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ARCHITECTURAL INTERIOR DESIGN FOR DURABILITY OF INTERIOR COMPONENTS. MATERIAL AND INTANGIBLE CONTEXTS OF SELECTED DURABILITY-SUPPORTIVE DESIGN SCHEMES

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DOI: 10.24427/aea-2024-vol16-05

Abstract

The problem of durability is mostly situated in theoretical and practical dimensions within the discipline of architecture in the context of environmental sustainability. Technical durability covers the subject of forming new buildings through embodied energy in building technologies, building materials, and products. The second identified durability framework, defined as emotional durability, concerns the enhancement of the relationship between consumers and products. The paper discusses the interior architectural design for the durability of interior components. The article identifies the supportive design methods to shape interior components while enhancing their durability placed within the two frameworks mentioned above, and analysed in material and intangible aspects, both reflecting the necessity for inclusion of the postulates of environmental sustainability. The research paper recognizes the interior architectural design for adaptive reuse and responsiveness-oriented scheme of biophilic design as supportive schemes for the interior architectural design given the durability of interior components within the material, as well as intangible aspects. The results of the study reveal that the intangibility-related factors dominate in the analysis of responsiveness and adaptive reuse as design schemes to support the durability of constitutive interior components. In particular, the user's emotional engagement, gained through the experience of natural building materials or secondary products introduced into the component's structure, is noticeable in both models. The cultural connotations are among the intangible factors common for the discussed models as well. The quotations from the past engage the users and enclosed within the component's volume, complement and enrich further satisfactory use of components, thus influencing the longevity of spatial objects featuring the inner spaces.

Keywords: interior architectural design; technical durability; emotional durability; adaptive reuse; responsive biophilic design; product longevity

INTRODUCTION

The durability problem is mostly situated in theoretical and practical dimensions, within the area of architectural design in the context of environmental sustainability. It has become an important feature of contemporary architecture and substantially modified the designing process in the discipline. Technical durability covers the subject of forming new buildings concerning embodied energy in building technologies, building materials, and products. Durability should be considered not only as the feature of the integral building as a whole but also as a set of components and materials designed for reuse in the reshaped original building or in a new structure [W. Celadyn 2014].

Durability, already recognized as a key issue for environmental sustainability, is appreciated as a measure in the leading multicriterial evaluation systems. These certification systems, based on the results of scientific research, require the development and implementation of detailed building durability plans. They are mainly the questions of high performance of building systems that, decreasing the possible deterioration of materials and products introduced into the structure, directly impact the long technical building's life. The second identified durability framework, defined as emotional durability [J. Chapman 2009, J. Chapman 2015] relates to the enhancement of the relationship

between consumers and products, remaining “a user-focused approach to product longevity” [Haines-Gadd et al. 2018]. This notion of emotional durability as “an approach concerned with the experience of the user” [Haines-Gadd et al. 2018] can be transferred into the area of interior architectural design as well. It can be referred to as the built-up of resilient relationships between users and the “constitutive interior components” [M. Celadyn 2018] forming a building’s internal spaces and assurance of these interior components’ longevity. Since interior components can be defined as specific and developed products, their longevity “needs to be concerned with not only the physical lifetime but also the psychological lifetime” [K. Ko et al. 2011].

The paper discusses the interior architectural design for the durability of the interior components. The proposed design model, situated within the design discipline of interior architecture, remains in the search for creative proposals to comply with an effective “working with issues of sustainability through design” [J. Chapman 2009]. The article identifies the supportive interior architectural design methods to shape interior components while enhancing their durability by being analyzed within the material and intangible aspects, both reflecting the necessity for inclusion of the postulates of environmental sustainability into design methodology. These demands concern the effective usage of energy and management of resources to minimize the negative effect of the building-related activity on natural surroundings, as well as the enhancement of the psycho-physical comfort of the occupants of the indoor environment. The latter is to be assured with the built-up of positive affective and cognitive relationships between end-users and interior components regarded as the multifunctional spatial objects featuring the interior environment. The article addresses the question of interior architectural design methods for the technical and emotional durability of interior components while examining their values regarding the selected constitutive interior components (i.e. partition walls, multifunctional spatial structures to divide various zones of the internal space, suspended or integrative ceiling, raised floors). The research paper identifies the interior architectural design for adaptive reuse [M. Celadyn 2018] and responsive biophilic design [N.A. Salingaros and K.G. Masden 2008], as durability-supportive interior architectural design models within the above-mentioned material and intangible aspects.

1. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main research method applied in this study is the critical analysis of literature on the subject of

durability in design disciplines with a focus on interior architecture. Moreover, the study refers to the biophilic design focused on responsiveness [N.A. Salingaros and K.G. Masden 2008] that adds to the fundamental biophilic design considerations, questions of sourcing of natural building materials and products, their processing, and their exposure. The main issues of the interior architectural adaptive reuse design scheme [M. Celadyn 2018] are discussed accordingly. These are focused on their impact on the effectiveness of resources management, as well as the relationship between the introduction of reclaimed used building products into components structure and the emotional response of the users about the question of product attachment and its consequences. The analysis is to demonstrate the consequences of enclosure of the design methods mentioned above into the methodology of interior architectural design to enhance the durability of interior components in physical, as well as intangible, aspects.

2. DURABILITY OF INTERIOR COMPONENTS

Durability is “the ability of a product to perform its required function over a lengthy period under normal conditions of use without excessive expenditure on maintenance or repair” [T. Cooper 2016]. The durability of physical objects, regardless of their scale, refers, thus, to their capacity to successfully fulfil the purposes they were designed for. In the case of a building, this capacity considers the delivery by these structurally and formally developed objects of functionally valuable spaces for a long time. This can be achieved mostly through carefully developed technical solutions to prevent the degradation of the outer layer of buildings caused by unfavourable atmospheric conditions, and extensive or inappropriate usage. The design strategies are therefore aimed at the avoidance of any signs of the gradually occurring disintegration of the cladding materials. This means preventing the introduction of materials that demonstrate their physical weakness, and tendency to compromise their performance in mechanical or functional contexts.

The main objective of the interior architectural design for the durability of interior components, featuring the building’s closed spaces, is to ensure their long-lasting performance. The analysis of durability-oriented design methods has to consider the technical or material, as well as emotional or intangible aspects of the durability phenomenon. Considering technical durability, the proposed design method is aimed at preventing the potential disfigurement of the outer layer of an object which is caused mostly by the synergic

effect of incorrectly selected building materials, poorly elaborated architectural details, unsuitable maintenance, as well as irresponsible or careless usage. The emotional durability is to be assured by the sustaining of the user's attention toward the interior component's appearance and performance conditioned by the mutual empathy between the end-user and the component – interior component.

2.1. Technical durability

Measures taken to avoid interior components' excessive and continuous physical degradation, which is a substantial factor to prevent the satisfactory and effective usage of these objects in long time perspective, and assure their positive perception by the occupants, should be preceded by the examination of the following design questions: 1) project category and interior placement in the context of their implications on the material condition of the objects (i.e. prevision of possible changes in internal space location and necessity of frequent dismantling and re-installation of components; 2) spatial organization and zoning in relation to the circulation density; 3) adaptability to allow changes in functional performance or product upgrading; 4) flexibility to comply with potentially changed functional requirements for the interior; 5) evolutive capacity, understood as the possibility of making future improvements within the object's structure; 6) considering the building materials' physical parameters (e.g., bending strength, abrasion resistance) while selecting them as suitable for the design purpose, including development of architectural details.

Other questions directly influence the technical durability of the building's inner spaces and their constitutive components but are related to the building managers' operation course. This problem is equally important in securing the durability of the object. It should be analysed simultaneously with functional and formal demands since the management and maintenance have a great impact on the design project and influence the end user's behavioural mode. Therefore, the design documentation should provide additional directives including 1) an agenda of the cyclic technical inspections within the internal spaces of a building to avoid the risk of premature disintegration; 2) guidelines for the maintenance procedures, specifically focused on the non-structural elements of the object; 3) manuals on the proper use of selected components to avoid their malfunctioning due to hazardous actions taken by the users, that might result in physical damages of the component.

The exemplary design methods to ensure the interior components' technical durability, which are

directly related to the question of preserving the embodied energy and embodied materials, embrace the following:

- Assembly methods to reduce the inseparable joints in favour of removable mechanical fixings that assure correct installation of components and enable potential replacement of the damaged parts or further reuse of dismantled parts, reclaimed building materials, or products from the dismantled object to form another interior component. This approach, following the postulates of the Design for Disassembly, is to support the minor or routine repair of the finishing layers of the component, and pointwise easy replacement of used and removed portions, to increase the useful life of the entire interior component;
- Simplicity of formal solutions, realized with avoidance of the object's inexplicable formal complexity;
- Clarity of applied technical solutions to assure access and easy inspection;
- Reduction in the number of elementary parts making up the component to ensure its functionality;
- Avoidance of unnecessary finishing and cladding, especially permanently fixed to the structural elements, that might prevent the pointwise exchange or repair when damaged;
- Construction design suitable for the category of interior component and the presumed duration of the interior;
- Structural honesty, interpreted as the integration of suitable building materials, structural and mechanical systems, and formal appearance of the object, as well as its performance. The clear explanation of the chosen technology is in tune with the solutions of the object's operating mode, as responding to the prior functional and formal demands;
- Material honesty is understood as a selection of specific building materials based on their mechanical properties that are to be respected while developing the object's formal appearance. It allows for avoiding the variety of unnecessary finishing layers in favour of the exposition of the texture of reclaimed building materials;
- Simplicity of the construction concept to reduce the number of various parts completing the object, in order to ease the integration with other parts of interior components and to reveal the original physical characteristics of building materials and products.

2.2. Emotional durability

Another area where the durability of interior components is to be examined embraces the question of emotional durability of interior components, aimed at the search for a solution to delay or eliminate the need for the replacement of objects being in use for some time, by the new ones. Emotionally durable design explores the possibility of establishing deep and sustainable bonds between users and artefacts. The development of an emotional bond with a specific object means that it acquired meaning beyond the fundamental functional issues [R. Mugge et al. 2009]. The objectives of this design for emotional durability are to reduce consumption, to acquire carefully and thoughtfully resources, and finally diminish waste production by elongating the lifespan of products. The main postulates of this design method can be applied to the shaping of interior components remaining multifunctional and compound interior components as well. This is to be achieved by *“increasing the durability of relationships between consumers and products”* [J. Chapman 2006, p. 21], as a result of the consideration of deeper sensorial dimensions of the objects by designers. This requires modifications of the design methodology to extend the traditionally deliberated problems such as functionality, ergonomics, or styling toward more environmentally oriented approaches, where emotional durability is placed. The interior component, defined as a functionally and spatially developed product is to be designed as an object that extends the user's multidimensional experience through the *“information it contains and the meaning it conveys”* [J. Chapman 2015].

