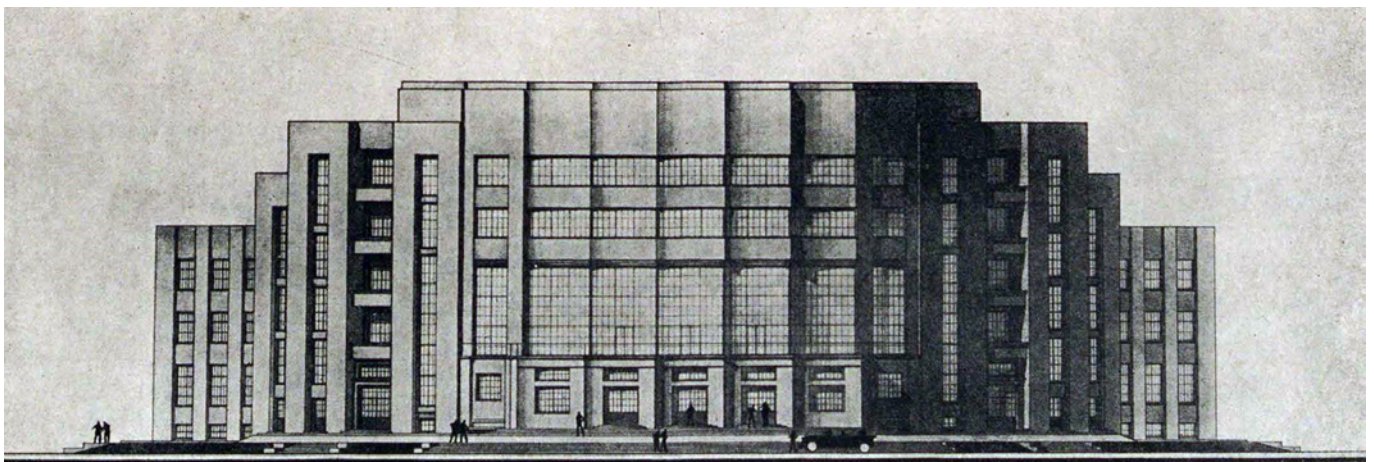
The building was raised on the corner plot of land. Its spatial composition reflected the modernist concept of architectural form as a result of internal functional program. The quarter-circular auditorium with large backstage were preceded by a large foyer and flanked by auxiliary rooms. [FIGURE 04] [FIGURE 05] The aesthetics of the edifice reflects both – the upcoming turn towards passé historicism and the origins of the author whose professional career began with projects of historicist mansions and public buildings. The composition of the facade reflects the structure of the building and is made in the form of five concave vertical surfaces which shape resembles stretched accordion bellows or fluting of a gigantic column. On both sides there were simple pylons hiding staircases. [FIGURE 06] The symmetry of the composition and the emphasized verticality created an impression of monumentality which was even stronger inside the lobby where granite surfaces provided the architectural frame for two enormous frescoes by Eugene Lansere (Yevgeny Yevgenyevich Lanceray).



04 Alexander Ivanovich Dmitriev, The Palace of Culture of Railway Workers, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 1927-1932. Ground floor plan. © Yearbook of the Society of Architects-Artists, Vol. 12, Leningrad: 1927.



05 Alexander Ivanovich Dmitriev, The Palace of Culture of Railway Workers, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 1927-1932. Section. © Yearbook of the Society of Architects-Artists, Vol. 12, Leningrad: 1927.



06 Alexander Ivanovich Dmitriev, The Palace of Culture of Railway Workers, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 1927-1932. Front façade. © Yearbook of the Society of Architects-Artists, Vol. 12, Leningrad: 1927.

Analysis of the auditorium itself reveals several inconsistencies in the design. Dmitriev reconstructed the traditional form of ancient Greek theater with fan-shaped plan, similar to works of Richard Wagner and Otto Brückwald in Bayreuth and consistent with the Great Theatre Reform movement. By recalling the antique, the architect tried to create the democratic space (Sennet, 1998, 275), where audience and actors become unity experiencing the spectacle (Leśniakowska, 2012). The tendencies to democratize the theatrical space were vivid among modernist architects achieved by reduction of distance or even (like Gropius) rejecting the traditional proscenium as an independent part of the theater, framed space based on the central perspective scheme – a reference to the simplest way of spatial perception with one focal point. But comparison with Gropius', Geddes' or Breuer' concepts, indicates that Dmitriev's design is apparently not "really avant-garde". The proscenium arch is an integral part of the auditorium whose size appears to be too narrow to provide the audience with a seamless contact between the stage and the actors. The auditorium of the Palace is apparently too flattened to provide an optimum view for all the spectators. To some extent, these problems refer to the balconies as well. The first, rather superficial impression leads to the conclusion that Dmitriev failed the attempt to create a modernist, open theater within the Palace of Culture in Kharkiv. However, it can be interpreted not as a result of the architect's incapability but his intuition of upcoming changes.

### BETWEEN LENINGRAD, KHARKIV AND DONETSK

As mentioned above, Dmitriev's early projects were oscillating between historicism and Art Nouveau. His career suggests that he was rather a skilled designer than a devoted modernist and the Constructivist aesthetics was probably another architectural costume he used - just like Art Nouveau or neo-Baroque details that he used to implement in his projects in 1900s and 1910s. Prior to the Revolution he was already a recognized author of several buildings including Peter I School or the residential building for the employees of the New Admiralty in St Petersburg.

Nevertheless, one cannot deny Dmitriev deep architectural awareness and great timing. Years before the Stalinist crusade against modernist aesthetics, he designed an edifice which was already "in transition" between Constructivism and Socialist Realism. This moderate strategy is clearly visible when one compares "Zheleznodorozhnik" to concepts of the Kharkiv Opera House from 1931 and other public buildings designed in the late 1920s and 1930s. The spatial distribution of the Palace of Culture of Railway Workers is far more



07 Alexander Ivanovich Dmitriev, Palace of Culture of Metallurgists, Donetsk, Ukraine, 1929. © Wikimedia Commons, public domain. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1930.\\_%D0%97%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5\\_%D0%BA%D0%BB%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%B0\\_%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8\\_%D0%9B%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B0.jpg?uselang=ru](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1930._%D0%97%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5_%D0%BA%D0%BB%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%B0_%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8_%D0%9B%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B0.jpg?uselang=ru)

traditional than the *Totaltheater* of Gropius or Geddes who put emphasis on merging of audience and actors. So is the architectural envelope which, contrary to the work of Alfred Kastner or the Vesnin brothers, rejected the machine-alike Constructivist aesthetics.

Apparently, it did not differ from other similar Dmitriev's projects; the projects of the theater-club in Kramatorsk (1930) or the Palace of Culture of Metallurgists in Donetsk (then Stalino) (1929). [FIGURE 07] Both of them had a similar composition with a dominant volume of the auditorium hidden behind the convex facade. The latter had outer walls clad with white ceramic tiles and slender pilaster strips which resemble the modernist architecture of the 1930s and its search for inspirations in classical monumentalism. The buildings were praised as a "pride of the region". Authors emphasized both – the form and the complexity of functional program with "a decent auditorium, a sufficiently equipped stage, and the service accommodations for it" (Dmitriev, 1929).

A few years earlier, in 1925, Dmitriev, in collaboration with David Lvovich Krichevskii and Alexander Ivanovich Gegello, won the design contest for a Palace of Culture in Leningrad (now St Petersburg). [FIGURE 08] The building was completed in 1927 and named after Alexei Maximovich Gorky six year later. The symmetrical convex front facade was glazed, divided with faceted pilasters and flanked with massive avant corps with accentuated staircases. The foyer set along the facade preceded the fan-shaped auditorium for 2 200 people. The functional distribution and a the composition of the specific parts of the building, does not differ significantly from Dmitriev's later works - clubs and palaces of culture.

Apparently, the A. M. Gorky Palace of Culture can be considered as a prototype for future projects as it contains most of the important features of architects' concept of monumental modernism – symmetrical convex facade with regular rhythm of vertical elements, centrally placed



08 Alexander Ivanovich Dmitriev, David Lvovich Krichevskii, Alexander Ivanovich Gegello, Alexei Maximovich Gorky Palace of Culture, St Petersburg, Russia, 1925-1927. Front façade.  
 © [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gorky\\_House\\_of\\_Culture\\_SPB.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gorky_House_of_Culture_SPB.jpg).



09 Alexander Ivanovich Dmitriev, The Palace of Culture of Railway Workers, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 1927-1932. Palace of Culture foyer. © Błażej Ciarkowski, 2017.

main entrance with the portico, fan-shaped auditorium with lodges and balconies, long and narrow foyer and interior decoration based on contrast between modernist simplicity and Soviet splendor, whose reign was yet to come. [FIGURE 09]

## THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

The complicated history of “Zheleznodorozhnik” is connected to important and tragic historical events which left deep marks on the collective memory and Kharkiv cityscape (Schlogel, 2019). Designed and raised in the times of the Ukrainian cultural renaissance, it was inaugurated in 1932, just before the beginning of Holodomor. During the

World War II the Palace of Culture was partially damaged by the Nazis, who destroyed its interiors and equipment. Soon after the war, it again opened its doors for the workers of Kharkiv. In 1967 the building was adapted for the Museum of the History of the Southern Railway and, a year later, by decision of the Ministry of Culture of the Ukrainian SSR, it was awarded the title of "People's Museum".

The exceptional value of Dmitriev's work was officially appreciated in the late 1980s as the Palace of Culture was recognized as an architectural monument in 1987. In 2022 the building, which had been turned into the Central House of Science and Technology of the Southern Railway in the meantime, was listed in the State Register of National Cultural Heritage as a "Monument of architecture and town planning" with protection number 7028-Xa.<sup>2</sup>

As it is a part of cultural heritage listed in the State Register, labeling "Zheleznodorozhnik" as "dissonant heritage" seems to be inappropriate. Nevertheless, the building's history provokes multiple questions which go far beyond the aesthetics to the delicate matter of architecture's ethics. The recent crusade against monuments of the Communist regime which started in 2015 when the Law of Decommunization was proclaimed (Antonenko and Deriabina, 2020), and is known under the name "Leninopad" as numerous statues of the Soviet Leader were destroyed then. In the case of the Palace of Culture of Railway the controversies concerned monumental paintings by Lanceray. Murals representing Partisans of the Caucasus saluting the Red Army and the Meeting of Komsomol members with the peasants of Crimea, were the only monumental works of the artist preserved in Ukraine and the only examples of murals of the 1930s that remained in Kharkiv. Nevertheless, the political context of Lanceray's works provoked a heated public discussion and discouraged the authorities from giving them the status of cultural heritage.

## CONCLUSIONS

The historical issues have impact on the choice of preservation methods. Following Alexander Bouryak, who analyzed the strategies for the preservation of authenticity and integrity of the Freedom Square Complex (Swobody Square), several possible solutions can be distinguished – from restoration of original forms, through reintegration to conservation of the asset with its post-war modifications (Bouryak and Rusanova, 2020, 91). Each of them brings different meaning and highlights specific paths of interpretation. Even an act of intended destruction (like in Donesk, where the Palace of Culture designed by Dmitriev was transformed into the center for Slavic Culture) appears to be a declaration of a certain attitude to the heritage of "Red Modernism".

Dmitriev's building's importance is contained not only in its materiality but also in its history. The "Palace of Culture" is a carrier of a complicated history. Even now, when destroyed by Russian bombs, it did not lose this function. On the contrary, as a "lieu de memoire" and historical palimpsest it bears a new layer of tragic memories. Wouldn't the conservation of ruins or reconstruction be a simple manifestation of what Pierre Nora named as a "fear of a rapid and final disappearance combines with anxiety about the meaning of the present and uncertainty about the future" (Nora 1989, 13)? The future of "Zheleznodorozhnik" requires discussion and, probably, development of new preservation strategies - just like those after World War II, when deep revision of preservationist doctrines concerning restoration and reconstruction was necessary.

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# KHARKIV INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

## The Apogee of the Soviet Architectural Avant-Garde

Svitlana Smolenska

**ABSTRACT:** One of the sides of a large study dedicated to the forgotten international competition of 1930 for the Project of the State Ukrainian Theater of Mass Musical Action in Kharkiv is touched upon in this article. Its purpose is the reconstruction of the competition events, identifying the features of the process of their organization. The competition attracted a record number of foreign contestants not only from many European countries, but also from other continents (from the USA and Japan). Why did it generate such widespread interest? Which famous architects took part in it? Who evaluated the projects and according to what criteria were the awards distributed? The author of this article is looking for answers to these questions. The problems of the research are due to the fact that the originals of the competition projects have not survived, and their photocopies and preparatory sketches are scattered in the archives of many countries. Information about the competition and its contestants is scarce and is documented in different languages: Ukrainian, German, French, Russian, Japanese, English, Croatian, Swedish. Only painstaking gathering, meaningful and comparative analysis of textual and graphical information obtained during the study, allows the author to reproduce the course of the competition, to reveal its significance for the development of architecture in Ukraine and for the world Modern Movement. The article analyses the methods that ensured a high level of organization of the competition and an open, unbiased assessment of its results. The distribution of prizes and the authors of the winning projects are also listed. The Kharkiv competition took place at a crucial period for the Soviet avant-garde: 1930-1931 were the last years of its heyday, after which it was banned and persecuted for many years. That is why it is so important to collect these lost puzzles of architectural history.

**KEYWORDS:** international architectural competitions, theater buildings, modernism of the 1920s-1930s, history of Ukrainian architecture.

**INTRODUCTION:** The short but bright period of the architectural Soviet avant-garde has long been inscribed in world history. It is recognized as an integral part of the Modernist Movement of the early 20th century. The results of the well-known international competition for the Palace of Soviets in Moscow in 1931-1933 are justly considered its disastrous end. But what can be called (at least symbolically) its apogee? After all, modernism in the USSR was interrupted on the rise, during its heyday. I recently found the answer to this not an idle intriguing question in a book by the Italian researcher of the Soviet avant-garde De Feo. Although the maxim was expressed by him back in the 1960s, it became an authoritative confirmation of my own conviction, which I came to as a result of my many years of research on this little-known event under a long name

"The International Competition in Composing a Project for the State Ukrainian Theatre Mass Musical Stage with a 4000 seat capacity. Kharkov":

*"Two episodes in 1931 are extremely representative of the situation: two competitions, namely, for the state theater of Kharkov, and for the Palace of the Soviets in Moscow. The first marks the high point of modern architecture in the Soviet Union, the second marks the beginning of its decline"*

*(De Feo, 1963, p. 60).*

The list of primary sources that was compiled during the study turned out to be quite limited. Avaricious information was scattered throughout publications of various

countries in the early 1930s. But from the materials, it was clear that the competition gathered a record number of participants and became an event of truly international scale and significance. Why did it not find worthy coverage in the press and was almost forgotten for decades? Even in Kharkiv itself, where I come from, few of my fellow architects or city historians know about it. There are good reasons for that.

- 1 The theater building was not implemented.
- 2 Authentic projects submitted for the competition have not survived. They were lost forever during the period of struggle against modernism, which began almost immediately after the end of the competition and dragged on until the mid-1950s. In addition, the occupation of Kharkiv and the heavy fighting for its liberation during the WWII did not leave hope for the preservation of documentation.
- 3 The jury did not include foreign representatives who would comment on what was happening for the general architectural community abroad. And the Ukrainian professional press was not accessible to Western readers due to the language barrier, unlike European architectural and construction journals, which could be obtained in the USSR in the late 1920s-early 1930s (Smolenska, 2019, p.12).

Therefore, *the purpose of the study* was set: on the basis of the materials collected about the Kharkiv competition in 1930, to identify and show its contribution to the history of the development of world modernism and its role in the fate of the Soviet avant-garde.

The task turned out to be difficult and stretched out over years. It was necessary to collect as many projects as possible, to find out from which countries they were sent, to restore the names of the contestants, to find any documentary evidence regarding the competition and its participants.

*The aim of this article* is more local: to reconstruct the competition events, to identify the organizational features of it, to analyze their impact on the final results.

#### Methods:

- collecting documents, photographs, other illustrations and any information about the projects submitted to the Kharkiv competition in archives, magazines, websites, books, etc.;
- collection and study of biographical information about contestants from various sources;
- processing photocopies of projects in Photoshop to improve their quality;
- meaningful and comparative analysis of textual and graphic information obtained during the study, its systematization.

## MAIN PART

Although my search began in the late 2000s, my ability to access foreign sources was limited at the time. Over the past decade, interest in this topic has also appeared among other researchers. But they were also restricted by borders and language barriers. The materials they published did not add knowledge, had inaccuracies, were incomplete and only convinced me that “step by step one goes far”.

The most interesting was the recent article by Hiromitsu Umemiya in DJ (Umemiya, 2022), based on the analysis of publications from the Japanese press and shedding light on the distant Japanese trace of the Kharkiv competition. I undertake to fill in the gaps left by Umemiya in his text and table, and to answer some of his questions in this article.

The research faced a number of problems from the very beginning.

- Too many projects (144) and even more authors. For example, the group of designers from Kharkiv, which received one of the first prizes, included 13 people: architects, theater artists, designers, acoustic engineers and other specialists.
- Projects were submitted to the competition anonymously, under the mottoes without indicating the author and country, in order to avoid bias in their evaluation by the jury. Only the authors of the awarded projects were announced, the rest remained unknown.
- The motto of the project could be numbers, letters of any alphabet, mathematical formulas, words or phrases, as well as images or geometric shapes. Difficulties arose with the latter, since they were described in different ways in the texts.
- Information about the competition is fragmentary and scattered across various resources and countries, preserved in different languages: Ukrainian, Russian, German, French, English, Japanese, and so on.
- The obtained information is not always accurate, and in some cases, it is erroneous, it should be constantly verified, compared with data from other, more reliable sources.
- The quality of photocopies of competition graphics published in the press in the early 1930s was often of poor quality. In this regard, there was an acute need to look for images of the same project in different sources in order to find copies with the best parameters.

It was hoped that the preparatory drawings and sketches of projects, their photographs remained in the personal archives of the contestants from different countries. And most importantly, there was a “hook” – an album of photographs of the awarded projects, made for one of the officials of the Kharkiv city council immediately after summing up the results of the competition. It was kept in the main Kharkiv library. In addition, the magazines of those

years in Ukrainian and Russian were at hand – the most reliable primary sources, from which it was possible to extract a fairly detailed description of the course of events, a list of received and awarded projects.

The most complete foreign publication, as it seemed at first, was information and illustrations in the French *L'Architecture Vivante* (Programme du concours, 1933). However, it was found out during the research that the description of the course of the competition process in it was completely based on information from Ukrainian sources, in particular, from the articles of architect Alexander Linetsky. As it was established later, the French delegation visited Kharkiv in September 1932, more than a year after the end of the competition. Perhaps the publication about it became one of the outcomes of that trip? The resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks "On the restructuring of literary and artistic organizations" (dated April 23, 1932) had already been issued, and the results of an open competition for the Palace of Soviets in Moscow (February 28, 1932) had already been announced by that time. The start for the reorientation of Soviet architecture, its turn to the classics had already been given.

## RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COMPETITION EVENTS

In mid-1929, the Ukrainian government "recognized the need to build a 4,000-seat theater in Kharkiv on the basis of a decree of leading Kharkiv professional and public organizations" (Linetsky/Rudnik/Shestopal, 1931, p. 35). The initiative to create a gigantic theater in the then capital of Ukraine, absolutely new in its content and technical equipment, apparently came not only from the professional and public organizations of the city, to which the authors of the article refer, but an active, and probably one of the leading roles in this was played by the People's Commissar of Education of the Ukrainian SSR Mykola Skripnik. He chaired the Competition Jury Council, which worked under his chairmanship (Program, 1930). It would be extremely prestigious for the authorities if the most modern and one of the largest theaters in the world at that time were built in the capital of Soviet Ukraine.

In order to realize such an ambitious intention, it was decided to hold an international competition that would allow to attract a wide range of specialists from abroad. The most difficult type of competition was chosen: international, two-stage, mixed. Its announcement was preceded by serious preparatory work. Initially, a special commission was set up to develop a preliminary program. Then (at the 1st stage) two projects were ordered, which made it possible to clarify the details of the program, determine the volume of the future building, the relationship of its individual parts and elements, the parameters of the main

and service premises, technical requirements and other features (Linetsky et al., 1931, p. 36). Several meetings to discuss the revised version of the program were held in the three most important cultural centers of the Union: Kharkiv, Moscow and Leningrad. The best specialists directly related to theatrical art: outstanding directors, conductors, architects, artists, stage specialists, acousticians, etc. participated in these meetings. Ultimately, after making numerous amendments and changes, the commission drew up the final program.

An international competition was announced in July 1930. Its program in the form of a multi-page book was published in five languages (Ukrainian, Russian, German, English and French) with a circulation of 3,000 copies. Its distribution around the world was carried out by the Ukrainian Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

The program-book (183 pages), designed by the remarkable Kharkiv artist, sculptor, poster artist Adolf Strakhov, was in itself a work of art, an example of talented book graphics. In fact, it was a kind of message, an unambiguous allusion to the style that was expected and welcomed by the organizers and the jury. It was designed to turn away adherents of the classics and attract modernist-minded professionals capable of generating bright, new, extraordinary ideas and images.

The competition was mixed. In addition to the open competition, in which everyone could take part, 15 projects had been ordered from the leading architectural universities, organizations or associations of the USSR to involve them in the design of the Kharkiv theater.

