

Participation of Design and Implementation Office Miastoprojekt-Lodz in shaping the architectural landscape of Lodz against the background of political and economic conditions in the years 1949–1989

The assumption of the scientific subject was an attempt to show the architecture of 1949–1989 as a multifaceted phenomenon, difficult to clearly define and assign to a stylistic convention. An attempt was made to capture the forced symbiosis between design documents and politics. However, this was not the only contribution to discussing and interpreting the architecture of 1949–1989. The basic research problem was the succession of changes that took place in the architectural process on the example of Lodz. They proved to be an inevitable consequence of the construction effort undertaken, the creation of new centers, city infrastructure, and estate complexes. The changes have been described in the work through the prism of the *Miastoprojekt-Lodz* design office. It's worth adding that the studio was the third office in the city in terms of the number of full-time employees.

The work is based on a traditional chronological and material arrangement. The beginning of the narrative is set in 1949, when the Lodz Branch was established within the framework of the Central Office of Architectural and Building Design in Warsaw. He started work on January 1 this year. After 56 years of activity in May 2005, the Design and Implementation Office *Miastoprojekt-Lodz* was liquidated. However, it was reasonable to accept the end date of 1989. After this date, the office lost its importance, and some designers started their private activities in the area of their own studios.

The scientific work is the first attempt to describe the architectural activity of the design office *Miastoprojekt-Lodz* over the years 1949–1989. In the time by 40 years, the city landscape has changed diametrically. New housing complexes, cultural objects, educational establishments, public utility buildings were created. The layout of the work, text, selection of issues and photographs has become an important task, important for explaining the processes taking place. One of the substantive problems in the development of People's Republic of Poland architecture is the need to prove its value. A difficult task was to translate the technical language, dominating in key sources, for the needs of descriptive and humanistic work. Such an example was the topic devoted to the issues of normatives and construction techniques. Another issue appeared in the description of the implementation of housing estates. The comparative analysis between the sources and the change in the administrative rules related to the division of districts turned out to be indispensable. At the stage of preparing each chapter,

the selection of photographic material was carried out. His purpose was to select the iconographies intentional and the most important.

The work was divided into seven chapters. The first one presents the historical context of Lodz architecture. It refers to the urban and architectural situation of Lodz after 1945, when metropolitan visions of the city revived with new forcibly. The time has begun to remove shortcomings in terms of administrative, cultural and housing facilities. The design work undertaken at that time brought changes in the architectural landscape of the city. The second part of this chapter describes conceptual and design documents. This chapter is a peculiar vademecum of Lodz architecture. It describes subjectively selected objects, but recognizable and considered the most important in the space of the past.

Chapter II – *Methods techniques to optimize housing on the example of Lodz* is the text describes chronologically the development of methods, techniques, optimization and prefabrication of housing construction in Lodz. It shows the issues that have had a major influence on shaping the forms of social housing. The process of industrialization and prefabrication depended on the financial resources allocated by the State. This factor determined the nationwide progress of prefabrication and the quality of façade and finishing material that were used. The author has attempted to define technical meanings. He characterized, on the example of Lodz and smaller towns like Strykow, experimental housing projects. In addition, he addressed technological issues in the field, which systematically led to the phenomenon of standardization and industrialization. Over time, more and more elements were created in factories – *factories of houses*. With the mass production of structural components, efforts were made to eliminate construction specialists and craftsmen. Installation of ready-made walls or sanitary equipment replaced efficiently the *human factor* by heavy construction equipment – cranes – capable of mounting ready-made components.

Chapter III presents the history of the *Miastoprojekt-Lodz* Project Office in a chronological-problem manner. The most important changes taking place in the organizational statute were indicated, which was directly related to changes in premises and personnel development. This part describes the tasks carried out by architectural studios over the years. The biographical notes were added to the presentation of those designers who exerted an unquestionable influence on the changes in the city landscape, and their ideas, assumptions and solutions as well as urban and architectural successes were published in opinion-making trade magazines. The main considerations concentrate around the activities of *Miastoprojekt-Lodz*, but for the needs of the issue, the work has been extended to the history of the

Miastoprojekt-Lodz II. The same factors influenced the organization of the second office. However, the industry activity of *Miastoprojekt-Lodz Voivodeship* has only been signaled.