Chapman identifies the fundamental issue for the effectiveness of this kind of user-product interaction extending toward the long-lasting partnership. It is the user's empathy strongly demonstrated towards these products, which proves their functionality while presenting the “layers of meanings” that reflect the user's previously gained experiences. The empathy and meaning as “metaphysical factors” make, according to Chapman, the core of the object's emotional durability, that influence the duration of the object's life. The complexity of the product's properties expands the user's emotional involvement and then transforms it into an emotional attachment. This strong connection between user and object, retained by the mutual empathy expressed by the user and a product, finally secures the extension of the object's lifetime. The sustenance of the user's desire to maintain an emotional bond with the object depends largely on the object's ability to adjust to the user's expectations changing in time and thus to prove its continuing attractiveness and usefulness.

Design for emotional durability denotes the object's active role in creating a continuous satisfactory relationship with the end user. The specific dependency of the object upon the user's attention requires the first to build up the model of exchange of reliance and need. It is possible through the object's abilities to adjust over time to sustain the user's attention while disclosing the yet uncovered values or unpredictable meanings. The discovery of the object's potential as continuing in time, lengthening and intensifying the interactive engagement, is a means to maximize the result of experiencing the object.

The exemplary design methods that assure the arousal of stable attachment and benefit in affective-related durability of interior components comprise the following:

- Clarity of structural and technical solutions based on identifying the object's specific part-pillar that regardless of the upcoming technological changes remains intact, eases further repair or upgrading other portions featuring compound object;
- Adapting the object (i.e. offering affordances previously undiscovered) to the user's rising expectations or changing needs occurring in time;
- Providing the object with additional and apparently invisible or irrelevant features, that reveal their hidden functional assignments to be slowly discovered, as well as increase the aesthetic values;
- Building up the specific resilience of the object, understood as its ability to successfully integrate signs of devastation occurring accidentally through its lifespan, accomplished with a graphic composition on its surface being adequate to the presumed purpose of the object.

The emotional and reflective interactions between the end-user and an interior component, stimulated by accordingly applied design methods, lead to the arousal of a stable and long-lasting relationship. The ultimate result of this process is the development of product attachment, outlined as a *“feasible sustainable design strategy”* [T. Page, 2014]. As Page further notices, the development of the emotional ties between users and products *“have a considerable effect on postponing product replacement”* [T. Page 2014] since people exhibit more protective behaviours to products to which they are attached. In consequence, they consider the possibility of postponing objects' replacement as long as possible [R. Mugge et al. 2006]. The authors link the experience of attachment to a product with the product's lifetime. The product attachment is followed by the phenomenon of place attachment that involves affirmative and positively experienced connections de-

veloped from the affective, and then cognitive responses that occur between individuals and their physical surroundings. This concerns especially interior spaces featuring the occupants' nearest environment.

The above-mentioned basic design methods to accomplish emotional durability, remain by the sustainable approach to design, claimed by Walker [S. Walker 2006, S. Walker 2010]. His concept emphasizes the essence of usefulness as a crucial factor for the final appearance of the object. He includes in the design methodology the inventive, still very demanding, and aesthetically provocative proposals referring to the requirement for "resourcefulness" in design. The claim for the cautious and rational usage of available material substances is mostly directly linked with the emotional aspect of the durability of interior components. The design approach is aimed at overcoming the dissatisfaction of users caused by the accumulative aging process and the growth of signs of wearing on the objects. They are to prevent them from becoming prematurely obsolete, both emotionally and aesthetically, and thus being subject to replacement by new ones or discarded.

The design methods referring to the concept of resourcefulness, as substantial for the positive perception of the object in a long-time perspective, comprise the following:

- Lack of precision in execution of the outer surfaces of interior components. This design technique, apparently proving the low quality of workmanship, if carefully planned and creatively explored, allows for the achievement of emotionally engaging and aesthetically appealing components;
- Lack of finishes in new elements or reused parts integrated with them or reclaimed materials being only cleaned up or refreshed, as means *"to absorb wear and tear in a way that does not detract from the overall appearance of the object"* [S. Walker 2006, p. 87];
- Roughness of the outer surfaces, considered an innovative means to protect the surface from premature deterioration caused by the accumulation of the signs of wearing that might critically affect its appearance. The growth of additional scratches on the object's surface, considered integral elements of the outer layer, does not provoke the user's dissatisfaction followed by the replacement of the component;
- Exposition of stains, decolourisation, scratches or small defects occurred throughout the technical life cycle. Deliberate, broad exposition of effects of the intensive usage of the reclaimed

objects, if thoughtfully and creatively executed, influence the users' perception. It attracts unexpectedly and severely their attention, then raises their curiosity by making indirect but evident references to the continuity and inevitability of the natural aging process. This design method allows for the absorption of wear and tear, thus becoming a driver for the aesthetics longevity as another element that defines the complexity of the notion of durability of objects.

3. BIOPHILIC DESIGN FOR RESPONSIVENESS

The biophilic design is to create a positive, multidimensional, and valued human experience of nature within the built environment, in particular in building closed spaces. Biophilic design is to transfer this association with nature into the approach for designing the built environment [S.R. Kellert 2005, S.R. Kellert et al. 2008], in a search for a reconciliation of humans with nature. The concise analysis of literature on the leading biophilic design schemes, which might be named as a dimensional model [J.H. Heerwagen and B. Hase 2001], valorisation model [S.R. Kellert et al. 2008], or application-oriented model [W. Browning et al. 2014, W. Browning and C. Ryan 2020], reveal certain similarities within the frameworks concerning the biophilic design methodology based on the creative imitation of the shapes, forms, patterns, and processes observed in the natural environment allowing them to identify biophilic design attributes. The aforementioned biophilic design models aim to eliminate harmful transformation and degradation of the natural environment caused by the effects of human activities while diminishing the growing alienation of humans from their natural settings. The application of biophilic design determinants into the design methodology, as described in the leading schemes, therefore, enhances reaching the goals of environmental sustainability.

The responsiveness-oriented design approach is to *"support the biophilia hypothesis from independent directions"* [N.A. Salingaros and K.G. Masden 2008]. The biophilic design for responsiveness underlines the phenomenon of specific exchange of information between humans and their nearest environment featuring buildings and their surroundings, as well as interior spaces and their components. This process of specific data transmission is to emulate the formal complexity of natural objects through the investigation of the physical characteristics of introduced natural, renewable materials. It assures emotional engagement, the process of decoding the multidimensional messages provided by the objects, and subsequently the

user's sense of belonging. The design model explores ways the material substance is implemented to form objects patterned on nature, to provide them with a direct and intense experience of the relationship between the built and natural environments.

The responsive biophilic design respects fundamental postulates for the introduction of nature-related patterns and attributes into the built environment. It addresses the questions of the physical characteristics of natural building materials and information-related questions resulting from materials aspects while proving their potential in shaping components of clear responsive appeal. This model combines patterns referring directly to the natural objects, processes, or phenomena (e.g., diversity in textures of natural resources, hierarchy, complexity) as well as patterns making references to the appearance of material texture or addressing the manufacturing and working techniques.

Design methods to introduce responsiveness, as a substantial biophilia-complementing and supporting approach, comprise fourteen steps identified by Salingaros and Masden [N.A. Salingaros and K.G. Masden 2008]. Among them, some proposals refer to the scale of the interior and its components. They are as follows:

- Reuse of locally reclaimed natural materials from older buildings, aimed to confirm their high informational content. This approach is supplemented with the use of natural unfinished materials to expose materials' texture and colour, to adjust design solutions to various sizes of available materials, and to reduce solid waste;
- Introduction of small-scale objects made with building materials of limited finishing into the newly conceived structures in a way to disclose the concept of construction and parameters of building materials;
- Geometrical interweaving of vegetation and nature-related features with the building fabric to sustain the connection between interior and natural environments. This process of establishing the human-nature relationship is not only emphasized by the number of plants introduced into the closed spaces but also by defining the boundaries of the latter as more "meandering or crene-lated".

4. INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN FOR ADAPTIVE REUSE

The interior architectural design for adaptive reuse is based on the reintroduction of reclaimed building materials and products from refurbished or

demolished buildings into the indoor environment to: equip them with new functions, add to a new formal value, and provide them with new spatial context, in the result of their transfer and conversion from building waste to resources enabling completion of new interior components. The interior architectural design for adaptive reuse is based on the analysis of the values of reclaimed parts, and follows the traditionally defined adaptive-reuse design method and its' belief that "*understanding of the inherent qualities and conditions of a building or site can provide clues to the redesign of the place*" [S. Stone 2019, p. 2]. This model considers the "*issues of memory and anticipation, discovery and recognition, the current need to belong*" [S. Stone 2019], that remains the domain of adaptive reuse in its most traditional understanding as an adaptation of the existing building structures to the new functional requirements. The interior filled with components made with well-recognized used parts provides occupants with the "*sense of spatial identity and experience of homeliness*" [L. Świątek 2009]. An object completed with the secondary products affects its user through the "*information it contains and the meaning it conveys*" [J. Chapman 2015]. The deeper examination of the interior component designed according to the adaptive reuse interior architectural design can lead to a mature consideration of the design concept based on "*rationalization and intellectualization*" [D.A. Norman 2004].

The reintroduction and formal assimilation of the reclaimed building materials and products within the structure of constitutive interior components is achieved without their prior significant reshaping or reprocessing. The whole process requires prior assessment of the "mining" potential of existing buildings and their internal spaces, as well as a qualitative evaluation of available resources and inquiry on the assembly techniques used formerly. The inter-setting scheme of interior architectural adaptive reuse involves building materials or products recovered from dismantled or deconstructed building structural elements and then re-introduced into the inner space to complete newly conceived interior components or refurbished ones. In the case of an intra-setting scheme of interior architectural adaptive reuse, the building materials reclaimed from the dismantled interior components are retained within a closed space to form other objects. Both the above-mentioned design schemes, refer to the question of effectiveness in the use of building materials, and comply with the "*environmental urge to adapt and transform combined with the need to build human experiences, rather than construct new things*" [S. Stone 2023].