Authoritative specialists of various profiles from many cities of the Union: architects, civil engineers, acousticians, theater directors, artists, playwrights, composers, members of the public were included in the jury (54 people). Their names were announced in the program. Here are just a few of them: architects-professors: N. Zamechek (Odessa), V. Krichevsky and V. Rykov (Kiev), S. Belyaev (Leningrad), I. Rylsky (Moscow); architects G. Yanovitsky (Society of Contemporary Architects of Ukraine, Kharkiv); F. Yalovkin (Society of Contemporary Architects, Moscow), well-known urban planner A. Eingorn (Kharkiv), civil engineers V. Ungern (Kharkiv) and prof. A. Garmash (Dnipropetrovsk), Ukrainian experimental theater directors Les Kurbas (theater "Berezil", Kharkiv) and Gnat Yura (Franko Theater, Kyiv), progressive theater designer A. Petrisky (Kharkiv), composer B. Lyatoshinsky, representatives of factories, trade union and cultural organizations, city and regional authorities, etc.

The auditorium for 4 000 seats was supposed to ensure the fusion of the actor and the audience, the stage and the audience, the audience and the street (demonstrations,



rallies and other “mass actions”), equal visibility and audibility from all places. The transformable stage was supposed to contribute to the most efficient use of the stage space and the entire hall for the most diverse forms of theatrical performances (Program, 1930).

The site for the future theater was chosen on the main city artery – Karl Liebknecht Street (Sumska str.) on the segment connecting the old city center with its new administrative ensemble of Dzerzhinsky Square (Svoboda Square). It was no coincidence that the Kharkiv competition attracted so many foreign participants. In those years, such active construction unfolded in the Ukrainian capital that the hope for the implementation of the most innovative projects was very solid. The ensemble of the new square – the largest in Europe – with its giant high-rise buildings, was in the process of its construction and served as clear evidence of that. Illustrations of its first building Derzhprom (1925-1928), a huge modern multifunctional complex, had already made the rounds of the foreign architectural press (for more on the ensemble of Svoboda Square in Kharkiv, see Smolenska, 2023).

Judging by the subsequent reviews, the detailed program contained clear and understandable requirements for all architectural, urban planning and technical aspects of the project. At the same time, it provided freedom to the participants. This was noted by the German press of those years:

*“...the authors are allowed to divert from the existing norms and rules as long as there are sufficient bases so as to secure the safety of the public and the conditions for perfect visibility and audibility”. It was one of the most important passages in the competition program. This sentence, which meant almost unrestricted freedom in the design, became decisive for the success of the competition. Rarely has an architectural competition produced such a variety of interesting and developable ideas”.*  
(Richter, 1931, p. 1562).

Six months were allotted for the development of projects. The deadline for their provision was indicated as December 25, 1930.

How many projects were submitted for the competition? There are discrepancies in the primary sources on this matter. Jury member Vasil Sedlyar pointed to 149 (Sedlyar V., 1931, p. 23), and a recognized expert on the Soviet avant-garde Selim Khan-Magomedov – 142 (Chan-Magomedov Selim O., 1983, p. 478). Architect Alexander Linetsky who was an authoritative figure in this topic – the executive secretary of the jury, who published the most complete description of the course of the

competition immediately after its completion, stated a number of 144 (Linetsky et al., 1931, p. 36). This number could be considered valid, but in the same article he gave a list of all the submitted projects under their mottos. When they were counted, it turned out that only 136 mottos were mentioned. Where did 8 more projects go? Of course, mistakes in listing so many mottoes, sometimes quite exotic ones, are inevitable.

It was also not clear from which countries the projects came and in what quantity. Only the process of painstaking searches made it possible to restore the original picture, find omissions, correct possible errors in authentic texts and confirm the total figure of 144, as well as clarify and supplement the list of projects’ mottos. The number of projects received from abroad and the countries from which they were sent were established – 99 projects from 11 countries: Austria – 3; Bulgaria – 1; Estonia – 1; France – 6; Germany – 67; Holland – 1; Hungary – 2; Italy – 5; Japan – 4; Sweden – 5; USA – 4. For comparison, only 24 projects from 7 foreign countries were presented at the already mentioned competition for the Palace of Soviets in Moscow.

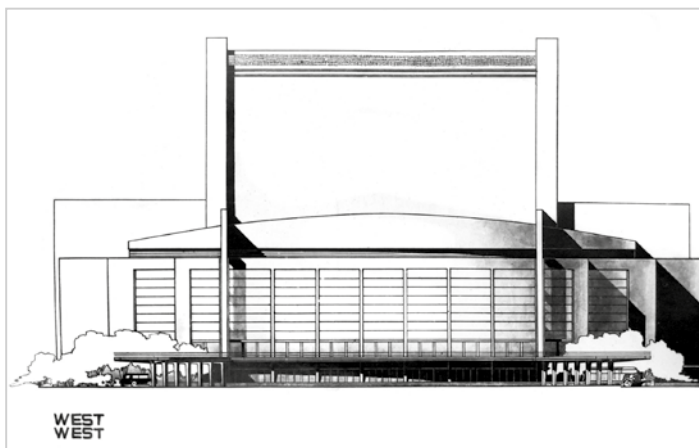
For the purposes of the study, it was important to recreate the project evaluation process in order to better understand the results of the competition. The work of the Jury took place in 2 stages due to the unexpected influx of submitted projects. It was decided to organize a special expert commission of 70 people under the leadership of 9 members of the Jury Council at the first stage. Its main task was to carefully analyze all the projects (both submitted to the open competition and invited) and distribute them into three categories depending on the quality. The first category included the best projects, which were supposed to be awarded. Projects with certain advantages, but not sufficiently developed were assigned to the second category; projects that are less successful or do not meet the requirements of the program – to the third.

It was necessary to minimize the bias of the members of the commission, to conduct an assessment in the most objective way, so that all aspects of each project were taken into account. Therefore, questionnaires, designed to systematize the material on the evaluation of projects from all points of view, were distributed to the experts. The expert commission was divided into teams, each of which included professionals from different areas: architect, director, conductor, artist, specialists in acoustics, fire prevention, stage, sanitary hygiene and technology. The final assignment of nominations to projects and the presentation of prizes was carried out by the Jury Council through open voting at the second stage. The work of the jury lasted two and a half months, during which 120 meetings were held (Linetsky et al., 1931).

The system of awarding projects turned out to be difficult, hierarchical due to the fact that the competition was "mixed", and also because of the large number of participants (information about the distribution of places and other incentives can be found in the primary sources (Linetsky et al., 1931; Sedlyar, 1931, etc.). The authors of only the 14 best projects were announced. However, the fact that their initials and surnames were published in Ukrainian in the local press became one of the problems

of the research. The names of foreign nominees, written in Cyrillic, had to be restored in their true spelling in their native language, which was done in the course of the research. Errors in the spelling of surnames/names or initials of some Ukrainian authors were also revealed.

12 prizes (in Soviet rubles) were assigned in advance for the open part of the competition. They were distributed as follows. The three first prizes were divided among three projects of equal value in the opinion of the Jury Council:



01 „Machine“. Arch. Alfred Kastner, USA, Stamford. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).

## “Machine”

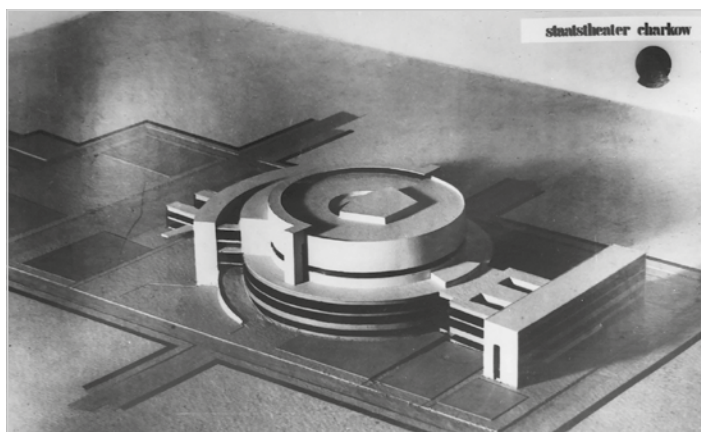
(arch. Alfred Kastner, USA, Stamford).

## 1931p.

(design team from “Ukrbudob’ednannya”: architects Yu. Afanasiev, V. Kostenko, M. Movshovich, R. Fridman, Ya. Shteinberg and artist V. Meller with the participation: Anatoliev - acoustics, sanitary engineer A. Zlatopolsky, model designers D. Ivanov and Sonichkin, constructor S. Freyfeld, artists V. Shirshov and M. Shteinberg; Ukraine, Kharkiv).



02 “1931p.” Design team from “Ukrbudob’ednannya”, Ukraine, Kharkiv. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).

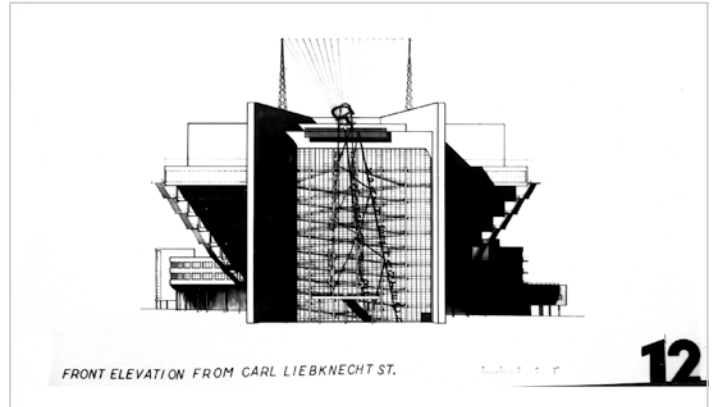


03 “Black sector in a red circle”. Arch. Zdenko Strižić in collaboration with engineer Karl Ebbecke, Germany, Berlin. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).

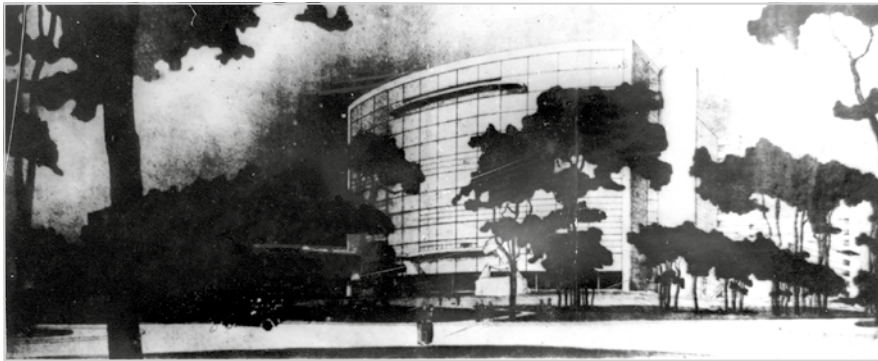
## Black sector in a red circle

(arch. Zdenko Strižić in collaboration with engineer Karl Ebbecke, Germany, Berlin).

**IV - R**  
 (arch. Renshichiro Kawakita, Japan, Tokyo).



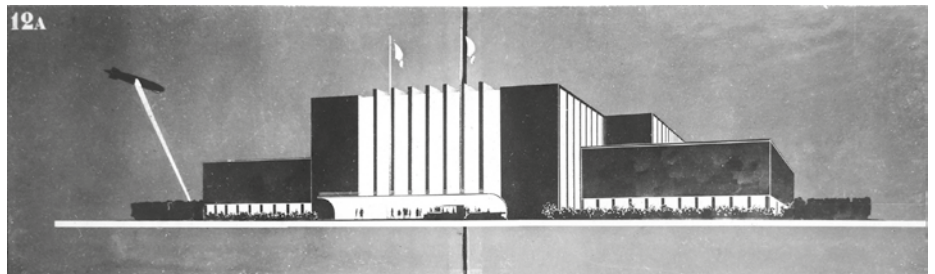
04 "R". Arch. Renshichiro Kawakita, Japan, Tokyo. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).



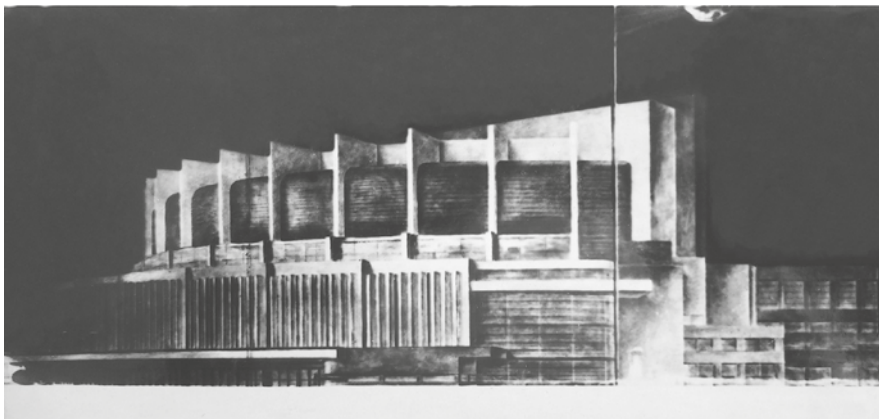
05 "12A". Arch. Victor Olenev, RSFSR, Leningrad. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).

**V - 12A**  
 (arch. Victor Olenev, RSFSR,  
 Leningrad).

**VI - OCT 1930**  
 (arch. Willy Boesiger and Oscar  
 Stonorow, Germany, Karlsruhe).

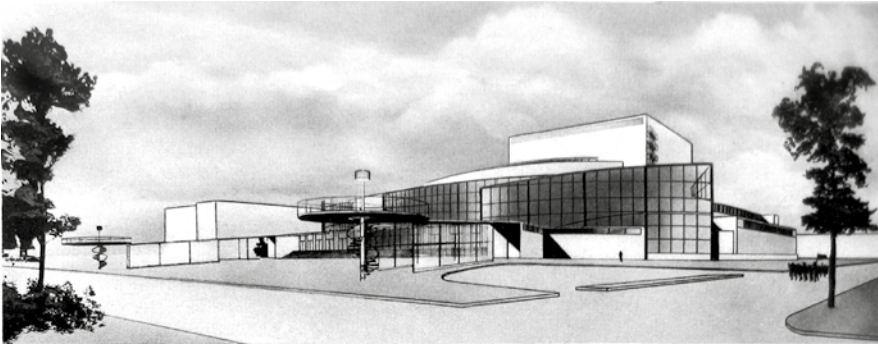


06 "OCT 1930". Arch. Willy Boesiger and Oscar Stonorow, Germany, Karlsruhe. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).



**VII - Vstrechniy /  
 Oncoming**  
 (architects Samuel Kravets and  
 V. Gerasimov; "Ukrbudob'ednannya",  
 Ukraine, Kharkiv).

07 "Vstrechniy" / "Oncoming". Architects Samuel Kravets and V. Gerasimov; "Ukrbudob'ednannya", Ukraine, Kharkiv. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).



08 "Mass Center". Arch. Walter Gropius, Germany, Berlin. © Bauwelt, 1931, 35, p.53.

## VIII – Mass Center

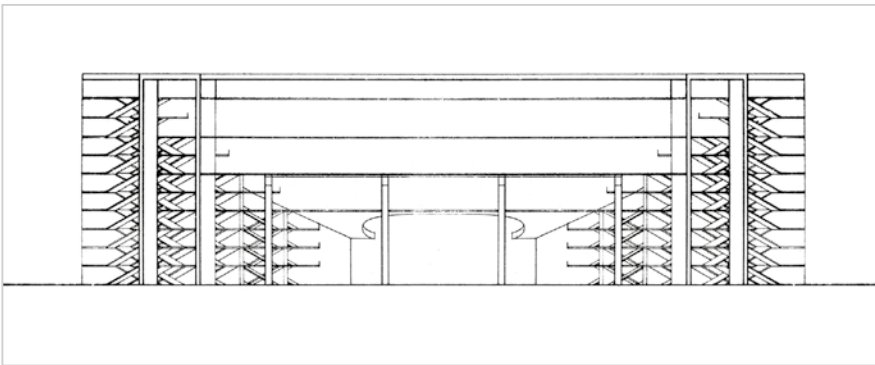
(arch. Walter Gropius, Germany, Berlin).

## IX – Down with the stage

(arch. N. Likin with the participation of arch. S. Panin; RSFSR, Moscow).



09 "Down with the stage". Arch. N. Likin with the participation of arch. S. Panin; RSFSR, Moscow. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).



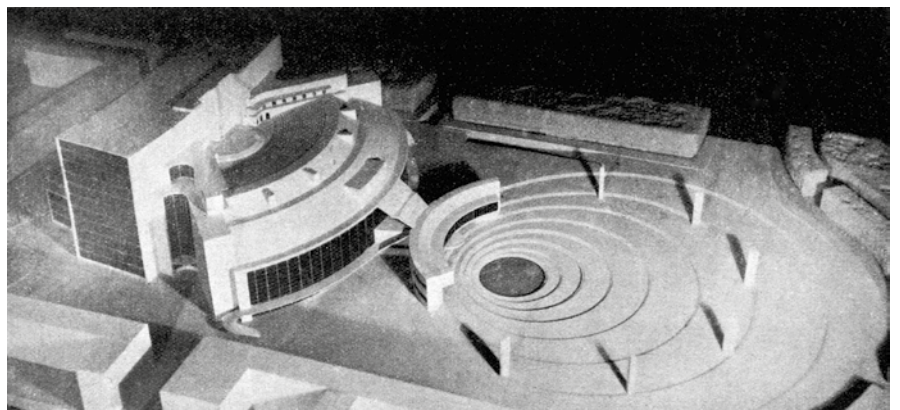
10 "KTH". Arch. Sune Lindström, Jöran Curman and others; Sweden, Stockholm. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).

## X – KTH

(arch. Sune Lindström and others; Sweden, Stockholm).

## XI – File 203 Number

(arch. Norman Bel Geddes, USA, New York).



11 „File 203 Number” . Arch. Norman Bel Geddes, USA, New York. © Richter, 1931, p. 1572.

## XII – Green ring

(architects Georgy Wolfenzon, Roman Valdenberg and Dmitry Meyerson; RSFSR, Moscow).



12 "Green ring". Architects Georgy Wolfenzon, Roman Valdenberg and Dmitry Meyerson; RSFSR, Moscow. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).

Not all the persons who participated in the Swedish project "KTH" [FIGURE 10] have been identified. Swedish names were interpreted in the Ukrainian text in Cyrillic: І. Курман, Л. Гірц, С. Ліндштрот, Г. Петерсон (Linetsky et al., 1931, p. 49). German version from „Die Baugilde“ was: Kurmann, Hirtz, Lindstrom und Peterson (Richter, 1931, p. 1571). French spelling of names: Kourman, L. Hirs, L. Lindstrom, G. Peterson (Programme du concours, 1933, p. 48). Since the project came from Stockholm, it could be assumed that KTH is an abbreviation for Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan (KTH) – Sweden’s largest technical university, and the authors of the project worked or studied at the Faculty of Architecture of KTH in 1930. As it was discovered during the research, Sune Lindström (Lindström, 2022) was a KTH student in 1930 (1926-1931) and spent a semester at the Bauhaus, Dessau in autumn 1928. He became a famous Swedish architect later. A second possible candidate for authorship could be J. Sigurd Curman, whose name was found in a list of pedagogues who worked at KTH in the early 1930s. He taught the history of architecture. However, another

architect more suitable as a co-author was his son Jöran Curman (Jöran Curman, 2021), who studied at KTH at the same time as Sune Lindström (1927-1931). Moreover, both of them did a joint architectural project in 1959. This could mean that their collaboration was not accidental and that they knew each other before. The search for the other two authors continues. This is just one example, one episode, demonstrating the difficulties that research faces in identifying even publicly named authors.

The jury singled out 12 more projects for their merits, which were "recommended for purchase" (they were not awarded, but interested customers could buy them). But the names of the authors were not published. Projects ordered from architectural organizations and paid in advance (closed competition) did not receive cash prizes. However, they competed on equal terms with the nominees of the open competition. The best of all 144 projects was recognized as an invited project under the motto "Two rings crossing each other" by the leaders of Soviet Constructivism Brothers Alexander, Viktor and Leonid Vesnin [FIGURE 13]. The project "ACI" (RSFSR) was equated



13 "Two rings crossing each other". Arch. Vesnin brothers; RSFSR, Moscow. © Projects, 1931 (without page numbers).

with the first prize. Its authors were students from the Moscow Institute of Architecture and Construction, headed by architect Alexander Vlasov.

Four more invited projects were assigned to the 1st category (in fact, their level was recognized as equivalent to the level of awarded projects). Their authors were established in the process of research.

- "Mask with a note" (architects A. Tatsiy, E. Mikhailovsky and A. Kasyanov; with the participation of Lyubarsky, Simanovsky and Krytov; Ukraine, Kharkiv)
- "Factory of Proletemotion" (A. Ginzburg, Ya. Mamontov, A. Pleshkov, V. Pushkarev, V. Trotsenko; Ukraine, Kharkiv).
- "Red star" (arch.-artist N. Lansere with the participation of A. Izosimov; R.S.F.S.R., Leningrad).
- "CI" (arch. P. Yurchenko, N. Kholostenko; Ukraine, Kyiv).

The Kharkiv competition attracted many well-known architects. In addition to the Vesnin brothers, Walter Gropius, Norman Bel Geddes already mentioned above, there were also Hans Poelzig, Ossip Klarwein, Wilhelm Brurein and others. But a much larger number of talented young people wanted to test their strength, demonstrate their capabilities on the international arena on a par with recognized masters. It should be noted: not all the merits of some projects were appreciated by the jury. For example, study of Hans Poelzig's preparatory drawings of the Kharkiv theater produced unexpected results that were not noticed by the judges at the time (for more details, see Smolenska/Nägelke, 2023).

The Belgian journal "La Cité & Tekhne" assessed the organization of the Kharkiv competition in the following way:

*"This competition, which we hope to talk about again soon, is one of the most important and best organized of those in which architects from all countries have been able to participate in recent years"*

(*La Cité & Tekhne*, 1931, p. 37).

