

Phenomenon of expression in resort modernism of Soviet Lithuania

Western dream then, undesirable shadow now?

Collective remembrance | national identity | “young” heritage

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Introduction

During thirty years of independent Lithuania, numerous iconic modern and postmodern buildings from the Soviet period¹ had been demolished. Only in recent years architects and preservationists have started to protest and communicate the message of opposition to such activities but in most cases, it is too late to save an artifact (cases like former Traffic Police building (2017) in Giraitės street, Vilnius or department store „Merkurijus” (2009) in Kaunas). Ambiguous feelings about Soviet-era buildings prevail in the society splitting between ones claiming to get rid of this outdated burden of the socialist past and others looking at such buildings as valuable works of art or signs of a certain period in time. For the generation which experienced the regime of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during their lifetime (my parents and grandparents), it is certainly hard to look at those buildings only from the aesthetic point of view - they are often interpreted as not only a pure architectural form but also as a space filled with political content².

In the rich field of architectural edifices of social modernism, resort architecture is particularly interesting. As a counterweight to the concept of general labor, Soviet Union developed the idea of common rest that was supposed to guarantee the balance of society. While upbuilding the imaginary "perfect" society, authorities had a special focus on the formation of the recreation system. Resorts and recreational facilities were massively built throughout the Soviet Union. Despite the normative documents and standard projects, efforts have been made from the outset (in the early 1960s) to design and build customized, original projects in recreational areas³. This can be described as a peculiar phenomenon of architecture of recreation, its uniqueness being the general agreement of planners and clients not to apply typical, model-design projects in resort areas. Resorts, as architectural typology, were highly attractive for architects - here they could have expressed their creativity. It can be stated that it was in the resorts that some of the most original and valuable structures of socialist modernism were erected in Lithuania. In theory it should be regarded as a niche where true Lithuanian architecture could have emerged through the limitations of Soviet apparatus, however it is surprising to see this sort of architecture neglected or demolished.

Knowing that architecture makes up a large part of the regional identity⁴, demolition of unique recreational buildings can lead to irretrievable loss of existing *genius loci*⁵. Therefore, my main research question is why and how large number of expressive examples of socialist resort modernist architecture in Lithuania are undesirable?

¹Lithuania was one of the constituent republics of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) during 1940–41 and 1944–90. 1944–54 the Stalinist period in architecture. 1959–79 - years of modernism. 1979–89 - the beginning of postmodernism.

²Drėmaitė, M., Petruolis, V., Tūtytė J. "Preface," in *Architecture in Soviet Lithuania (Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, 2012), 13-16.

³Tūtytė, Jūratė "Architecture and Recreation: The Mission of (In) Impossible Recreational Architecture" in *Architecture in Soviet Lithuania*, ed. Marija Drėmaitė (Vilnius: Vilnius Academy of Arts Publishers, 2012), 185-203.

⁴Abel, Chris "Architecture as Identity, I: The Essence of Architecture" in *Semiotics* (Springer, Boston, MA, 1980), 1-11.

⁵The term used by Norberg-Schulz in the book "Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture" (1980) describing the spirit of a place.

Is it a matter of economics, considering the prestigious location of most of the remaining resort buildings? Is it because of the inseparable link between politics and architecture? Is it the institution of heritage and conservation failing to protect them? Is collective remembrance being altered when difficult heritage buildings are being demolished?

In addition to the existing discussion within the Lithuanian community about Soviet time heritage preservation, I will consider the unique resort buildings being part of the national identity and as an element of a cultural phenomenon.

In the first chapter I explain historical context and the origin of socialist modernism, prevailing ideological apparatus at the time, significance of resorts and their architecture.

The second chapter consists of investigation what is hiding “behind the scenes” of the ignorance of socialist modernist architecture. In different sections I discuss such architecture in terms of memory (section 2.1), collective remembrance (2.2), explain the concept of *genius loci* (2.3), talk about psychological confrontations of the country (2.4), elaborate on how heritage preservation is not always applicable in Lithuania (2.5) and look into economic aspect (2.6).

The third chapter addresses two case studies - demolition and renovation of resort buildings. Firstly, I discuss the demolition case of cafe “Banga” (1796; demolished in 2015) in Palanga. Secondly, renovation of cafe “Vasara”(reconstructed in 2005)

The methodology that I will use consists of thorough reading of the cultural and architectural history of socialist modernism in Lithuania. The main secondary sources - such as Marija Drémaitė’s book “*Architecture and Housing in Soviet Lithuania*” (2017) together with other book called “*Architecture in Soviet Lithuania*” (“*Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*”, 2012) by Marija Drémaitė, Vaidas Petrulis and Jūratė Tūtlytė led me through the complexity of the field and helped me in finding individual approach. Additionally, I will use magazines, articles, and essays to grasp various points of view. By inherently being Lithuanian I will also refer to my own perception and knowledge as a first-hand account.

The framework of my thesis is built from original archival material, supplemented by a discourse analysis of collective remembrance and “young” monuments as well as aspects of phenomenology.

1. Historical context

1.1 Socialist Modernism

To form a full image of architectural context in Soviet Lithuania it is important to understand its chronological sequence and different features.

In the West (Western European countries that were not part of Soviet Union and US), modernism was a continuous period of architectural history, albeit divided into interwar and pre-war periods. Lithuanian modern architecture was influenced both politically and ideologically by three major chronological periods and their prevailing styles: interwar (modernism), postwar (socialist realism) and late Soviet period (socialist modernism).⁶



Figure 1: Stalinist period cinema building “Taika” transl. “Peace” in Kaunas. Built in 1953, standardised project.

Lasting from 1944 to 1991 Soviet occupation in Lithuania started with Stalinist period in architecture (also known as socialist realism). This post-war architecture (1945-55) is perhaps the most controversial period in the discourse of modern Lithuanian architecture. This decade is perceived as interrupting the natural development of Lithuanian modern architecture. The retrospective aesthetics⁷ (the style of architecture in Eastern Bloc⁸ is also known as Socialist classicism) created by foreign architects⁹ is considered to be the most prominent symbol of Sovietization, often referred to as a foreign heritage (see figure 1). It is noteworthy that even in Soviet Lithuania the architecture of this period was represented very moderately - only four buildings were registered in the list of monuments (now around 20 buildings).

⁶ Drėmaitė, Marija. “Moderniosios architektūros paveldas Lietuvoje: teorinis aspektas,” *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 36, no.3 (2012): 149–160.

⁷ Retrospective aesthetics in this case is referred to the use of classical Roman order elements like porticos, columns, ornate balconies and arches in architecture. The revival of neoclassicism in socialist realism was not a unique phenomenon. Similar architectural aesthetics in 1940s is accepted in countries that had nothing to do with socialism. It was an alternative to modernism as a form of modernized classics, called new traditionalism.

⁸ Eastern Bloc - the group of communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, and Southeast Asia under the hegemony of the Soviet Union (USSR) during the Cold War (1947–1991) in opposition to the capitalist Western Bloc.

⁹ Retrospective buildings in Soviet Lithuania were mainly designed and built by architects from other Soviet Republics - for example, Russian architects Viktor Anikin, Piotr Ashastin, Vera Furman.

However, the next Soviet period (socialist modernism) is related to the continuous, programmatic modernization of the whole country (1955-1990), where architectural modernism was one of the main ideological tasks aimed by the state.

Socialist modernism can be divided into two phases: the first (1955-79), marked as elegant modernism (example project - see figure 2), when the so-called “Lithuanian School of Architecture” was formed and flourished¹⁰, and the second stage - the search for diversity (1979-89), named as late modernism (forms of plasticism, regionalism, structuralism and postmodernism)¹¹.



Figure 2: Vilnius Marriage Palace. Arch. G. Baravykas, E. Gūzas and A. Katilius. Built in 1974.

It has to be acknowledged that, despite its seeming similarity to modernist architecture in the West, socialist modernism is a rather distinctive phenomenon whose development was limited

¹⁰ Drėmaitė, Marija. “Šiaurės modernizmo įtaka „lietuviškajai architektūros mokyklai” 1956–1969 m.,” *Menotyra* 18 no.4 (2011): 308–328.

¹¹ Petrušis, Vaidas. “Įveikiant funkcionalizmo ribas” in *Architektūra sovietinėje Lietuvoje* (Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2012). 107–128.

by the planned economic system¹² and the lack of materials and technology¹³. It is considered by some theorists to be even purer (in a sense of fulfillment) and more coherent than the Western one, particularly because of the lack of private ownership and command policies that led to large-scale projects (industrialization, typification, standardization, urban development)¹⁴.

Today modernist heritage faces contradictory phase - research in recent decades has extended its definition from a very clearly chronologically and stylistically defined phenomenon of International Movement (Modern Movement) to a much broader concept that embraces modernity as reflected in architecture. Moreover, according to some theorists, the idea of preserving modernism is itself controversial. English philosopher Owen Hatherley looks at this from the perspective of the modernists, stating that they were not interested in continuity, all the more for eternity. The interface between function, interior and exterior was particularly important in modernist buildings, and once the original function is lost, it no longer make sense to preserve and restore these buildings, because only a "blank shell" of the building remains¹⁵. Therefore, some theorists suggest that buildings of modern architecture should simply be used without giving them any heritage status (except for demonstrative applications where there is a possibility of preserving and showcasing an authentic idea)¹⁶. However, this is not a consistent position, as in this case the future legacy of this architecture will not be shaped by heritage protection but by the market.

Because of these controversies in heritage protection (mentioned above) numerous academic studies have been devoted to the problematic of socialist modernism in recent years, leading to its international recognition¹⁷. Last year in MoMA¹⁸(one of the largest and most influential museums of modern art in the world) the exhibition about Yugoslav socialist modernist architecture was held called "Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980" which received a great deal of attention and discussions worldwide¹⁹. Socialist modernism in Lithuania has also received special interest in recent years, for example

¹² *Planned economy* - an economic system in which the government controls and regulates production, distribution, prices, etc. unlike a *command economy* which necessarily has public ownership of industry while having this type of regulation as well.

¹³ Deficiency of all kinds of goods flourished. Consequently, building materials were being constantly stolen by factory workers and builders. Technological backwardness limited the implementation of avant-garde projects.

¹⁴ "Socialistinis modernizmas" in *Architektūra sovietinėje Lietuvoje*. Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 87–88.

¹⁵ Tim Boer, "Revitalising Modernist Heritage," *ArchiNed.nl*, 18 February 2008, accessed January 14, 2020, <http://www.archined.nl/en/news/revitalising-modernist-heritage/>.

¹⁶ Drėmaitė, Marija. "Moderniosios architektūros paveldas Lietuvoje: teorinis aspektas," *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 36, no.3 (2012): 150.

¹⁷ Crowley, D. "Thaw Modern: Design in Eastern Europe after 1956," in *Cold War Modern. Design 1945–1970*, ed. J. Pavitt, D. Crowley (London: V&A Publishing, 2008), 129–153.

Reid, S. E., "The Soviet „contemporary style“: a socialist modernism," in *Different Modernisms, Different Avantgardes: Problems in Central and Eastern European Art after World War II*, (Tallinn: Kadrioru Kunstimuseum, 2009), 89–112.

A. Kiricenکو, T. Nesterova, V. Mitrea and D. Rusu, *Socialist Modernism in Romania and the Republic of Moldova*, ed. D. Rusu, (Bucharest: Asociata Birou Pentru Arta si Cercetare Urbana, 2017).