In the following part, the analysis selected objects were analyzed, urban spaces that do not exist or exist. This group includes cultural buildings, an urban complex of the academic district, the Lodz University of Technology, the Łódź State Art School (The Strzemiński Academy of Art), the *Centrum* Hotel and spaces designated for the new city centers - the area of Romuald Traugutt St and Jozef Pilsudski Avenue. The selection of objects is not accidental. Each of the above undertakings had a unique technological, artistic value, with different forms and assumptions.

An extensive fragment of the work is Chapter V devoted to housing estates. In order to systematize the material, sub-sections were distinguished, based on the administrative division of districts that existed until 1993. This solution was chosen because the five-part system remained in the memory of the inhabitants. This has also been maintained in offices for the purposes of the administrative service of the population. The basic assumption of this fragment of the work was to create the most complete picture of the estate with the surrounding infrastructure - health service, commercial buildings, schools. Characterizing the subsequent housing complexes, apart from the artistic evaluation attempt, the technical definitions related to the concepts of standards and prefabrication were referred to. Changes in the design documents and available technologies were taken into account during the 1950s and 1980s.

Applying the principle from the general to the specific, after describing and interpreting the artistic, functional and technological values of housing, the next part of the work (Chapter VI) intervenes in the premises space - *Own Flat. Interior design of residential premises by the office staff*. In this chapter, the reader will follow two processes that theoretically should be excluded, but in practice are fully dependent on each other. The usable areas had a repetitive layout of rooms and cubature. This prosaic obstacle initiated the direction of arrangement projects. The architects of the *Miastoprojekt-Lodz* office came to the advantage of the owners of their own flat, who visualized optimal and functional solutions using drawings.

The last chapter is to prompt the reader to a general reflection on Lodz architecture from 1949–1989. It shows it in various meaning, both defects and superlatives. The criterion was adopted to assess not only architects, but especially residents of the city and users of premises. In the competitions titled *For a golden trowel*, the inhabitants gave their vote for residential buildings, which in their opinion stood out architecturally, vividly and functionally from the remaining housing estate.

Despite the passage of time in the People's Republic of Poland objects are still not assessed in terms of the quality of workmanship, applied technical solutions or artistic and artistic assets. There is a lack of a common foundation that would become a catalyst for combining research and issues of change. It should be agreed that not all objects and design documents are worth attention. Part of mass construction, similar to the Residential Sections, (Łódzka Sekcja Mieszkaniowa) does not have any scientific or artistic values. At the same time, it should be noted that the genesis of their creation was associated only with economic. Cut a long story they were a fast *housing* that fulfilled the promise of providing the accommodation to as many inhabitants as possible. This view is reflected in past events. The Residential Sections were not objects that were considered in architectural contests like the *golden trowel*. Users of these spaces spoke negatively about them. The forms of finishing and comfort of use were questioned.

The design documents of *Miastoprojekt-Lodz* were part of the most important urban and design documents related to the projects of new urban centers, hotel, school, and theater buildings, academic and housing complexes. Architects have created a number of objects that have permanently inscribed in the landscape of Lodz architecture. The names of the authors permanently entered the annals of Polish architecture. There is no doubt about the emotional involvement of designers in a huge undertaking, which was urban and architectural implementation, which was the participation of the *Miastoprojekt-Lodz* office. It should be emphasized here that we owe the present landscape to architects educated outside of Lodz. This situation only brought benefits. The projects were expressed with care both at the concept stage and throughout the implementation process. Finally, the moment of construction aroused animosities and emotions. Following political and economic changes in 1989, some of the designers of *Miastoprojekt-Łódź* started their own architectural activity.

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