## CONCLUSIONS

Restoration of competition events, carried out in the course of the study, allows us to assert that the competition was held at the highest level - from drawing up a detailed and beautifully designed program to summing up its results. The organizers used effective methods to ensure the fairest, unbiased assessments of the final results: the requirement to submit competition projects anonymously under mottos, a multi-stage system for their evaluation

involving professional experts from various fields in order to take into account all the features of the design and further functioning of a modern theater building, a hierarchical incentive system for nominees etc.

It makes sense to mention here some of the results of the research.

- 1 The mottos of all 144 nominated projects have been restored, as well as the countries from which they were submitted, and in some cases the cities.
- 2 The categories to which each project was assigned by the jury, the distribution of prizes and other rewards were determined. For example, the three projects mentioned in Umemiya's article (Umemiya, 2022), which came from Japan, were ranked in the third category: "S", "HT" and "Monogram" (the architects Aki Kato and Hideo Noro submitted their project under this motto).
- 3 Photocopies or originals of preparatory drawings were found for about 40 projects, which is more than a quarter of the total number of applications for the competition.
- 4 The names of the authors of almost all projects whose images were found have been established.

The significance of the results of the Kharkiv competition for the development of world modernism still needs to be substantiated. The research is ongoing. But even now it can be stated that it was not only the apogee of the Soviet architectural avant-garde, but also one of the culminating moments in the process of formation of modern multi-functional spectacular theater buildings. In addition, the competition became, for many young talented architects from different countries, the first step on the path to success in the profession. Later, many of them became famous. They made a meaningful contribution to the development of architecture in the 20th century. As this research goes deeper, it becomes more and more convincing that behind each project there is an intriguing story, reflecting the relationships between people and events that characterize the architectural environment of the heyday of interwar modernism.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# MONO-FUNCTIONAL HOUSING AND CHANGING CONCEPTS IN KHARKIV RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE DURING THE CAPITAL PERIOD

Kateryna Didenko

**ABSTRACT:** In the 1920s - 1930s in Kharkiv, at that time the capital of Soviet Ukraine, two main programs of city development were implemented - the creation of a new metropolitan center and the development of the industrial complex. Within the framework of these programs there was an evolution of Kharkiv's housing infrastructure, which developed largely in connection with the leading Western social concepts of architectural and urban planning practice: garden city, house-commune, residential combine and socialist city. However, in addition to these concepts that replaced each other, there was also a parallel design of "mono-functional" housing, which is an integral, important and significant component of the avant-garde architecture of Kharkiv. It was built both within the framework of the program of the creation of the capital center and within the framework of the program of development of the industrial complex. It is unfair that such housing, as a rule, is in the shadow of more vivid and radical typological avant-garde solutions and is insufficiently described. The method of systematization and analysis of literary and documentary sources was applied. In the context of Russian aggression and its unfolding of a full-scale war against Ukraine since 24 February 2022, the architectural heritage of Kharkiv, as well as the heritage of other cities of Ukraine, is under constant threat of destruction. In this regard, the documentation and introduction of undeservedly forgotten "mono-functional" residential buildings into the international scientific community is extremely relevant. The article begins to document mono-functional housing built in the 1920s-1930s, and discusses in detail several examples: Chervonyi Knygar, Slovo and Komunar.

**KEYWORDS:** creation of a new metropolitan center, development of the industrial complex, "mono-functional" housing, concepts in residential housing, metropolitan Kharkiv.

**INTRODUCTION:** The results of architectural and construction activity of the Ukrainian avant-garde, especially the world's largest early-modernist complexes of metropolitan Kharkiv, form an important part of the national architectural heritage. The interwar period in Kharkiv led to the formation of the administrative center with its unique residential areas and the creation of a large industrial socialist city, the Kharkiv Tractor Plant. In the European panorama of the pioneers of the Modern Movement, these complexes are of interest as works of outstanding artistic quality, which together form a unique collection that complements the overall picture of innovative architecture of the 20th century.

The study of "Kharkiv constructivism", due to an unfortunate confluence of historical circumstances, is still actually in an understudied state. Many monuments of this bright period are still in the shadow and should be separately

highlighted and systematized. Considering the housing architecture of this period it should be noted that at the moment there are studies devoted to the description of such socio-housing concepts of architectural and urban planning practice: garden city, house-commune, housing combine and socialist cities embodied in the capital Kharkiv. Developing in accordance with the main social ideas and trends of Western architectural and urban planning practice, in Kharkiv - the capital of Soviet Ukraine - in the 1920s - early 1930s, these architectural and urban planning concepts were formed in a certain sequence. The first was the concept of the "garden city", which was a borrowing of Western models that did not correspond to the early Soviet ideology; the concept of the "house-commune" was a recreation of the classics of utopian socialism and became a reincarnation of the phalanster; the third



concept - the functional-spatial model of the “residential combine” embodied the socio-political doctrine of early Soviet propaganda and had analogs in Western countries in the form of housing with social services; the fourth concept - the “socialist city”, the concept of the housing combine expanded in space, which became an example of socio-economic invention in the context of sectoral planning and was a city attached to production (factory or manufacturing plant). But it should be said that, in addition to the above-mentioned types, in metropolitan Kharkiv there were largely present examples of housing that do not fit into any of the above concepts - this is mono-functional housing. By mono-functional housing we mean such type of buildings, in which, according to the project there was overwhelmingly residential function and did not imply the presence of social and domestic services. However, examples of this type of housing have been somewhat neglected due to the non-radical nature of the type, which is undoubtedly unfair, and examples of this type of housing are worthy of special consideration. The historical and theoretical relevance of the study lies in the fact that without a consistent and comprehensive analysis of Kharkiv’s heritage we will not be able to get a general picture of the architectural process in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century and to identify the place and role of Ukraine in this socio-humanitarian panorama.

The architectural and town-planning heritage of Ukraine in the interwar period of the twentieth century, in particular the architecture of Kharkiv, is described in the collective works “History of Cities and Villages of the Ukrainian SSR”, “Kharkiv. From fortress to the capital: Notes on the Old City” [Leibfreid, 2001] etc. The first articles devoted to architectural ensembles of the capital Kharkiv and the peculiarities of their formation appeared in the 2000s (O. Bouryak, K. Cherkasova) [Bouryak, 1999; Cherkasova, 2010]. From then to the present day, several dozens of articles and several dissertation studies have been devoted to this period. Kharkiv’s architectural and urban planning heritage of the interwar period is described in the works of A. Gella, O. Deriabina, K. Didenko, L. Kachemtseva, N. Khoroian, S. Smolenska and others [Alyoshyn, 1985; Gella, 2010; Deriabina, 2013; Didenko, 2016; Khoroian, 2015; Smolenska, 2017]. The authors’ works cover the phenomenon as a whole or analyze individual, most significant monuments of it, or describe the socio-housing programs of metropolitan Kharkiv and the concepts that were implemented within the framework of these programs.

The purpose of this article is to show examples of the implementation of “mono-functional” housing in the context of consistently embodied socio-housing concepts within the implementation of the programs of creation of the capital center of Kharkiv and development of the

industrial complex; to give a detailed description of several examples of mono-functional housing created within the program of the creation of the capital center.

The method of systematization of literary, documentary and archival sources and analytical approach for studying the location of residential complexes within Kharkiv and revealing their typological characteristics are relevant to the research.

## KHARKIV HOUSING IN THE USSR CAPITAL PERIOD

In the European, and even domestic press, publications about Kharkiv architecture of the period when Kharkiv was the capital of the Ukrainian Socialist Republic are devoted to huge administrative complexes - the building of the State Committee of Ukraine, the House of Projects, the complex of buildings on Dzerzhinsky Square – today Svobody square [FIGURE 01], as well as club construction. To a certain extent, residential buildings erected within the framework of one of the four concepts implemented in the capital Kharkiv have been studied: garden city, house-commune, residential combine, socialist city [Didenko, 2016]. However, the mono-functional residential buildings of this interesting period are little known to foreign readers, although their architectural characteristics are not inferior to those of buildings with more radical typologies. By mono-functional we mean those that were conceived as containing only the residential component itself, without the addition of a socio-cultural function [Didenko, 2023].

The construction of residential buildings and facilities that were part of the housing programs began in the capital city of Kharkiv only in the early 1920s. The construction of housing near industrial enterprises was driven by the need to provide housing for workers of already reconstructed and new production facilities. The construction of housing in the central part of the city was facilitated by the creation of a metropolitan center with a large number of governmental institutions that needed living space for their employees.



01 Kharkiv governmental complex. Aerial photo. © V.Bysov.

The following examples of mono-functional housing built as part of the creation of the capital's center were selected for consideration as representative of housing for different communist elites. Kommunar was for members of the government and leading employees of the Council of People's Commissars, Slovo was for Ukrainian writers, Chervonyi Knygar was for employees of the Printing House and Tobacco Factory [Nikolskyi, 2014].

#### IMPLEMENTATION OF MONO-FUNCTIONAL HOUSING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROGRAM OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAPITAL KHARKIV

In 1923 - 1925 during the construction of the first workers' settlements the "garden city" model, created by E. Howard at the turn of the nineteenth century, was realized in Kharkiv. The cottage houses on Kharkiv Heroes Avenue and Plekhanivska Street are examples of the garden city concept: they were built for workers of the Elektrosila-1 and the locomotive plants. Residential cottages on Lysa Hora in the Chervonyi Zhovten settlement for railway station workers and the main street Novyi Pobut (New Life). There are only a few cottages on Chervona Bavaria. These settlements were created in 1923-1925 and had 1-2 story buildings [Leibfreid, 2001].

Soon, the resettlement of workers in cottage-type houses was found to be economically unprofitable, and from 1925, instead of cottages, workers' settlements with three- to four-story apartment buildings began to be built on the outskirts of the city. Such worker's settlements appeared to the south-east of the locomotive plant (Artem settlement), new residential buildings on Lysa Hora in the same Chervonyi Zhovten settlement, which became examples of mono-functional transitional housing as part of the development of Kharkiv's industrial program. Within the Artem settlement, four residential buildings were built on Morozova Street (2, 3, 4, 5), designed by architects

M. Zelenin, I. Taranov-Belozirov, and V. Bohomolov, as well as residential buildings on Chernohlazivska Street (3 and 5), built in 1928 by I. Taranov-Belozirov and V. Bohomolov. Subsequently, dozens more residential buildings, a school, a vocational school building, and a complex of service buildings were built, which are now part of the Artem settlement [FIGURE 02].

From the mid-1920s, experiments began with the implementation of the house-commune concept, the main features of which were maximum socialization and industrialization of everyday life. In Kharkiv, as early as in 1925, an attempt was made to implement the idea of a commune building on Studentska St., designed by V. Trotsenko.

Finally, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the concept of the "socialist city" was formed. The period paralleled the widespread introduction of "residential combines", which had no analogues outside the USSR. The idea of the 'socialist city' was often a transfer of the working pattern of the organization of life in the 'residential combine' to the spatial scale of the whole city. The similarity of the tasks was emphasized even by the name - residential combine "New Kharkiv" - which originally had the settlement designation of KhTP.

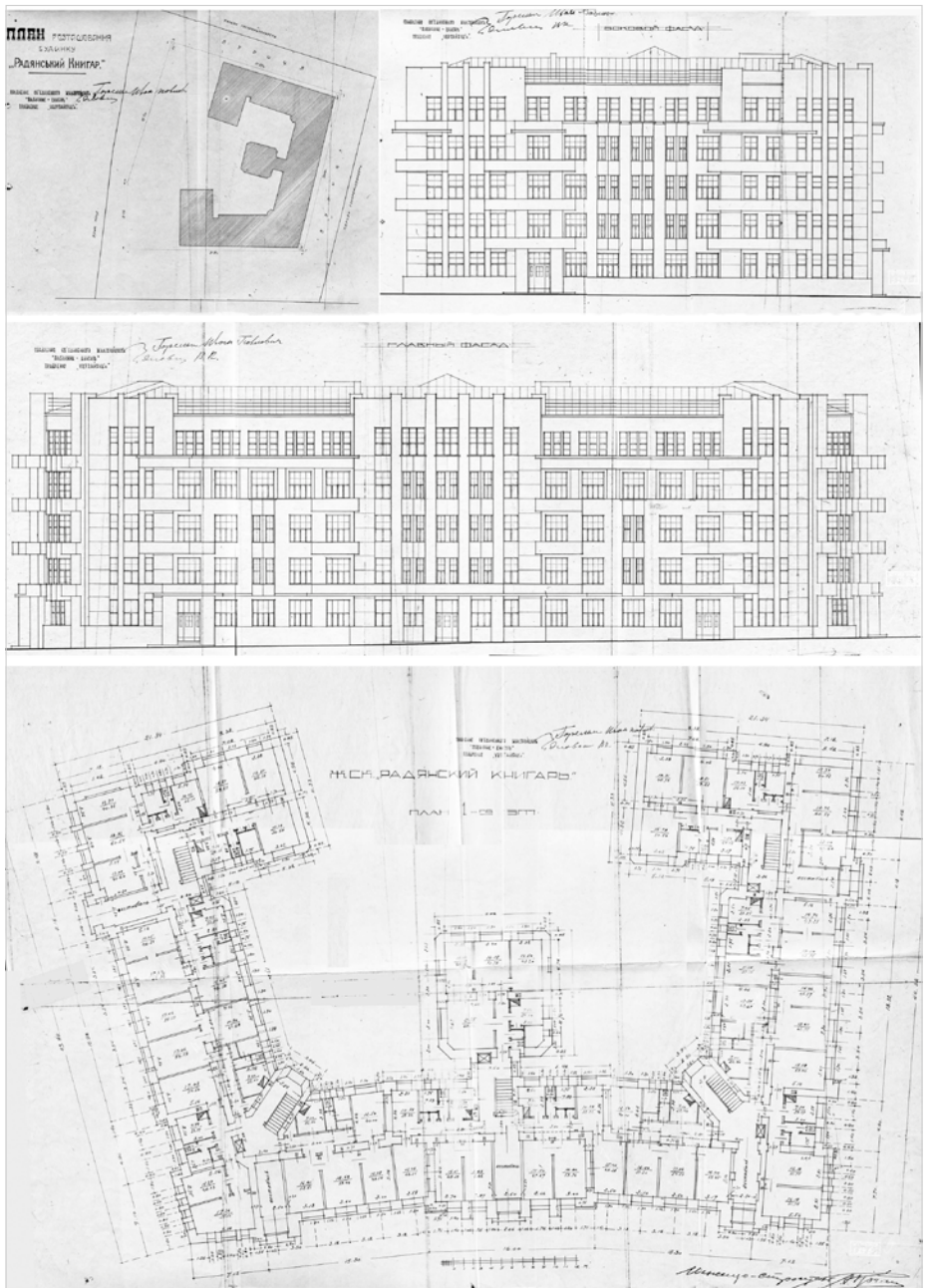
#### IMPLEMENTATION OF "MONO-FUNCTIONAL" HOUSING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CREATION OF THE METROPOLITAN CENTER.

The program of creating the metropolitan center included the construction of residential combines in the late 1920s - the first half of the 1930s, with partial inclusion of communal houses, and the construction of mono-functional residential buildings. Residential complexes were included in the urban complex of Svobody Square in Kharkiv - these are residential complexes which service Red Industrialist and House of Specialists, and were also built outside of it - for example, a residential house for workers of the



02 Settlement Artema. Chernomorska 5, 1928, arch. I. Taranov-Belozirov and V. Bohomolov. © Author.

03 Chervonyi Knyhar. Photos of façades. 1927-1931, architects P. Frolov, O. Kogan. © Kateryna Didenko



04 Chervonyi Knyhar. Drawings of General Plan, side façade, main façade, Plan 1st floor. 1927-1931, architects P. Frolov, O. Kogan. © Archive-CSSTA, case 6.

state apparatus (54 Pushkinska St.), House of Militia (11 Bagalii St.), House of Southern Railways (8/10 Kotlyar St.). To monofunctional residential houses, which followed the pre-revolutionary tradition and were usually with a high level of comfort, such as: House for the Members of the Central Committee Presidium (5 Manizer St.); Chervoniy Bankovets House (6 Artema St.), House for ex-political prisoners (Pushkinska St.), Voinved (71 Sumska St.) and many others.

The list of mono-functional buildings includes those that we will explore in more detail: Komunar residential building for members of the Soviet government of Ukraine, built on Hirschman Street, the Slovo House for members of the Writers' Union of Ukraine, and the Chervoniy Knyhar residential building, located in the area behind the State Industrial Building. The latter was one to be constructed in this unique residential area, built on a radial ring principle. Chervoniy Knyhar ("Soviet Knyhar", "Tabachnyk-Knyhar") residential building (1 Nezalezhnist Av.) was constructed in 1927-1931 and intended to be fully residential. The foundation stone for the building (architects P. Frolov, O. Kogan) was laid on 6 August 1927. In 1927-1928, the construction was carried out by the City Executive Committee, and in July 1928 it was handed over to Ukrpaibud [CSSTA, case 6].

The facades have a complex composition, organized by the rhythm of vertical pylons and triangular bay windows, intersected by the horizontals of balconies and cornices, which is an atypical technique for constructivism [FIGURE 03]. The plan of the building resembles a capital letter E. Due to the configuration of the site, the side facades of the Chervoniy Knyhar building are located at 90° and 103° to the main facade [FIGURE 04]. There are 109 apartments in the building; each of the five entrances is served by a lift. The building has five floors and a basement. Four of the five entrances have back exits to the courtyard. In the first, third, and fifth entrances, the sections facing the courtyard were shifted by half a floor relative to the main volume, making them six-story.

The three- and four-bedroom apartments have a floor area of 70 to 110m<sup>2</sup> and a finished floor height of 3.5m. Each apartment has a kitchen and a bathroom, with windows usually facing the courtyard, except for the corner three-room apartments in the second and fourth entrances, where service windows face the side facades. The floors of the building are reinforced concrete and timber. The foundation walls are brick with cement mortar, and the bay windows are concrete. The external walls at the level of 4-5 floors are 2 bricks thick, 3 and 2 floors - 2.5 bricks thick, the 1st floor - 3 bricks thick and the basement - 3.5 bricks thick. The basement was also made of brick on cement mortar and to prevent dampness in the basement,



05 Slovo. Photo of the southeast façade in its original form and after modifications. Collage from the author's archive. 1927-1930, architect M. Dashkevych. © Korolenko State Scientific Library and Kateryna Didenko.

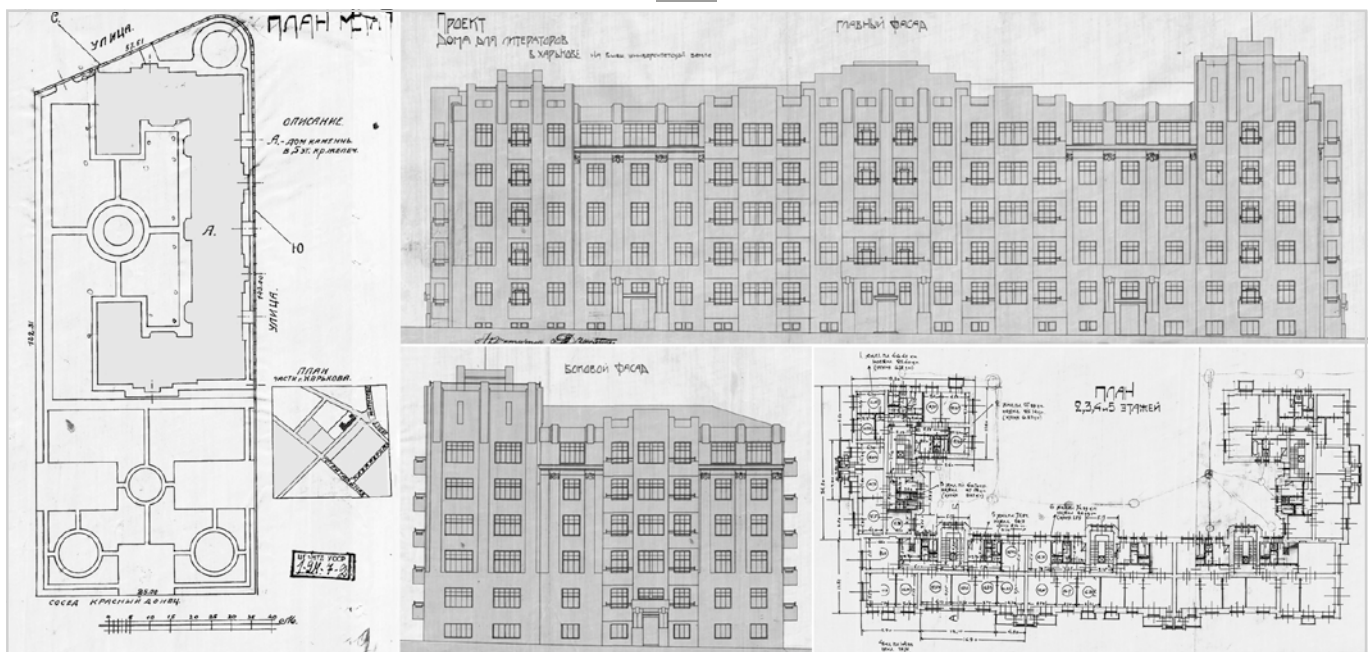
an insulating layer of 2 rows of waxed tar paper on the smoothly mortar-levelled surface of the basement was laid below the ground floor level. All window and door openings in both external and internal walls are covered with metal H-beams, filling between the beams with concrete and brick. Window casings and window sills were made of pine; window fixtures were bolts with copper handles or oxidized. "The stairwells were constructed on metal stringers, the steps were reinforced concrete with a mosaic surface, the platforms were reinforced concrete, lined with (...) tiles. Iron grates with handrails made of varnished oak" [SAKhR, case 94].

The building was fully electrified, had central heating, central water and sewerage. The building was handed over with sanitary ware (faience toilets and washbasins), interior finishing and whitewashing of walls and ceilings, and painting works were carried out. The facades were plastered.