J. Haspel and D. Rusu, *Socialist Modernism in Germany*, ed. D. Rusu, (Chisinau: B.A.C.U. Publishing House, 2019).

¹⁸ MoMA - The Museum of Modern Art in New York, US. Exhibition was open for the public from July 15, 2018 to January 13, 2019.

¹⁹ Martino Stierli and Vladimir Kulić, "Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980," accessed January 15, 2020, <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3931>.

exhibitions (the most recent one is “Reikėjo vakar“ *transl. “needed yesterday”* by photographer Norbert Tukaj) as well as academic publications and books (works of Marija Drėmaitė, Vaidas Petrulis, Jūratė Tūtlytė, Rasa Baločkaitė).

To conclude, at present day modernist heritage faces contradictory phase. On the one hand, research has extended its definition to a much broader concept that embraces modernity as reflected in architecture - legal protection should be applied for too many buildings. On the other hand, some theorists claim that the idea of preserving such buildings is itself contradicting the modernist architectural ideas and suggest to simply use the buildings without giving them any heritage status. In recent years the problematic of socialist modernism is receiving more interest in Lithuania as well as worldwide.

1.2 Ideological Apparatus

When viewed through the prism of a socialist order, in the general architectural history of the second half of the twentieth century, we can distinguish several dominant forms of political embodiment in space. The most striking visual manifestations are the repressive, totalitarian architectural applications common to various regimes influenced by the Cold War atmosphere. Whether in the Eastern or Western Bloc, one can recognize the principles of architecture's relationship with a human that promote obedience, a sense of humility, and similar emotional reactions²⁰. Space is designed to represent power and social order that is formed "from above".

In the race against the West, present not only in armament but also in propaganda about the ideal society and modern cities, one of the most important goals for Soviets in the Cold War was to prove that the planned economy was superior to Western capitalism. Architectural ideas of modern movement itself were very closely related to the Marxist mindset which aimed for the complete reform of the industrial city and society²¹. Architecture and urban design played a prominent role in this process.

In Lithuania as well as in other Soviet Union countries architects had a task to introduce new living conditions for both workers and intellectuals reflecting prevailing technology and official moral standards. In 1959 the "Seven Years Plan" was initiated - the fastest and most intensive phase of modernization in the history of Lithuania (1959-1965). After Stalin's death economy was criticized as backward and inefficient, critics turned to "uneven distribution of productive forces" and "excessive concentration of industry in major cities"²². As a consequence, immediate application of the principles of spatial planning started: stopping the growth of large cities, starting their subdivision and the creation of new satellite cities, intensifying the development of small and medium-sized cities (in particular by building industrial sites and utilizing vacant areas for residential construction)²³.

One of the most important goals of the Soviet government was to "implement new tradition and customs" and to transform conventional behavior patterns into "communist world moral ideas and values".²⁴ For instance, religion, being highly important in Lithuanian society before occupation, was no longer officially promoted. As a result sacral architecture was reconstructed, converted into museums (often with a strong tone of ideology), cultural centres, sport halls, sometimes warehouses. This also led to the emergence of specific functional types of architecture, such as ritual service buildings, individually built for both marriages (for instance the Wedding Palace in Vilnius by architects G. Baravykas, E. Gūzas, A. Katilius) and funerals (like Funeral Chamber in Kaunas by architect A. Paulauskas).

²⁰ Drémaitė, M., Petrulis V. & Tūtlytė, J. *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, (Vilnius: Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts publishing house, 2012), 23-24.

²¹ Panayotis Tournikiotis, *The Historiography of Modern Architecture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: MIT Press, 1999, p.94.

²² "Industrializacija ir Urbanizacija," Marija Drémaitė, accessed Feb 22, 2020, <http://www.mmcentras.lt/kulturos-istorija/kulturos-istorija/architektura/19551959-modernizmo-startas/industrializacija-ir-urbanizacija/78195>.

²³ Drémaitė M. *Industrializacija ir Urbanizacija in Progreso meteoras: Modernizacija ir pramonės architektūra Lietuvoje 1920-1940*. Vilnius: Lapas, 2016. 235.

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Modernisation brought unification in architecture all throughout Lithuania: repetitive public projects, modular residential dwellings in the cities, typical family houses in the suburbs. Cheaply and fastly erected structures were not oriented to aesthetics (refusal of excesses in architecture²⁵) - "beauty for tens, hundreds of thousands - such a motto of our Soviet life dictated today" proclaimed in the press²⁶. The task of an architect, increasingly referred to as "project maker" (*Lith. projektuotojas*) in the jargon of the day, was embodied in the slogan "faster pace for construction!"²⁷. Architectural development had to be simple in shape (easily calculable area) and generally representable in the main mechanism of Soviet propaganda - statistics (by numbers of finished buildings and area per person proving the successful development of socialist cities). Lioginas Šepetys, Lithuanian Communist party activist and aesthetic ideologist, blamed the most unique projects of the time (such as the restaurant "Vasara" in Palanga or the cafe "Tulpé" in Kaunas) for being overly luxurious²⁸. Such standpoints were widely accepted and led to the homogenization of architecture, the monotonous industrial cityscapes.

Hence, architects were to introduce the new living conditions for the industrial society in Soviet Lithuania by the architects. This resulted in the fastest phase of modernization in the history of Lithuania and later the intense urban and suburban sprawl. New specific typologies of architecture emerged. During this intense urbanisation an architect, referred to as "project maker" was almost not needed in fastly erected standardised buildings. With "refusal of excesses" modernisation brought the homogenization of built environment in Lithuanian cities.

²⁵ Kazarinskis Levas, "Geru keliu" ("The good way"), *Literatūra ir menas*, 1961, december 23, p.3.

²⁶ "Grožis dešimtims, šimtams tūkstančių" ("Beauty for tens, hundreds of thousands"), *Kultūros barai*, 1965, no.11, p.4.

²⁷ Drémaitė, M., Petrulis V. & Tūtlytė, J. *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*. (Vilnius: Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts publishing house, 2012), 30.

²⁸ Šepetys, Lioginas. *Daiktų grožis (The beauty of things)*, Vilnius: Mintis, 1965, p.8.

1.3 Significance of Resort Architecture

In the Soviet order, much attention was paid to the collective holidays and therefore a suitable network of recreation and leisure facilities was developed. The state declared an interest in the health of its labourers (a policy highly promoted in the 1960-70s) and gave grounds for a countrywide recreational infrastructure.²⁹ In order to advance their vision of universally accessible rest and leisure opportunities, the socialist authorities used tools such as newly constructed cultural centres, holiday homes, sport centres, resorts, and hotels. Resorts together with their recreational and leisure components belonged to the state. In 1970 the jurisdiction of many such facilities was given to labour unions and healthcare institutions.³⁰ The recreation facilities were financed by the state, Soviet farms, collective farms, agencies, higher education institutions (vouchers to various Union resorts and recreation areas were distributed for free or at a 70% discounted price). A programme of constructing, maintaining and renovating these places was implemented by the Trade unions. Resort design was supervised by a huge Soviet organization called the All-Union Resort Design Institute (*Soyuzkurortproyekt*). In Lithuania, it was overseen by the Institute of Urban Construction Design (*Lith. Miestų statybos projektavimo institutas*) and from 1967 by the Vilnius branch of *Soyuzkurortproyekt*.³¹

Urban areas reserved for mass recreation was distributed for two types of leisure: short-term and long-term. Short-term relaxation zones (beaches, restaurants, forest parks, sport centres, summer arenas) were designed for the use during the weekend, leisure day and located within one-hour drive from residential areas. The boarding houses, tourist centres, leisure homes and sanatoriums were allocated for the long-term leisure, from which the most popular ones were sanatoriums and leisure homes (also known as vacation complexes).

There was not much difference in the typology of leisure facilities in the Soviet Union compared to the West. However, in the socialist system new type of facility was created called sanatorium-preventorium. In this medical spa, visitors stayed overnight, after their day at work, to receive the medical, therapeutic treatment needed. Moreover, children's recreational facilities had additional classification such as Communist Party Pioneer camps and children's sanatoriums.³²

With the beginning of modernism in Soviet Lithuania architecture in the resorts was following the uniform functionalist appearance as all the new architecture did at the time. In the early 1960s, there was a substantial amount of highly laconic compact scale (2-5 floors) recreational buildings and complexes (see figure 1) in all of the main Lithuanian resorts (Šventoji, Palanga, Neringa, Druskininkai, Birštonas). Because of the growth of recreation towns functionalist high-rise buildings arose near the low-rise buildings in the large complexes, such as the "Neringos Kopus" nine-story residential building in Palanga (Enrikas Tamoševičius, 1966) and the "Nemunas" ten-storey in Druskininkai (Tamoševičius, Povilas Adomaitis, 1966-1973). The

²⁹ Drémaitė, Marija. *Baltic Modernism: Architecture and Housing in Soviet Lithuania*. (Berlin: DOM publishers, 2017), 259.

³⁰ Tutlytė, Jūratė "Architecture and Recreation: The Mission of (In) Impossible Recreational Architecture" in *Architecture in Soviet Lithuania*, ed. Marija Drémaitė (Vilnius: Vilnius Academy of Arts Publishers, 2012), 185-203.

³¹ Drémaitė, Marija. *Baltic Modernism: Architecture and Housing in Soviet Lithuania*. (Berlin: DOM publishers, 2017), 259.

³² *Ibid*, 259-260.

appearance of massive structures inevitably unified unique resort areas and brought them a bit closer to the then-usual homogenized architectural living environment.



Figure 3. Standardised small scale functionalist sanatorium “Dainava” in Druskininkai. Arch. N. Kėvišas. Built in 1965.

As construction of mass recreation facilities increased, architectural policy for resorts changed correspondingly. According to Jūratė Tutlytė, since the Soviet scientists proved that recreation of workers should be pursued in environment that differed from everyday life and work surroundings, architects were encouraged to design customized, original structures in resort areas. Projects in the main Lithuanian resorts became desired and prestigious orders for the architects.³³ They were encouraged to design unique buildings and their attempts to maintain the distinctive characteristics of each resort town developed into what scholars have called the phenomenon of recreational architecture. This was distinguished by a mutual agreement between the Party and the planners to abstain from the use of standardised designs³⁴ in resort regions.³⁵ Despite the need to build as many recreational buildings as fast as possible, this approach allowed the display of individual architectural expression and new design solutions.

By original custom-designs architects were in pursuit of the latest international architectural trends to demonstrate ingenuity. The example of new construction implementation and what

³³ Tūtlytė, Jūratė. “The intended breakaway: The Case of Recreational architecture in Soviet Lithuania,” *Art And Politics: Case Studies From Eastern Europe*, no.3 (2017): 111-18.

³⁴ In 1957 a Union-wide series of 3, 4, and 5-story typical large-panel residential projects was published, later in 1957 and 1958 “Lietprojektas” (State design institute of Soviet Lithuania) published 2, 3, 4, and 5-storey residential project series.

Public resort architecture buildings also were standardised, same project with slight changes was built in different towns. For instance, the project of the canteen, restaurant and hotel complex “Galvė” in Trakai (slightly adjusted - a shop function introduced instead of a hotel) has been repeated and adapted in Alytus, Kretinga, Mažeikiai, Raseiniai and Zarasai.