Among the design strategies of the interior architectural design for adaptive reuse are the following: 1) Inversion, meaning the broad acquisition of available reclaimed building products from refurbished or demolished buildings understood as the superior design principle aimed at the building products reversal from costly reprocessing, recycling or final disposal; 2) Inclusion, meaning the fragmentary inclusion of salvaged building materials or products as means of exercised flow of resources between indoor environment and natural surroundings; 3) Integrity, meaning the established unity of building components and interior components, to enable exploration of their material and semantic potential. The introduction of reclaimed elements-building products within the interior components structure stimulates unconventional design approaches focused on the accommodation of salvaged materials and products to assure formal consistency and high performance of components.

The exemplary design methods include:

- Design for Display to attract users' attention through the appearance of reused building materials;
- Design for Interaction to build up knowledge on the impact of components on the natural environment;
- Design for Connection to provide users with evidence of their contribution to environmental integration due to the components' selection based on the adaptive reuse model.

5. DISCUSSION

The two design schemes: adaptive reuse and biophilic design for responsiveness were examined in this study given their role in architectural interior design for the durability of interior components. The finishing layer of the internal wall was indicated as the exemplary interior component chosen for the assessment of biophilic design for responsiveness and adaptive reuse design scheme as interior components' durability-supportive design method, concerning the material and intangible aspects of durability.

5.1. Durability-supportive features of responsiveness

Biophilic design for responsiveness, while mentioning reuse as one the most promising approaches, directly refers to the question of preserving the embodied energy and embodied materials, as well as extending the technical life cycle of the product. The postulates of limited working, especially in the context of the

finishes of surfaces of objects, address the material aspect of an object's durability.

The demand for the implementation of natural and reused parts addresses the emotional durability of interior components. Rationally grounded acceptance of design methods to form interior components is the result of emotional perception followed by cognitive reaction. This design model comprises the exemplary intangibility-related factors:

- Natural environment-oriented connotations within the interior component structure as a source of positive emotional and mental experiences of the presence of natural materials or the "nature analogues" within the structure of interior components and, thus, within the closed spaces;
- Emotional relationship developed through the experience of meaningful and expressive properties of the used natural building material;
- Decoding materials' properties due to the limited finishing and exposure of natural materials texture. This approach provides the users with a more intense experience, and optimizes the amount of information revealed to them.

Biophilic design for responsiveness as a durability-supportive design method to enhance the interior architectural design is demonstrated within the exemplary commercial interiors in Figure 1. The finishing layers of loadbearing walls, partitions, or spatial dividers were chosen for the evaluation, as they are critical interior components defining the inner space and influencing its perception.

5.2. Durability-supportive features of interior architectural adaptive reuse

The durability-related approach of the interior architectural adaptive reuse design scheme, within its material aspect, refers to the following:

- Preserving the embodied energy in materials through reversing the potential building waste from the landfill, their remanufacturing, and reintroduction into the structure of valuable and functional objects;
- Extension of the lifespan of the product through various modes of its application in alternative locations to fulfill new functional assignments;
- Closed circuit of material substance as the ultimate sustainability-oriented design postulate achieved by the potentially cyclic repetition of extracting recoverable materials from refurbished or demolished buildings, reprocessing of the reclaimed products, and reintroduction of material substance into the building.

| Biophilic design for responsiveness in patterns | Intangible aspects of interior component's durability | Material aspects of interior component's durability |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of natural unfinished materials to expose materials texture and colour; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience of the object through accommodation of signs of decay (i.e. sound graphic arrangement to hide marks of use); | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural honesty; Construction design suitable for the category of interior component and presumed duration of the interior; |
| Self-supporting dividing structure made with the locally available natural stone boulders, building Dipoli, Alvar Aalto University, Helsinki, arch. Raili and Reima Pietilä, 1966, renovation 2017, ALA Architects, Fot. M. Celadyn, 2023 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of natural unfinished materials to expose materials texture and colour; Adjustment in design solutions to introduce the available materials of various sizes; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience of the object through accommodation of signs of decay (i.e. sound graphic arrangement to hide marks of use); | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplicity of formal solutions, realized with avoidance of object's inexplicable formal complexity; |
| Internal wall cladding with solid wood varnished with a dark colour, main hall, Helsinki Music Center, 2011, LPR Architects Fot. M. Celadyn, 2023 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of natural unfinished materials to expose materials texture and colour; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of structural solution that allow to identify the construction clear principle and to ease possible repair or pointwise replacement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assembly methods to reduce inseparable joints in favour of the removable mechanical fixings that assure correct installation of elements and enable potential replacement of the damaged parts; Structural honesty; Clarity of applied technical solutions to assure access and easy inspection; |
| Internal wall cladding with timber battens fixed with steel hinges, entrance hall, Marunouchi Center Building, Tokio, 1984, Shimizu Corporation, Fot. M. Celadyn, 2019 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of natural unfinished materials to expose materials texture and colour; Adjustment in design solutions to introduce the available materials of various sizes; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of structural solution that allow to identify the construction clear principle and to ease possible repair or pointwise replacement; Provision of additional functions and meanings gradually discovered by users; Resilience of the object through accommodation of signs of decay (i.e. sound graphic arrangement to hide marks of use). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assembly methods to reduce inseparable joints in favour of the removable mechanical fixings that assure correct installation of elements and enable potential replacement of the damaged parts; Simplicity of formal solutions realized with the avoidance of object's inexplicable formal complexity; Structural honesty; Avoidance of unnecessary finishing and cladding, especially these permanently fixed to the structural elements, that might prevent them from the pointwise exchange or repair when damaged |
| Cladding of internal wall in wood strips used for temporary exhibits, Undergraduate Center, Alvar Aalto University, Helsinki, arch. A. Aalto, 1964, renovation 2017, Architects NRT, Fot. M. Celadyn, 2023 | | |

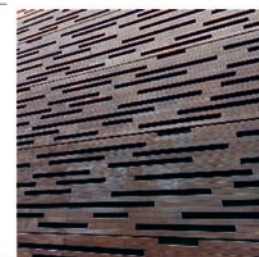


Fig. 1. Biophilic design for responsiveness as a durability-supportive design method; source: author's drawing

The interior architectural design model based on adaptive reuse offers the opportunity for building up an individual subjective interpretation of the compound object and engagement due to the emotional experience accompanying the first contact with an object, then followed by a gradually developed reflective response. The process of captivating the occupants' attention, and influencing their positive reactions toward the interior components, is assessed within the intangible context of durability issues.

The exemplary intangibility-related factors of the design model comprise:

- Multisensorial experience of interior components of the complex structure (i.e. composition of new and reclaimed secondary parts) that engages affective reactions is followed by a conscious exploration of the components' features. This encourages end-users to recognize the role of interior components', as objects broadly exposing salvaged elements, in stimulating the users' intensive affective reactions;
- Emotional engagement gained through the experience of the introduced secondary product, as

a means to evoke the users' expressive attachment caused by the services provided. The affective engagement, if sustained by the design solution responding to the object's gradual decay in time, can evolve into a cognitive perception and rationally grounded acceptance of the design method.

- Cultural connotations, related to the experience of the interior component made with reintroduced building materials and products of historical

or aesthetic value, provide a sense of cultural continuity.

- Reflective response based on the semantic analysis of the experience of reintroduction into the structure of interior components of pre-used building materials and products.

Adaptive reuse as a durability-supportive design model to supplement the interior architectural design is demonstrated based on the exemplary commercial interiors in Figure 2.



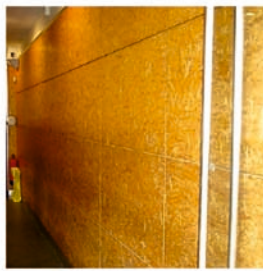

| Adaptive reuse in patterns | Intangible aspects of interior component's durability | Material aspects of interior component's durability | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of reclaimed building products; ▪ Inter-setting transfer of resources (i.e. introduction of reclaimed building products originally featuring building's structure or outer finishing layer to shape interior component) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resilience of the object through accommodation of signs of decay (i.e. sound graphic arrangement visible on the object's surface to hide marks of current use); ▪ Provision of additional functions and meanings gradually discovered by users; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assembly methods to reduce the inseparable joints in favour of the removable mechanical fixings that assure correct installation of portions and enable potential replacement of the damaged parts; ▪ Clarity of applied technical solutions to assure access and easy inspection |  |
| Cladding of lightweight partition wall with reclaimed timber shutters, City Market Is-Suq tal-Belt, upper floor of multifunctional public building, Valetta, 1861, renovation 2018, arch. M. Casamonti, Fot. M. Celadyn, 2024 | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of reclaimed building products ▪ Inter-setting transfer of resources (i.e. introduction of reclaimed building products originally featuring building's structure or outer finishing layer to shape interior component) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of additional functions and meanings gradually discovered by users; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction design suitable for the category of interior component and presumed duration of the interior; ▪ Avoidance of unnecessary finishing and cladding, especially those permanently fixed to the structural elements that might prevent them from the pointwise exchange or repair when damaged; |  |
| Cladding of layered internal wall with reclaimed and further brushed bricks, main foyer adjacent to the concert hall, Center of Culture, Lublin, arch. Stelmach & Partners, 2013, Fot. L. Nyka, 2018 | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of reclaimed building products ▪ Intra-setting transfer of resources; (i.e. introduction of reclaimed building products originally featuring inner finishing layers to shape interior component) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resilience of the object through accommodation of signs of decay (i.e. sound graphic arrangement visible on the object's surface to hide marks of current use); | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction design suitable for the category of interior component and presumed duration of the interior; ▪ Clarity of applied technical solutions to assure access and easy inspection |  |
| Cladding of partition walls with oriented strand board reclaimed from the temporary wooden frame structure and further covered with protecting finishing layer, restaurant, Barcelona, Fot. M. Celadyn, 2015 | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of reclaimed building products ▪ Inter-setting transfer of resources; (i.e. introduction of reclaimed building products originally featuring building's structure or outer finishing layer to shape interior component) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of additional functions and meanings gradually discovered by users; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction design suitable for the category of interior component and presumed duration of the interior; ▪ Clarity of applied technical solutions to assure access and easy inspection |  |
| Partition walls with reclaimed ceramic tiles from refurbished roof, Office building Warehouse8B, Madrid, arch. A. Franco Diaz, renovation and adaptation 2011, Fot. Carlos Fernandez Piñar, (Source: https://www.dezeen.com/2011/07/10/warehouse-8b-by-arturo-franco-office-for-architecture/) | | | |

Fig. 2. Interior architectural adaptive reuse as a durability-supportive design method; source: author's drawing

5.3. Accumulative effect

The analysis was to indicate the scale and diversity of the material and intangible aspects of the durability of interior components shaped based on the above-mentioned design schemes included in interior architectural design methodology. The results of the study reveal that the intangibility-related factors dominate in the analysis of responsiveness and adaptive reuse as design frameworks to support the durability of interior components. The accumulative effect of enclosure of both discussed design schemes is illustrated in Figure 3.