The mono-functional buildings erected within the residential area of the administrative center of Kharkiv also include the Slovo residential building (architect M. Dashkevych) at the corner of Kultury and Literaturna street. The project was developed and supervised in 1927-1930 by the Ukrtsyvilbud Institute [SAKhR, case 192]. The building resembles a capital letter C. It is five stories high, has five entrances, and 66 apartments with three to four rooms each. According to the project, the entire building was to be equipped with electric lifts, but this was not immediately implemented, and the lifts were installed later only in a few entrances. However, the solarium with showers above the fifth floor, which was envisaged in the project, was implemented.

The building looked a little different after completion than it does today. The finials above the northeast and southwest corners, which are visible in the drawing of the main façade [CSSTA, case 7], unfortunately, have not survived.

The northeast wing of the building was left unchanged. The windows of two three-room apartments face north-east. The original design solution and the later version of the façade on Kultury Street differ in the presence of



06 Slovo, General Plan, Drawings of side façade, main façade, Plan 1st floor. 1927-1930, architect M. Dashkevych. © Archive-CSSTA, case 7.

small balconies facing northeast. No plans corresponding to the implemented solution have been found in the Kharkiv archives. No drawings of the southwestern façade have been found yet. Judging by the plans, it remained unchanged.

Despite the adjustments to the original architectural solution, the number of rooms in the apartments was preserved. In the side sections, the rooms facing Literaturna Street now have one window instead of two; in the central part, in the four-room apartments, the number of windows has increased from one to two. Due to the fact that the terrain slopes down to the northeast, it became possible to additionally mark out one four-room and three three-room apartments in the basement. This made it possible to provide lifts in the first and second entrances. The other part of the basement was designed to house a boiler room with auxiliary rooms and storerooms, which is also a characteristic feature of that era. The bathrooms and toilets in the building receive sunlight, while the windows of the kitchens and toilets face the courtyard and the rear façade.

Three-room apartments are located in the side wings of the building, and four-room apartments in the central part and corner volumes. The entrances of the building pass through, so the area of the ground floor apartments (about 15m<sup>2</sup>) is smaller than in apartments on typical floors (18-19m<sup>2</sup>), with the same number of rooms.

The design of the building is quite traditional. Slovo House has longitudinal and transverse load-bearing walls made of brick. The building was constructed "in forms that take an intermediate place between Art Nouveau and Constructivism" [Leibfreid, 2001].

The section of the staircase shows that the interfloor floors of all floors are made of monolithic reinforced concrete on metal beams. The building has quite high floors - 3.28m [FIGURE 05, FIGURE 06].

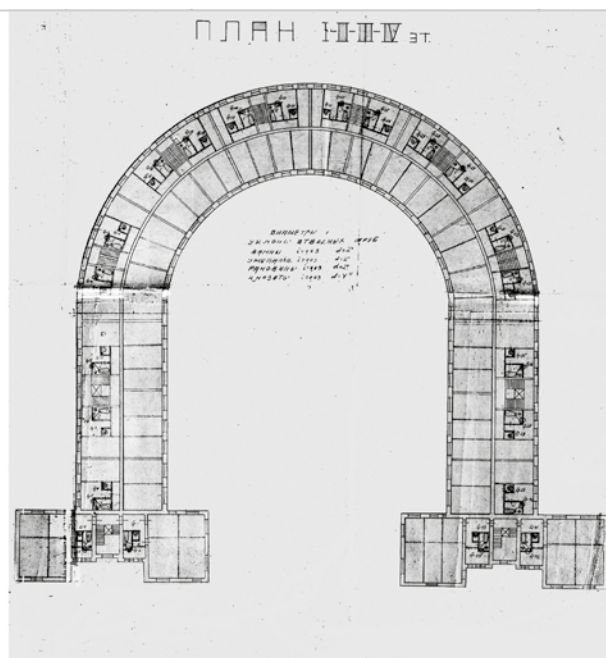
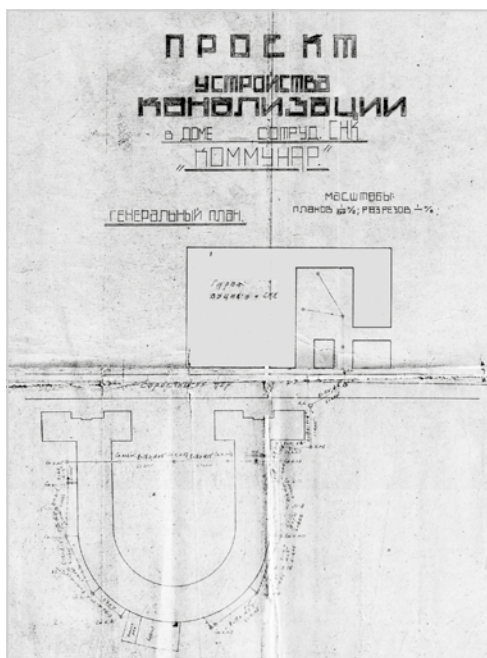
The Komunar residential building (17 Hirschman St.) was built for members of the Council of People's Commissars of the Government of the USSR (architects A. Linetskiy, V. Bohomolov). The project was developed and implemented in 1929-1930 by the Ukpaibud company paid for by the Komunar housing cooperative. Interestingly, the Garage was built for this house in 1928-1931 and the House of Drivers was built in the block across the street from the main residential building. The archive contains an original drawing of the sewerage project for this complex, which shows the general plan with the garage and the Drivers building located on the opposite side of Hirschman Street.

The architecture of the residential building is entirely in constructivist forms, its facades are virtually devoid of decoration, except for the modest artistic molding of the entrances and stained glass staircases in the side wings of the building. The building is shaped like a horseshoe. Two seven-story side towers framing a semicircular front yard open to the street, which is accessed by ten entrances to the five-story part of the building, add an expressive plasticity to the composition of the complex [FIGURE 07, FIGURE 08, FIGURE 09].

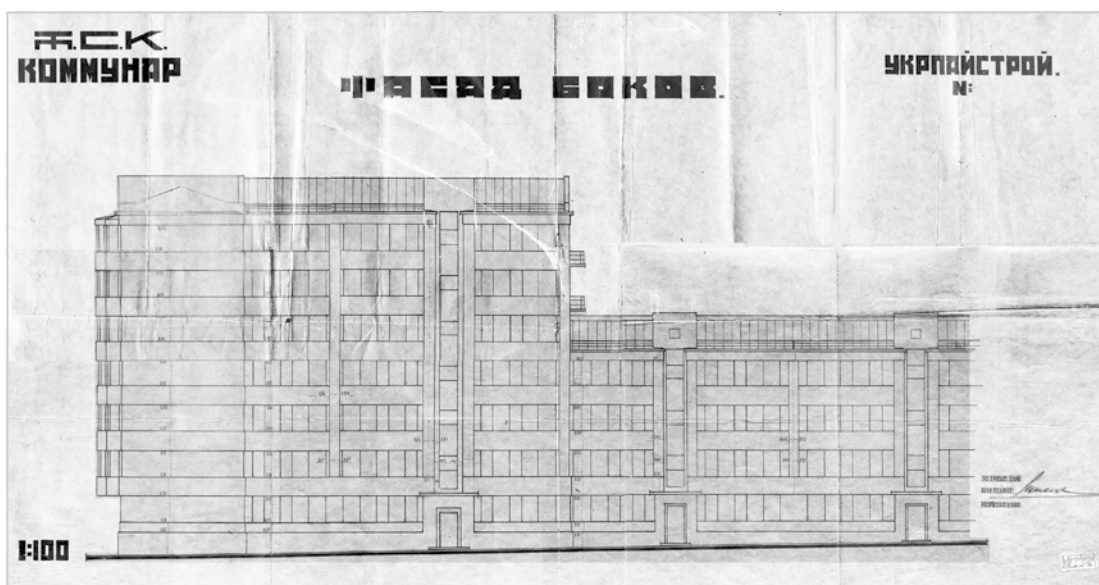
The Komunar residential building has 10 entrances and 50 three- and four-bedroom apartments. The curvilinear



07 Komunar (Communard) residential house, 1929-1930, arch. A. V. Linetskiy and V. I. Bogomolov. © prof. A. Bouryak's personal archives.



08 Komunar. Drawings of general plan and plan of floors 1-4. 1929-1930, arch. A. V. Linetskyj and V. I. Bogomolov. © Archive-CSSTA, case 5.



09 Komunar. Drawing of side façade. 1929-1930, arch. A. V. Linetskyj and V. I. Bogomolov. © Archive-CSSTA, case 5.

part has 5 floors and a basement, while the T-shaped parts have 7 floors, with a basement under them. The seven-story towers flank a semicircular front yard, which is accessed by eight entrances of the five-story part of the building. The seven-story part of the building has lifts. The five-story part of the building contains only three-bedroom apartments, while the seven-story part is mostly four-bedroom. The first and tenth entrances have three apartments per floor, one of which is a three-room apartment. The area of a three-room apartment in Komunar is 70-75m<sup>2</sup>, and a four-room apartment is about 120m<sup>2</sup>. The project envisages a boiler room and a coal room in the basement, a laundry room in the right wing of the building, and a doorman's room in the basement.

The construction of this residential facility was given special importance and the speed of its construction was a priority compared to other construction projects. The study of archival materials revealed a document from UKRPAIBUD dated 26 July 1929, which mentions that materials for the construction of this building were "temporarily borrowed"

from other construction projects. The same letter also states that 25 wagons of cement and 2 wagons of I-beams were used. It is also mentioned that there were problems with the supply of scarce materials such as I-beams, wire rod, and parquet [CSSTA, case 5; SAKhR, case 183].

## CONCLUSION

Large-scale residential and cultural construction in metropolitan Kharkiv was carried out within the framework of programs for the creation of the capital's administrative and governmental center and the formation of the Kharkiv industrial complex. Within the capital center program, the concept of the residential combine was embodied, and within the industrial complex development program, the concepts of the garden city, commune house, and social city were embodied.

In parallel with the implementation of the above-mentioned concepts, which are undoubtedly a remarkable fact that makes the architectural heritage of the capital city of Kharkiv unique, mono-functional residential buildings were

built, which are vivid examples of Ukrainian avant-garde architecture and require special attention. Mono-functional housing was created as part of the programs for the creation of the capital's center and the development of the industrial complex, in addition to the above-mentioned concepts. Emphasizing the presence of "mono-functional" residential complexes built into the programs for the creation of the capital's administrative and governmental center and the formation of the Kharkiv industrial complex is necessary to understand the full picture of the residential architecture of the capital city of Kharkiv.

The article presents mono-functional residential buildings built in the 1920s and 1930s, erected as part of the programs for the development of the industrial complex and the creation of the metropolitan center. Three residential buildings that were selected for consideration as representatives of housing for different representatives of the communist elite and built as part of the program for the creation of the metropolitan center are examined in detail: Residential House Slovo, Residential House Komunar and Residential House Radyansky Knyhar. A detailed examination of these buildings is the first step towards introducing buildings that are outstanding monuments of residential architecture in the capital city of Kharkiv into international architectural research.

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# INNOVATORY KHARKIV MASS HOUSING ESTATES IN URBAN PLANNING OF THE 1960s-1980s

Nadiia Antonenko

**ABSTRACT:** The destructions of the Russo-Ukrainian war are leading to a rapid loss of cultural heritage in Ukraine, including contemporary 20th century monuments in Kharkiv, the cradle of Ukrainian modernism. At the greatest risk are the sites, which were complex and not well understood heritage before the war - mass housing estates of 1960s-1980s. In view of the postwar reconstruction, there is a great need to analyze mass housing estates in Kharkiv as potential objects of preservation. The purpose of this article is to reveal the architectural and historical value of the first Kharkiv mass housing estates in terms of their innovation, which might be the basis for further preservation steps. The article focuses on the three earliest areas of mass housing estates of the city - Pavlovo Pole, Novi Budyuky and Saltovsky mass housing, which were designed and built during the period of the transition to rapid and large-scale prefabricated industry in the late 1950s - early 1960s. It is namely during the design and construction of these estates that innovatory technologies and approaches were developed and tested, which were later used in the construction of new housing estates both in Kharkiv and in other cities of Ukraine. These innovations included the system of microdistricts, the staggered system of services for the population, and the method of focusing in urban planning. The creation of a number of standard series of pioneering residential buildings for mass industrial development by the "Kharkovproject" and "Ukrmistostroyproject" design institutes. The study is based on the reconstruction of the historical chronology of design work of 1960's - 1980's in the history of Ukrainian city planning; a comparative analysis of the first-erected housing estates, and the definition of the unique solutions of Kharkiv city planners that were implemented in the development of the first housing estates in Kharkiv.

**KEYWORDS:** mass housing, innovations, Kharkiv, urban transformations, Russo-Ukrainian War

**INTRODUCTION:** The Russo-Ukrainian war of 2022 has made the issue of the preservation of Ukrainian immovable cultural heritage more acute. Architectural sites are at daily risk of destruction due to rocket and artillery fire. A greater threat is posed by military operations to objects whose status even before the war was not defined as being valuable, such as the typical post-Soviet mass housing estates. In the event of the slightest destruction, there is no question of rebuilding panel buildings a priori - after the war all the destroyed buildings will be dismantled.

At the same time, for conservationists of monuments and architectural heritage, the questions "What will be built in their place?" and "Will material evidence of an entire period of world architectural history remain, when the choice was made in favor of utilitarian provision of housing after the catastrophic destruction of World War

II?" become unusually acute. After all, the post-Soviet housing estates in large Ukrainian cities range from 30 to 60 per cent of the total area. They have had a significant impact on the formation of the modern image of Ukrainian cities, having become an integral part of them for 70 years. Several generations of citizens have grown up in the spatial environment of residential areas, who culturally and socially identify themselves and their families with these city territories.

The critique of the Soviet housing programs, which claimed the 'greyness and facelessness' of the mass housing estates and was prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s, did not reflect the actual state of the situation. Despite predictions of ghettoisation, Kharkiv's neighborhoods have not only managed to adapt to the new market context, but have also created comfortable living conditions for local



residents by forming a local self-identity. Nevertheless, current challenges make it doubtful that programs of revitalization and integrated development of Kharkiv's mass housing estates should be developed promptly before the end of military activity. The most effective tool for the preservation of Kharkiv's housing estates during the war and post-war reconstruction period is the inventorization and documentation of historical phases of design, construction and development that demonstrate the uniqueness, effectiveness and resilience of developments. The documentation of the developments should be made in the viewpoint of both positive and negative aspects. The results of these studies should be taken into account in the development of new design concepts in their area.

In the 1990s, mass housing estates in the public mind of Kharkiv citizens began to be perceived as a clear aesthetic and socio-functional symbol of totalitarianism, which must be overcome and eradicated. However, thirty years after the collapse of the USSR, this symbolic opposition has softened. The natural changes which have taken place over the 30 years have partly liberated the urban environment of mass housing estates from the clichés imposed by ideology and, in parallel, acquired new symbolic and cultural meanings. This is a background for thinking about the cultural value of mass housing areas, not on the basis of authenticity and integrity, but by looking at the resilience of the original concept to the new challenges. In addition, it is necessary to evaluate the impact of the housing estates created in the 1950s and 1960s under the conditions of ideological understanding of the organization of everyday life, corresponding to the current ideas about a comfortable urban environment.

That is why now, while military attacks are taking place, an urgent task for architectural researchers and monument conservationists is to identify valuable cultural layers of 20th-century Ukrainian architecture and to take proactive measures for their further preservation. Consideration of the period of mass industrial construction is one of the key directions of this study. The importance of this work is due to the fact that large Ukrainian cities again, as after World War II, face the choice of strategy for spatial development, technological modernization and the beginning of the reorganization of their urban life.

A unique Ukrainian city whose mass housing estates should be studied in the first priority is Kharkiv, a Ukrainian modernist urban laboratory. The first phase of large-scale housing construction in Kharkiv came at a time when the city was the capital of the Ukrainian SSR (1919-1934) and one of the main cities of the Soviet Union. It was at that time when the search for an optimal housing concept took place in Kharkiv (Antonenko et al, 2016). In the

post-war 1960s and 1980s, it was Kharkiv that became the first city in Ukraine to have tested new urban planning solutions, which led to fundamental changes in the social organization of city life. Among them: the system of microdistricts, a staged system of household services, the method of focusing in urban planning, which were eventually implemented in the solutions of housing estates design in other Ukrainian cities.

The epoch of Soviet mass pre-fabricated construction has been widely reflected in the professional literature. The problem of the preservation of residential areas has been discussed in the works of P. Moiser (Moiser, Zadorin, 2018), B. Engel (Engel, 2019), N. Liutauras (Liutauras, 2020), M. Glendinning (Glendinning, 2021), F. Urban (Urban, 2018) and others. The history of Ukrainian urban planning in the 1960s and 1980s is represented by published reports of design institutes (Novikov, 1990), as well as by the works of S. Shirochin (Shirochin, 2020), V. Yatsenko (Yatsenko, 2016), and Y. Shkodovsky (Shkodovsky et al, 2002). N. Mysak opened the topic of the identity of the housing estate in the example of Sychov housing estate of Lviv (Mysak, 2018). No less important are the studies of Ukrainian scientists dealing with: the problem of revitalization of urban environment of post-soviet housing estates - M. Demin (Lavrik, Demin, 1975), A. Pleshkanovska (Pleshkanovska, 2005), I. Stetsiuk (Stetsiuk, 2016), the analysis of transformation that has occurred with areas of Ukrainian mass housing estates after 1991 (Antypenko, 2021), the problem of historic de-personification of urban planning practices of the period (Bouryak, 2017). The issue of innovative approaches during the period of mass housing is addressed in the recently published article by O. Bouryak (Bouryak, 2020), in which the authors tried to form a holistic picture of changes in urban planning that took place during the period of mass industrial development, highlighting the innovative component in each of the main aspects of this picture – urban planning, architectural and typological, engineering and technological, and social and functional.

The goal of this article is to discover the architectural and historical value of Kharkiv's first mass housing districts and to identify specific signs of innovation, which could be the basis for further protective steps. The study is based on the restoration of the historical chronology of design work in the 1960s - 1980s in the history of Ukrainian urban planning. The comparative analysis of the first erected housing estates was carried out, the unique decisions of Kharkiv city planners that were implemented in Kharkiv were revealed, and the key persons - the organizers, architects and engineers who contributed most to the development of Kharkiv of that period were identified.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH OF LEONID TULPA'S DESIGN TEAM TO THE PLANNING OF PAVLOVO POLE

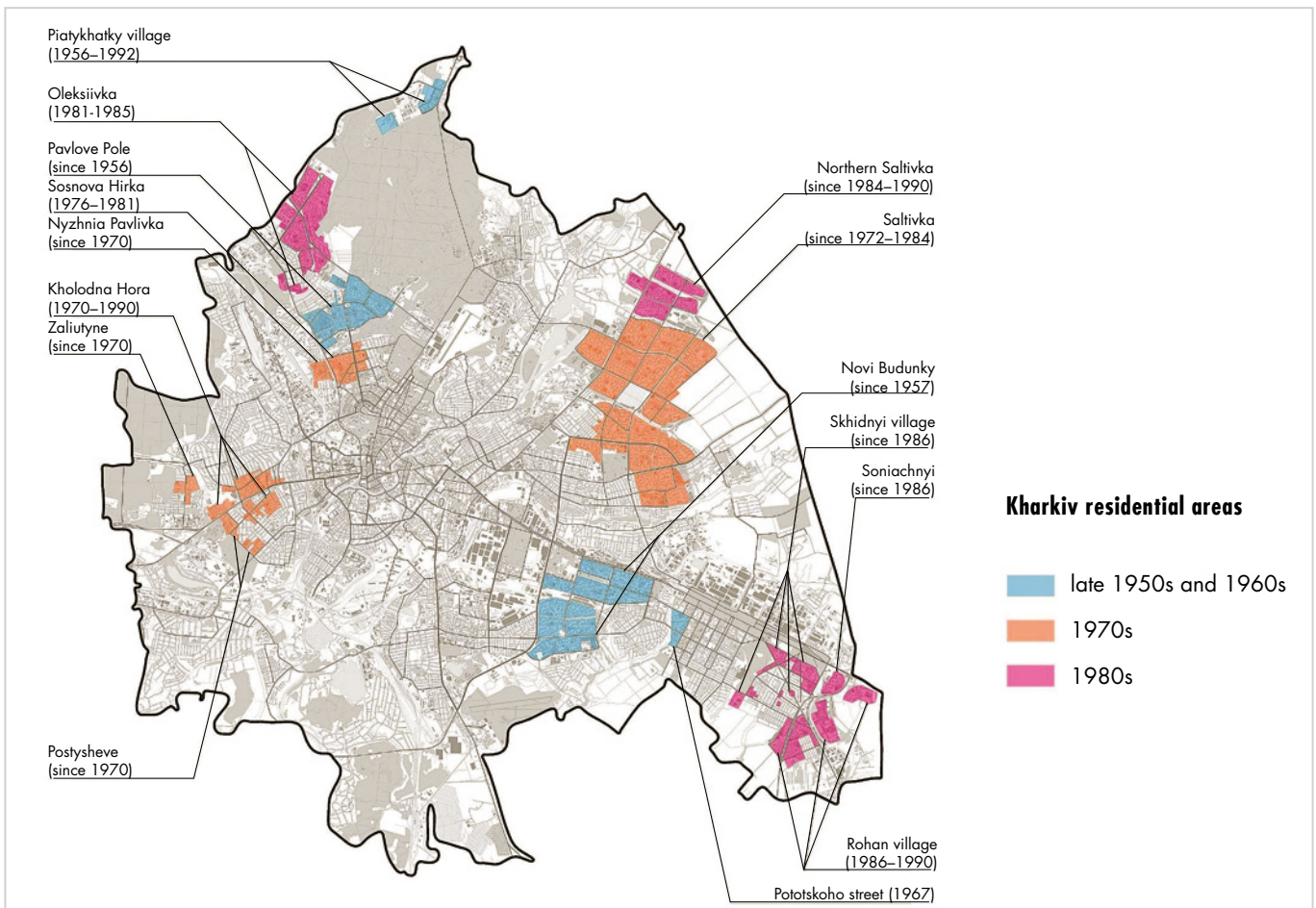
In 1967 a new master plan of Kharkiv was approved. It planned a clear functional division of the city into eight industrial and residential planning districts, connected with each other, with the city center, places of employment, urban and suburban recreation areas. The main mass housing estates were located in the eastern districts and the main industries were in the western districts (Antonov, 1967). A single subordinated street and road network of the city was created, with a clear distinction between the main and local systems. The main directions laid down in this master plan were implemented during next twenty years until the late 1980s - mid-1990s, as a result of which more than ten large-scale mass housing estates appeared on the map of Kharkiv [FIGURE 01].