³⁵ Drėmaitė, Marija. *Baltic Modernism: Architecture and Housing in Soviet Lithuania*. (Berlin: DOM publishers, 2017), 263.

was considered novel aesthetics can be clearly seen in the “Žilvinas” vacation complex (1967) designed by Algimantas Lėckas in Palanga (see figure 4) which undoubtedly influenced the development of Lithuanian architecture at that time. The positive correlation between the observation of global trends and gradually complicating form of Lithuanian architecture was represented in examples like the modern dynamic wooden interpretation of the traditional cottage in the villa of the Academy of Sciences by architects Vytautas Dičius and Leonidas Ziberkas built in 1977 (see figure 5), architectural gem of Lithuanian regional modernism - summer reading hall (arch. Albinas Čepys, built in 1968) in Palanga or the newly planned Vanagupė resort (near Palanga) with “Linus” vacation complex (arch. Algimantas Lėckas, 1975-84) (see figures 6,7).



Figure 4: “Žilvinas” vacation complex in Palanga. Arch. Algimantas Lėckas. Built in 1967.



Figure 5: Academy of Sciences of Lithuania summer villa in Palanga. Arch. Vytautas Dičius, Leonidas Ziberkas. Built in 1977.



Figure 6: Summer reading hall in Palanga. Arch. Albinas Čepys. Built in 1968.



Figure 7: Vanagupė resort with “Linus” vacation complex in Palanga. Arch. Algimantas Léckas, Built in 1984.

Late Soviet modernism is distinguished by mannerist modifications. The most prominent examples such as the Physiotherapy Centre (arch. Romualdas Šilinskas, Aušra Šilinskienė, 1975-81) and “Pušynas” vacation hotel (arch. Romualdas Šilinskas, 1982) demonstrate *sculpturality* and refinement of the form (see figure 8,9).

The so-called head architects (senior architects that administered certain region) played a critical role in terms of preservation of the original character of each resort town. Since the late 1950s they had been advocating for the embrace of *genius loci* in small scale resort towns. In Druskininkai the head architect (in position 1956-61) Algimantas Mačiulis strived to preserve two to three-story high urban scale hand in hand with the green city image that had taken shape in pre-war times.

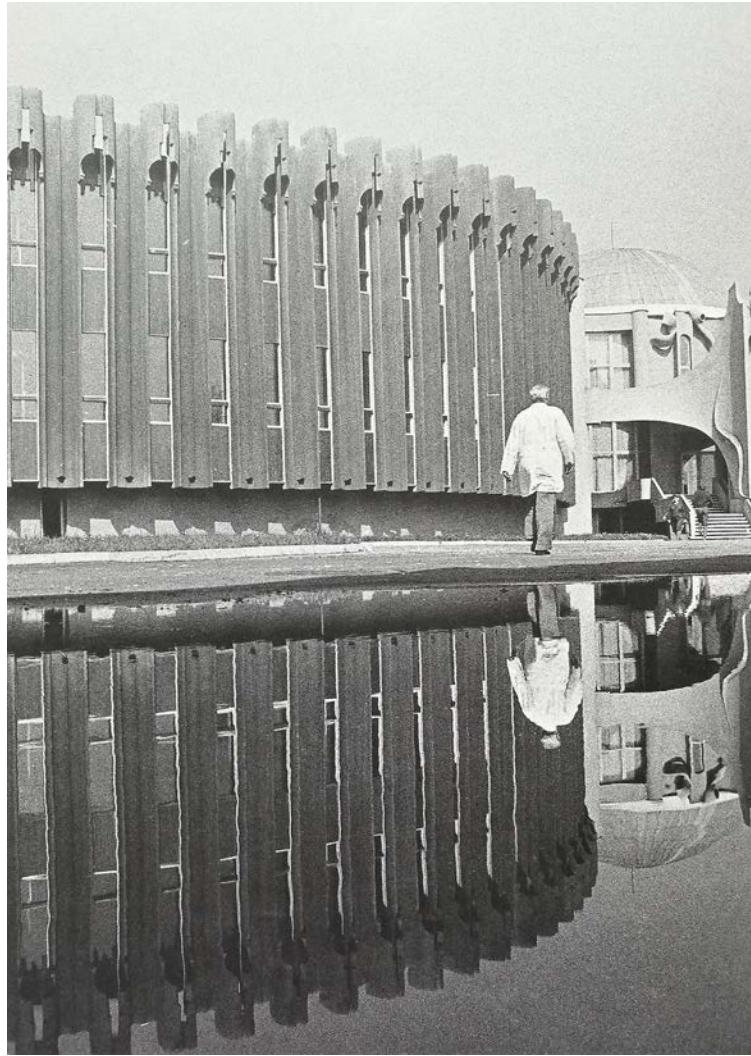


Figure 8: Physiotherapy Centre in Druskininkai. Arch. Romualdas Šilinskas, Aušra Šilinskienė; Built in 1981.



Figure 9: Vacation hotel "Pušynas" in Druskininkai. Arch. Romualdas Šilinskas. Built in 1982.

In late 1960s Palanga, a former countryside locality, during six year period grew into one of the most popular health resorts in USSR (hosting more than a quarter million guests every year) resulting in dramatic architectural and urban changes.

Mostly thanks to the head architect of those days, Alfredas Paulauskas (in position 1952-63), Palanga gained its unique aesthetic appearance - Paulauskas established a zoning plan and introduced the main urban facilities for public use. He was surnamed a “man *samura*” by his colleagues³⁶ because of “protecting Palanga city as his home - “did not let build in random manner”³⁷. What was specific about his way of work is that most of the projects were implemented without being certified. Proceedings were done straightly during the course of a building based on Paulauskas’ drafts. This was an exceptional case in the context of strict Soviet documentation and bureaucracy and was possible only due to particular relationship between the head architect and the officials in the Ministerial Council in Vilnius³⁸. The special mutual trust and understanding between them enabled architects and artists to enjoy a privileged status in Palanga (toleration for bypassing of rules by the regional authority, extra financing for architectural projects)³⁹.

On the one hand, this was quite an autocratic management, on the other hand, it demonstrates how it was possible to overcome the restrictions in order to bypass the architectural monotony while pursuing the preservation of unique locality. The following head architect, Albinas Čepys (1963-77), also protected Palanga’s architecture - he personally supervised and designed construction projects of the town taking care that architecture would adapt to nature, not vice versa.⁴⁰ This approach surely led to more regionalist architectural results.

To conclude, A lot of attention was paid to the collective holiday in the Soviet order, therefore a countrywide recreational infrastructure of medical and leisure facilities was developed. Because of the rapid growth of the resort towns the uniform functionalist appearance and high-rise residential buildings started to emerge in the small scale towns. Thanks to the early adoption of environmental regulation and resort architecture policies together with the endeavor of the head architects of Lithuanian resort towns the period from the 1960s to the 80s turned out into a progressive resort architecture era.

³⁶ Gudjurgienė, Gerda, “Kurortui būdingas netikėtumas” in *Palanga*, no.45 (1991): 4.

³⁷ Quote by landscape architect Rūsna Vaineikytė.

³⁸ Tūtlytė, Jūratė. *Pokarinės Palangos rekreacinė architektūra (Recreational Architecture in Palanga during Post-war period)*, master thesis, Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 1997, 16-17.

³⁹ Tūtlytė, Jūratė. “The intended breakaway: The Case of Recreational architecture in Soviet Lithuania,” *Art And Politics: Case Studies From Eastern Europe*, no.3 (2017): 113.

⁴⁰ Drėmaitė, Marija. *Baltic Modernism: Architecture and Housing in Soviet Lithuania*. (Berlin: DOM publishers, 2017), 267.

2. “Behind the scenes”

2.1 Architecture as a mnemonic device

Cities consist of memories, both - individual and collective. As one moves through the city, he/she is facing architecture as a mnemonic device⁴¹ making us remember memories that are coded in the city and its built environment.

To conceptualise architecture as a mnemonic device one needs to understand memory as a process. When memorizing without mnemonic object, the strength of the memory is weakened as the “non-material remembering consists of a very short and thus very unstable network.”⁴² In the memory process the object-based memory exchanges present meaning and use with the past through an operational network. For instance, a physical building functions as a mnemonic device for individual memories when one is referencing this building to past moments of individual experience.

According to architect Aldo Rossi, humans memorize through the city and our ability to remember is closely linked to city’s preservation. He believes that as the city changes, it erases our memories. Furthermore, a city may change its appearance even in the period of a man’s life, with “its original references ceasing to exist”⁴³.

If an urban space is a repository of the memory constructed around that particular space, then there exists a fundamental network connection between a community and the particular urban space. In case a demolition of a building happens, this connection is being changed. After losing part of the spatial framework the citizens’ memory is affected⁴⁴.

Michael Guggenheim writes that in science there are two connected networks: first - the network that scientists use to theorize and describe the past (e.g. existing image of the city and its buildings) and second - the network of historical truth (e.g. ideological impact, social context, architectural language of certain historical time)⁴⁵. A change in the first one, (a loss of a building) leads to a change in the second one (absence of direct historical truth).

Thus, as resort socialist-modernistic artefacts are being destructed, community of today and the future is losing the direct link between the first and the second networks. The capacity to reconstruct individual and collective memories from the past and integrate them into nowadays discourse of the community is diminished once an artifice has vanished.

Hence, it is clear that a persistent link exists between buildings and the social memories of the history of a certain place. Built heritage holds people’s capacity to reconstruct memories from the past and integrate them into nowadays historical discourse.

⁴¹ Mnemonic device - object or technique that aids information retention or retrieval (remembering) in the human memory. Mnemonics aid original information in becoming associated with something more accessible or meaningful.

⁴² Michael Guggenheim. “Building memory: Architecture, Networks and Users,” in *Memory Studies*. Vol. 2, no. 1 (2009): 41.

⁴³ Aldo Rossi and Peter Eisenman, *The Architecture of the City*. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1982), 61.

⁴⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*. ed. M. Douglas (New York: Harper & Row, 1950/1980), 6.

⁴⁵ Guggenheim, Michael. “Building memory: Architecture, Networks and Users.” *Memory Studies*. Vol. 2, no. 1 (2009) 43.

2.2 Collective remembrance

In 1920s sociologist Maurice Halbwachs and the art historian Aby Warburg independently developed separate theories of a "collective" or "social memory".

Halbwachs showed that our memory (like consciousness) depends on socialization and communication. According to him, memory enables us to live in groups and communities, which, in turn, enables us to build individual memory⁴⁶. Two decades later in the book "The Collective Memory"⁴⁷ he writes that in addition to an individual memory, there is also a group memory that exists beyond the individual. It can be constructed, shared and passed on by large and small social groups e.g. generations, nations, communities. Moreover, individual perception of the past is linked to the group consciousness⁴⁸. He also elaborated on the work of French philosopher Auguste Comte, who asserted that our mental equilibrium is connected to the ability to recognize physical objects of our daily contact. Halbwachs states that our memories are socially constructed around objects which organize and stabilizes our memory.⁴⁹

The art historian Aby Warburg, however, coined the term "social memory" as a cultural layer of memory. He was arguably the first one who treated images as the memory carriers. His famous last and unfinished project "Mnemosyne" (the term for memory in ancient Greek) where he studied "afterlife" (*germ. Nachleben*) of classical antiquity in Western culture in a form of image atlas, strongly influenced the way western society conducts art-historical research nowadays⁵⁰. With the approach to reveal history as a form of (cultural) memory he introduced images as a tool of acquiring knowledge⁵¹. Thus, either individual or social, memory is also very much related to a visual perceivment of the environment.