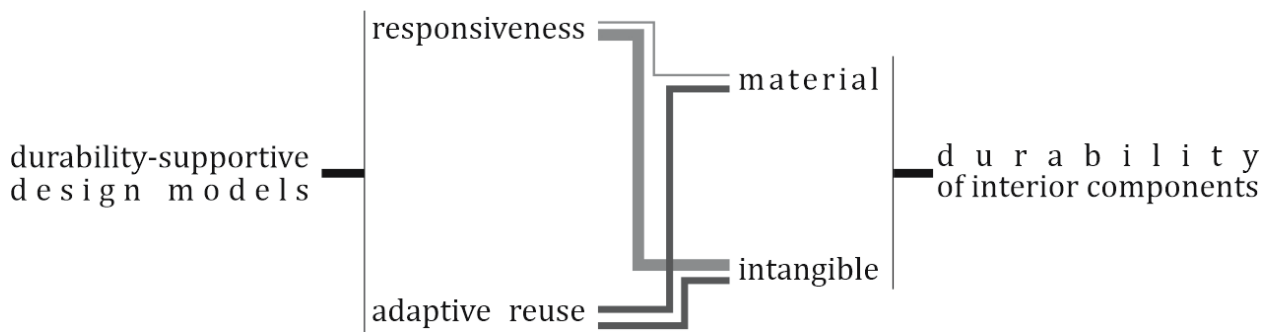


Fig. 3. Responsiveness and adaptive reuse as durability supportive design methods; source: author's drawing

In particular, the user's emotional engagement, gained through the experience of natural building materials or secondary products introduced into the component's structure, is noticeable in both models. The affective engagement, if sustained by a design solution responding to the object's gradual decay over time, can evolve into the cognitive perception and rationally grounded acceptance of the design method based on the systemic implementation of secondary products.

The cultural connotations are among the intangible factors common for the discussed models as well. Their role is meaningful even despite the visible signs of malformation and gradually occurring deterioration of the physical performance of interior components. The quotations from the past, enclosed within the interior component's volume, engage the users, complement, and enrich further satisfactory use of these objects in a long-term perspective. They allow occupants to: 1) reach the reflective level of conscious interpretation of experienced emotions caused by the interaction with reintroduced parts of the objects; 2) build up the user-object relationship on a specific object's "layered complexity" revealing the diversity of material culture-related citations. Finally, they stimulate the occurrence of users' empathy and attachment toward interior components. If these cultural connotations are com-

plemented by individual users' memories and personal meaning attached to the reclaimed building materials and products introduced into the structure of the designed interior components, it might be justified to define these objects as of unique value, and in consequence, increase their lifetimes.

CONCLUSION

The study analysed the accumulative effect of enclosure of interior architectural design for adaptive

reuse and biophilic design for responsiveness into the interior architectural design framework. This approach was examined with regard to the range and diversity of durability of interior constitutive components. The analysis of technical and emotional aspects of the durability phenomenon identified the characteristic material and intangible durability-supportive factors within the discussed design methods. In particular, the study revealed both above-mentioned design schemes' potential in stimulation of users' emotional attachment to interior components. The multisensorial experience of interior components built based on interior architectural design for adaptive reuse and biophilic design for responsiveness, affective engagement of users toward interior components, cultural connotations, decoding of materials' properties, or reflective responses were disclosed as drivers to develop emotional durability. The interior components' acceptance, developed as a result of the multidimensional experience and positive reactions to intangible aspects of their appearance, conditions postponing the premature and unreasonable replacement of these spatially and functionally developed building products, as well as the extension of their lifetimes. The interior architectural design focused on the exploration of the emotional-intangible aspect of the durability of interior components shows, therefore,

its potential in fulfilment of design strategy for environmental sustainability through the creation of physical objects of longevity.

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URBAN WOODEN ARCHITECTURE AS CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY CIVIL SOCIETY

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DOI: 10.24427/aea-2024-vol16-06

Abstract

On the basis of a review of old Polish literature, the changes in the valuation of urban and small-town wooden architecture in the Polish cultural environment from around the mid-19th century onward are shown. It is also shown how the Polish experience can be used in the future (including the expected „political future”) to protect the wooden heritage of urban architecture in Belarus and Ukraine.

Keywords: architecture; wooden buildings; vernacular architecture; small-town architecture

INTRODUCTION

Old urban and small-town wooden architecture seemed to have remained on the sidelines of Polish scholars' interests (at least in comparison with urban style architecture, as well as rural folk architecture), despite the fact that already in the 19th century the commemorative value of wooden arcaded houses, wooden Catholic and Orthodox churches, and wooden synagogues was recognised, and their iconography was published in „Tygodnik Ilustrowany”, „Kłosa”, „Wisła” and other non-periodical publications. However, even later, i.e. in the twentieth century, the conservation and protection of old wooden monuments of urban and small-town architecture was relegated to the background – especially in view of the scarcity of funds and human

resources, and often because of a lack of social will and support².

Some enthusiasts of old small-town or urban wooden buildings, perceiving them as a valuable part of Poland's architectural heritage, have taken initiatives to preserve or (in some cases) restore them³. Such measures have sometimes been advocated for in spite of decision-makers and public opinion, which attributes the old wooden buildings of cities and towns (including villages) to flammability, impermanence and shoddiness⁴, and, in the case of buildings more recent than the mid-19th century, stylistic worthlessness, alleged civilisational backwardness or primitivism⁵, or even non-Polishness (rather Jewishness or Russianness).

¹ The earliest description (from 1865) was by Franciszek Maksymilian Sobieszczański. It concerned the synagogue in Nasielsk and was included in the commentary to the entry *Nasielsk* in the 19th volume of Orgelbrand's Universal Encyclopedia [p. 228].

² Ludwik Puszet [1903, pp. 30–31] distinguished between the „unicameral type” with two subtypes („the Kuyavian-Pomeranian group” and the „Silesian-Spiš group”) and the „symmetrical-bicameral type”.

³ A summary of the losses of monuments from World War I, including an indication of the losses of wooden monuments, was prepared and published in 1929 by Jarosław Wojciechowski [1930/31].

⁴ On the list of the Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee (<https://bolognaby.org>) Dr. Yauhen Malikau is currently listed as a repressed person.

⁵ See [K. Lisowska-Siudek 1979, p. 33; J. Szablowski 1946, p. 28] and the issue of „Architektura” 3–4(29–30)/1950 devoted entirely to towns.

After the political changes of the 1990s, new participants joined the discussions on the preservation of these buildings: investors interested in the value of the land – and, on the opposite side, NGOs representing heritage enthusiasts. In this way, old urban wooden architecture gradually became the subject of a complex game for space.

At the same time, discussions on the need or superfluity of protecting old urban and small-town wooden architecture proved to be a test of the principles of civil society, where theoretically all participants in discussions have equal rights and opportunities to argue, while attitudes and opinions based on a sense of communal responsibility for the public good are considered ethically lofty and systemically protected from the pressure of particular interests. However, in Poland and the neighbouring countries of the former Eastern Bloc, appealing to the common good and shared responsibility for it has become the domain of only a part of the intellectual elite – often only the most zealous enthusiasts, charismatics of democracy, able to overcome their own restraint and external accusations of ethical overzealousness or insincerity. Civic virtues, including community responsibility (for public affairs and especially for the common space), aroused suspicion. Social movements and any grassroots activity attracted and connected only small groups of participants, usually those who knew each other personally, which guaranteed a certain level of trust. Besides, grassroots architectural heritage activities were sometimes carried out against the will of the general public. The public expected an increase in living standards and improved housing, not architectural stagnation.

This state of affairs nullified the effectiveness of broader campaigns to protect urban and small-town wooden architecture, and caricatured its successful manifestations. The article presents and subjects to scientific criticism the specificity of selected grassroots attempts to document and protect urban and small-town wooden architecture in Poland. It shows

how the Polish (temporal and political) experience can be used in the future to protect the wooden heritage of urban architecture in Belarus and Ukraine, where the current political situation and war turmoil not only hinder the real protection of this heritage, but also deforms the discussion about it – and, above all, prevents cross-border activities.

The study is based on bibliographic searches carried out by the authors of this article, as well as their participation in some past documentation projects.

1. THE BEGINNINGS OF DOCUMENTING URBAN AND SMALL-TOWN WOODEN ARCHITECTURE

In the first half of the 19th century, only a trace of interest in urban and small-town wooden architecture could be seen in brief mentions in articles published in the pages of the "Przyjaciół Ludu"⁶, "Starożytności Warszawskie"⁷, in the work of Łukasz Gołębiowski *Domy i dwory...* [Houses and manors]⁸ and in several other publications.

The breakthrough came in the middle of the century. In the years 1844–1855, Kazimierz Jakub Stronczyński, together with illustrators delegated by the governmental Commission of Internal and Spiritual Affairs as part of the so-called 'delegation to describe ancient monuments in the Kingdom of Poland', produced 417 watercolours and gouaches documenting the monuments of the so called Congress Kingdom of Poland (a semi-autonomous Polish state created in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna). These illustrations were systematised according to governorates and districts; they also included (though not as main subjects) a few views of small-town wooden buildings (e.g. painted by Adam Lerue⁹ a view of the market buildings of Kazimierz-on-the-Vistula or Józef Polkowski's view of a chapel, or rather a post in Sierpc, surrounded by wooden buildings in the Jewish quarter; or the wooden buildings on the eastern slope in front of the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Zakroczym; Fig. 1–3)¹⁰.

⁶ These volumes are currently stored in the University Library in Warsaw (Gabinet Rycin) and made available in digital version in the Digital Library of the Warsaw University of Technology (<https://crispa.uw.edu.pl>).

⁷ In Wiśnicz, Jan Matejko regularly visited the family of his wife, Teodora Matejkowa née Giebułtowska.

