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Modern architecture around historic monuments. Transformations of architectural space in Cracow

The term “culture” can be understood in a number of ways. In this article that term will be presented in reference to its original Latin meaning. *Culture* as “exercise or improvement”¹ [6] means a process where man changes the existing environment to submit it to his own needs and improve it. Transforming space is an intrinsic part of civilization as its improvement and adjustment to his own needs enables constant growth.

In this article I will try to answer the question of modern approach to transformation of historical space (both architectural and urban) in order to increase its quality and adjusting it to applicable standards. As an introduction, the history of relations between forms in given contemporary periods to the architectural environment will be presented.

Over a great portion of the history of human civilization the transformations of space were treated pragmatically – what is inappropriate for functional or aesthetic reasons or due to deterioration of matter – was replaced or remodeled. Depending on capabilities and resources, these changes were total changes. In some cases the limited capabilities prevented complete erasure of existing buildings and their fragments, sometimes large, were preserved as traces of the past.

Only in the 19th century did a real change take place in perceiving structures which would present a memory of the past. Appreciation for them along with crystallization of the notion of a *monument* caused a slow process of departing from previous practices. In the evolution of ideas the activities of Eugène Viollet-le-Duca were especially significant; he claimed that *To restore a building is not the same as maintain, repair or renovate it but restore it completely to its probable original*

*state*². This resulted in the development of a school of architects *happily invading a historic monument whenever it is possible, who do not know how and do not want to assume an ascetic position*³ [1]. The counterbalance was provided by the ideas of John Ruskin who greatly valued historic monuments and encouraged to *count (...) the bricks (...), protect (...) like the gates of a besieged city; strengthen weakened places with iron, support with a beam the places to prevent collapse and do not worry about ugliness of the support because it is better to support something than lose its part*⁴ [9]. What was missing in these two conceptions was the look at a modern form as an independent architectural entity because it was either submitted to the style of the building or the only thing which was noticed was the technical aspect of its introduction.

Next stage of development of conservation of historic monuments was the theory of historical value of monuments formulated by Alois Riegl and implemented by his student Max Dvořák. The “Vienna School” created by them was the foundation of the ideas which were expressed in 1931 in the *Athens Charter*. It dealt with modern elements around historic monuments casually. It recommended that the infill structures be distinct from

² E. Viollet-le-Duc, *Słownik logiczny architektury francuskiej od XI do XVI wieku, 1854–1868*, [in:] *Zabytek i historia. Wokół problemów konserwacji i ochrony zabytków w XIX wieku. Antologia*, P. Kosiewski, J. Krawczyk (eds.), Warszawa 2007, p. 79.

³ A. Tomaszewski, *Wiek XX w konserwacji, konserwacja w XX wieku*, [in:] *Badania i ochrona zabytków w XX wieku. Materiały konferencji naukowej zorganizowanej staraniem Wydziału Architektury Politechniki Warszawskiej, Generalnego Konserwatora Zabytków i Towarzystwa Opieki nad Zabytkami w stulecie urodzin Profesora Jana Zachwatowicza w dniu 4 marca 2000 roku*, Warszawa 2000, p. 16.

⁴ J. Ruskin, *Lampa pamięci*, 1849, [in:] *Zabytek i historia...*, p. 109.

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¹ Own translation [after:] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, P. Glare (ed.), Oxford 2009 (reprint), p. 466.



Fig. 1. Roofing the courtyard of Pod Kruki House.
Photo by author

historic fabric⁵ and that the building elements which were introduced for technical reasons “should be hidden to prevent the deterioration of the appearance and character of the restored building”⁶ [3]. It was required to pay attention to the surroundings of historic monuments and modern architecture which is designed near them, however, no specific recommendations were provided.

Still in the interwar period often it was not permitted to combine historic monuments with the emerging radical modern art. One of those who were against it was Gustavo Giovannoni who was advocating the idea that the new should not be combined with the old. He argued that the value of modern architecture is lower than that of historic monuments and that is why they should not exist together⁷ [2].