In this paper terms *collective memory* and *collective remembrance* are used in the same sense even though *memory* as a notion is something that is arguably not reliable, therefore remembrance is more accurate term to use in this case.

In contemporary times collective memory has been a topic of interest and research across a number of disciplines including psychology, sociology, history, philosophy, anthropology and architecture. Nowadays the discourse is of even greater interest since people are constantly finding out about ignored occurrences or distorted narratives throughout the history.

According to scholar Jeffrey K. Olick (who played an important role in reviving the concept of *collective memory* at the junction of twentieth and twenty first centuries), collective memory is an ongoing process of meaning-making through time⁵². In the article *Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint: Holocaust Myth and Rationality in German Politics* (with co-author Daniel Levy) he focused on the remembrance of Holocaust in post-war Germany, tracing the means in which authorities of the country face the delicate legacy related to Nazi past. He observed the Holocaust representations in state rhetoric and deduced that the commemorations are not just isolated events, but also attempts to reconcile with the past "in a structured dialogue with each

⁴⁶ Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire, 1925.

⁴⁷ fr. "La Mémoire collectif" 1950.

⁴⁸ Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, "Cultural Memory Studies," in *An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, (Berlin, New York, 2008) 109-118.

⁴⁹ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 3.

⁵⁰ Christopher D. Johnson, "About the Mnemosyne Atlas," Cornell University Library, accessed March 12, 2020, <https://warburg.library.cornell.edu/about>.

⁵¹ Erll, *Handbook*, 109-118.

⁵² Olick, K., Jeffrey and Levy, Daniel, "Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint: Holocaust Myth and Rationality in German Politics". *American Sociological Review*, 62, no. 6 (1997): 921–936.

other and with the past"⁵³. This idea of Olick could be perfectly adapted within the domain of architecture - memorials or well retained buildings of particular era (e.g. period of Soviet Union) function as symbols of the reconciliation with the difficult past, acknowledging it by ourselves and continuing the link for the future generations.

In 2018 American political science professor Marc Howard Ross whose interest is in conflict theory and management, the politics of ethnicity and race wrote a book *Slavery in the North: Forgetting History and Recovering Memory* discussing his findings about social memory and collective oblivion of important events from the past. His interest in this topic was sparked by the public attention on the story that George Washington held nine enslaved Africans in the President's House just one block from Independence Hall while he was President and Philadelphia was the country's capital. The building was not there anymore but when the history of this house was escalated in media, literature and public discussions, archeological research and memorial of the building was done on the site. Ross delved into the broader question of why and how slavery faded from public consciousness so that most of Americans soon perceived it solely as a South America problem. His discovery revealed a bigger picture of politically constructed national narrative which was involved with cultural identity.

We can see similarities between Ross's insights about silenced difficult history of America and the ongoing destruction of Lithuanian architecture from the Soviet occupation period with the stories and aesthetics that are collectively neglected and even hated because of the prevailing narrative.

Memories of socialism in former Soviet Union countries are contradictory and complex as they fluctuate between personal biography and state ideology, between individuality and collectivism, and between empathy and hate. According to Vaidas Petruelis, any approach actively expressed in today's Lithuania towards buildings created during the Soviet years is inevitably politicized. By building a relation with heritage as places of memory and selecting values to be preserved, we inevitably create one or another form of memory or oblivion that shows our approach to the history of certain time⁵⁴. As Gregory Ashworth and his colleagues have accurately pointed out: "heritage can be linked to both forgetting the past and preserving it"⁵⁵.

Generations who have experienced socialism as the regime with its perpetrators and victims are aging, consequently taking up less authority in society. In this case architecture - more precisely heritage - acts as a tangible mediator - the connection between history and personal experience. Linking individual memory with collective and further on with history and cultural identity - that is its role.

The fact that the issue of heritage recognition of phenomena and objects at the occupation time has just begun to be analytically illustrated shows the still existing sensitivity to the past traumas of historical consciousness, which does not allow for dialogue with, and knowledge of a painful and complex past⁵⁶. Moreover, this lack of dialogue and hasty emotion-driven decisions lead to

⁵³ Olick, Levy, "Collective Memory," 921–936.

⁵⁴ Petruelis, Vaidas. "Sociocultural Controversies of the Inheritance of the Architectural Heritage of Soviet Lithuania" ("Sovietinės Lietuvos architektūrinio palikimo įpaveldinimo Sociokultūrinės kontraversijos"). *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 36, no.1 (2012): 10.

⁵⁵ Ashworth, G. J.; Graham, B.; Tunbridge, J. E., "Pluralising Pasts: Heritage, Identity and Place" in *Multicultural Societies*. (London: Pluto press, 2007).

⁵⁶ Rasa Čepaitienė, "Sovietmečio atmintis - tarp atmetimo ir nostalgijos," *Lituanistica*, no. 4 (2007): 36-50.

irrecoverable losses of socialist modernism architecture. Therefore it is highly important for the professionals - who understand the process - to involve in this ongoing development of historical narrative. According to Vaidas Petrulis⁵⁷, heritage conservation experts cannot passively observe processes in relation to the Soviet legacy, but must take an active role in developing narratives that include the issues of politics and modernity, thus giving intangible meaning to heritage.

To conclude, collective remembrance is an outcome of the created and prevailing narrative. As well as within the media or literature this narrative is existing through architecture. Nowadays fostered architectural structures of the difficult eras like Soviet occupation act as symbols of reconciliation with the difficult past, admitting it at present-day and continuing the link for the future generations. Eliminating such a built environment can affect cultural identity.

2.3 Genius Loci

Talking about collective remembrance, it is also essential to describe the concept of *genius loci*⁵⁸. The term itself, as stated by M. Reza Shirazi, has two connotations: meaning and structure. Meaning (subjective) aspect consists in object's relationships to other objects - what the object collects. However, Structure (objective) aspect indicates the formal properties of a network of relationships. Thus, *genius loci* consists in an actual architectural composition (structure) and has an individual character (meaning) which is usually very complex⁵⁹. Even though places are constantly changing over time, genius loci tends to remain the same if only the way of building (e.g. massive, skeletal), the type of settlement and characteristic motifs are respected while changes are being made. According to Christian Norberg-Schulz, "If the primary structural properties are respected, the general atmosphere or "stimmung" will not get lost."⁶⁰

The difficult "stimmung" example is experienced by the visitors in the initial Hitler's holiday camp resort *Prora* located on the German Baltic sea coast⁶¹. The building really was used as a training camp for the Nazi military police, then for the East and (later) United German armies. The fact that "this is a place where 20,000 people were to be groomed to work and wage war"⁶² leaves it controversial for some visitors. However, at present day some of the gigantic building blocks are renovated and meet luxurious resort standards, but the history still belongs to this

⁵⁷Vaidas Petrulis, "Sociocultural Controversies of the Inheritance of the Architectural Heritage of Soviet Lithuania," *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*, no.1 (2012): 14.

⁵⁸ The term used by Norberg-Schulz in the book "Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture" (1980) describing the spirit of a place.

⁵⁹ Shirazi, M., Reza. *Towards an Articulated Phenomenological Interpretation of Architecture : Phenomenal Phenomenology*, (Routledge, 2013), 42.

⁶⁰ Norberg-Schulz "Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture" (Rizzoli,1980), 180.

⁶¹ On the island of Rügen, Germany.

⁶² Quote by Katja Lucke, chief historian at a private museum on the site.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/germany/articles/nazi-relic-set-to-become-luxury-beach-resort/>

ensemble and will always be part of it⁶³. The massive volume and length of the complex holds the *genius loci* through its existence. Hence, it is not necessary to preserve the building completely - while the structure of the original building remains it will always tell the story for those who are interested in it (see case study that relates to this project in section 3.2).

It appears that everything and every place has its “genius”, its particularity. As Schulz puts it, because a human being’s life fundamentally only “takes place”, one plainly has to grasp the *genius loci* of a given place. According to him, to distinguish *genius loci* means observing the environment, realising its particularities and showcasing them in architecture, as an individual work with its own particular character. That being the case, by erecting buildings and making architecture, man reveals the genius loci of the given site and enables the location to manifest its “genius”.

It might seem that following these permanent properties in a way is repeating, but more precisely it is “interpreting” (designing taking a position regarding a particular context) them. Schulz indicates two types of “interpretation”: when it is accepted by fundamental ‘genius’ of the place or when it introduces a new manifestation (e.g. Casa da Música in Porto, Portugal). Space must be left for the future buildings that will become imprinted in their own time, collective memories and continue the history - excessive sentimentality can halt the urban development. Hence, architecture is the field of endless interpretations by which the *genius loci* is continuously constructed.⁶⁴ .

Thus, architecture constructs or continues *genius* (particularity) of a place which is part of the smaller or bigger social group’s collective memory. In order to nourish the genius loci of particular urban setting, the characteristic motifs and the specifics of structure have to be respected while changes are being made. Genius loci can also be constructed by introducing new manifestations to the existing structure.

⁶³ Owen Hatherley, “Hitler’s holiday camp: how the sprawling resort of Prora met a truly modern fate,” accessed Feb 26, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/nov/06/hitler-holiday-camp-prora-nazi-development>.

⁶⁴ Shirazi, M., Reza. *Towards an Articulated Phenomenological Interpretation of Architecture: Phenomenal Phenomenology*, (Routledge, 2013), 43.

2.4 Psychological confrontations

One can notice that demolition and rejection of previous historical context was part of the Soviet discourse in occupied countries. Totalitarian regime made great efforts to reinterpret the past by creating a fairly simple, homogeneous, inflexible and unquestionable image of it⁶⁵. This was done primarily to justify and maintain its legitimacy in an occupied territories⁶⁶. At the same time, elements of collective and especially cultural memory that were unfavorable for this purpose were completely erased or radically reinterpreted not only in public, but also, if possible, in private communication⁶⁷.

Precisely in this order many new public buildings were built by simply emptying the former built environment (e.g. the historic New-town structure was destroyed and the first cinema building known as "Triumph" was demolished in order to build shopping centre "Merkurijus" in the main alley of Kaunas).

Thus, not only the old ideological discourse was denied, but also the visible symbols, signs and architecture of the former country were rejected. According to Paul Connerton, this is how condemnation of the old regime becomes an act of the new order⁶⁸.

If we take Lithuania's independence years, after the shift of political and economic systems, we are noticing almost the same sort of condemnation of the Soviet regime. The rejection of symbols, signs and architectural environment from the traumatic historical period is such intense that society is better off with demolishing exceptional socialist modern artifice rather than finding out compromises to adaptively reuse it. It seems that throughout the occupation years destructing mindset was in a way installed in society's mentality.

Delving deeper into psychological confrontations of people, in Soviet occupation period the instincts for survival (threatened by KGB⁶⁹ prison, death sentences and mass deportations to Siberia for compulsory work under slave conditions) forced major part of the society (often even at the expense of conscience) to adapt to the new conditions and to pick up the officially shared views⁷⁰. Hypocrisy was part of everyday life for many people at the time.