⁸ For example, as early as 1827, in Łaszczów, in Tomaszów County in the Lublin region, Jews accounted for 86.2% of the population, i.e. 862 people out of the total number of 999 inhabitants [P. Sygowski 2011, p. 150], and in 1878 Trzcianne, the Moniecki County in Podlasie was inhabited almost exclusively by Jews in the number of 2057 people [Słownik..., vol. XII, pp. 543–544]. As for Białystok, it was reported that "according to statistical calculations from 1895, the population of Białystok amounted to 62,993 heads (...); There were 47,783 Jews (78%)" [H. Mościcki 1933, p. 175].

⁹ "The old type disappears, giving way to a new figure that could be called (...) suburban or small-town" – complained Jan Karłowicz in 1884 [p. 400].

¹⁰ Following the 15th-century Polish historian Jan Długosz (Ioannes Długossius, 1415–1480), it was often said that until Casimir the Great, Poland was wooden (including city buildings) and various articles mentioned the wooden buildings of old cities, including Warsaw ("Przyjaciół Ludu" 1841, No. 11, p. 85), Kiev ("Przyjaciół Ludu" 1841, No. 20, p. 158), etc.



Fig. 1. Kazimierz on the Vistula River in a drawing by Adam Lerue from 1852; source: [A. Lerue 1857, tabl. 32]

In the middle of the 19th century, wooden houses in Piotrków Trybunalski were drawn by Wojciech Gersohn [1865, p. 92; Z. Gloger 1907, p. 240–241]. Old wooden houses in Wiśnicz in 1857 drawn by Ludwik Łepkowski [Z. Gloger 1907, p. 210–213], and in 1863 – Jan Matejko (the woodcuts were prepared by Feliks Zablocki), where the houses, together with almost all the wooden buildings, were consumed by fire the day

after Matejko left Wiśnicz.¹¹ [Z. Gloger 1907, p. 214–216, 244; J. Łepkowski 1866] (Fig. 4). Later in the year 1866, Jan Matejko made drawings of the wooden buildings of Biecz (however, even these houses were destroyed by fire in 1903), and of Muszyna in 1867 (the buildings burnt down in 1927; Fig. 5 [J. Matejko, M. Kuczyński 1868; D. Kuśnierz-Krupa 2013]).

¹¹ "Houses in small towns differ from common peasant huts in that they are not covered with straw, but with timber or shingles, and a second room is often present, making them closer to noble mansions" [1830, p. 6].



Fig. 2. Wooden buildings in the 'Jewish quarter' of Sierpc, painted by Józef Polkowski; source: [K. Stronczyński (ed.) 1850–1855, t. 5(1853), tabl. 69]



Fig. 3. Wooden buildings on the eastern buttress in front of the church in Zakroczym; source: [K. Stronczyński (ed.) 1850–1855, t. 5(1853), tabl. 22]

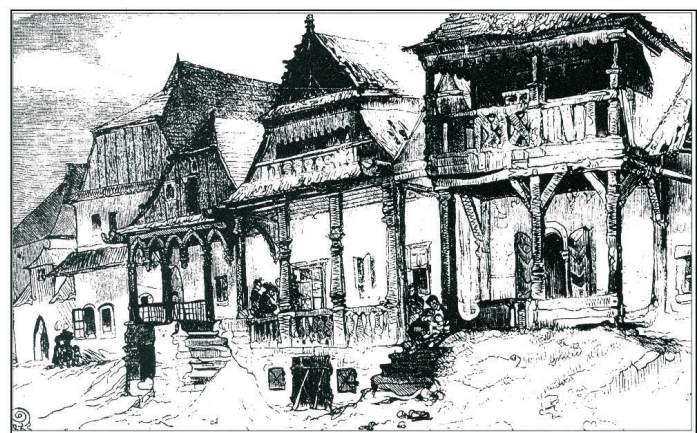


Fig. 4. Woodcuts by Feliks Zablocki based on Jan Matejko's 1864 drawings from the nature of Nowy Wiśnicz; source: [Z. Gloger 1907, p. 214; *Materyały...* 1916, p. 40–41]



Fig. 5. Jan Matejko's drawing of Muszyna's wooden buildings from 1867; source: [J. Matejko, M. Kuczyński 1868, p. 98]

Urban wooden architecture was also occasionally drawn by Hipolit Lipiński (*Miasteczko góralskie Niedźwiednik* [The highland town of Niedźwiednik], 1873; *Cygan z niedźwiedziami w miasteczku* [A Gypsy with a bear in town], 1876); Apoloniusz Kędzierski (*Domy w Przysusze* [Houses in Przysucha] in "Tygodnik Ilustrowany" 1880, No. 260, p. 400; Fig. 6), Józef Teofil Smoliński (*Stary spichlerz nadrzeczny w Warszawie* [Old riverside granary in Warsaw], 1906 [„Świat” Y. 1, No. 7 of 17 February 1906]; *Dom w Mirze* [House in Mir; Z. Gloger 1907, p. 220]; *Dom przy ul. Czerniakowskiej w Warszawie* [House at Czerniakowska Street in Warsaw; ibidem, p. 223], *Dom przy ul. Jatecznej w Lublinie* [House at Jateczna Street in Lublin; ibidem, p. 224]), Marian Wawrzeniecki ([House in Pińczów, 1883; ibidem, p. 234]).

Since the end of the 19th century, drawings and photographs of the oldest or most interesting wooden town houses were published in "Tygodnik Ilustrowany", "Wisła" and other Polish magazines [see e.g. H. Łopa-

ciński 1902]. Nevertheless, Zygmunt Gloger, having devoted 33 pages to houses in his *Budownictwo drzewne* [Wooden Construction; 1907, p. 209–242], included under the encyclopedic heading "houses" not only urban, bourgeois houses, but also suburban mansions and rural croft houses, and even local taverns and inns.

In a joint chapter on the pages of *Sztuka ludowa w Polsce* [Folk Art in Poland], Kazimierz Mokłowski [1903, pp. 448–466] described urban wooden "arcaded houses" and "suburban manors" [ibid., pp. 444–447]; he also prepared a paper devoted to wooden arcaded houses for a meeting of the Commission for the Study of Art History in Poland [K. Mokłowski 1905] (Fig. 7).

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, scientific reflection also included wooden synagogues [M. Bersohn, 1895–1900–1903; Z. Gloger 1907, p. 22–55; K. Mokłowski 1903, p. 425–441], documented by Polish erudite scholars since around 1874 (drawings and mentions were published earlier in the pages of "Kłósy"). However, published considerations were limited

Fig. 6. Apoloniusz Kędzierski drawing of houses in Przysucha; source: "Tygodnik Ilustrowany" [1880, No. 260, p. 400]



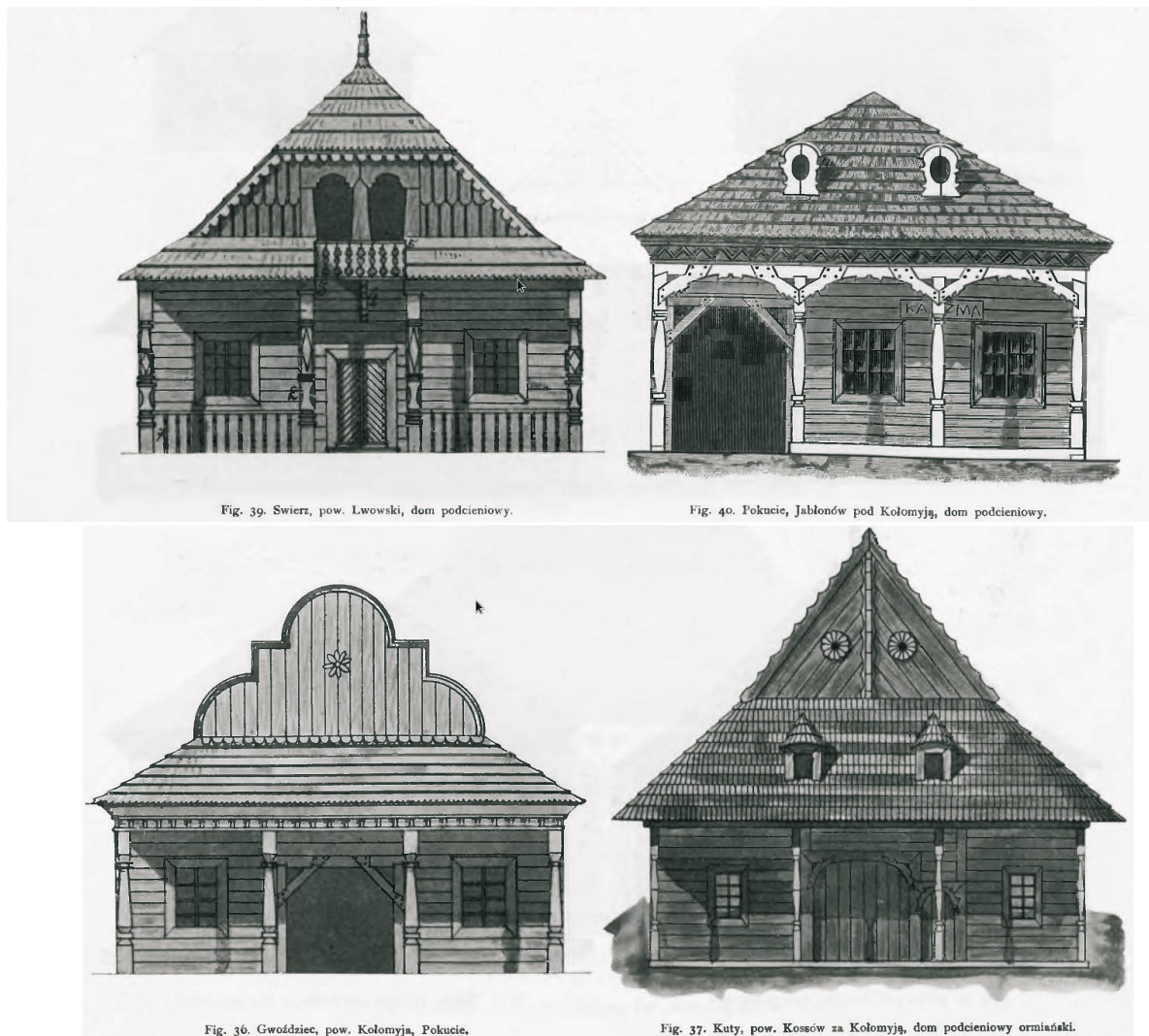


Fig. 7. Drawings of arcade houses; source: [K. Mokłowski 1905]

to descriptions of selected wooden synagogues¹² and possibly to the divagation about the nativeness of this architecture and the origin of its forms either from the wooden churches of Silesia [M. Bersohn 1895, p. 14–15], or from nobleman's mansions [K. Mokłowski 1903, p. 352, 436 i 438]. There was a lack of typologization, a lack of consideration of the integration of synagogues into the urban landscape – e.g. Mathias Bersohn [1895, p. 5] quips this aspect with a brief statement: *“It's a pity that buildings of a similar kind are usually obscured by various huts and cottages”* (although precisely this surrounding or even ‘cladding’ of synagogues with houses of pious Jews was a spatial expression of their

personal aspirations, very characteristic of this group; having a house adjacent to the synagogue ennobled the family in question). Proposals for protection were also lacking.