The Pavlovo Pole housing estate was Kharkiv's first polygon to test new methods to fundamentally revise its urban planning approaches and significantly improve the technical and economic indicators of housing construction.

Pavlovo Pole was a large housing estate located near the city center. For a long time it has been considered an area intended for the resettlement of the "Soviet intelligentsia". The initial design project of the Pavlovo Pole planning was developed by the "Khargorproject" design institute

(architects B.G. Kleyn, A.S. Proskurnin, A.P. Pavlenko) as early as in 1945. Its architectural and planning system was based on the block type of buildings, specific to the urban planning of the late Stalin era. By 1954 only a few two-story houses had been built according to this project. In 1954, the project was declared ineffective and was sent back for reviewing (G. Krykin, L. Tyulpa and I. Feigin). However, the developed solution retained the features of the old city block approach, and although the first three blocks were built, in 1957 the construction was interrupted (Grigorenko, Tyulpa, 1958).

The adopted project of the housing estate was developed in 1958 by young specialists L. Tulpa and A. Grigorenko, who managed to bring the spatial layout as close as possible to the requirements and tasks set by the new Party administration. The designers completely abandoned the previously accepted principles of organizing the urban space, which historically referred to the neo-classical symmetrical geometric schemes. The project was based on a strict technical-economic analysis. The density of the buildings was maximized by taking into account the physical requirements of the urban environment and the buildings themselves - insulation, ventilation, estimated proportion of greenery, the number of necessary services - schools, kindergartens, shops, laundry rooms, etc. Out of 499 ha, 199.5 ha have been reserved for residential





02 Detailed planning project of Pavlovo Pole. Last approved option. © Photo of original plan, Nadiia Antonenko.

buildings, 59 ha for social facilities and 54 ha for public spaces and greenery [FIGURE 02].

In this approach, the designers decided against fractional block dividing, and the area of the housing estate was subdivided into five large self-contained microrayons of 30-50 hectares. The previously built blocks became part of microrayons Nos. 1 and 2. Schools and kindergartens were located in the center of the microrayons, grouped around the microrayon gardens. Public service buildings (shops, canteens, laundries, garages) were located along the streets that bordered the microrayon. A network of intra-block dead-end lanes was developed to provide access roads to the dwellings. Public transport in the estate consisted of trams, trolleybuses, buses and taxis (Shpara, 1988).

Not all objects were realized, but the design of the Pavlovo Pole public center included a stadium for 7000 spectators, an 800-seat auditorium, a 1200-seat cinema, a hotel, a shopping center, a café, a post office, a department store, a telephone office, and a car parking area. The territory on which the buildings were located was completely isolated from traffic. On the southern hillside of Sarzhin Yar, a botanical garden of about 60 ha was created, and a polyclinic and hospital were built next to the forest park, which served the entire housing estate (Tyulpa, 1963).

Thus, in this project Kharkiv city planners were among the first in Ukraine to implement the principle of “microrayonning”, the principle of “free planning” and tested a staged system of public facilities, in which each microrayon was a self-sufficient urban unit in terms of daily life services for its residents. A new principle of the spatial organization of the inner-district community center was designed, which in terms of the intensity of its functional content was to become a fully-fledged socio-cultural sub-center of the city. Unfortunately, however, the community center project was only partly realized due to a shortage of funding [FIGURE 03].

The direct link between the planning schemes of the housing estate and the new type of construction industry - enterprises of prefabricated assembly line production of building elements - was also innovative. The composition of the housing estate was formed on the basis of the available set of industrial products, which could be produced by the local newly created house-building factories, allowing them to be folded into the typical serial residential and public buildings.



03 Pre Russo-Ukrainian war view of the main avenue Pavlovo Pole. © Yevgen Kostjuk, 2021.

## NOVI BUDYNKY AS A BALANCE OF SANITARY AND HYGIENE NORMS AND HIGH STANDARDS OF EVERYDAY SERVICES

The Novi Budyvky housing estate is located in the south-eastern part of the city of Kharkiv on the former lands of the Research Institute of Genetics and Breeding (the former selection station) on an area of 445.9 ha. The relatively close location of this territory to the large industrial enterprises, good sanitary-hygienic and natural conditions predetermined its use for housing development. The dwelling density was up to 3,100 m<sup>2</sup>/ha for a five-story building and up to 4,300 m<sup>2</sup>/ha for a nine-story building.

Two blocks were built according to the design of architects B. Klein and Y. Nikolaenko (Kharkov branch of Giprograd), retaining the features of block planning. The building of the selection station started in 1957. In 1963, the project was redesigned and the housing estate was divided into two zones, each having a population of about 150,000. The principle of 'microrayoning' was used for both zones and the territory was divided into 10 microrayons.

Zone A was designed by Ukrgorstroyproject (A. Motorin, N. Kireeva, Y. Koltsov, A. Nesterenko, etc.) and Zone B by Kharkovproject (G. Kesler, Y. Plaksiev, P. Areshkin). Both projects were interconnected, but their compositional and planning design was different. Whereas the zone A was characterised by linear structure, the zone B used completely different planning principles. For example, microrayons № 24 and 25 were characterised by long, semi-detached houses arranged in the form of trefoils (Kireeva et al, 1962).

A distinctive feature of zone B was the use of long (average length of six sections) and multi-story buildings. As a result of this planning solution, it was possible to increase the green space area at high rates of housing area output. In addition, the pinpoint inclusion of the multi-story buildings considerably enriched the silhouette of the housing estate and its architectural expressiveness. This principle was actively used later in the design of Saltovsky and Alekseevsky housing estates.

In the planning of Novi Budyvky great attention was paid to the development of an optimal system of green spaces. The planners managed to bring the greenery index to a norm of 10 m<sup>2</sup> per person, while minimizing the typology of greenery, combining intra-block gardens with greenery areas of schools, kindergartens, nurseries, roads and driveways, thus creating continuous "green corridors", running through the entire housing estate (Matorin, 1964). [FIGURE 04].

Novi Budyvky are an example of the successful implementation of a system of staged public services. The main elements of the system of cultural and household services for the population of individual microrayons of Novi Budyvky were: primary facilities, consisting of kindergarten buildings and primary health care stations, which served the population of housing groups located within a radius of 150-200 meters and everyday facilities, consisting of school buildings and houses of culture in housing estates, which served the population of the entire microrayon and located within a radius of 400-500 meters. The public and commercial center was conveniently connected to the microrayons - the maximum



04 Pre-war view of Novi Budyuky. © Yevgen Kostiuik, 2021.

distance from the dwelling did not exceed 1.5 km. There were shopping, food and service buildings, a cinema, a restaurant and the Palace of Culture. The center was connected by a 100 m wide boulevard with a park, stadium and artificial pond. According to local respondents, they really rarely travelled to the center - everything they needed was within walking distance, unlike residents of Pavlovo Pole, who were forced to travel to the city center almost every day due to the limited range of household and cultural services.

### THE “FOCUSING” SYSTEM OF THE SALTOVSKY HOUSING ESTATE: ACHIEVING THE LIMIT VALUES OF THE TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS

The development of Ukraine’s largest housing estate consisting of thirteen microrayons began in 1968. By 2018 there were over 400,000 people living there.

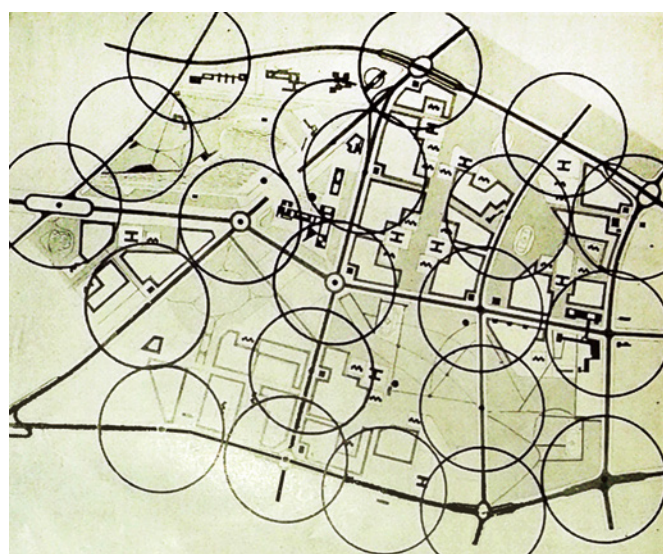
It was in the planning of the Saltovsky housing estate that Kharkiv’s urban planners developed and first applied the ‘focusing’ method. This method was based on the idea of concentrating socio-cultural, commercial and household facilities near public transport stops and major transport hubs, with appropriate calculation of accessibility radiuses. This method allowed the extension of the network of main highways, reduced the number of crossings, increased the distance between transport stops to 800-900 m, reduced the number of stops and increased the speed of communication by up to 20% (Tyulpa, 1964)

[FIGURE 05].

The ‘focusing’ method made fundamental adjustments to the microrayon system and virtually removed the ‘first

priority’ of the intra-microrayon service system as a planning principle. These adjustments to the ideology and practice of microrayon planning were a recognition of the principle of human mobility in the modern city and a de facto rejection of the principle of linking the service system to the place of residence. Further implementation and development of the method can be seen in such Ukrainian large-scale mass housing estates as Troyeschyna in Kyiv (1981-1991) and Tairova in Odesa (1968-1986).

Typological innovations can also be found in the designing of Kharkiv’s own series of industrial housing. These design developments of the “Kharkovproekt” and “Ukrmistostroyproekt” coexisted with the optimization



05 Focusing scheme of residential area No. 5 of Saltovsky mass housing estates. © Tyulpa L. (1973) New planning solutions in the development of Saltovskiy large-scale housing estate. In: *Stroitel'stvo i arkhitektura*. Vol 4.



06 Destroyed multi-story houses of Northern Saltivka. © Victory Gritsaienko, 2023.

approach that prevailed in the adaptation and partial modifications of the “all-union” series, in particular in the work on series II-57, the base for house-building plant DSK-1. Technical and technological innovation was concentrated in the creation and cyclic modernization of the production of vibro-rolled panels, significantly more economical in comparison to frame-panel structures.

At Kharkiv DSK-1, the first house-building factory in Ukraine, three vibro-rolling mills BPS-6 were installed. An innovation was the transition to an assembly line technology for the production of large panels and the corresponding operating technology for the assembly of finished houses. The innovations in the technological processes for the production and processing of assembly units were largely focused on finding ways of replacing wet processes. Much effort has been made, in particular, to realize fully factory-assembled sanitary cabins.

The rate of construction in Kharkiv in 1970-1980s was very high thanks to technological innovations. About 320-480 thousand sq.m. of dwelling were commissioned annually. There were cases, when a nine-story building was ready for occupation after 32 days. By the mid-1980s the housing crisis in Kharkiv had almost completely disappeared.

## CONCLUSION

Mass housing development radically changed the face of all post-war Ukrainian cities. However, the scale of the transformation and its value remains undervalued. Meanwhile, the mass housing program that was implemented in Kharkiv was a definite response to the post-war housing crisis. Its implementation allowed the creation

of acceptable living conditions for millions of people in a short period. When the value of such objects can be evaluated, the conditions of their creation, space-planning solutions, and technological innovations can be taken into account. Technological approaches and methods, which were developed by Kharkiv scientific-research institutes, were innovative and experimental. The usage of particular technologies during the short period of the 1950s-1960s allowed the architectural and construction industry to reach an increasing speed of construction and a higher quality. The research and historical and architectural description of Kharkiv in the epoch of mass industrial development should solve the same problem in relation to the 1960s-1980s, as the research of the heroic epoch of avant-garde of the 1920s-1930s, which was developed in recent years.

Novy Budyuky and Pavlovo Pole were the first housing estates, where various experimental layouts of microrayons with perfect territorial balance (dwellings and adjacent territories, public green spaces, areas education institutions, service and public facilities, socio-cultural institutions, as well as areas of passages) and minimally reduced construction costs were worked out. The design results obtained were taken into account in the planning of later housing estates and in the deployment and setting up of a huge machine of house-building factories. The Saltovsky housing estate is the ultimate form of techno-economic rationalism in Ukrainian urban planning of the Soviet period. The Kharkiv city planners managed to get as close as possible to the lower limit of the Soviet norms of designing housing estates, providing the maximum amount of living space, with minimal costs for the

construction of cultural and entertainment facilities and consumer services, while remaining within the approved state building codes and sanitary standards.

After the Russo-Ukrainian war, on the basis of the historical and inventory work begun, it will be possible to carry out a multifaceted study, which should include: a detailed inventory of the buildings that have survived, a sociological and demographic study, the development of local safety programs, an analysis of changing intra-city logistics, prospects for economic development and the identification of ecological threats. This study will justify the rationale for preserving the existence of material evidence of each housing estate and its parts, and, if necessary, develop a methodology for the preservation and renovation of Ukraine's mass housing areas. Perhaps, given the scale of the expected urban transformation, Kharkiv could become an innovative urban site for the third time in its history.

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# A STUDY OF THE KHARKIV ARCHITECTURAL AVANT-GARDE

## Challenges of Authenticity Preservation

Kateryna Cherkasova, Olesya Chagovets

**ABSTRACT:** The article addresses the issue of preserving Kharkiv's architectural heritage from the first third of the 20th century. The main focus is on the preservation of authenticity of the early modernist heritage in the context of a crisis situation associated with the overall state of heritage preservation in Ukraine and during active military operations. The research was conducted in the context of the planning development and spatial structure of the Kharkiv historical center and suburbs, where new workers' settlements were formed, as well as considering the architectural layers within the structure of historical districts of Kharkiv. The main objective of the study is to determine the value and authenticity of the architectural heritage of early modernism. The study employed the methods of historical, retrospective, and comprehensive analysis. The general plan of the "Socialist Reconstruction of Kharkiv" from 1931-1933 and the historical-architectural reference plan of Kharkiv from 2019 were analysed as additional sources. The research results provide comprehensive information about the architectural and urban heritage of this period and emphasize the attention to the issue of preservation of authenticity. The conclusions of this work will serve as a basis for further development of specific measures for the conservation, restoration, and preservation of historical monuments in Kharkiv from the first third of the 20th century. The research will also contribute to raising public awareness about the value of early modernist architectural heritage and encourage the implementation of restoration programs to preserve these important landmarks.

**KEYWORDS:** architectural avant-garde, early modernism, authenticity, heritage preservation, 1920s-1930s.

**INTRODUCTION:** The current situation of architectural heritage preservation in Ukraine is characterized as a crisis. The list of architectural and urban planning monuments in Kharkiv includes over 545 objects, of which 100 objects from the first half of the 20th century are classified as individual Constructivism, Post-Constructivism, and Stalinist Art Deco landmarks. For a long time, from the early 1930s to the 1960s, the heritage of the architectural avant-garde suffered the consequences of oblivion and violent rejection. Additionally, the insufficient knowledge of early modernism's experimental construction technologies and non-compliance with restoration requirements have led to challenges in conducting preservation works. Today, the preservation of Ukrainian architectural avant-garde heritage faces additional risks and threats of destruction during periods of active military operations. Therefore, the main challenge lies in preserving the authenticity of Kharkiv's architectural avant-garde.

The current study proposes an analysis of the architectural and urban heritage of Kharkiv from the first third of the 20th century, with the aim of generalizing and investigating issues related to the preservation of authenticity. To achieve this goal, a review of literary sources on the history of Ukrainian architecture has been conducted, including works by architects, art historians, local historians, and historians.<sup>1</sup> The methods of historical, retrospective, and comprehensive analysis have allowed for the development of criteria to assess the historical and cultural value of areas and local objects within the historical environment. Furthermore, the study of materials from the general plan of the "Socialist Reconstruction of Kharkiv" (1931-1933) and the historical-architectural reference plan of Kharkiv (2019)<sup>2</sup> helped to identify many historical buildings that have survived to the present day, with the purpose of their inclusion in the lists of monuments and valuable development objects (Einhorn, 1935). The object of the research



is the architectural and urban heritage of Kharkiv from the first third of the 20th century, specifically the ensembles of the administrative-business center and residential complexes (Cherkasova, 2010).

The research plan included the following tasks:

- the classification of architectural avant-garde heritage objects in Kharkiv based on the degree of authenticity at the object and typological levels, and the degree of urban, historical and cultural value at the morphological level;
- consideration of the monument's preservation level throughout their period of use;
- assessment of historical stratifications and the degree of destruction to determine the preservation of the authenticity of the objects.

The research conclusions offer comprehensive information on the architectural and urban heritage of Kharkiv during the early 20th century and highlight the importance of preserving its authenticity. This study holds significance in developing restoration programs for Kharkiv's monuments from the first third of the 20th century.

### THE ARCHITECTURAL STRATIFICATIONS WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF KHARKIV'S HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The reconstruction of the Old Centre squares in 1925-1930 significantly changed the appearance of the city center. In the central blocks, the Trade Exchange (1925),<sup>3</sup> the Passage shopping complex (1925), the Chemical Building of the Physics and Technology Institute on the University hill (1928), and the Department Store building on Pavlivska Square (formerly Rosa Luxemburg Square) were constructed (Shvydenko, 2020c).<sup>4</sup> The new administrative and business center on Freedom Square (formerly Dzerzhinsky Square) was built outside the visual accessibility zone of the Old Centre. The ensemble of the new administrative center was created according to a unified architectural concept in the 1920s and 1930s. The square ensemble became one of the most unique examples of the Ukrainian architectural avant-garde in terms of architectural and spatial solutions.<sup>5</sup> It had a city-forming significance for the development of the northern part of the Nagirnyi district, as it defined the larger scale of development and the spatial organization of the architectural-planning framework of the area. The fundamental characteristic of urban planning concepts during this time is the idea of development, which reflects the distinctive features of spatial forming, which manifested in the creation of linear and linearly dispersed planning structures.

The territorial development of the working-class suburbs in Kharkiv's industrial districts emerged itself in a diverse range of social housing unit designs. The urban planning ideas of de-urbanization were reflected in the residential

development of 1923-1924 in the creation of workers' settlements. There was a gradual transition from organizing residential settlements near production enterprises to various types of residential neighborhoods: Red Ray settlement (1929-1932, architect H. Vegman); Machine builders settlement (1926-1929, architects M. Zelenin, I. Taranov-Belozorov, V. Bogomolov); New Kharkiv Social City (1929-1932, a team of architects led by P. Alyoshin), Zaderzhpromya Residential District (1928-1933, architects S. Kravets, A. Kogan, P. Frolov, etc.), Sotnia Residential Quarters on Kholodna Hora (1930s), and so on.

The development of city planning in the late 19th to early 20th centuries resulted from the overlay of the old (compact, radial-circular) planning structure and the new linearly dispersed structure, forming a unified structural framework. The territories of Kharkiv's main historical districts, covering the largest concentration of cultural heritage objects, are united within the boundaries of the Central Historical Area as defined by the Historical and Architectural Reference Plan. These districts are surrounded by traditional buildings. An important characteristic of early modernist architecture is the mass character of engineering, which introduced a new typology of residential and public buildings. These include collective housing building with a communal service system, small apartments in the initial series of sectional residential buildings for workers, kindergartens, schools, hospitals, and workers' clubs, which, in most cases, have lost their original function. The initial projects of mass series residential buildings and public buildings were created under experimental programs until the early 1930s. Today, all of them do not comply with the requirements of modern construction norms and regulations regarding dimensions of internal communications, areas, and premises composition.

### RISKS OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING MONUMENTS: LOSSES OF EARLY MODERNISM

Identification and assessment of historical stratifications at the object, typological, and morphological levels help to determine the degree of the monuments' authenticity, which is essential for further research and adaptation to modern use.

At the object level, during the operation of buildings, there are certain losses of stylistic features and spatial form characteristics, namely, the loss of original elements and decorative details, the use of unusual materials (such as granite or plastic), and non-characteristic colours. For example, the telephone exchange building was built on one floor, which led to the loss of the architectural composition (Smolenska, 2015). The Kulinichi café was added to the volume of the Post Office building, which also altered

the shape of the object; the Hihant dormitory building was randomly built up at the ground floor level. One of the potential threats concerning damaged objects due to missile attacks is the risk of repairs being conducted without professional restorers. Monuments that have suffered significant damage during wartime await funding for restoration works. Unfortunately, most of them are not properly preserved, which worsens their condition. Thus, at the object level, there is a risk of changes and distortions in the external appearance during post-war repairs, which may result in the loss of original details and stylistic features.

On a typological level, most monuments of the early modernist period have technical and technological value due to the implementation of the latest construction techniques at that time (large-span slabs in the X-ray Academy building or the Foppl wooden structure in the UPhTI complex) and the rapid development of technical sciences and industrial mechanization. For example, the UPhTI complex included the installation of a Van de Graaff electrostatic generator, mechanization of services in the Post Office building, and the construction of two advanced automatic telephone exchanges. The current state of this equipment can be described as almost lost. The exception is the UPhTI complex, where most of the majority of equipment and machinery have been preserved in their original state.