After the declaration of independence the right-wing members were very keen to distance themselves from the occupation legitimizing discourse, unequivocally denying any value of that legacy. Such a posture can be related to the notion of *alienation* (*Lith. svetimumas*) used in the historical consciousness *problematique*⁷¹. According to Rasa Čepaitienė, it is a state when some phenomena or events of the past are completely unacceptable and even

⁶⁵ G. J. Ashworth, The Conserved European City as Cultural Symbol: the Meaning of the Text, *Modern Europe, Place, Culture and Identity*, ed. B. Graham (London: Arnold, 1998): 267.

⁶⁶ John. E. Tunbridge, G. J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage. The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1996): 138.

⁶⁷ T. Kuzio, "History, memory and nation building in the post-soviet colonial space," in *Nationalities papers*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2002): 241–264.

⁶⁸ Connerton, Paul. *How Societies remember*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 6.

⁶⁹ KGB - *transl.* Committee for State Security - the main security agency for the Soviet Union from 1954 until its break-up in 1991. The agency was a military service governed by army laws and regulations, in the same fashion as the Soviet Army.

⁷⁰ Čepaitienė, "Sovietmečio atmintis," 45.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 44-45.

incomprehensible - it describes our distance in time regarding certain phenomena, customs, or processes that are clearly different from the present ones. In the meantime it was also sought out with who to identify in the past. That is the *proximity* of history, described as the exclusion and emphasis of those details and aspects from the past that have remained relevant to this day and connect us to the people of certain period in time.⁷² What followed was that nationalist narratives were promoted to resurrect the national spirit of the interwar republic – the true statehood of Lithuania - as it was never seized but was only repressed during the occupation⁷³. Until this day socialist modernist buildings are not very appreciated in public discourse while interwar modernist architecture is being praised. Regardless the time when socialist modernism buildings were built, citizens tend to not know how many Lithuanian architects were trying to create exclusive, unstandardized architecture and urban design in the constraints of the Soviet order.

Hence, totalitarian destruction and traumatic history formed big part of the society's attitude not only towards the socialist regime but also everything related to it, including buildings.

The rhetorical question arises - doesn't demolishing valuable buildings from the Soviet occupation time metaphorically put the nation in its former perpetrator's position? Will it not be another loss - but this time by free will?

Certainly the nation chose to emphasize interwar republic history and cherish heritage of that period, but it is about time for society to learn dissociating Soviet apparatus from the buildings and to understand the value of exceptional experimental architecture created within Soviet constraints.

⁷² Rasa Čepaitienė, Živilė Mikailienė, "Istorijos artimumo ir svetimumo atskleidimas" (transl. "Revealing the proximity and alienation of history") in *Pasaulis prasideda čia*, ed. Artūras Judžentis (Vilnius: Didakta, 2017), 38-39.

⁷³ Ibid. 46.

2.5 How heritage preservation is not always applicable in Lithuania

During the period of independence (since 1991) a new Register of (immovable) cultural heritage of the Republic of Lithuania re-evaluated those pre-war buildings of modern architecture that represented a significant heritage of the First Republic (but no detailed study was prepared). At the very end of the 20th century Register re-examined the architecture of the Stalinist period and objects of that period were no longer automatically rejected but perceived as, for example, witnessing complex history (Green Bridge with sculptures in Vilnius) or socialist realism. During the last two decades, several new objects of post-war modernism were added to the Register as their survival was threatened (e.g. Concert and Sports Palace in Vilnius, Kaunas Funeral Palace).

In 2005 all cultural monuments have been automatically transferred from the Soviet lists to present day Register of Cultural Heritage and now there are approximately 350⁷⁴ positions in the Register (buildings and complexes consisting of 2 to 10 buildings) built between 1920 and 1990. According to Marija Drémaitė, although the number of objects is not small, the list shows that a systematic approach to assessing and recording the heritage of modern architecture has not developed. The review of the accounting by the Department of Cultural Heritage testifies to the chaotic, random, process of registration that threatens the survival of the object, but not systematic, consistent and conceptual registration based on cultural and architectural history research and inventory⁷⁵.

Thus, the first problem is emerging, the essence of it being the large division between the researches of Lithuanian modern architecture⁷⁶ and the formation of heritage discourse represented by the Register of Cultural Values.

The root of the second problem lies in the lack of identification and communication to the public about the values of the objects in the Register. The main accounting document - The Real Estate Accounting Act basically records only what needs to be stored on the property, but does not justify why it should be protected. The representativeness of the register becomes difficult to grasp, as a large number of objects included in it are selected on the basis of very diverse and inconsistent criteria, without comparative research⁷⁷.

Heritage conservationists are facing new problems because of the expanded concept of modern architecture. Research in 21st century has extended its definition from a very clearly chronologically and stylistically defined phenomenon to a more broader concept that embraces modernity as reflected in architecture⁷⁸ (e.g. regionalism, mass accommodation, model projects, socialist realism etc.)

This heritage expansion and devaluation, known as 'heritage inflation', pose complex challenges for both owners and authorities responsible for heritage protection. This situation is

⁷⁴ The list is approximate because the Cultural Heritage Register (<http://kvr.kpd.lt>) does not search by date of construction, author or style - only by geographical location, and more than one hundred objects attributable to the period of investigation do not have revised data and photographs, therefore the exact number of objects could not be determined.

⁷⁵ Drémaitė, Marija. "Moderniosios architektūros paveldas Lietuvoje: teorinis aspektas," *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 36, no.3 (2012): 150.

⁷⁶ Drémaitė, Petrusis, Tutlytė 2012; Drémaitė 2016, 2017; Petrusis 2006, 2019, 2012; Nekrošius 2012, 2019; et al.

⁷⁷ Drémaitė, "Moderniosios architektūros paveldas," 150.

⁷⁸ Rimantas Buivydas, "Žvilgsnis į XX a. architektūros pasaulį kaip į priešpriešų istoriją," *Urbanistika ir architektūra* no. 2 (2001): 89–96.

also fueled by the mindset prevalent in society and among professionals that if an object is not listed as a heritage site it will be automatically demolished⁷⁹. The register is no longer a list of the most valuable objects of the state, but also a refuge for objects that can become heritage, since there is no intermediate stage between two extreme choices of restoring or demolishing - simply adaptively reusing the object.

Sadly, even the buildings in the Register may receive a market-driven “repair” which was visually captured by N. Lukšionytė in the case of architect V. Landsbergis house “renovation” in Kaunas⁸⁰ (almost nothing authentic left about the exterior of this modern building) (also see relevant case study in section 3.2). The inconsistent formation of the list of modern architecture in Lithuania poses a threat like this.

In most cases one can state that monumental designation of valuable modern buildings is being stopped by the existing system of friendships and favor-making among Lithuanian politics and businessmen (like demolished restaurant “Banga” building in Palanga with the help of the city’s major; see case study in section 3.1), breakage of architectural competition rules (like the story of Stasys Eidrigėvičius Arts Center in Panevėžys where regardless of reusing the existing socialist modernist “Garsas” cinema building, as it was decided in the competition’s workshop, the winning design proposed a brand new building without any clue of the old cinema).

However, It has to be realized that despite the activity of enthusiastic groups, the register will not be able to accommodate all the legacy of Lithuanian modernism soon enough - the owners and tenants of valuable buildings have to be more informed and feel responsible for architectural aesthetics of modern buildings today.

Hence, although the number of protected buildings in the Register is not so small, the systematic approach to assessing the heritage of modern architecture has not been developed. Two main problems are prevailing - first - the disunion between the scholars researching Lithuanian modern architecture and the Register of Cultural Values, second - the scarcity of identification and communication to the public about the values of the heritage in the Register. Since, there left no intermediate stage between restoring or demolishing socialist modernist buildings in the market-driven reality of Lithuania, the register’s function becomes a refuge for objects that can become heritage. On top of that, even being in the Register buildings are managed to receive an arbitrary reconstructions. Judging from the proposals of architectural contests, one can also notice that some architects themselves do not realize the value of modern heritage.

⁷⁹ Drémaitė, “Moderniosios architektūros paveldas,” 151.

⁸⁰ Lukšionytė, N. 2012. Iš lietuviškos paveldosaugos paraščių: trys istorijos, *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 36 (1): 54–62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3846/20297955.2012.679787>.

2.6 Economic incentives

The three decades of independence have brought many changes to the cultural, social and economic life of society. Many of the structures of the Soviet era are gradually losing their former form, their visual integrity. What we are witnessing in former Soviet countries is *defacement* process of a modern city says Arnold Toynbee⁸¹. This stagnation is an outcome of a contradiction between two different political eras, with appearance of the dissonance of urban development.

In the post-soviet phase, the majority of easily replaceable symbols of the previous official ideology was eliminated and emblematic buildings were customized to represent a different political system. Paradoxically enough, urban structures (including shopping centres of the districts, houses of culture or leisure facilities) designed as a form of "constructed happiness"⁸² in the previous regime, became the most abandoned and damaged at present day. That shows that the newly formed Lithuania (before dependant on socialist authorities in Russia) was struggling to build up its economy from the very scratch with its society not being able to afford or maintain (before provided by the State) resort or leisure time complexes. Furthermore, even when the conditions of life increased, such amount of unmaintained facilities were not attractive in the new capitalist order and at the sight of mainstream denial of the buildings erected in Soviet period.

On top of stagnation problem, there are many situations in Lithuania where, due to the attractive location of the acquired valuable modernist building, businessmen are planning to demolish it - here the defenders of the building as an *art object or a time marker* are interfering (see case study in section 3.1). What exactly is leading the owners to demolish the existing building differs to each case but there are reasons why valuable buildings are constantly vanishing in Lithuania and post-soviet countries.

According to Martin Capeluto and Maria Turull⁸³, there are many specific problematic issues when obeying the heritage protection policy for the 20th century's architectural legacy: "restoration of modern architectural materials, discovery of functions that could be used for original spatial solutions of these buildings, ways of gaining non-professional public recognition"⁸⁴.

The major threat to modernist resort buildings apparently is a global capitalism. Professor Edward Said states that it is dangerous to the preservation of all architectural language, as capitalism progresses in the creation of spaces that rather serve economic than public interests⁸⁵. Entrepreneurs who own the buildings are looking for quick profits. Even though their choice is, obviously, short sighted compared to the long-term financial gain of acquiring a heritage monument.

⁸¹ Toynbee, Arnold. *Cities of Destiny*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1976, p.22

⁸² Mart Kalm, Ingrid Ruudi (eds.), *Constructed Happiness: Domestic Environment in the Cold War Era*, Estonian Academy of Arts Proceedings, 16, Tallinn: Estonian Academy of Arts, 2005.

⁸³ Capeluto, M.; Turull, M. 2008. The Evolution of Intervention Criteria in Modern Movement Restoration: Essential Problems and Circumstantial Problems. GATCPAC'S Conservation Project as a Case Study, in Proceedings of the 10th International DOCOMOMO Conference. The Challenge of Change. Dealing with the Legacy of the Modern Movement, IOS Press, 37–42.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 37–42.

⁸⁵ Said, Edward W. "Invention, Memory, and Place." *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2000) 180.

At present, modernist buildings' ideological undesirability is being used as a justification for economically operated reconstruction or demolition. It is not always enough to reconstruct old soviet modernist building in order to extend its lifespan and give a building a new beginning. The building has to revive in the society's eyes and gain public recognition - otherwise it will not gain any economic profit (see related case study in section 3.1). Consequently, the owners have to come up with a marketing strategy in order to engage not-interested in architecture.