However, this abundance of manifestations of interest in old urban wooden architecture was apparent, because much more research attention and space on the pages of dissertations was devoted to rural peasant cottages and wooden churches and Orthodox churches (especially those erected by Greek Catholics). Their systematic study and preservation was called for as early as the mid-19th century; soon the first attempts to typologize the cottages were also

¹² Especially in issue 8 from 1849.



Fig. 8. Collage of three photos of synagogues in Zabłudów and a photo of the synagogue in Volpa from M. Bersohn's brochures [1895, p. 7–9; 1903, p. 7]

made (at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the division of Polish cottages into wide-fronted and narrow-fronted appeared, which was later consolidated in ethnography). It was even theorized that small-town and suburban architecture was more susceptible to foreign influences and absorbing architectural unfashionableness, so that by the end of the 19th century it was already a source of patterns foreign to Polish indigenes: *"In spite of a strenuous search, I have not found (...) a single type of Polish cottage, (...) for we lack detailed descriptions of all the corners of the country, and in addition, every day the old type disappears, giving way to a new form, which could be called*

(...) suburban or small-town" complained Jan Karłowicz in 1884 [p. 400].

A short-lived signal to focus research and conservation attention on small-town buildings turned out to be the destruction of the first years of World War I. In response to this historical catastrophe, in 1916, through the efforts of the Society for the Care of Monuments of the Past, the album *Wieś i miasteczko* [Village and Township] was published, intended by the publishers to be the first volume of the series *Materyały do architektury polskiej* [Materials for Polish Architecture; *Materyały...* 1916], documenting the resources of indigenous customary and style architecture. The afore-



26. WŁODOWICE, DOM Z PODCINIEM.



182. SZTYDLOWIEC, DOMY PODCINIOWE.



248. KAZIMIERZ DOLNY, DOMY W MIASTECZKU.



370. JEZÓW, DOMY MIEJSKIE.



301. BYTOM, BRAMA PRZY DOMU MIEJSKIM.



477. BIAŁA RADZIWIŁŁOWSKA, DOMY MIEJSKIE.

Fig. 9. Selected illustrations of small-town buildings from the *Materyały do architektury polskiej* [*Materyały...* 1916, p. 9, 67, 91, 111, 139 and 178]

mentioned volume includes drawings and photographs of various buildings (including those of wooden construction; Fig. 9), including religious buildings of various denominations, city granaries, town halls, houses, etc., arranged by province.

In conclusion, with the end of World War I and the establishment of an independent Polish state, there was already an iconography that had been collected for more than 60 years, documenting selected wooden buildings and public spaces of small towns.

2. ATTITUDES TOWARD OLD URBAN WOODEN BUILDINGS

The society of the newly formed Second Polish Republic, including its intellectual elite, faced a challenge, namely, the need to respond to the old wooden buildings of cities and towns that had been heavily damaged by warfare: its acceptance or even appreciation as heritage – or, on the contrary, its negation as a ballast of the past or as a product of non-Polish ethnoses.

Attitudes toward old urban wooden buildings were already taking on ideological overtones: “*Who knows whether and to what extent the weak development of the self-government of our cities (...) does not stand in relation to the almost exclusively wooden buildings prevailing in them?*” Zygmunt Balicki asked rhetorically [1908, p. 53], arguing, “*Cities, towns (...) built of wood, changing their appearance (...) every few generations, do not – because they cannot – have a tradition.*” [ibid]. Perhaps this is why Artur Kühnel overlooked wooden monuments in his guidebook *Zasady budowy miast małych i miasteczek* [Principles of Construction of Small Towns and Cities], written during World War I – despite the fact that many towns had wooden buildings, and despite the fact that he carefully justified the need to “*protect buildings that have historical, commemorative or artistic value*” and, furthermore, in a separate argument, justified the need to “*protect swojszczyzny*” i.e. architecture having “*peculiar, exclusively our characteristics, distinct from other nations ..., arising from the requirements of the climate and the habits of life of the population, acquired over the centuries*” [A. Kühnel 1918, p. 114–120].

A critical attitude to the existing wooden buildings of towns may also have resulted from fears of their Judeanization, which has been repeatedly written about in ideological tones ranging from anti-Semitism to cautious reflection; at the end of the 19th century the most reliable expression of these fears was given in the book *Nasi Żydzi w miasteczkach i na wsiach* [Our Jews in towns and villages] by Klemens Junosza Szaniawski, who also drew such a picture of the towns

of the Congress Kingdom of Poland: “*The average town, both in the governorates of the Kingdom and in neighboring governorates, presents more or less the same type. Muddy, dirty and shabby, it consists of a large market square, around which stand Jewish houses in a compact row, and several narrow streets diverging in different directions. Along these streets are the houses of the Christian population, engaged either in farming or crafts. A long row of barns outside the town completes the picture. Jews are settled at the main point of the city, at the market: here they have hams, stores and stalls, here are the dwellings of money potentates (!) – the main providers of small usury credit. This is where commerce is concentrated. A little farther away is a large synagogue (because there is no shortage of small ones either), a dozen or so cheders, where small children study, the locum of the rabbi and various kahal dignitaries. It's the same in every town.*” [K.J. Szaniawski 1889, p. 12–13].

Not surprisingly, such a picture of a “muddy, dirty, shabby” town with flammable wooden buildings did not encourage conservation efforts – yet similar descriptions are also found written by other authors, not excluding Jewish ones. In 1925, the Polish-Jewish historian, Rabbi Majer Samuel Balaban, in his textbook for rabbinical schools, outlined a picture of former Jewish neighborhoods in the 16th century that coincides with the state of town buildings at the turn of the 20th century: “*The Jewish street is built up still in the middle of the 16th century exclusively with wooden houses, only here and there stand brick houses, and in them are storehouses, or butcheries, in Lithuania hams. Cramped conditions cause dirt and mud. (...) The cramped conditions and lack of housing force the ghetto's residents to divide their apartments into several sections. When this no longer helped, higher and higher floors were built, and above them apartments were arranged in facades, and finally courtyards were built over and houses were moved closer to the city walls. Outbuilding windows were often pierced through these walls, niches were planted in the walls, and almost always sewers were passed through the walls. (...) In such cramped quarters the Jews nestled; here they housed a great number of stoves and chimneys, often made of wood and covered with shingles; it would only take one spark for the entire Jewish city to go up in smoke. No wonder, then, that in the second half of the 16th century Jewish quarters in Lviv, Lublin, Poznań, Brest almost burnt to the ground.*” [M.S. Bałaban 1925, p. 227–228].

Also in later centuries, the densely built wooden towns east of the Vistula River, populated largely or sometimes predominantly by Jewish people, were easily

subject to fire¹³. It was easy to regard them (from a non-Jewish perspective) as cultural ballast rather than heritage. In other cases, their Polishness was proven, treating Jewish craftsmen as depositories of Polish building culture¹⁴.

3. EXAMPLES OF EFFORTS TO DOCUMENT OR PROTECT PRE-WORLD WAR II URBAN WOODEN ARCHITECTURE

While World War I was still in progress, in 1916, through the efforts of the Civic Committee for the Reconstruction of Villages and Cities in Krakow, a catalogue of small-town building designs was published, proclaiming the need for *"architecture ... based on the basic simplest elements of our native art"* [J. Gałęzowski 1916, p. 7]. However, the editor of the catalogue, Józef Gałęzowski, was critical of the architecture of small towns and suburbs at the time: *"Despite their illustrious past and the wealth of remaining monuments, they show in recent times the complete collapse of our building art, especially in small towns. Good traditions have been lost and a lot of time and work is needed to revive the old beauty through evolution. We have to start from the beginning. (...) However, with reconstruction already real in a specific place, the tradition and poetry of its former art should be a source of inspiration for architects."* [ibid.].

The critical attitude towards the existing architecture of small towns (which east of the Vistula was mainly wooden, but not necessarily very old) was also evident in the fact that the catalogue designs limited the use of wood as a building material (Fig. 10), providing for *"plaster masonry with the use of wood in porches, arcades, and gable boarding"* as the basic material [ibid.], while the adopted forms of the proposed buildings referred mainly to the forms of Renaissance architecture from Lesser Poland region and to manor house construction, rather than to the actual peculiari-

ties of small-town construction in the various regions of the then Polish cultural area.

War damage¹⁵ also prompted monument enthusiasts to intensify their research of Polish architectural heritage, and as a result, small-town wooden buildings were also covered to some extent by inventory research, carried out by students of architecture faculties as part of compulsory summer internships – especially at the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology under the supervision of Oskar Sosnowski, as well as at the Faculty of Architecture of the Lviv Polytechnic (the Lviv collection, however, was mostly destroyed during or after World War II). By 1936, the Measurement Section of the Department of Polish Architecture and History of Art at the Warsaw University of Technology had taken measurements of some urban wooden buildings, mainly wooden churches and bell towers; in addition, several wooden Orthodox churches, manor houses and a dozen or so synagogues were measured and inventoried [Zbiory... 1936].

However, an ideological breakthrough had already been made earlier by the Second All-Polish Congress of Conservators in Warsaw, organized in 1927, which adopted and supported the proposal put forward by Jerzy Dobrzycki for programmatic documentation of old wooden architecture and its scientific study at the state level: *"In view of the growing interest of science, both Polish and foreign, for the monuments of Polish wooden architecture, the congress expresses the wish to organize an archive of wooden construction, which would gather in one place all materials concerning the history of the creation and conservation methods regarding Polish wooden construction. This archive should then develop into an independent institute of scientific research in the field of Polish wood construction."* [J. Remer 1930–31, p. 358]. Thus, for the first time, the thesis of the need to emancipate inventory studies of wooden architecture (then still located in the catego-

¹³ "Although Matejko drew old Jewish houses in Wiśnicz near Kraków, and Mickiewicz described one of the old Jewish taverns that existed in his holy Lithuania, Matejko's drawings and Mickiewicz's description indicate one and the same architectural motif (...). But why were these motives so especially loved and cherished by the Jews? How can we explain this undeniable fact that it was thanks to the Jews that the most valuable and interesting monuments of our oldest architecture survived?" – Stefan Szyller [1916, pp. 45–46] wondered.