At the morphological level, many avant-garde architecture objects in Kharkiv underwent reconstruction during the lifetime of their authors. These transformations were caused by a change in ideological course when Constructivism and its ideas became prohibited. The destruction suffered by the city during World War II also contributed to the rapid reconstruction of the city in the forms of Soviet neoclassicism. This reconstruction introduced layers of a different style and had an ensemble character. In 2011, the "Kharkiv Palace" hotel (architect S. Babushkin) was built, which led to the emergence of historical layers of contemporary architecture in Freedom Square (Yanovytskyi, 2015). The same applies to the area near the ATC building, where an office building

was constructed, disrupting the morphology of the street's development. A similar problem can be observed in the Zaderzhpromya district, where objects of contemporary architecture appear, contrasting with the historical residential area in terms of style. As a result of the military aggression, which caused serious damage to avant-garde architectural monuments, a complex situation arose, raising numerous questions regarding the preservation of the integrity of residential architecture ensembles and individual objects of early modernism.

### THE DEGREE OF PRESERVATION AND AUTHENTICITY OF EARLY MODERNISM ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

The study of complexes and ensembles built in the 1920s and 1930s, revealed a high level of authenticity, compositional, and stylistic integrity of the buildings. The sample of objects refers to ensembles and complexes where spatial characteristics serve as a sign of style and possess city-forming significance. The objects were organized according to their significance and cultural value into three categories. The first category of value includes the Freedom Square ensemble, which has been included in the preliminary list of World Heritage sites. The second category encompasses residential neighborhoods of Zaderzhpromya, New Kharkiv Social City, Machine Builders Settlement [FIGURE 01], UPhTI development block, Institute of Radiology building, and the Hihant dormitory complex. The objects of the third category are the urban planning complexes such as Red Ray [FIGURE 02], Red October workers' settlement, Sotnia residential quarter, Kharkiv Locomotive Plant settlement, and the Post Office building. Preserving the urban planning significance of such objects involves considering visual perception of the object and its surroundings, limiting vertical construction in areas of compositional influence, and developing proposals for programs to restore individual objects and the spatial environment.

The ensemble of Freedom Square enriched the compositional structure of Kharkiv's city center and allowed the

01 (a) The builders' machine Settlement. German aerial photograph. © Unknown, 1941. (b) Location Scheme © Authors, 2023. (c) Photo at 2, Morozova Street © Vitchenko, 2009.





02 (a) "The Red Ray" Settlement. German aerial photograph. © Unknown, 1941. (b) Location Scheme © Authors, 2022. (c) Photo at 191, Kharkiv Heroes Avenue. © Kornilov, 2019.

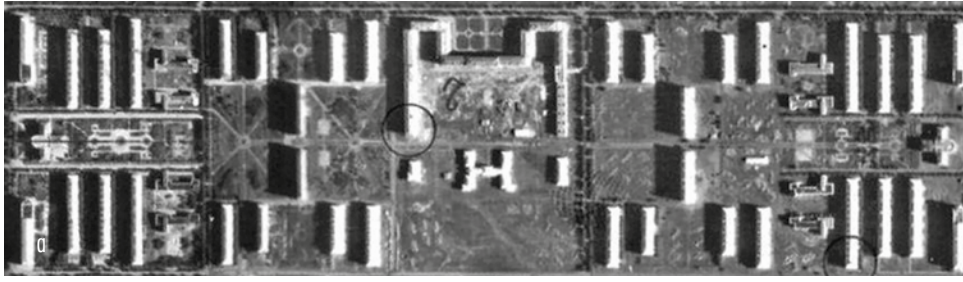


03 (a) The ensemble of Freedom Square (Dzerzhynskoho until 1991). German aerial photograph. © Unknown, 1941. (b) Photo © Johannes Hele, 1942. (c) Photo © sbworld7, 2012-2022.

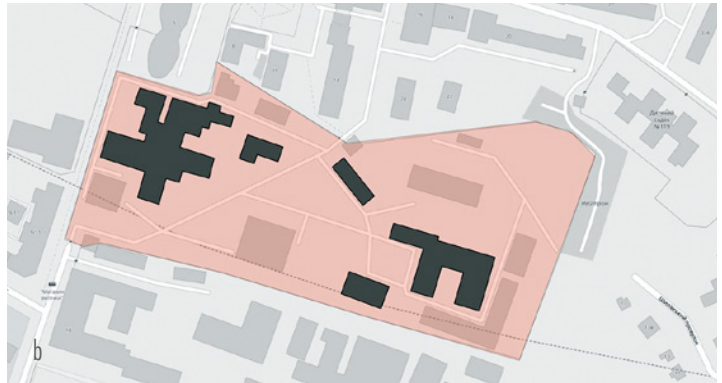
preservation of the historic buildings of the old center without significant reconstruction [FIGURE 03]. During the Second World War, the buildings of the square's ensemble were seriously damaged, which necessitated a large-scale reconstruction in the 1950s. As a result of this reconstruction, the overall Constructivist style of the square was replaced with Soviet Neoclassicism, with the exception of the Derzhprom building, which remained unchanged (Zvonytskyi, 1992). At present, in order to preserve the visual openness, it is necessary to keep the open spaces in the northern and northeast directions free from construction. The risks of losing the spatial composition and integrity of the Freedom Square ensemble require the allocation of a buffer zone in the spatial environment of the square with a special management regime. During the period of Ukraine's independence, there is a tendency

to increase the density of historical buildings in the spatial surroundings of the Freedom Square ensemble with modern architectural objects. In certain areas of protected historical zones, there is an excessive height of buildings, distorting the silhouette characteristics of the construction, disrupting the historical morphology of residential quarters, and compromising the stylistic uniformity of valuable and traditional buildings.

In May 1930, the Kharkiv Tractor Plant settlement (New Kharkiv social city) for 100-120 000 residents was established on the Losivsky site [FIGURE 04]. The construction was carried out based on the principle of residential kombinat, which ensured the social and domestic needs of the residents without the need to leave the district boundaries (Bozhenko, 2021). The residential neighborhoods were located along the Chuguyivska Road in close proximity to



04 (a) "New Kharkiv" Social city. German aerial photograph. © Unknown, 1941. (b) Photo at 3, Peace Lane © Arbit, 2021.



05 (a) Ukrainian Institute of Physics and Technology (UPhTI). © Unknown, 1930s. (b) Location Scheme © Authors, 2023. (c) © Shliomych, 2020.

the city's main enterprise - KhtZ.<sup>6</sup> According to the initial project, 5 blocks were constructed, and their planning structure has remained almost completely intact to this day.

The Ukrainian Physic and Technical Institute (UPhTI) complex is one of the most important scientific heritage sites in Ukraine [FIGURE 05]. The complex was constructed in three stages from 1929 to 1941. The main building holds significant architectural value as an example of Constructivism.

In total, the complex's four buildings represent examples of Constructivist architecture (Kachemtseva et al, 2021). Until the 1990s, the complex remained under restricted access, which facilitated the preservation of nearly the entire area and buildings in their original state. In the 1970s, some laboratories and equipment were relocated to a new complex in Pyatykhatky. The Institute continued to operate at the former site, but the complex gradually suffered from

degradation and the destruction of individual buildings. In 2019, the Museum and Cultural Complex “UPhTI. Kharkiv” was created based on the premises of the Kharkiv Physics and Technology Institute (Melezhyk, 2020).

In 1929, the construction of the Institute of Radiology began according to the design of V. Estrovych [FIGURE 06]. Progressive structural solutions of that time were used in the construction, such as large-span coffered ceilings made of monolithic reinforced concrete. The main façade of the building underwent a cosmetic renovation in 2013 with the replacement of authentic timber windows with double-glazed windows, while preserving the original window division (Semyakin, 2014). The composition of the facades, spatial arrangement, internal layout and structural scheme of the building remained unchanged. The main building of the Radiology Institute is a valuable cultural and architectural asset, thanks to its progressive design solutions, expressive spatial structure, and preservation of authenticity in facade details.

The Hihant dormitory became the starting point for the formation of one of the first student campuses in the USSR [FIGURE 07]. During its initial stage, the building’s facades exhibited the features of Constructivism. The dormitory

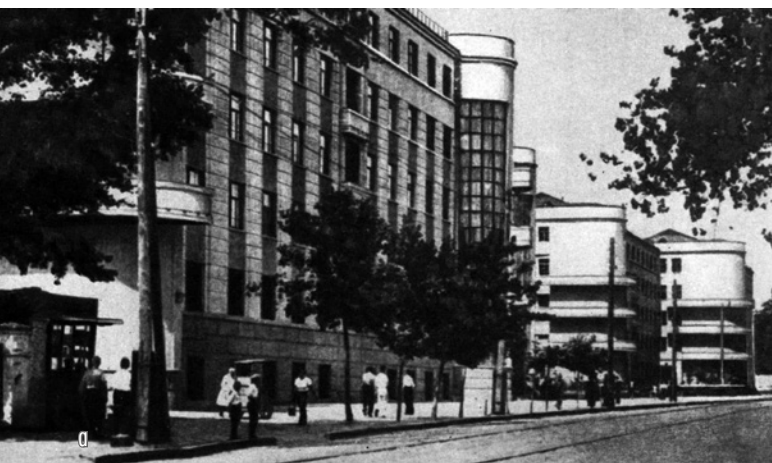
underwent two reconstructions - one in 1950 (led by architect N. Pidhorny) and another in 1957 (led by architect A. Pokorny). These reconstructions resulted in a change of stylistic features from Constructivism to Art Deco on the building’s facades and an optimization of the planning solution. The overall condition of the Hihant, as the main building of the former Kharkiv Technological University student town, is assessed as satisfactory (Akmen, 2020).

In 1930-1931, near Freedom Square, an automatic telephone exchange was constructed (architects P. Frolov, M. Pokorny, Yu. Tsvetkov) [FIGURE 08]. Architectural, structural, and compositional solutions were proposed for the construction, which corresponded to the progressive type of building. In the early 2000s, the building was reconstructed, including the addition of another floor. This led to a change in the original proportions of the building. In addition, modern materials were used to decorate the facades, which were not typical of the period when the building was constructed. However, despite this, the overall image of constructivist architecture was preserved.

The Kharkiv Post Office building is one of the most significant structures of Ukrainian architecture of the 1920s [FIGURE 09]. The Post Office was designed with consideration



06 (a) Institute of Medical Radiology. © Unknown, 1930s. (b) © Motornyi, 2021.



07 (a) Complex of student dormitories «The Hihant». © Unknown, 1930s, from the book *Essays of the Ukrainian SSR Architecture History (Soviet Period)*, 1962. (b) © Nikolsky, 2000s.



08 (a) City telephone exchange building. © Unknown, 1930s, Pshenychnyi Central State Film and Photo Archive of Ukraine. (b) © Chahovets, 2020.



09 (a) The Post Office Building. © Unknown, 1930s. (b) © Chahovets, 2020.



for modern technologies and rationalization of postal services. The project was carried out with the participation of the young architect A. Mordvinov and was recognized as innovative for its architecture and construction ideas that reflected the spirit of avant-garde architecture. The building has almost completely retained its original appearance, but in the 2010s a café was added to the ground floor level, which negatively affected the overall appearance of the building. Additionally, the metal windows of the strip glazing on the facades and along the staircase were replaced.

In the 1920s, the development of new types of housing in Ukraine began, including individual houses and housing blocks with a compact, functional space-planning structure. In Kharkiv, the construction of “worker settlements” started, and brick two-story houses of the Kharkiv Locomotive Plant settlement were built in 1923-1924 based on standard projects by architect V. Trotsenko [FIGURE 10]. The planning and spatial structure of these cottages incorporated features of Ukrainian folk architecture, such as steep roofs, verandas, and balconies. The search for national identity in architecture continued, with a rethinking of folk architectural traditions took place. Today, only nine buildings in the worker settlement remain, and only four of them

have protected status. Despite their protected status, the authenticity of the buildings has not been preserved, as practically all of them have been rebuilt.

The “Red October” settlement is recognized as a valuable object of urban planning heritage and historical urban landscape [FIGURE 11]. The district actively engaged workers of the Southern Railway in the construction of residential cottages based on standard designs of the Derzhstandartbud<sup>7</sup>, which helped speed up construction and save on materials. The main element of the construction was cottages designed by architect A. Langman. The toponymy of this area reflects proletarian ideas, and the streets bear names associated with cooperative building, progress, and rallies. The planning structure of the settlement has remained almost unchanged, preserving its original appearance, although minor alterations have influenced the visual-spatial character of the area (Shvydenko, 2020<sup>9</sup>).

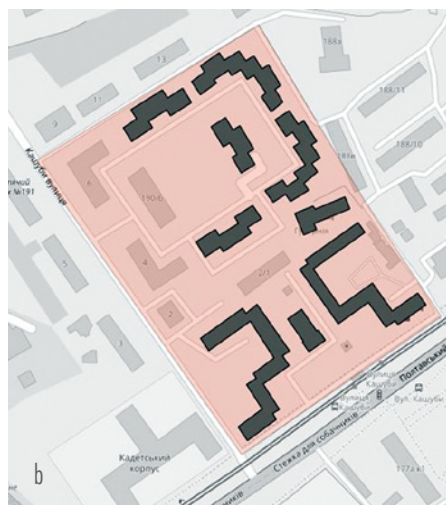
In the district of Holodna Hora, a military garrison was situated, which led to the construction of numerous buildings intended for military personnel. One of these objects, the Sotnia residential quarter, was built in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The planning structure of the quarter has survived almost unchanged. The quarter



10 (a) Residential buildings of the Kharkiv Locomotive Plant. © Unknown, from the book *Essays of the Ukrainian SSR Architecture History (Soviet Period)*, 1962. (b) © Kornilov, 2019.



11 (a) "Red October" Settlement. © From the archive of Kornilov. (b) © Kornilov, 2019.



12 (a) "Sotnia" Residential Quarter. German aerial photograph. © Unknown, 1941. (b) Location Scheme © Authors, 2023. (c) © Chahovets, 2020.

consists of two stylistically distinct parts. The outer part, facing Poltavskyi way, includes two symmetric five-story buildings with pronounced features of Constructivism. The inner part of the quarter consists of 2-3-story buildings that exhibit influences from various styles, including elements of Ukrainian folk architecture and classical architecture (Shvydenko 2020b). In summary, it can be said that the quarter preserves its layout and spatial structure, stylistic features, and compositional peculiarities [FIGURE 12].

## CONCLUSIONS

Special attention was given to the functional adaptation of monuments, analysis of original materials and structures that require preservation. The research has demonstrated that the monuments have a high level of preservation and authenticity, which is important for the integrity of the urban environment. Some objects should be restored to their original appearance. The question of the need to restore the stylistic integrity of the buildings in the circular part of the Freedom Square remains open for discussion.

For the effective functioning of the heritage preservation sector at the local level, the following issues are

relevant: establishing relationships between the professional community, and heritage management over the implementation of the provisions of monument protection legislation. Collaboration with local community associations and private property owners is also crucial. The heritage management system at the local level needs to be reorganised due to the lack of decentralisation processes and the establishment of local management institutions for the protection and restoration of monuments. Significant processes of decay of heritage objects in Kharkiv and the region require restoration and regeneration efforts for the historical environment, with the initial focus on determining the degree of preservation and integrity, particularly for historical buildings, architecture and urban planning, and valuable components of the existing urban environment.

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## ENDNOTES

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- 5 Following the conference "Constructivism in Ukraine" (2004), dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the Derzhprom, it was decided to include it in the preliminary list of World Heritage Sites.
- 6 KhTZ - short for Kharkiv Tractor Plant
- 7 Derzhstandartbud - short for State Standard Construction Committee

# ARCHIVAL CHALLENGES FOR THE VAN NELLE FACTORY

## Documenting twenty Years of a World Heritage Property's Redevelopment

Edward van Hevele, Wessel de Jonge

**ABSTRACT:** Marking the anniversary of the redevelopment of the Van Nelle Factory in Rotterdam, the related project archive was formally transferred to the Rotterdam City Archive in order to enable proper archival conservation and public accessibility of this essential documentation. This article sheds light on the documentation and redevelopment process of a modern World Heritage (WH) site and on the role of archives as an example for other protected heritage projects or sites.

**KEYWORDS:** Van Nelle Factory, Rotterdam City Archive, documentation, archival challenges, redevelopment.



01 Van Nelle Factory after conversion and conservation.  
© Fas Keuzenkamp, 2007, coll. WDJArchitecten.

**INTRODUCTION:** The Van Nelle Factory was designed by the architects Brinkman and Van der Vlugt, and gradually completed between 1928-31 [FIGURE 01]. The redevelopment project, involving the conservation and adaptive reuse of all ten buildings and the outdoor space, started late 1998.<sup>1</sup> The aim of this endeavor, as conceived by its spiritual father Eric Gude (1953-2018), was to create a hub for the creative industry of Rotterdam: the 'Van Nelle Ontwerp Fabriek' (Design Factory). By September 1999 a Master plan for the redevelopment was drawn up by the architect Wessel de Jonge. Since then, his office was in charge of all conservation works, the conversion of two of the buildings, and of coordinating the adaptive reuse projects by fellow architects for the other heritage buildings on site. The property was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2014.

## COORDINATED PROJECT

In addition to providing historic building surveys and coordinating the redevelopment project, the architect also had an on-going and instrumental role as a member of the site's Management Committee. This committee, which also involved the owner, the municipal and the national heritage agencies, was in charge of supervising the sub-projects for the various buildings, as well as all subsequent modifications when requested by new tenants or the maintenance team. As a result, between 1998 and 2018, when a shift in ownership and management took place, a vast amount of documentation was produced and recorded, ranging from historic research reports and design studies, to committee meeting reports, building permit applications, zoning plan amendments, project administration and all related correspondence. These documents remained in the archives of the architecture firm, partly due to a legal obligation to keep project and construction documents for at least ten years. Upon the conclusion of their involvement with the project, it became opportune to hand over the archive to allow for more professional care and to ensure long-term accessibility as a documentation of the redevelopment process. This endeavor proved to be challenging, considering the intricate nature and distinctive characteristics of the project and the volume of the related archive.

## MODERN HERITAGE ARCHIVES

Historic archives related to 20th century historic buildings mostly differ from those of older buildings in their volume and particular character.<sup>2</sup> This is mainly due to the introduction of building legislation and permit procedures<sup>3</sup> and to the ever-growing breakdown of responsibilities in the building process, both of which required increasing communication through drawings and other documents. As a result of the many actors in the design and building

process, documentation may be dispersed among the various contributors to the project. Information may be found in municipal archives, at architecture firms, technical consultants, suppliers, construction companies and with clients. The period in which the Van Nelle Factory originates, is also characterized by the rise of photography and film. The company had the construction of the buildings and the final results extensively documented by professional photographers and cinematographers. The ample availability of films and photographic documentation is another particularity of many 20th century historic building archives.

Such an abundance of information makes it difficult to get an overview of the archival material. Often it is not so much a matter of where and how to find information, but where to start, how to set about it, and what choices to make. The case of the Van Nelle Factory was no exception to the rule but fortunately the company itself had kept an extensive historic archive of thousands of drawings, documents and photographs that became available for the preparatory research. Around 2005, upon completion of the first phase of the redevelopment project, this Van Nelle Historic Archive had already been donated to the Rotterdam City Archive.

## VAN NELLE REDEVELOPMENT ARCHIVE

Due to the appointment of a coordinating architect, the documentation of the redevelopment project was less dispersed than could have been expected. The architect's project archive was quite comprehensive but was not classified and access for further study could not be provided by the office. Moreover, it took up a lot of space while archival storage standards could not be met. The 25th Anniversary of the redevelopment proved to be the right momentum to also find a more suitable home for the archive. With the municipality of Rotterdam, as one of the site-holders of the WH site, a solution was found to reorganize and move the archive.

Before delving into the issues raised by the conceptual organisation of this archive, it was crucial to identify the specific objectives related to it. One of the main reasons for opening this archive was accessibility for researchers and architects, for example in the context of historic building surveys in the event of a possible future restoration or redevelopment. Moreover, it is in the interest of future maintenance because, besides the rationale for certain decisions, the documents also contain building specifications with details on materials and finishes, product codes and so on.

A second important objective was the documentation obligation that comes with UNESCO World Heritage status, which requires information about the site to be made available to researchers and the public at large. Emphasis

is not only placed on the history of the site, but also on the traceability of the strategies that informed the 1998-2018 restoration and redevelopment. In this case, this obligation lies with the two site-holders: the municipality and the new owner. This prompted the municipality to enter into a partnership with the architect to secure the archive.