Moreover, the undesirable aesthetics of such buildings excuses an action against them, as their negligent structures lack attractiveness. In most of the cases a lot of maintenance work have to be done, evaluating and finding right materials (which can be expensive to find nowadays) for the reconstruction before a building is ready for reuse.

Most of the time the structure has to be strengthened or repaired, insulation added - all of it taking up some space in the usable plan area. All the new voids and volumes in the building have to correspond with the existing construction, constraining architectural freedom. Fire safety measures (which are more strict comparing to the laws when it was built) have to be taken into account which also deduct usable space.

Likewise, the restriction of available space leads to another problem - not sufficient area for a new function. The solution, obviously, is an extension of the building, but only if that is allowed by commissions.

However, regardless of the drawbacks mentioned, adaptive reuse of such building has a variety of benefits.

Heritage conservationist J.E. Tunbridge noticed a noteworthy phenomenon referred to as the "identity versus economy" dilemma⁸⁶. The former USSR countries which are prone to look at communist-era heritage as a disruption in the construction of new national identities, are in fact attracting the attention of foreign tourists and consequently a significant financial inflow namely because of this heritage⁸⁷). This statement can be supported by Grutas Park⁸⁸, highly popular with foreign tourists. Founded in 2001 after a decade of collecting sculptures of Lenin, Stalin etc. and other exhibits typical to Soviet everyday life from around the country, Grutas Park is visited annually by 120,000 tourists - half of them are foreigners. Another recent example is the large-scale prefabricated building quarter Fabijoniškės in Vilnius where most of the HBO miniseries called "Chernobyl"⁸⁹ was filmed. Because of the relatively authentic look of the Soviet mass-housing buildings foreign tourists are coming to visit and even stay in Airbnb rented accommodation. Thus, we can notice that expanding lifespan of an authentic Soviet modernist heritage has a great tourism potential in a long run especially when the building possess exceptional architecture..

⁸⁶ John E. Tunbridge, "Whose Heritage? Global Problem, European Nightmare," in *Building a New Heritage: Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe*, ed. G. J. Ashworth, P. J. Lakrham (London: Routledge, 1994), 123–134.

⁸⁷ Duncan Light, "Gazing on communism: heritage tourism and post-communist identities in Germany, Hungary and Romania", *Tourism Geographies*, no. 2 (2000) 157–176.

⁸⁸ Grūtas Park - sculpture garden of Soviet-era statues and an exposition of other Soviet ideological relicts from the times of the Lithuanian SSR.

⁸⁹ 5-episode long historical drama "Chernobyl" about one of the worst nuclear disasters in the history of mankind which happened in Chernobyl, Soviet Union (today Ukraine). (2019)

Saving modernist building rather than demolishing acts friendly on the environment. Not only the waste of existing structure will not appear in a landfill (most of resort buildings, being one of a kind, are not reusable structure- and material-wise), but also it will save in material expenses as less of them is needed.

In western Europe, there is already a trend towards re-use of modernist or industrial buildings - in some cases (like the North region in Amsterdam or Strijp-S neighbourhood in Eindhoven, The Netherlands) even new kind of district *gentrification*⁹⁰ takes place around the revived or re-used 20th century buildings. Seeing the flourishing examples around the world, it prompts to invest and develop the adaptive reuse projects which are becoming more and more interesting for the new generation (growing up with more awareness about nature-friendly environment and consciousness about temporality).

Hence, the problem of stagnation obviously lies in the shift of the ownership and reduced demand of resort facilities. Whereas demolition is caused by the evasion of difficulties (for the building owners) obeying a heritage protection policy of the socialist modernist architectural legacy: restoration of materials, discovery of possible functions of such buildings, ways of gaining public recognition. Capitalism, as it progresses in the creation of spaces that rather serve economic than public interests, leads the owners to ignorance of heritage preservation and seek for quick profits. Undesirable aesthetics, maintenance of the existing structure, constraints of the architectural freedom and unsecured income do not encourage owners to reconstruct the existing neglected artifice. However, developers are still shortsighted, Soviet-era heritage is, in fact, attracting the attention of foreign tourists and accordingly a financial profit. Moreover, by being environmental friendly solution, the adaptive reuse is already gaining its popularity in western Europe, with examples of the revived previously neglected parts of the city.

⁹⁰ Gentrification - a process of changing the character of a neighborhood through the influx of more wealthy residents and businesses.

3. Case studies

3.1 Demolition: unnoticed on purpose? Case of cafe “Banga” in Palanga



Figure 10: Cafe “Banga” in Palanga. Arch. Gintautas Telksnys. Built in 1976.



Figure 11: Demolition of cafe “Banga” in 2015.

Palanga lost one of its symbols - the building of the former "Banga" cafe (see figure 10), which stood at the beginning of J.Basanavičiaus Street (the main pedestrian avenue). The decision to demolish the building became a conflict of public and private interests.

During the Independence years, the privatized and decommissioned building was leased to a variety of merchants and its facade was littered with low-value stalls and commercials during the summer (see figure 14). In 2014 the hand-to-hand building was acquired by “Amber Queen”, an amber-processing company with amber shops in Lithuania, Latvia.

The company, which decided to expand its business in Palanga, planned to establish not only a shop but also a museum-gallery. “Amber Queen” stated that they have a display of amber and its articles that could even compete with the Amber Museum of Palanga city. After buying “Banga”, business owner Aleksandras Afanasjevas (one of the richest businessmen in the country) decided it would be impossible to fit the gallery into the building and began considering

demolition. According to Afanasjevas, the former building could not be adapted: "It was built as a summer cafe, therefore completely uninsulated, without windows"⁹¹. Knowing about the value of the building and the ongoing procedure for determining the level of significance, he submitted the demolition project of the building to the Architecture and Spatial Planning Department of Palanga City Municipality. The fact that the building had not yet been included in the list of cultural properties and was not protected by the state let the company demolish it.⁹²

Such a decision by its owners caused a storm among renowned architects in the country. Built in 1979 it was an exceptional example of brutalist concrete manierism in Lithuania. The artifice contained not only the unconventional, expressive volumetric structure, but also the reinforced concrete surface that gives an exceptional impression. Rough concrete surface clearly goes beyond functionality (see figure 12). In this way, the search for the means of architectural expression shows an irrationality, the ideological expression of which continues the "picturesque and metaphorical stylistics of Antonio Gaudi"⁹³.

The concrete architecture of original artifice, aging almost forty years in the prestigious resort area, was well known to several generations of summer residents of Palanga. The café, which operated in the summer in Soviet times, was a popular place for entertainment (see figure 13). "Banga" building was often photographed for postcards and albums representing the resort.

The story of the bulldozer's triumph in May, 2015 (see figure 11) lasted for several years - according to architect Laima Šliogerienė, in October 2013 Klaipėda City Real Estate Heritage Assessment Council announced that "Banga" building was architecturally valuable and the necessity to keep its volume and facade image as they were, the changes could be carried out only inside the building. L. Šliogerienė pointed out - in the story of "Banga", the architects' community were exceptionally united - everyone agreed that the work of a famous architect was worth saving, especially since it could really be adapted to the new owner's intended function⁹⁴.

The members of the Klaipėda City Real Estate Heritage Assessment Council agreed that the building should be granted legal protection - at least as the local level of significance cultural heritage site. Architects from Palanga were urged to promptly collect the assessment material needed for such a decision. Procurement procedures and other obstacles disrupted the process, so the material was only presented to the council in January 2015. However, the decision was postponed again because the material appeared to the council members to be improved, especially since there were thoughts that the building could claim to earn the status of a regional cultural heritage site. At the end of 2014, the Cultural Heritage Center carried out an assessment of Banga at the expense of the municipality, and for the final decision, all what left to do was to send this material to the Council of Real Estate Heritage Assessment in the Cultural Heritage Department, which did not happen until the demolition.

⁹¹ Alvydas Ziabkus, "Palangos meras įveikė architektus: griuvo legendinė „Banga“", *Lietuvos Rytas*, accessed March 2, 2020, <https://bustas.lrytas.lt/nekilnojamosis-turtas/palangos-meras-iveike-architektus-griuvo-legendine-banga.htm>

⁹² Ziabkus, "Palangos meras."

⁹³ Navickienė, Eglė, *Gintautas Telksnys: architektas*, Vilnius: Artseria, 2005. 12.

⁹⁴ Marčėnaitė, Rusnė, "Sovietmečio architektūra: nuteista be įrodymų," July 2015, accessed March 10, 2020, <https://sa.lt/sovietmecio-architektura-nuteista-be-irodymu/>.

Concerned about the preservation of the unique architectural building famous architects Kęstutis Pempė, Saulius Juškys, Eugenijus Miliūnas and Rolandas Palekas wrote requests to Diana Varnaitė (the director of the Cultural Heritage Department) and the mayor of Palanga (Šarūnas Vaitkus)⁹⁵. On the sixth of February of 2015 in a letter signed by the President of the Union of Lithuanian Architects (LAS) Prof. Marius Pranas Šaliamoras, the union addressed the city mayor of Palanga, requesting to take into account the real architectural value of Banga as a priority goal in its possible reconstruction. The letter states that LAS has no doubts about the need for a new function, but after got acquainted with the prepared proposal, they can responsibly state that the new function can be perfectly installed in the existing Banga building or by integrating the Banga building into the newly designed one⁹⁶. On the same day LAS also sent a letter to Department of Cultural Heritage (KPD).

The mayor of Palanga stated that the municipality could not refuse to give a permit to demolish the building: “approvals from all institutions were obtained, the building was not recognized as a cultural asset, and the municipality could be sued for delaying the decision”⁹⁷. In his words, he did not understand where had all the architects been for twenty years, when such a unique and supposedly valuable building was every summer embraced by the ugly kiosks and advertisements.

In the meantime, the owners also sought support for their plans (to build a new building instead of the renovation) at the Architecture and Urban Planning Department of Palanga, and the new project (see figure 15) had been transferred to the Klaipėda County Council of Architecture and Urban Planning Experts. They did not support the demolition in anticipation of the construction of a new building and backed up the proposal to grant legal protection. However, with the slow rotation of a bureaucratic apparatus with legal protection, the owners found an opportunity to obtain permission to demolish the building and immediately took advantage of it.

After trying to save the building together with his colleagues, the architect Leonardas Vaitys, who created several projects together with the original building’s architect G. Telksnys, prepared an alternative reconstruction project that preserves the uniqueness of the “Banga” building (at his own expense) to hand it over to the building owner. L. Vaitys hoped that he would take into account the fact that the architectural community is united to support the preservation of “Banga”, and perhaps consider the proposed solution (see figure 16). According to the architect, the mayor of Palanga Šarūnas Vaitkus agreed to allocate one month to this plan, guaranteeing that by then “Banga” will not be demolished. “The agreement took place on the second of April, 2015. Since the second of May was Saturday, Vaitys decided to go to the mayor with all the drawings on the fourth of May, before his work day began. And already on his way to the municipality he saw bulldozers working. According to the architect, he left the entire project folder to the mayor’s secretary. In fact, he did not want to meet with the mayor that day, said Vaitys⁹⁸.

⁹⁵ Ziabkus, “Palangos meras.”

⁹⁶ Almantas Bružas, “Modernistinis paveldas: Architektų Sąjunga ragina išsaugoti Palangos „Banga“,” accessed March 13, 2020, <http://pilotas.lt/2015/03/23/uncategorised/modernizmo-paveldasarchitektu-sajunga-ragina-issaugoti-palangos-banga/>.