¹⁴ "The depreciation of the value of wooden architecture was undoubtedly the result of the cultural inferiority complex that accompanies the evaluation of our cultural heritage, which, given the outdated system of evaluation, means that so far there has been no monographic study of this subject from the point of view of the history of art, a study (...) in which the perfection of the load-bearing structures of this construction would be properly read, using (...) technical properties of the material, such as (...) hanging roofs on 9-post structures in arcaded houses in Zakliczyn" [J. Dutkiewicz 1966, p. 4].

¹⁵ "Who knows, maybe in Podhale or Rzeszów it would not be advisable to group scattered objects in one or more towns (e.g. in Zakliczyn, Czchów or Próchnik), where they would then have a better chance of survival and appropriate conservation care. Several such towns throughout the country, performing their normal functions, would be a huge tourist attraction. Unfortunately, the implementation of such plans will be hindered by both ownership issues and costs related to the relocation of objects and their maintenance" [W. Kalinowski 1964, p. 9]. "Towns with the largest percentage of preserved buildings and a good tourist location should be selected, to which the most valuable specimens from other centers unsuitable for care could be transferred. I think that in the Kraków Voivodeship it could be, for example, Ciężkowice and Lanckorona, and perhaps even one street in Zakliczyn" [J. Dutkiewicz 1966, p. 5].

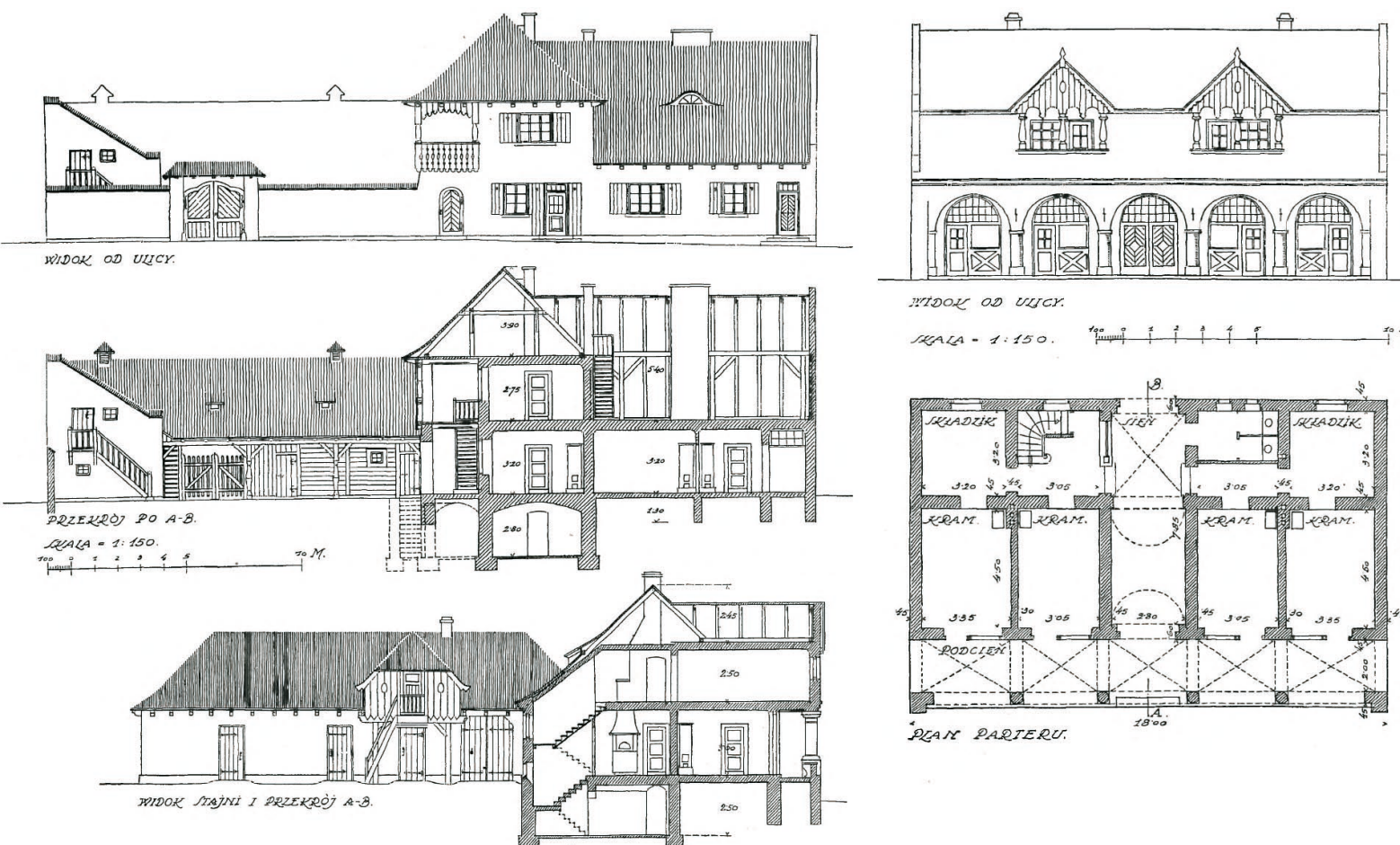


Fig. 10. Collage of designs from the catalogue *Odbudowa polskiego miasteczka* [Reconstruction of a Polish town; J. Gałęzowski, 1916, p. 33, 61 and 67]; the buildings with the most exposed wooden construction were selected

ry of “construction” and not professional architecture) was put forward and supported. Of course, this would include primarily wooden rural architecture, but not only, as the quoted message deliberately avoids phrases like “rural architecture” or “folk architecture” so as not to narrow the scope of objects worthy of scientific and perhaps conservation attention.

At the General National Exhibition in Poznań in 1929, in the section of state care of art monuments, maps showing the location of architectural monuments in the lands of the Second Polish Republic were displayed, with wooden architectural monuments singled out (with grey squares). This method of clearly systematizing knowledge about monuments resonated with the theses put forward at the aforementioned Second National Congress of Conservators, which led in the same year to the creation of a corresponding unit in the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment – the Central Office for the Inventory of Art Monuments.

4. SELECTED EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES IN DOCUMENTING AND PRESERVING URBAN AND SMALL-TOWN WOODEN ARCHITECTURE IN THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF POLAND

For the post-war half-century, urban wooden buildings were given little conservation and scientific care, as due to the massive war damage, priority was given to monuments of stylish architecture, usually older, as well as – in the folklore community – to the former rural buildings of indigenous Polish communities. Shortly after World War II, Jerzy Szablowski, considering the needs for an inventory of monuments in Poland, postulated: “...in relation to small-town wooden buildings (...) I would inventory only examples of typical historic buildings, while I would mention their complexes only in general terms, adding their photographic views.” [J. Szablowski 1946, p. 28]. Thus, there have been few efforts for the appreciation, inventory and protection of the former wooden “tsarist” villas (i.e., built to serve the

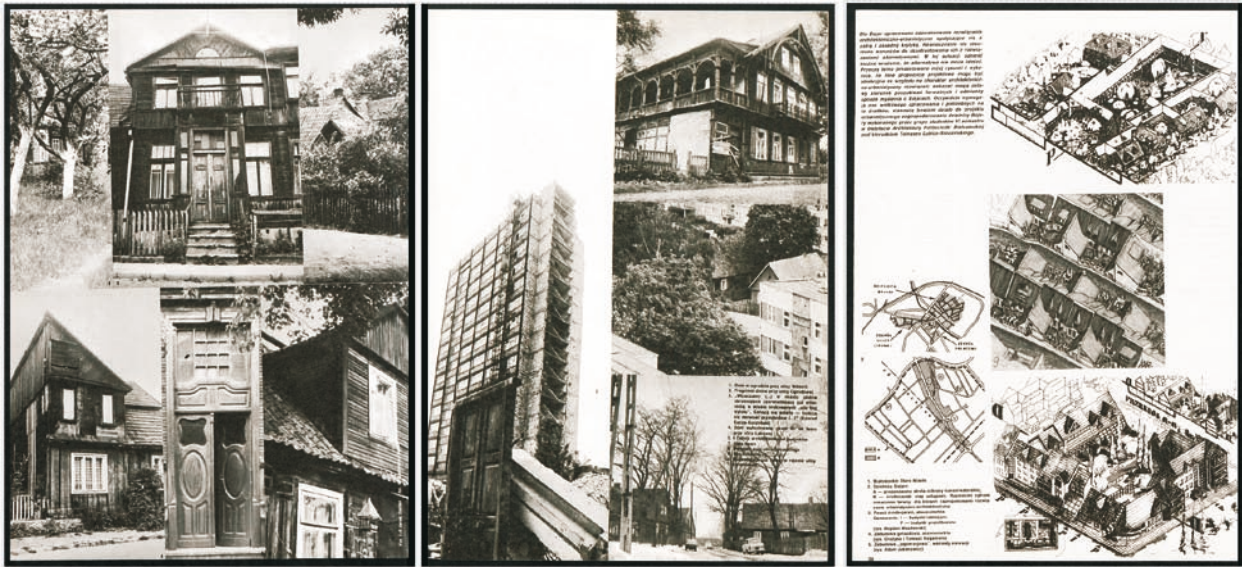


Fig. 11. Illustrations of the old wooden buildings of the Bojary district of Białystok, posted on the rights of an architectural manifesto in the pages of the *Architektura* in 1989 (No. 3–4, p. 34–35). As well as a project posted there (p. 38) using concepts from students at the Białystok University of Technology (proj. by A. Jakimowicz, B. Wasilewski, G. and T. Rogala under the guidance of arch. T. Brzeziński); <https://mbc.cyfrowemazowsze.pl/dlibra/publication/86753/edition/86154> <accessed December 2024>

needs of Russian officials of the partition period) or the residences of factory owners, richly decorated wooden summer resorts from the turn of the century, wooden railroad stations, frontages of market houses-crams, although there have been commendable exceptions [I. Tłoczek 1955; J. Górak 1966], and one of the few threads not ignored was small-town arcaded houses [W. Kalinowski 1952; J.A. Miłobędzki 1952; M. Pękalski 1959] and wooden synagogues [J. Górak 1966]. These topics were taken up by passionate people aware of the importance of the issues and willing to go beyond the current political course and beyond the generally accepted views of their time.