## THE CHOICE FOR AN ARCHIVE

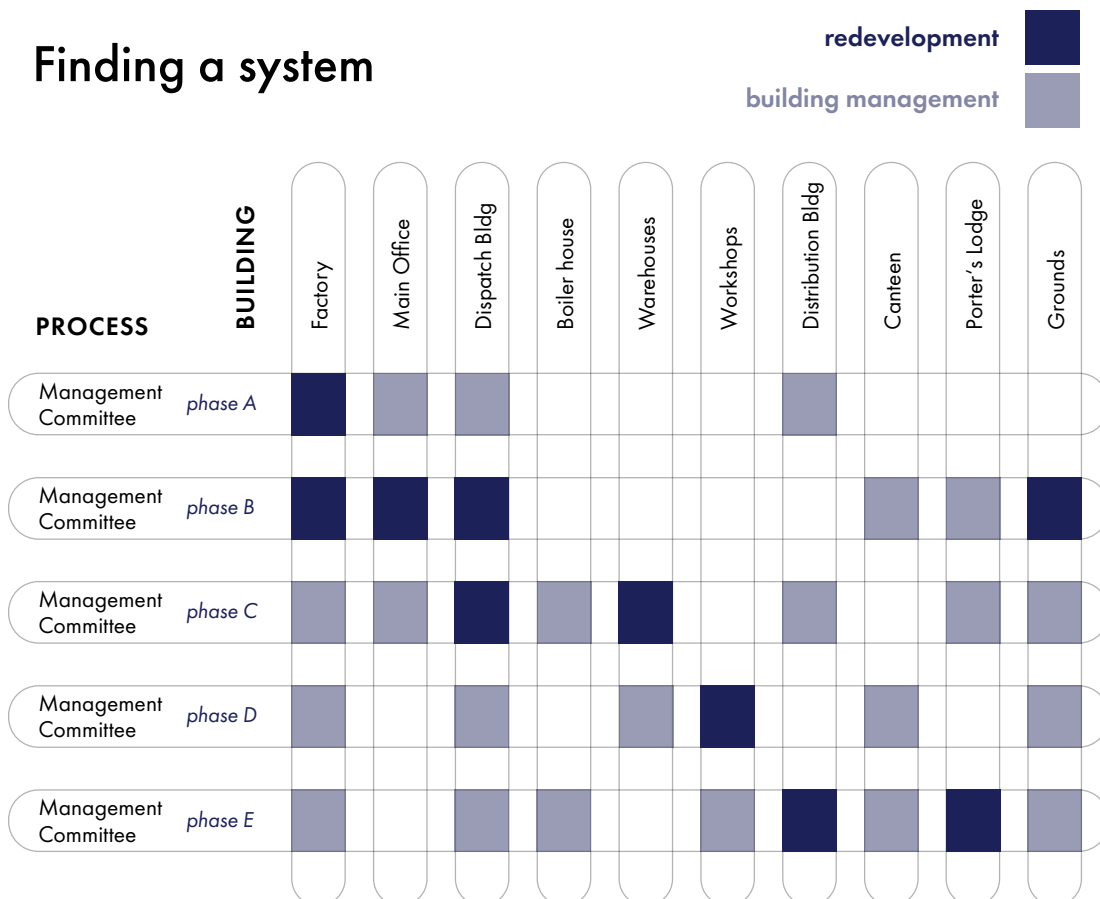
One of the first challenges is determining to which archive the material should ideally be transferred. In this case the choice was somewhat obvious, given the municipality's involvement and the fact that the Van Nelle Historic Archive was already kept in the City Archive. The imperative remains to consolidate the information. Still, this decision needs consideration as archival institutes have different interests and emphases. For instance, an architectural archive such as the one of the former Netherlands Architecture Institute<sup>4</sup> focusses on intermediate products of the architect in the design process, such as drawings on transparent paper, sketches on tracing paper and so on, reflecting design ideas, even if they have not necessarily led to an outcome. The City Archive on the other hand attaches great importance to precisely those documents that have led to a decision or process, by them referred to as 'transaction documents'. This led to a decision to leave some of the early sketches outlining the redesign project in the architect's archives that are more design-focussed.

## FINDING AN ARCHIVAL CONCEPT

Although architects have no legal obligation on how to structure their archives, it is obviously invaluable to contribute to the story and essential for them to recognize this significance, even if this is more of a moral obligation. However, architects are not used to process an archive to this end. Working with heritage buildings, they usually find themselves on the other side of the process where they have to dig into such archives themselves. One of the challenges that was met, was finding a way to make information traceable in files that were previously organized according to the different tasks assigned to the architect over time.

Some of the material was categorized according to the ten different buildings within the Van Nelle complex, while other documents related to procedures of the site's integrated building management. Documents that related to structures and others to processes—or both—caused overlap and dilemmas. For example, from an architect's perspective it seems logical to order the documents building by building, particularly in the first phase when the project primarily focussed on the main factory block. But as the supervision of the project continued for two decades, eventually most building-related documents became integrated as well with the Management Committee's reports, with essential information on several sub-projects in parallel [FIGURE 02].

## Finding a system



02 Schematic overview of the overlap of building-related and process-related files, for which an archival system needed to be found.  
© WDJArchitecten, 2024.



03 The archive involved various types of hard copies to be processed. © WDJArchitecten, 2023.



04 Discussion how to organize the diverse material, involving historic building surveyor Suzanne Fischer (right), Edward van Hevele (center) and Wessel de Jonge. © WDJArchitecten, 2023.

In an effort to downsize the archive, it was considered to identify duplicate documents, comparing process-related with building-related files, and perhaps discard the duplicates in the meeting reports. The archivists disagreed since splitting up these reports may have made the documents meaningless, whilst these meetings were crucial in the decision-making process with direct implications on the design choices and interventions. Upon consideration, it was decided to keep the reports in their entirety, as a 'customised' solution. An additional list indicating in which reports certain buildings are addressed allows searches by sub-project.

Other tools to regain an overview of the various processes and sub-projects include timelines of the subsequent assignments, and mind-maps of the various stakeholder networks. Just as well, this allows single documents to be understood within their context and added to the proper file.

### DUPLICATES IN MULTIPLE CONTEXTS

Inevitably, the archive of the 1998-2018 redevelopment partly also overlapped with the Van Nelle Historic Archive that was donated to the City Archive before. The latter has been a primary source for series of historic surveys, and was 'quoted' extensively in the preparatory research reports for each of the buildings that were produced as part of the redevelopment process. Again, the question was raised whether such quotations should be respected and preserved, or rather discarded to reduce the volume of the archive. The architects involved were inclined to decide for the latter since the preservation of duplicates seemed hardly relevant to them. The archivists' advice to respect the integrity of the documents and accept possible duplicates elsewhere in the archive was again prompted by their focus on the decision-making process and eventually agreed to be followed.

The discussion about documents appearing as copies within multiple processes triggered a further debate on duplicates. While building processes since the early 20th century are often characterized by the increasing

replication of drawings into series of prints and textual documents into photocopies, there is still a tendency to keep 'the original'—even though their preservation may pose significantly greater challenges in conservation, when we just think of original sketches on tracing paper. More and more we find 'duplicates' that show essential additional information, for instance prints of drawings that have been used in discussions with the client, containing annotations by hand that were crucial to the implementation of the design. With that comes the difficulty of determining what is actually significant and what is negligible [FIGURE 03, FIGURE 04].

When digital resources are concerned this requires further discussion at another level. Again, in order to cut down the volume of the archive, the architect offered digitized versions of many documents. However, as an archival institute subject to national law, the City Archive had to observe digitalization standards that the architect's office could not meet. This made an amount of digitized information unacceptable, so no other option remained but to transfer these as physical documents as well.

In addition, the Van Nelle redevelopment archive included a huge amount of digitally-created material, such as CAD drawings, e-mails, digital reports and so on. This



05 Re-organized documentation before shipment to the archive. © WDJArchitecten, 2023.



06 Example of the photographic documentation in the archive, showing the 'automatic' self-closing mechanism of a fire door. © Fas Keuzenkamp, 2007, coll. WDJArchitecten.

resulted in a diversity of document types that have been transferred ranging from paper and blueprints to floppy disks and CD-Roms. Digital documents were transferred from the architect's digital archives to external hard-drives and handed over for further processing by the City Archive.<sup>5</sup>

## COPYRIGHT

The involvement of the project's property developers and other contributors such as historic building surveyors and architects of sub-projects have been very rewarding. Not only did they possess complementary archival material, their insights were also helpful for its correct interpretation. This led some of them to add documents from their own archives. A special donation was the visual documentation of the redevelopment process by photographer Fas

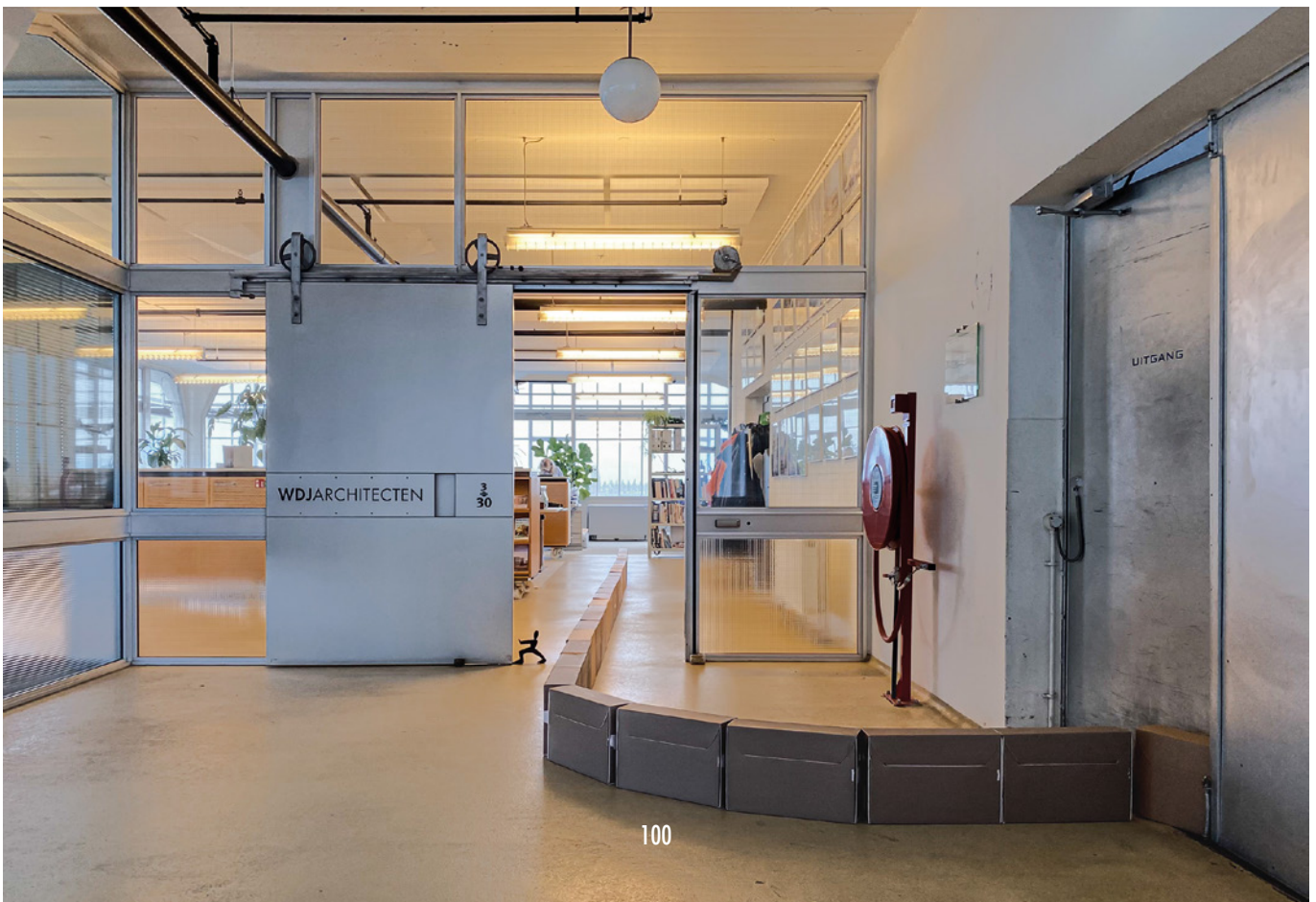
Keuzenkamp [FIGURE 06]. This came with an added complexity regarding the various copyrights and licences associated with transferring an archive of multiple authors. Following legal advice, the archives of some other contributors were officially incorporated as designated 'sub-archives' within the redevelopment archive. Separate licence agreements have been drawn up for the donated photographic documentation and the design documents transferred from CE-design, the architect of one of the sub-projects.

## CONCLUSION

All things considered, we may conclude that processing and categorizing such archives to these ends is not self-evident for architects. Soon after starting the work, it became clear how important it is that the reorganization of documents is done in close coordination with the receiving archive. Although, in spite of this, rookie mistakes may still have slipped into the project, this sharing of knowledge has been crucial. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge one's own professional limitations and to understand what should be entrusted to the expertise of the archivist, who will be responsible for the final archiving. Moreover, it is important to reflect on the degree of distance one can take when assessing material one has created or brought about oneself. Allowing different perspectives is helpful when the architect may be so much involved in the project that it is difficult to look at it at a higher level of abstraction.

Finally, the time commitment of such an archival project

07 Symbolic departure of the files leaving the WDJArchitecten office in the Van Nelle Design Factory, on their way to the City Archive. © WDJArchitecten, 2023.



should not be underestimated. In this case, it took three months to process the archive and reduce it by approximately 30 percent. This implies that it is a costly endeavor that would not have been possible without the support of the municipality.

A question remains whether the preservation of such an archive should depend on the moral responsibility of those involved in the project. New construction projects in our country are subject to an archival retention obligation by law of only ten years. For restoration projects, the question is whether that is long enough, and whether documentation on research, conservation methods and interventions will not be lost as a result. For long-term adaptive reuse projects, this obligation is not sufficient either. As it becomes increasingly easy to store information digitally, it may be time for a long-term archival retention obligation for such projects.

After processing the files and documentation in the fall of 2023 [FIGURE 07], the redevelopment archive was officially handed over to the Rotterdam City Archive on January 15, 2024. On that occasion, the archive was registered as the Van Nelle Ontwerp Fabriek Archief, in memory of Eric Gude.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The original design and the redevelopment of the factory are extensively covered in 'Van Nelle. Monument in Progress', Rotterdam 2005.
- <sup>2</sup> See W. de Jonge and H.J. Henket: 'Historic building survey on Modern Movement buildings', chapter 2.2 in 'Sanatorium Zonnestraat. The history and restoration of a modern monument', Rotterdam 2010.
- <sup>3</sup> In the Netherlands, building permit procedures were introduced with the 1901 Housing Act.
- <sup>4</sup> Today the New Institute or NI in Rotterdam.
- <sup>5</sup> More on the challenges of digital archiving from: <https://nieuweinstituut.nl/en/articles/digitalisering-architectuurpraktijk>

**Edward van Hevele** graduated in architecture from KU Leuven, Belgium, in 2022. He is currently completing his 'Master of Conservation of Monuments and Sites' at KUL. As part of his traineeship at WDJArchitecten in the fall of 2023, he has been in charge of processing the Van Nelle redevelopment archive for transfer to the Rotterdam City Archive.

**Wessel de Jonge** is a professor at TU Delft and an architect practicing in heritage preservation in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. His office WDJArchitecten has been in charge of the conservation and the coordination of the adaptive reuse projects for the Van Nelle Design Factory from 1998-2018.

# THE ROLE OF CITY PARTNERSHIPS IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF UKRAINE

Oliver Schruoffeneger

In 2015, there were around 80 city partnerships between Germany and Ukraine. In addition to the major partnerships between Berlin, Munich, and Leipzig with Kyiv or Berlin and Nuremberg with Kharkiv<sup>1</sup>, these were mostly partnerships between smaller municipalities with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants. Many of these partnerships were very old and had their basis in the old structures between the Soviet Union and the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). Only a few new partnerships were formed after the fall of the Berlin Wall and Ukraine's independence in 1991. Others resulted from the old peace movement in the West, which organized active support after the Chernobyl accident with vacation stays for Ukrainian children in Germany in conjunction with direct humanitarian and medical support.

This resulted in very different approaches and structures of cooperation. While many of the old partnerships were based on personal friendships that had developed over many years and focused on personal exchange, others were based on structural cooperation, such as the "German House" in Kharkiv, where the city partnership with Nuremberg found a home, but where culture and language courses were also anchored. Others, such as the city partnership between Munich and Kyiv, had a thematic focus (e.g. LGBT).

The situation changed abruptly after the Maidan Uprising and the Russian attack on Ukraine in 2014. Ukraine suddenly became the focus of European and German institutions. Support programs were launched in almost all policy areas. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) rediscovered Ukraine, as did the Federal Foreign Office (AA). It was not uncommon for city partnership activists to meet twice within one month, once at an AA congress and then at a BMZ congress. And this was not only the case in Germany but also in other Western European countries. However, things did not go as smoothly as desired: in 2015 the BMZ launched a city partnership support program that required the signature of the Ukrainian city administration. This represented the old structures rather than the awakening of civil society after the Maidan. As a result, it was not always clear whether the newly emerging projects were really promoting democratization or merely offering old wine in new bottles.

At the same time, however, there were, of course, many programs that directly addressed civil society in Ukraine and very quickly overwhelmed the activists there. Not only did the various projects need to be structured and organized, but the many groups of visitors also had to be accompanied, senior experts came and tried to explain how the world works, and many things came to nothing.



The situation changed abruptly with the Russian invasion in February 2022. In 2022, 80 city partnerships were active, and after the outbreak of war, 41 more announced their interest.<sup>2</sup> Suddenly, everyone was needed. The organization of humanitarian and medical transports and the accommodation of refugees were all new fields of activity for the existing town twinning partnerships. It was not always easy to reconcile the expectations of the Ukrainian partners and the German associations and municipalities. The Ukrainian side also asked for weapons and protective clothing and could not understand why many town-twinning activists did not see this as their task.

At the same time, the interest of German municipalities grew, and many new town-twinning partnerships were established to support the new partners in the war situation. However, it is slowly becoming clear that there must be permanent, functioning structures that plan the strategic reconstruction of Ukraine together. Even though the war is still ongoing, there are first discussions about how to rebuild the destroyed infrastructure and the role of town twinning in this. These are often conducted between the municipalities involved.

National governments controlling these processes is not yet apparent and would indeed be unusual. However, some foundations need to be laid at this level. A good example is the funding programs offered by the BMZ as part of the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW). Since 2015, a network of formalized and non-formalized municipal partnerships has been promoted. The city of Berlin and its districts have formed eight municipal and two operator partnerships, such as, for example, Berlin Steglitz-Zehlendorf with Kharkiv-Industrialnyi.<sup>3</sup> The program can be used to finance vehicles and technical equipment for municipalities in Ukraine. The individual projects are handled by the respective city partnerships, which are also responsible for transportation and logistics.

It must be clarified what role the existing town-twinning arrangements should play in reconstruction and what role civil society structures can play in this. It must also be clarified what is being funded and the framework conditions for funding.

These questions naturally arise when rebuilding the many destroyed buildings and the transport infrastructure. Of particular interest here is the tension between the largely original reconstruction of the cities, which have often drawn their atmosphere and uniqueness from their architectural substance. Or is it about modernity, the digital and climate-neutral city? Reconstruction can be an opportunity to build one of the most modern urban structures in Europe—analogue to the constructivist project of the mid-1920s. But must that also mean that the cities will look completely different? What is the model for reconstruction? Does each city decide for itself, perhaps in exchange with the partner cities, or will there be national guidelines and specifications? This discussion must be held, and funding programs and partnership projects must be aligned with it.

The beauty, uniqueness and radical nature of many Ukrainian cities make it worth taking a closer look at the future image of the city. One aim of the Russian invasion was to wipe out Ukrainian culture, including urban development and building culture. This may not succeed.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 BMZ country list of partnerships. Intermunicipal relations between Germany and Ukraine (Status: February 23, 2024). <https://skew.engagement-global.de/Liste-deutsch-ukrainischer-kommunalbeziehungen.html>.
- 2 Schulze, S. (July 6, 2022). Speech by Federal Minister Svenja Schulze at the networking meeting with German and Ukrainian municipalities in Berlin. <https://www.bmz.de/de/aktuelles/reden/ministerin-svenja-schulze/220706-rede-schulze-kommunen-116616>.
- 3 Crawford, C. E. (2018). From Tractors to Territory: Socialist Urbanization through Standardization. *Journal of Urban History*, 44(1), 54-77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144217710233>

**Oliver Schruoffeneger** is a German political scientist and politician of the party Bündnis 90/Die Grünen Berlin. He served as a district councilor and a member of the Berlin state parliament. He was leading the district department for urban development, building, and the environment in Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf from 2016 and since 2021 he is district councilor for the environment and public space, among others.

### European Cooperation with BHROX bauhaus reuse and New European Bauhaus

— The District Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf department for urban development, building, and the environment is supporting and cooperating partner of the “BHROX bauhaus reuse” center and laboratory for sustainable urban development in Berlin. With BHROX as official member of the “New European Bauhaus” (NEB), the district is engaged in the newly founded NEB-Lab on the transnational development and heritage of Modernism, with special focus on Central and Eastern Europe, called “ETOM NEB Lab”. The Lab is based on the initiative “ETOM – European Triennial of Modernism”, aiming to foster the cross-sectoral collaboration between NGOs, cultural institutions, municipal and governmental organizations, especially to maintain the awareness and protection of the modern built heritage.



BHROX at Ernst Reuter Platz, Berlin.  
© Ken Schluchtmann, 2021.



Exhibition at BHROX. © Michael Setzpfandt,  
2022.

# BOOKS, REVIEWS, RESEARCH AND EXHIBITIONS

## REVIEW



### BEING A UKRAINIAN ARCHITECT DURING WARTIME ESSAYS, ARTICLES, INTERVIEWS, AND MANIFESTOS

2024  
IEVGENIIA GUBKINA

Ukraine has become the headlines in news media since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. The headlines raise questions about grain ships, the Wagner terror organisation, about Kim Jong Un and Vladimir Putin meeting, the uranium shells, and about thousands of children abducted from Ukraine and forcibly taken to Russia. The news continues: tens of thousands of people have been killed, historic buildings are being destroyed or added to endangered heritage lists. It is an entire world changing: the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says that over six million Ukrainian refugees have been recorded as being globally displaced (as at September 2023). In the midst of brutal war, how to make sense of a collapsing work? How to move from the headlines into the stories of the people?

Architect Ievgeniia Gubkina does so in her powerful and insightful book *Being a Ukrainian Architect During Wartime: Essays, Articles, Interviews, and Manifestos*. Gubkina humanises the suffering of the Ukrainian people by

writing a different kind of history. It is a history unseen in the big news headlines and the tragic numbers of millions of people; it is a history narrated with a great sense of respect and dignity.