⁹⁷ Ziabkus, “Palangos meras.”

⁹⁸ Marčėnaitė “Sovietmečio architektūra.”

Residents and holidaymakers of Palanga have different opinions on the case. The news about demolition of “Banga” in Lrytas.lt (news portal) facebook page received surprising amount of comments⁹⁹. There were ones that nostalgically remember the cafe building as their childhood memory - like Natalija who remembered eating ice cream on the first floor terrace of “Banga”. A lot of people expressed great pity about a loss of building which “still evokes fond memories”¹⁰⁰. Some locals understand the uniqueness of mannerist modernism architecture - in the interview of LRT¹⁰¹ reportage respondent Stanislovas did not agree with demolition, because he didn't believe something better will be built - probably another glass “jar” as it happens everywhere”¹⁰².

Others did not feel sorry for the building - “Is it necessary to mourn Russian architecture? I think if what was left hasn't been revived, something new is better than those ruins” wrote Vilma who clearly (as major part of Lithuanian society) still labels modernist buildings as part of the Soviet apparatus.

Some citizens did not count the building as one of the symbols - Andrius, the resident of Palanga, ironically commented on the article: “Such a symbol that has been abandoned for a number of years”¹⁰³.

The building was demolished without a project for a future building ready¹⁰⁴. On the one hand, this shows a hasty and selfish action caused by the seek of the instant result. On the other hand, who can blame the owner who did not foreseen the future disruption and problems with heritage protection when buying an old decayed building. If the artifice would have been legally protected as architectural heritage, this scenario would have not happened at the first place.

After the demolition the owner promised an architectural competition, but since then further plans for the private site were not publicly showcased or announced - the last information open to public was sale announcement. For four years the site was hold empty as it continues to be until now (April 2020). In May 2019 the advertisement was placed in aruodas.lt (real estate portal) selling the empty site of the former “Banga” cafe for a commercial use with a permit to

⁹⁹ Alvydas Ziabkus, “Palanga nebeturi vieno iš savo simbolių,” accessed March 12, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/lrytaslt/posts/10153267165256800>

¹⁰⁰ Ziabkus, “Palanga nebeturi,” Audrone Vikonyte comment.

¹⁰¹ LRT - Lithuanian National Radio and Television.

¹⁰² LRT “Palangos meras įveikė architektus: griuvo legendinė kavinė „Banga“ (“Mayor of Palanga overcomes architects: legendary cafe “Banga” collapsed”), Youtube video, posted by Lithuanian National Radio and Television, April 6, 2015, Palanga, retrieved on February 24, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfA2-edJln8&t=57s>

¹⁰³ Ziabkus, “Palanga nebeturi.”

¹⁰⁴ LRT “Palangos meras.”

reconstruct the building and the technical project¹⁰⁵. Today in Regia.lt (the database portal of Lithuania) there is a legal person UAB "Poilsio banga" registered on the site who specialises in "cafes, clubs, bars, restaurants" activity. Does this mean that the former building will be reconstructed in its original function? Would this scenario be the best solution since it would have nothing authentic left? Perhaps in this case it would continue the building's function as an element of Palanga's collective memory. These are rhetorical questions that are not easy to answer but have to be taken care of in the future of this site.



Figure 12: Cafe "Banga" in Palanga. Arch. Gintautas Telksnys. Built in 1976.

¹⁰⁵ Aruodas.lt, accessed Jan 11, 2020, <https://m.en.aruodas.lt/sklypai-palangoje-j-basanaviciaus-g-parduodamas-sklypas-palangoje-j-11-1006287/>

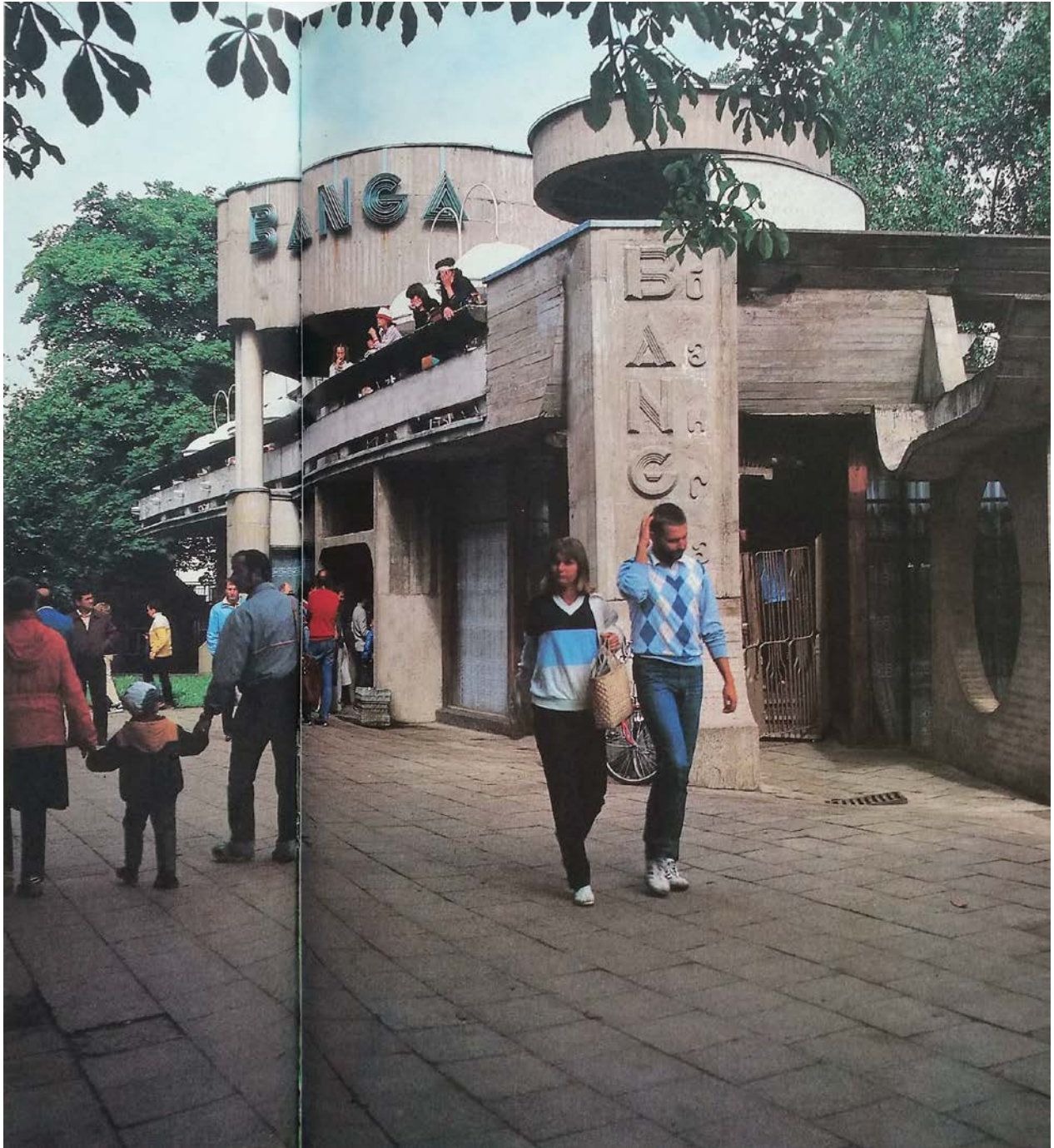


Figure 13: Cafe "Banga" with visitors and pedestrians, 1989.



Figure 14: “Banga” building rented by several merchants covered in low-value stalls and commercials, 2014.



Figure 15: The new project proposal by “Studija 33” that received sharp criticism from fellow architects.



Figure 16: Artist's impression of the project preserving the "Banga" building.

Hence, Lithuanian community of architects lost several years of struggle for the survival of brutalist and postmodernist building by architect Gintautas Telksnis. In this story we can recognize the hasty and profit-driven decisions by the owner mentioned in the section 2.6 as well as the lack of organisation in the heritage preservation domain (section 2.5). Case study brought to the front the fact that politics control what we remember and forget, discussed in section 2.2. Mayor's role in this story was crucial, but he not only didn't see the need to prevent the demolition on "Banga", but ignored the claims and evidence by the experts. In my opinion, it would not be too much to call this case the deliberate deletion of collective memory, when politics allow owners to decide which parts of the historical narrative will remain alive and which will disappear.

3.2 Renovation: Case study of renovated restaurant “Vasara”



Figure 17: Original design of the restaurant “Vasara” at the daytime. Arch. A.Eigirdas. Built in 1964. Photo: 1973.



Figure 18: The appearance of the facade after reconstruction at the daytime, 2016.

At the start of twenty first century in Palanga, there was a great demand for new hotels, residential buildings and rented apartments that met European standards. Taking advantage of the fact that the central part of the city had been built quite extensively until then, more and more projects were planned near the main street, J. Basanavičiaus, which attracts the largest flows of holidaymakers. One of the most striking examples of such development is the reconstruction of the restaurant “Vasara” *transl.* “Summer” and the formation of a new complex around it, proposed and implemented by architecture studio “Arches” in 2005. At present day the restaurant “Summer terrace” operates here during the daytime while at night the building turns into a popular night club “Exit: Summer Residence”.

The original design of the legendary restaurant "Vasara" (1964, arch. Aleksandras Eigirdas; see figure 11) had become an iconic example of socialist modernism in Lithuania due to the exceptional volume of the cylindrical configuration and the unique vaulted construction. The reinforced concrete mushroom-shaped structure was applied – a single central pillar which spreads out at the top to form the roof of a space. In “Vasara” restaurant construction was exceptional both for its size and for its slender shape: the pillar expanded to create the roof in a continuous curved section, without any interruption between the pillar and the ceiling. Where the pillar was most slender stability was added by an intermediate floor, supported by conventional concrete pillars¹⁰⁶.

Among all the reconstructed valuable Socialist modernist architecture Julija Kšivickaitė attributes restaurant “Vasara” as irreversibly altered examples. These are buildings that, regardless of their value, public opinion or heritage status, have been reconstructed by changing their essential features, both internally and externally. Such buildings have often been successfully adapted to today’s needs, but their architecture has been irreversibly altered by changing the composition of volumes, functional schemes, finishing materials. These buildings can no longer be considered as examples of Lithuanian modernist architecture due to excessive changes and loss of unique properties¹⁰⁷. However, before deciding on the strong attitude against this renovation, it would be interesting to hear out other opinions.

According to “Arches” architects, when creating the new complex, it was important for them to preserve the vitreous cylindrical volume of the restaurant building as a key focus of the new ensemble. The function of restaurant has remained unchanged, as well as the vaulted construction that had brought the fame to the building¹⁰⁸.

It is noticeable that while maintaining the cylindrical volume, another highly important qualitative category was forgotten - the transparency of the facade (see figures 11,12). The transparent glass facade showcasing the vaulted structural composition was a memorable architectural sign of Palanga resort. The principles of modernist architectural composition here created a unity

¹⁰⁶ Fundación DOCOMOMO Ibérico, accessed April 2, 2020, <https://100of20.innovaconcrete.eu/exit-vasaros-rezidencija-naktinis-klubas-exit-summer-residence-night-club-and-terasa-vasara-summer-terrace/pdf>.