Next stage of the evolution of the conservation doctrine is the *Venice Charter* from 1964 whose provisions can be considered to a large degree applicable today. It provided that *all complementary works which are considered necessary should derive from architectural composition and display the distinctive features of our times*⁸. Additions were

permitted *as long as they respect all major parts of the building, its old surroundings, composition balance and relations with the surrounding environments*⁹ [3]. Those provisions indicate that transformations were permissible but they had to meet numerous conditions and restrictions.

The postulates of the *Venice Charter* were confirmed by the *Cracow Charter 2000*. That document can be considered one of the signs of decentralization of the conservation doctrine of historic monuments which over the last few years emphasized more and more evidently the issue of regional specificity¹⁰. Apart from the “conservative preventive conservation of the environment, emergency maintenance and repair” the *Cracow Charter* considers permissible also *restoration, renovation or rehabilitation*¹¹. Furthermore, *...if necessary, for a proper use the building, completion of more extensive spatial and functional parts should reflect contemporary architecture*¹² [12]. The liberalization of the approach to potential transformations of historic buildings is evident here.

All above-mentioned conservation documents provide only general recommendations regarding a possible intro-

⁵ Karta Ateńska Konserwacji Zabytków, [in:] E. Małachowicz, *Konserwacja i rewaloryzacja architektury w środowisku kulturowym*, Wrocław 2007, p. 585.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 586.

⁷ A. Kadłuczka, *Ochrona zabytków architektury. T. 1, Rozwój doktryn i teorii: (vademezum)*, Kraków 2000, p. 60.

⁸ After: E. Małachowicz, *Konserwacja i rewaloryzacja...*, p. 591.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 592.

¹⁰ Compare B. Szmygin, *Obiekty zabytkowe – pojęcia zakres i zasady działania*, [in:] *Wybrane zagadnienia ochrony i konserwacji zabytków architektury*, B. Szmygin (ed.), Lublin 2007, pp. 32–34.

¹¹ *Cracow Charter 2000*, <http://www.zabytki-tonz.pl/pliki/Karta%20Krakowska%202000.pdf>, 27.10.2010.

¹² Ibidem.



Fig. 2. Layout of the interior of Pasaż 13. Photo by author



Fig. 3. Former Schindler's factory – before remodeling.
Photo by author.
Below: design of Contemporary Art Museum. Source: <http://architektura.muratorplus.pl/projekty/muzeum-sztuki-wspolczesnej-na-terenie-bylej-fabryki>



Fig. 4. Wyspiański Pavilion 2000.
Photo by author



Fig. 5. Faculty of Finances.
Photo by author

duction of transformations in historic monuments. Due to their individual character the approach to historic monuments must be also individual. The theoretical deliberations rather provide a kind of direction, emphasize trends of thought in specific periods. In the second part of this paper I will try to present how the postulates put forward by me are implemented.

I will analyze attempts at architectural and urban improvements of the buildings located in Cracow whose historical value has been established. The group of buildings will be additionally narrowed down to buildings of public utility where transformations took place in the 21st century that is after 2000. They include comprehensive projects evidently invading the historical fabric of a given building. The descriptions of the buildings in that group will not then include details in such areas as carpentry, metalwork or such building or construction improvements as new floors or bracings. The described group also excludes reconstructions (regardless of their historical or modern forms).

The restriction regarding a building capacity which prevents operations of a company or an institution is often the motivation to perform works transforming a historic monument. As it is difficult to resign from good location which is offered by most of such buildings it is often necessary to extend them. Due to the extent of the invasion such activities are considered beyond conservation¹³ [3].

The extension of the International Center of Culture located in the Pod Kruki House by the Market Square is a perfect example of that. The project was prepared in 2001 by Atelier Loegler. The transformation included enclosing the courtyard and adding an additional storey to the annex. Above the courtyard, where a conference room was designed, an exhibition space was created at the level of the 1st floor. The whole extension was covered with a glass roof. A bay window was added to the annex, where a reading room was designed, and an additional glazed storey covered with a semispherical roof. The interiors were laid out in modern style.