Small-town architecture was only marginally represented in the increasingly established open-air museums. When the Nadwiślański Ethnographic Park in Wygiełzów was begun in 1968, one of the first buildings acquired was a suburban craftsman's house from Chrzanów (dated 1804), and just a few years later, in 1973, a small-town arcaded house from Alwernia (dated 1825) was also transferred there. Nonetheless, for several more decades the inventory and transfer of town houses to open-air museums was among the exceptions.

A breakthrough in thought turned out to be an attempt (albeit ineffective in terms of practical results) to protect the Bojary district in Białystok, a neighborhood built with only wooden buildings. In 1987, Białystok-based architects Janusz and Barbara Kaczyński, Krzysztof and Barbara Sarna and Mirosław Siemionow at the Second International Architecture Biennale in

Cracow won an award from the magazine "Architektura" for their project to readapt and protect the Bojary district. In October 1988, the so-called Bojary Charter, later approved by the Program Council of the 9th All-Polish Regional Architecture Symposium chaired by Prof. Andrzej Skoczek, was edited, while earlier – in 1983 – the so-called Bojary Appeal was published, edited by a group of recognized Polish architects (Zbigniew Ihnatowicz, Michał Gutt, Konrad Kucza-Kuczyński, Tadeusz Zieliński and others). And, in addition, in 1989 this district was devoted a lot of space in the pages of the then bilingual "Architektura" (the texts were also published in English) [K. Lisowska-Siudek 1989]. These activities did not gain public support at the time, but they broke the impasse of thought blocking the discussion of the value of the old wooden architecture of cities and towns. Another thing is that this district of the provincial capital had a rural genesis and such as to the genesis and character of the buildings.

In 1988, at the Scientific Conference of the Association of Art Historians in Wojnowice, among other topics, the need to protect the architectural heritage of towns was addressed, and the results of the deliberations, including 17 papers, were published in a book published a little later, *Wieś i miasteczko u progu zagłady* [Village and Town on the Threshold of Destruction; M. Bielska-Łach, T. Rutkowski 1991]. Thus, it can be considered, taking into account this conference, the aforementioned Bojary initiative and several other initiatives of the time, that approximately the year 1988 was a breakthrough – the impasse was overcome and

discussions began on the value and preservation of old urban and small-town wooden buildings. In the 1990s and beyond, this discussion swelled and became fraught with issues previously pushed out of individual and collective consciousness.

5. SELECT EXAMPLES OF CIVIC ACTIVITIES IN DOCUMENTING AND PROTECTING URBAN AND SMALL-TOWN WOODEN ARCHITECTURE IN THE THIRD REPUBLIC OF POLAND

The aforementioned initiative to protect Białystok's Bojary district, built up with wooden houses, recurred over the following decades in unsuccessful practice and in scientific publications by employees of the Faculty of Architecture at the Białystok University of Technology [D. Korolczuk et al. 1994; D. Korolczuk et al. 1996; G. Dąbrowska-Milewska 1996b; J. Żarnowiecka 2004; J. Szewczyk 2006; M. Tur 2017]. This is just one of many examples, as discussion centers on the value of old local urban wooden architecture have also formed at other universities. Some topics were discussed on a national forum. In the 21st century, scientific and conservation activity in this field has increased even more [I. Górka et al. 2020].

In practical and theoretical terms, the discussion of the value of urban and small-town wooden architecture was undertaken by folklorists. Jan Górak in 1996 published a small brochure called *Podcieniowa zabudowa miasteczek Lubelszczyzny*, perhaps inspired by Wojciech Kalinowski's article *Drewniane podcienia rynków południowej Lubelszczyzny* four decades earlier, where he wrote: "To date, 20 towns with wooden arcaded houses were known, of which 63 photographs or drawings were presented in various publications, scattered and often difficult to access. Also known were 12 townships with arcaded market frontages. Field research and a bibliographic search enriched this material with a further 12 townships with arcaded houses and 45 photographs of arcaded houses. It turned out that some of them, such as those in Krasnobrod and Tyszowce, are impressive in their richness of form, although they are, in a way, houses of the second generation, as they were erected after World War I, during which the original buildings, more impressive than the ones being rebuilt, burned down". [J. Górak 1996, p. 2–3].

In some open-air museums, the bolder directors have initiated efforts to systematically transfer wooden town houses to open-air museums or to create so-called "urban sectors" (often with buildings reconstructed rather than transferred). Examples of urban sectors include the Galician Market in the Folk

Building Museum in Sanok (the concept had been in development since the 1980s, but implementation was completed in 2011), the Galician Town sector in the Ethnographic Park in Nowy Sącz (also in 2011), the town sector in the Lublin Village Museum (implemented in 2010–2013 [A. Wrona (ed.) 2018]). An urban sector was also intended at the Folk Culture Museum in Wasilków-Jurowce.

The conservation community has also matured to discuss the title topic. When the 5th Warsaw Preservation Conference was organized under the aegis of the Capital Conservator of Monuments in 2022, its subject matter was defined as follows: "Historic wooden architecture in urban centers – issues of conservation." The titles of the speeches given by representatives of the Capital Conservator of Monuments became a specific sign of the transformation of thought:

- "Actions of the City of Warsaw for the protection of wooden architecture" (Michał Krasucki),
- "Recognition of the stock of wooden monuments as a basis for further actions defining conservation policy" (Andrzej Wolański),
- "Historic wooden architecture in Warsaw – inventory and recognition of the stock" (Małgorzata Jaworska) [M. Jaworska (ed.) 2022].

Some local charismatic activists, enthusiasts of local culture and history, local government activists, founders of the so-called third sector organizations (NGOs, non-governmental organizations), private entrepreneurs, and even managers and employees of some landscape parks, community centers, schools, etc., have joined the discussion on the value of urban and small-town wooden architecture. For example, the Society of Friends of Otwock, the Wawer Cultural Center and the Municipal Cultural Center in Józefów have been organizing the Świdermajer Festival since 2010, which promotes wooden villa architecture (in the so-called "Nadświdrzański style") on the so-called "Otwock Line" – in former summer resorts, but also in the town of Otwock itself. Another example is a private business initiative to create a replica of old small-town wooden buildings in Biłgoraj, initiated in 2005 by Tadeusz Kuźmiński and supported by the Biłgoraj XXI Foundation. [E. Przesmycka 2021, p. 313].

Thus, with regard to the title issue, the beginning of the 21st century brought heated discussions and, consequently, a pluralism of themes and attitudes; discussions were undertaken in various forums (including various scientific communities: architects, ethnographers, historians, conservationists) and at different levels of discourse, both from a scientific-theoretical perspective and from a practical, conservationist perspective.



Fig. 12. One of the term papers of the students of the Architecture Department of the Białystok University of Technology promoting a public discussion on the preservation of the wooden buildings of Białystok (M. Pacewicz and A. Sadowska led by J. Szewczyk, 2018)

6. WOODEN TOWN BUILDINGS IN BELARUS AS A SCIENTIFIC CHALLENGE

In 2009, Belarusian art historian Yauhen Malikau defended his doctoral dissertation on Ornamental woodcarving in folk carpentry of southeastern areas of Belarus (late 19th – first half of 20th centuries), the theses of which were later published as a book [Y. Malikau 2009; Y. Malikau 2016]. An important aspect of the issue studied was the decoration of small-town houses in that area (Gomel region). This research (and its results), carried out under the promoter supervision of Alyaksandr Lakotka (a scholar with a double doctorate in historical sciences and architecture), can be considered an attempt to make a breakthrough in thought

towards overcoming negative stereotypes about old small-town and urban wooden architecture in Belarus. This process is therefore similar to the thought transformation in Poland, although occurring relatively later in time.

Yauhen Malikau continued his research and covered not only the eponymous “southeastern areas of Belarus,” i.e. the Gomel region (Gomelszczyzna), bordering Russia and Ukraine, but also collected rich iconographic material of rural, small-town and urban wooden buildings of the Belarusian-Russian borderland in the more than 300-kilometer strip from Gomel to Vitebsk (especially the so-called Chernivshchyna, Chernihiv region). These materials, now being compiled, are of documentary and archival nature, as some



of the photographed buildings no longer exist, and the current uneasy political situation will probably prevent objective and politically risk-free in situ scientific research of small-town and urban wooden construction in those areas of Belarus for years to come, especially since they are also border areas. Research opportunities and prospects (and the political situation) are even more difficult now (in 2024) in the western areas of Belarus, bordering Poland and Lithuania.

However, regardless of the current war and political turmoil, and perhaps even thanks to this turmoil, a positive ferment has been (and is still being) created in Belarusian intellectual circles, which is conducive to getting rid of the ballast of stereotypes and ossified sentiments and is conducive to all sorts of re-evalu-

ations. Until the Russian-Ukrainian war, small and very active museum and research units created by people with a considerable potential of knowledge and ideas [Y. Malikau 2022] began to function in Belarus outside the state system of large research institutes and open-air museums. Since the full-scale war in Ukraine (2022), and the earlier protests in Belarus (2020–2022), Belarusian scholars thrown into exile by the political turmoil have been working in Poland, Germany, Lithuania or Latvia – in environments that have already travelled the road from the suppression and negation of urban wooden architecture (and ancient culture in general) to its ennoblement as a unique, and therefore valuable, element of culture.



Fig. 13. Cover and one of the pages of the book of Y. Malikau [2016, p. 86] with photographs of old wooden town houses in Gomel

CONCLUSIONS

The Polish experience seems to indicate that – with regard to the title issue – the potential of grassroots activities (inventory, conservation or simply discourse), including those initiated and developed by charismatic individuals convinced of the value of cultural heritage, grows with the democratization of society and the general civilizational pluralism of social opportunities and attitudes. This probably also applies to Belarus, even at its current unnatural stage of socio-political evolution, where political-administrative hermeticism has by no means stopped the intellectual (and physical-immigration), grassroots drift toward a non-authoritarian culture. Old cultural heritage, including the wooden architecture of small towns, has become, in a way, a warped way of thinking about the cultural autonomy and identity of Belarusians, which may already have an impact on relevant scientific research on the subject, but the actual protection of this heritage will probably still have to wait.

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The publication is part of a project titled “Wooden architecture as cultural heritage in modern society: the Polish experience for Belarus,” financed in the XXII edition of the Gaude Polonia scholarship program of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage in 2023 and managed by the National Cultural Center.