*Being a Ukrainian Architect During Wartime* is a deeply moving account about the horrors of war in Ukraine from an architect, writer and educator whose life has been transformed by these harsh realities both in Ukraine and abroad. These realities are often muted and untold when we hear about refugees and displaced communities when they arrive to new home countries. Gubkina urges us to look harder and to enable a new infrastructure of solidarity where history is written by those whose lives have been impacted by war so that we are closer to the realities of other people. In a section titled *Unseen Realities: Let History Be Told by the Victims*, Gubkina writes:

My reality is my substantially destroyed home city of Kharkiv. For many years I acted as a guide for hundreds and thousands of people to this city..... My world, my reality, is being destroyed, bombed, exterminated,

erased, exploded, demolished, deconstructed, and killed, along with my home city of Kharkiv.

I arrived to Gubkina's writing earlier this year when Michal Murawski (University College London) invited Gubkina and me, as someone who has been forcibly displaced from Syria for twelve years, to have a conversation about our books. Gubkina read my book *Domicide: Architecture, War and the Destruction of Home in Syria*, and I have read hers. I was impressed by the words of Gubkina whose pain has been transformed to me throughout her writing. Our conversation has been poignant as we both write and grieve our beloved cities. Yet, a dialogue like this has allowed me to get closer to the human suffering in Ukraine.

Gubkina humanizes and individualizes the suffering in Ukraine with her eloquent and fierce voice that allows readers to rethink research of cities and war. She does so by asking the right questions at the right moments of history, and by keeping her emotions and realities at the heart of her writing even at times when some academic and architectural circles would expect contributions that are not 'too personal'. As Gubkina strongly says:

Emotions are part of my work. I'm not trying to manipulate them, just to be responsible towards reality. We censor ourselves far too often. There was recently a discussion at one of



Maslovsky apartment building (1911; architect: Moisey Meletinsky, Kharkiv). This building was destroyed by a Russian missile strike on 14 March 2022. © Pavlo Dorohoi, 2022.

the German universities about inviting Ukrainian academics to a panel, and someone said, 'Maybe we'll wait another two or three years because Ukrainians are far too emotional now.'

As we live in a world where many cities are in ruins due to human-made destruction, as in Iraq and Yemen, and also due to natural catastrophes, as what we have just seen in Morocco and Libya, how much do we need to open up dialogues across geographies? How urgent it is to unpack this word that has turned into a word of our times: 'reconstruction'?

Being a Ukrainian Architect During Wartime is an essential book for anyone interested in the question of reconstruction. It offers a painful account about the loss of cities, and Russia's destruction of Ukrainian heritage and Putin's efforts to erase peoples' material culture, their achievements, their everyday life, and above all, their presence in their own country. This is a timely and a must-read book.

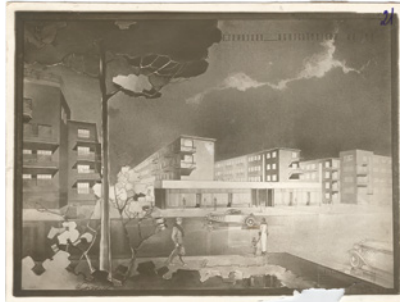
Ammar Azzouz

## RESEARCH

### DIPROMISTO: THE FIRST AND POSSIBLY THE LAST PROJECT INSTITUTE IN UKRAINE

DIPROMISTO is the first project institute in Ukraine, established in Kharkiv in 1930. At the beginning of its existence, DIPROMISTO developed the technical and economic foundations of urban planning and the first set of standards for the development of Ukrainian cities. Until 1950, it was the only institute in Ukraine that was engaged in scientific research. DiIPROMISTO also holds a special place in the history of Ukrainian architecture due to comprising the largest number of branches across all of Ukraine (Kherson, Sumy, Lutsk, Lviv etc.). Nowadays, DIPROMISTO is going through very hard times. At the same time, Ukraine is facing enormous challenges regarding future reconstruction after the war. Will the previous experience of one of the most prominent project institutes be useful in the future, or will it also be liquidated, and, like 100 years ago,

will the entire state's architectural and construction system have to be recreated from the ground up? This paper will outline the history of DIPROMISTO from 1930 to the present day and raise a series of relevant questions about its place in Ukrainian history and its potential future.



Perspective image of the residential district in Gorlivka (Donbas), 1930s. © Image courtesy of Alex Bykov, 2024.

Alex Bykov

## RESEARCH



### POST-WAR URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF LARGE-SCALE MASS HOUSING ESTATES (LHE) OF THE 1980s

The research aims to analyze transformational strategies for the regeneration of LHE in Ukraine and East Germany and to propose ideas for the redefinition of mass housing estates in post-war Ukraine as resilient and sustainable urban areas. This research is proposed based on a detailed study of selected LHE in East Germany—in Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden—and Ukraine—in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Lviv. The main tasks are to compare the conditions of LHE development in Ukraine and Germany, to identify the morphological, programmatic, and spatial changes, and to propose a list of changes in urban planning activities for effective post-war regeneration in Ukraine.

Nadiia Antonenko

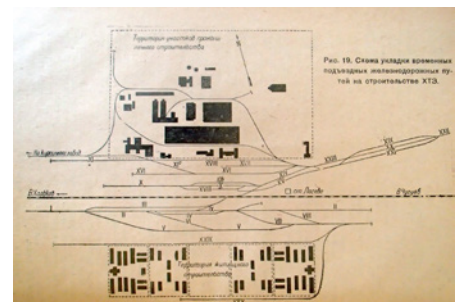
## BOOK CHAPTER

### THE FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF FOREIGN SPECIALISTS IN THE SOVIET INDUSTRY IN THE 1920 AND 1930S: THE CASE OF EASTERN UKRAINE

This chapter of the book *Detroit-Moscow-Detroit: An Architecture for Industrialization, 1917-1945*, co-edited by Jean-Louis Cohen, Christina E. Crawford, and Claire Zimmerman, MIT Press, 2023, unfolds the participation of foreign specialists in the development of industrial plants in Eastern Ukraine during the 1920s-1930s and focuses specifically on Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia. A significant gap was left in Eastern Ukraine's documented history concerning the contribution of foreign specialists to its industrialization during the first five-year plans. The chapter is based on the archival documents preserved in the collections of American and Ukrainian Libraries and investigates the accurate history of early Soviet industrialization.



DniproHES, a hydropower station on the Dnipro River in Zaporizhzhia, 1927-1932. © Chabanyuk, 2017.



Plan of Kharkiv Tractor Plant. © Baltuzevich, Opyt i uroki stroitel'stva KhTZ (Moscow: Gosstroizdat, 1932), p. 34.

Oksana Chabanyuk

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## EXHIBITION

### FEMALE ARCHITECTS WHO BUILT THE CITY OF RIVNE (UKRAINE)

The exhibition (June 2023) was dedicated to female architects' contribution to Rivne's environment formation in the 1960s-1980s. As in other cities of Ukraine, under the conditions of total typification, the work on the spatial planning composition of new urban districts remained the only tool for creating expressive urban landscapes. Criticized for their



Main hall of the exhibition. © Olga Mykhaylyshyn, 2023.

monotony and vagueness of image, building complexes and architectural ensembles of that time attract attention today due to the integrity of the formed space and purity of the modernist forms, illustrating the view of architects on the image of contemporary cities.

Olga Mykhaylyshyn

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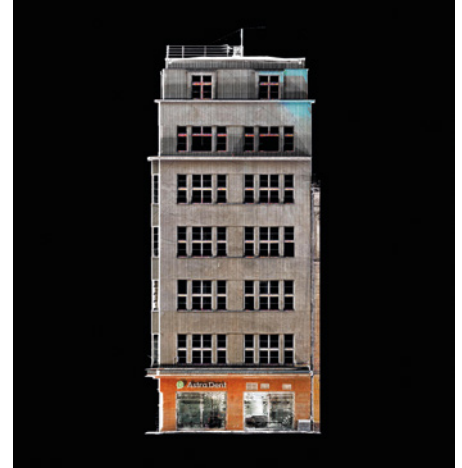
## RESEARCH

### LVIV MODERNISM PROJECT

#### DIGITAL PRESERVATION OF ARCHITECTURE AND MEMORY

"Lviv. Architecture of Modernism" is a project which documents interwar modernist architecture and investigates the epoch through its materiality. Modernist buildings and artefacts are the only records of the 1920s and 1930s in Lviv, as the city lost 90% of its population after WWII. Based on this project, the initiative "Saving Objects and Stories of the Modernist Period in Ukraine" was established in 2023 at ETH Zurich to document modernist heritage, which

is now under the combined threats of disrepair and war, using 3D scanning and building research. Within the initiative, Ukrainian architecture students were trained in scanning and research and scanned five buildings in Lviv.



Cover: a screenshot of the 3D model of the Trade Unions' Building (Lviv, Ukraine) made by Skeiron and Kharkiv School of Architecture. © Myroslava Liakhovych, 2023.

Myroslava Liakhovych

## ACTIVATING TRANS-EUROPEAN MODERNISM

## The ETOM NEB-Lab for the New European Bauhaus and the ETOM – European Triennial of Modernism

The collaborative trans-European dimension of Modernism engenders particularly three huge potentials – especially exploring the developments beyond east and West dichotomies: first, a scope of incredibly rich and diverse modern cultural heritage, second the vital realm and diversity of historic protagonists as well as of current actors, topics, and formats and, third, its fruitful relevance and diverse perspectives for contemporary challenges and opportunities.

And yet these potentials lack behind to be unlocked, based on knowledge, exchange, and joint projects, across nationally, disciplinary, and sectoral borders. The knowledge has been growing, dark spots became tendentially enlightened in the recent years, but still leave tremendous uncovered and unpersuaded topics and sub-topics remaining. However, the need for increasing knowledge goes along with even more major lacks which need to be transformed into their contrary – naming three As: due to raising activity, raising awareness, and raising appreciation (AAA).

These to be unlocked potentials and lacks addresses the ETOM initiative and the new ETOM NEB-Lab, not only initially with focus on Central Europe, from north to south along the former Iron Curtain. Not least it is the commitment to overcome the outdated but still lasting East-West divide, to emphasize on the special role of the region for the European idea and to foster transnational societal coherence, based

on the resilience of modern values and cultural cooperation.

Taking up the enrichment of knowledge and raising of AAA faces common and different local, national, and international circumstances. The answer to this needs of increment and sustainment certainly is represented by the trinity of capacity building, co-creation, and communication (CCC) and transnational, transectoral, and transdisciplinary (TTT) collaboration.

The successful rise of activity firstly tackles the dedicated actor's engagement of each country, including to provide informative and interactive offers across target groups, aiming to speed up getting into action as well as to maintain the pursuit of topics and collaborations in the long run. The rise of awareness is based on a middle term approach, addressing different interests, incentives, hurdles, and sensitiveness to the target-groups of the national, and vice versa the foreign or international discourse and views. The rise of appreciation calls for the long-term approach, as well of certain differences of the target groups' national or international relations but aiming on a much more widely change of dominant perception or valuation.



Conference "Convergences and Divergences" – ETOM and Pilecki-Institute, Berlin 2023 © Photos: Pilecki-Institute, Grzegorz Karkoszka (collage ETOM, buschfeld.com)

As response to this goals the ETOM NEB-Lab builds for a circular triennial ecosystem to bear and maintain plural collaboration in CCC. The concept of the ETOM ecosystem and the triennial rhythm is to track four parallel objectives for cross-sectoral capacity building, transdisciplinary research, co-creative development and realization of transnational projects, and the recurring triennial trans-European and decentralized ETOM festival.

The partnership follows a strictly transnational set-up of heterogeneous backgrounds and sectoral profession, with already more than 40 partners including around 10 official NEB community members, from 15 countries, primary from Central Europe, from Baltic to Balkan: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Germany, The Netherlands, Czech Republic, Belgium, France, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, and North Macedonia.

The prior aim is not on connecting national umbrella associations, the objective is to interconnect local plus transnational structures in trans-European collaboration. The model is to include partners in particular across three sectors to engage in active and responsible roles and to share, work, and communicate on-eye-level. The sectors incorporate cultural institutions (small to large, private to public), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and municipal or national governmental organizations (GOs). This exemplary cross- or transsectoral approach is inevitable to win achievements in capacity building and for best practice, not least in the protection and careful development of heritage.

Likewise the TTT principle follows the objective for collaborative research and projects highly supporting participation along the five Cs of co-creation co-learning, co-design, co-production, co-presentation, and co-evaluation. The aim is on the incubation, development, realization, and exploitation of certain topic related Milestone-projects and for the triennial festival. As target- and starting point for the circular ecosystem, the ETOM festival reinvents the conventional schemes of Biennials or Triennials, to interlink actors, joint activities, and exchange formats for a multilocal festival of public offers and locations. To sustainably develop and pursue topics, ETOM fosters public dialogue to bridge between professional and civic target groups and audiences, activated by the Lab, at regular meetups, with curated encounters, partner-events, and the recurring triennial festival.

The trans-European exploration of Modernism opens up a large cosmos of findings and insights. One the one hand this concerns the developments of origins and transformations, on the other hand and maybe even more the developments of interpretations and agencies, as in the final aim to derive answers for pressing planetary and future questions and tasks.

Robert K. Huber  
Ben Buschfeld

### **ETOM NEB-Lab and ETOM**

The ETOM NEB-Lab establishes a co-creation lab on trans-European Modernism to evolve and realize trans-national cooperation, best-practice, research, and capacity building. The Lab was created by the NEB-partners BHROX bauhaus reuse / zukunftsgeraeusche with KÉK – Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Center and ICOMOS international, National Gallery Prague, Slovak Design Center, and Estonian Academy of Arts. The partners act as the Lab's coordination group, together with buschfeld.com. The ETOM initiative was founded by the curators Robert K. Huber (BHROX bauhaus reuse / zukunftsgeraeusche) and Ben Buschfeld (buschfeld.com) during COVID-19 pandemic, as international spin-off to the superregional Triennial of Modernism (TDM) in the cities of Weimar, Dessau, and Berlin, curating the festival program for the Berlin section. The development of the ETOM NEB-Lab and ETOM network has been accompanied and supported by the German Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) hosting the German «NEB National Contact Point» (NCP), and the Berlin Monument Authority (LDA).

## Concreto Academy kicks off

The Concreto Academy has officially launched its mission to advance modern concrete heritage conservation with an impactful kick-off meeting held on March 6th at the Town Hall of the City of Ivrea. The event, attended by a diverse and enthusiastic audience, marked the beginning of an ambitious Erasmus Plus funded project aimed at preserving architectural heritage through innovative approaches.

In a ceremony graced by the presence of Mayor Matteo Chiantore and Filippo Ghisi, the Site Manager of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Concreto Academy received a warm welcome and unequivocal support from the city administration. Mayor Chiantore reiterated the city's commitment to the initiative, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and shared responsibility in safeguarding cultural legacies.

Elisabetta Margiotta Nervi, the Project Coordinator and Secretary General of the PLN Project Foundation, provided an insightful overview of the Concreto project's objectives and structure, setting the stage for Irene Matteini, Scientific Director of the Concreto Initiative, to delve into the educational aspects of the endeavor. Their presentations illuminated the significance of the Concreto Academy's mission in preserving concrete heritage for future generations.

A pivotal moment of collaboration occurred as Elisabetta Margiotta Nervi and Mayor Matteo Chiantore signed a Memorandum of Understanding, solidifying a successful partnership between the PLN Project Foundation and the city of Ivrea, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Following the official launch ceremony, participants embarked on an enlightening visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ivrea, gaining firsthand insights into the significance of concrete heritage conservation. Subsequently, they convened to prepare for the tasks ahead, with a particular focus on the Concreto lab desk research presented by DOCOMOMO International.

The spirit of sustainable regeneration and knowledge sharing permeated the discussions, reflecting the collective dedication of all involved parties to the success of the Concreto Academy. As the project embarks on its journey, stakeholders express optimism for a fruitful collaboration and meaningful contributions to architectural heritage conservation.

<https://concreto-academy.org/>

**CONCRETO**  
ACADEMY

MPHO	HEIs	VET	TA
<b>2 Modern Heritage Preservation Organisation</b>	<b>3 Higher Education institutions</b>	<b>3 Vocational Training Organization</b>	<b>5 Trade Associations</b>
<b>PLN Project</b> Pier Luigi Nervi Foundation (BE) Project Coordinator  <b>DOCOMOMO International</b> (NL)	<b>METU</b> Middle East Technical University (TR)  <b>PolIMI</b> Politecnico di Milano, Laboratorio Nervi (IT)  <b>UPM</b> Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (ES)	<b>IIPLE</b> Istituto per l'Istruzione Professionale dei Lavoratori Edili della Provincia di Bologna (IT)  <b>FLC</b> Fundación Laboral de la Construcción, Madrid (ES)  <b>MYK</b> Mesleki Yeterlilik Kurumu (Vocational Qualifications Authority of Turkey) (TR)	<b>ATCEA</b> Association of Turkish Consulting Engineers and Architects (TR)  <b>CCICCP</b> Colegio de ingenieros de Caminos, Canales y Puertos (ES)  <b>CNAPPC</b> Consiglio Nazionale Architetti, Paesaggisti e Conservatori (IT)  <b>FCNI</b> Consiglio Nazionale Ingegneri (IT)  <b>CSCAE</b> Consejo Superior de los Colegios de Arquitectos de España (ES)

01 Docomomo International is one of the partners in the Concreto Academy. The project is co-funded by the European Union with project number 101140028.



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## INTERNATIONAL SPECIALIST COMMITTEES

Docomomo International has six International Specialist Committees (ISC) comprised of experts on Registers, Technology, Urbanism+Landscape, Education+Training, Interior Design, Publications working under Docomomo International's supervision. An ISC will consist of approximately five specialists of different countries as well as a chairperson appointed by the Council.  
<https://docomomo.com/iscs/>

### ISC/REGISTERS

The docomomo ISC/Registers was created to engage national/regional chapters in the documentation of modern buildings and sites. Its mission is the development of an inventory of modern architecture, including both outstanding individual buildings and 'everyday' examples.

- Louise Noelle (chair, docomomo Mexico), [louisenoelle@gmail.com](mailto:louisenoelle@gmail.com)
- Horacio Torrent (vice-chair, docomomo Chile)

### ISC/TECHNOLOGY

The mission of the docomomo ISC/Technology is to promote documentation and conservation through studies of, and research into, technology, and into the material qualities of modern architecture. The committee organizes seminars; it also supports and participates in workshops related to the technology of modern buildings.

- Robert Loader (co-chair, docomomo UK), [studio@gardenrow.net](mailto:studio@gardenrow.net)
- Rui Humberto Costa de Fernandes Póvoas (co-chair, docomomo Iberia/Portugal), [rpovoas@arq.up.pt](mailto:rpovoas@arq.up.pt)

### ISC/URBANISM & LANDSCAPE

The mission of the docomomo ISC/Urbanism+Landscape is to promote research, documentation and protection of modern ensembles and environments, as opposed to individual 'setpiece' monuments. In practice, our current work focuses almost exclusively on research and documentation.

- Ola Uduku (chair, docomomo Ghana), [o.uduku@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:o.uduku@liverpool.ac.uk)
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### ISC/EDUCATION & TRAINING

The docomomo ISC/Education+Training has the mission of educating to protect "by prevention". This means to preserve not by action-reaction to specific threats, but by creating a general awareness and

appreciation of modern buildings in the younger generation, general public and the society at large. The workshops in the framework of the Docomomo International Conferences are increasingly successful and prove that young people like to be involved in assignments concerning modern heritage. The ISC on Education and Training would like to provide these young people the possibility to excel in the Documentation and Conservation of modern heritage.

- Andrea Canziani (co-chair, docomomo Italy), [andrea.canziani@polimi.it](mailto:andrea.canziani@polimi.it)
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### ISC/INTERIOR DESIGN

The docomomo ISC/Interior Design focus on Interior Design, an issue of major relevance for the Modern Movement and Modern Living. Interior Design gives us important spatial, ideological and aesthetic information necessary for a full awareness and experiencing of Modernity. The Modern Movement considered Interior Design as being in close relation with architecture and the other arts. This implied the demand for a new aesthetics in response to new technology and a need for a total work that embraces all the expressions into a unitary (and also utopian) environment for humanity. The Modern Interiors' identity is characterized by a strong and coherent style which results from a unity between architecture, furniture, design, decorative arts, utilitarian objects, equipment, textiles and light.

- Bárbara Coutinho (co-chair, docomomo International), [barbara.coutinho@tecnico.ulisboa.pt](mailto:barbara.coutinho@tecnico.ulisboa.pt)
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- Marta Peixoto (secretary, docomomo Brasil), [marta@martapeixoto.com.br](mailto:marta@martapeixoto.com.br)

### ISC/PUBLICATIONS

In order to have more coordination between the ISC's and other docomomo bodies regarding publications, the Advisory Board unanimously agreed on the creation of a Docomomo International ISC/Publications, integrating all the ISC chairs and the Docomomo International Chair. This may concern their content and editing status (indexed) but also the use of funding and external resources and the contacts with publishing houses.

- Ana Tostões (chair, docomomo Iberia/Portugal)

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## AIMS AND SCOPE

Docomomo Journal is the open-access, international, peer-reviewed journal of docomomo International that, since 1990, has provided a twice-yearly summary of recent and original research on the documentation and conservation of Modern Movement buildings, sites and neighbourhoods.

By virtue of its inclusive, pluralist and interdisciplinary nature, Docomomo Journal acts as an exchange platform that brings together architects, town-planners, landscape architects, engineers, historians and sociologists. Broad in scope, Docomomo Journal welcomes theoretical, historical, technical and critical contributions that support its comprehensive coverage of the Modern Movement, encompassing landscape, urbanism, architecture, engineering, technology, design, education and theory.

Providing a link between theory and practice, Docomomo Journal is committed to creating a body of critical knowledge with a range and depth of thought that enriches the architectural discipline and its practice.



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