¹⁰⁷ Kšivickaitė, Julija, “Soviet modernist architecture losses in Lithuania,” *Ur-ba-nis-ti-ka ir ar-chi-tec-tū-ra (transl. Town Plan-ning and Ar-chi-tec-tu-re)*, no.3, (2008): 173–182.

¹⁰⁸ Genovaitė Mikalaukaitė, “Reconstruction of Restaurant “Vasara” with Apartments,” accessed March 10, 2020, <http://archmap.lt/en/objects/reconstruction-of-restaurant-vasara-with-apartments/>.

between exterior and interior¹⁰⁹. After the reconstruction, the facade of the building was covered with tinted glass and this valuable compositional thought had not remained.

However tinted glass was a very much practical and needed design solution. According to famous singer Stasys Povilaitis, who was a frequent visitor of restaurants in Palanga, the most vividly he remembered “the hellish heat inside the restaurant”¹¹⁰. Povilaitis added that during the summer, when restaurants “turned into ovens”, men was supposed to wear jackets and women tights - everyone wondered at a time why there was no open-air restaurant in Palanga. According to him, because the building was all glazed, “when the sun was setting on a hot day, it was impossible to sit down - people felt like they were in a greenhouse” (see figure 11).

To achieve less heated interior the architects had just a few (most commonly used at that time) passive design strategies - increasing shading by the roof extension, introducing additional facade elements or tinting the glass in order to reduce the sunlight coming inside. Taking into account the necessity for the optimal climate in the interior of the restaurant, the context of demanding real estate market and the fact that the building was not legally protected, the architects could have done way more drastic changes but they chose the least damaging solution - tinted glass. It is also a reversible solution, because in the future reconstruction windows could still be changed to more transparent ones. One can notice that the facade is see-through during the night time, when it is mostly used - as a club (see figure 14) this way remaining true to the original design idea (see figure 13).

However, even if the daytime appearance of the building does not resemble the original concept anymore, holidaymakers can still experience spectacular and avant-garde architect's Aleksandras Eigirdas design idea at night, even if it is no longer authentic.

This case study brought to the front the issue of *genius loci* (discussed in section 2.3). Christian Norberg-Schulz's statement that “If the primary structural properties are respected, the general atmosphere or “stimmung” will not get lost”¹¹¹ can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, scholar Julija Kšivickaitė stated that the building can no longer be considered as example of Lithuanian modernist architecture due to the loss of unique property - transparency of the windows. On the other hand, if we consider the opaque windows being reversible and quite small intervention and the fact that at the nighttime the original architectural idea can still be seen and experienced by visitors, we can claim that previous *genius loci* of this building did not disappear, only was modified. The latter being the case, the building lost its importance as an architectural symbol of Palanga - it is not presented on the postcards or travel booklets anymore, but it continue to exist as a landmark to the citizens of Palanga as well as to all Lithuanians physically and mentally (being a connector of generations in stories).

¹⁰⁹ Rudokas, Kastytis, „Vasaros“ restorano rekonstrukcija ir plėtra (transl. Reconstruction and development of the "Summer" restaurant), *Architecture and Urban Design Research Center (AUTC)*, <http://www.autc.lt/lt/architekturos-objektai/1615?rt=3&oe=6>

¹¹⁰ Evelina Valiuškevičiūtė, “Legendiniai Palangos restoranai – senienos ar šaunios vietos?”, accessed Feb 22, 2020, <https://www.lrytas.lt/zmones/pramogos/2013/07/21/news/legendiniai-palangos-restoranai-senienos-ar-saunios-vietos--2759589/>.

¹¹¹ Norberg-Schulz “Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture” (Rizzoli, 1980), 180.



Figure 19: Original design of the restaurant "Vasara" by night. Arch. A.Eigirdas. Built in 1964. Photo: 1973.



Figure 20: The appearance of the facade after reconstruction by night, 2014.

4. Conclusion

The answer to the question why modernism, and particularly the resort architecture, is undesirable in today's Lithuania is not obvious but rather very complex indeed.

Starting from the *problematique* of the socialist modernism as an architectural style, we found out that nowadays the modernist heritage faces contradictory phase. On the one hand, research has extended its definition to a much broader concept that embraces modernity as reflected in architecture - legal protection should be applied for too many buildings. On the other hand, some theorists claim that the idea of preserving such buildings is itself contradicting the modernist architectural ideas and suggest to simply use the buildings without giving them any heritage status. In recent years the problematic of socialist modernism is receiving more interest in Lithuania as well as worldwide.

To grasp the reason why resort architecture was exceptional, understanding the ideological apparatus and its architectural context of Soviet Lithuania was vital (see section 1.2). In Lithuania, as well as in other Soviet Union countries, the new living conditions for the industrial cities and society had to be introduced by the architects. This resulted in the fastest phase of modernization in the history of Lithuania (1959 - 1965) and later (after Stalin's death) the intense urban and suburban sprawl. The totalitarian implementation of "the communist world moral ideas and values" led to the new specific typologies of architecture (e.g. ritual service palaces). Cheaply and fastly erected standardised buildings barely needed an architect, referred to as "project maker" (*Lith. projektuotojas*) at the time. Modernisation brought the homogenization of architecture in Lithuania.

The importance of resort architecture and the extent of it was discussed in section 1.3. It was found out that great attention was paid to the collective holiday in the Soviet order and therefore a countrywide recreational infrastructure of medical and leisure facilities was developed. The vouchers for holidays in recreation facilities and their maintenance were financed by the state. Mass recreation was distributed for two types of leisure: short-term and long-term. Because of the rapid growth of resort towns the uniform functionalist appearance and high-rise residential buildings started to emerge in the small scale towns. Regardless of the recurrent use of standardized designs in architecture for recreation, the early adoption of environmental regulation and resort architecture policies together with the endeavor of the head architects of Lithuanian resort towns helped to turn the period from the 1960s to the 80s into a progressive era in terms of resort architecture.

Once I got acquainted with the context, I began to browse what was hiding "behind the scenes" of ignoring such architecture.

I discovered that there exists a permanent link between buildings and the social memories of the history of a certain place. As a mnemonic device, heritage holds people's capacity to reconstruct memories from the past (especially an event or epoch which should not be forgotten) and integrate them into nowadays historical discourse (see section 2.1).

Surprisingly, the collective remembrance is an outcome of the created and prevailing narrative. As well as within the media or literature this narrative is existing through architecture. Nowadays

fostered architectural structures of the difficult eras like Soviet occupation act as symbols of reconciliation with the difficult past, admitting it at present-day and continuing the link for the future generations. Eliminating such a built environment can affect cultural identity (section 2.2).

One of the components of the smaller or bigger social group's collective memory is *genius* (particularity) of a place which is continued or constructed by architectural environment (section 2.3). In order to nourish the *genius loci* of particular urban setting, the characteristic motifs and the specifics of structure have to be respected while changes are being made. *Genius loci* can also be constructed by introducing new manifestations to the existing structure. Excessive sentimentality can withhold the urban development, accordingly space must be left for future buildings that will become imprinted in their own time, memories and continue the history.

Totalitarian destruction and traumatic history formed a big part of the society's attitude not only towards the socialist regime but also everything related to it, including buildings (section 2.4). The rhetorical question arose - doesn't demolishing valuable buildings from the Soviet occupation time metaphorically put the nation in its former perpetrator's position? Will it not be another loss - but this time by free will?

It was chosen to highlight and cherish heritage of interwar period, but it is about time for society to learn dissociating Soviet apparatus from the buildings and to understand the value of experimental and benevolent Lithuanian architecture created within Soviet constraints.

Heritage preservation is not always applicable to socialist modernist buildings in Lithuania and in section 2.5 we found out why. Apparently, during the recent years, several new objects of post-war modernism were added to the Register only as their survival was threatened. Although the number of protected buildings in the Register is not so small, the systematic approach to assessing and recording the heritage of modern architecture has not been developed. There are a few problems to it. Firstly, the disunion between the scholars researching Lithuanian modern architecture and the Register of Cultural Values. Secondly, the scarcity of identification and communication to the public about the values of the heritage in the Register. Since, apparently, there is no intermediate stage between restoring or demolishing socialist modernist buildings in the market-driven reality of Lithuania, the register's function becomes no longer a list of the most valuable objects of the state, but also a refuge for objects that can become heritage. Besides all that, even the buildings in the Register are managed to receive an arbitrary reconstructions and, by proposals of architectural contests, one can see that some architects themselves do not realize the value of such legacy.

The shift of the ownership and reduced demand of resort facilities led to neglectance and stagnation of socialist modernist buildings. In case a new owner acquires such abandoned building in most cases, seeking for the quick profits, he/she, is avoiding the heritage protection policy of architectural legacy and eventually demolishes the building. This is largely due to capitalism, as it progresses in the creation of spaces that rather serve economic than public interests. Unpleasant aesthetics, maintenance of the existing structure, constraints of the architectural freedom and unsecured income do not encourage owners to reconstruct the existing neglected artifact (section 2.6). However, developers are still shortsighted - Soviet-era heritage is, in fact, attracting the attention of foreign tourists and accordingly a financial profit. Moreover, being environmental friendly solution, the adaptive reuse is already gaining its popularity in western Europe, with examples of the revived previously neglected parts of the city.

The third chapter consisting of two - demolition and renovation - case studies illustrated the real life events in Lithuania. From the memory related topics of the second chapter, one already can perceive the damage done by the demolition (section 3.1). The deliberate deletion of collective memory was witnessed which showcased how historical narrative is being changed by the politics. Moreover, the second case study (section 3.2) showcased quite controversial adaptive reuse of the socialist modernist artifice which brings back the interpretations of the *genius loci*. The interpretation of restaurant "Vasara" is two-fold. On the one hand, due to the loss of unique property the building can no longer be recognized as an example of Lithuanian modernist architecture. On the other hand, the building lost its importance as an architectural symbol of Palanga, but with majority of its former qualities it continue to exist as a landmark to the citizens being a link of different generations in the stories and continuing to transfer the collective memories.

Overall, it may be said that resort architecture of the socialist modernism should be seen and regarded as a niche where the true Lithuanian architecture have emerged throughout the limitations of the Soviet regime. Destroying such architecture is a loss of collective memory of - at present neglected but valuable - experimental Lithuanian architects' works and the evidence of way of living, therefore cultural identity. But not only that - sustaining or adaptively reconstructing these buildings continues the *genius loci* of the cities.

The lack of recognition of the socialist modernism requests a greater critique on the process of heritage preservation and how existing and future architectural gaps in the cities could be reassembled into a different historical narrative in the future.

5. Image sources

Cover. Rakauskas, Romualdas. [photo] "Physiotherapy complex in Druskininkai." *Architecture and Urbanism Research Centre*, KTU ASI archive. Retrieved on April 12, 2020. <http://www.autc.lt/en/architecture-objects/723?rt=3&oe=5>

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Figure 6: Garunkštis, Arūnas. [photo] "Summer reading hall in Palanga. Arch. Albinas Čepys. Built in 1968". *LCVA (Central State Archive of Lithuania), photo documents department*.

Figure 7: Photographer unknown. [photo] "Vanagupė resort with "Linus" vacation complex in Palanga. Arch. Algimantas Lėckas, Built in 1984". *TSR archive*. Retrieved on April 12, 2020. <https://postimg.cc/LnHG38tc>

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7. Videography

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