Another example is the adaptation of two connected houses at the Market Square for shopping and services. This structure currently functions as Pasaż 13. It was designed by Arch. Marcin Janowski and it was completed in 2006. Like in the case of the Pod Kruki House, additional space was created by roofing the courtyard.

This was additionally emphasized by leaving the modern staircase open from the basement level up to the skylight. In order to draw attention to the exceptional character of the structure (which is supposed to generate the marketing value) the original Gothic and Renaissance architectural details were displayed. They were contrasted with modern and rather minimalistic interior design. The remodeling caused a lot of controversy due to the extent of the invasion. The most negative comments regarded the balcony designed on the facade with the writing "Pasaż 13" instead of balusters¹⁴ [11].

Another investment where enclosing of the courtyard was an important element is being executed now – namely roofing of the courtyard of the Home Army Museum – by AIR Jurkowski-Architekci. The institution is housed in former Austrian barracks. The steel structures which support glass planes allude in style to the raw military architecture, however, they do not try to imitate it, retaining a separate character. The project included adaptation of basements for exhibition purposes.

In the designs of MCK and Pasaż 13, it was necessary to develop new circulation in the buildings by introducing additional stair case and elevator shafts. It was also connected with providing emergency exits and adjusting the buildings for the disabled.

A similar modernization was conducted in the house at the corner of the Market Square and Sienna Street where at present Empik Mega Store is located. The design from 2000–2001 by J. Kapitoński includes a possibly discrete adjustment of the building for the needs of its new users. Elevators were added connecting all storeys of the store. Glass planes were supposed to provide transparency of these elements so that they do not overwhelm the interiors.

Apart from the need for new space, another reason for introduction of architectural transformations in historic monuments is the changes caused by social processes such as "moving" the citizens from the city centers. The buildings where they lived previously – as attractive commercial spaces – undergo conversion into new facilities providing services or sales. Conversion of tenement houses into hotels is a popular solution. It was the case with Gródek hotel (Na Gródku Street), Stary hotel (Szczepańska Street) or Rubinstein hotel (Szeroka Street).

Another group of functional adaptations includes post-industrial structures which, as a result of the city center growth, became useless from the point of view of production profitability. Abandoned by their users, they offer good location for large-capacity investments. However, the existing architecture is not always considered fit for renovation.

Galeria Kazimierz is an example of a transformation conducted on a complex of post-industrial structures. The project by IMB Asymetria and HOK included preservation and renovation of only six buildings of a large 19th century slaughterhouse complex. Now they house cafes and restaurants. The brick buildings and the street along them provide an axis for pedestrian circulation leading inside the completely new shopping mall.

The Bonarka City Center investment goes even further. The project by Bose International Planning & Architecture which included adaptation of the factory for a huge services and shopping center in fact resulted in total winding down of Bonarka Chemicals Plant after which the center took its name. As a sign of former function the factory chimney was left there with changing color and pattern LED lighting. Remodeling was completed in 2009.

The authors of the Museum of Contemporary Art in former factory *Emalia* where Oskar Schindler's plant was located during the Second II had different assumptions. Claudio Nardi Architetto from Italy decided to preserve

¹³ E. Małachowicz, *Konserwacja i rewitalizacja...*, p. 128.

¹⁴ *Szopa dla hotelu*, „Gazeta Wyborcza. Kraków”, 19.06.2006, <<http://krakow.gazeta.pl/krakow/1,35812,3427883.html>>, 27.10.2010.

the sawtooth roofs typical of the post-industrial complex. The new urban development was supposed to introduce order into existing architecture. In order to do that it was decided to demolish the building of historic porter's lodge. It has not yet been executed so the actual effect of the transformation of the historic halls is still unknown. However, it should be noted that despite considerable invasion into the structure of the buildings the architect declared that the historic value of that place will be respected¹⁵ [7]. The transformation of the complex is an element of the plan of revitalization of Zabłocie District.

The principle of minimal invasion was the basis of the project from 2004 by M. Tomczak that was developed for the Museum of Galicia. A brick hall located at Dajwór Street which in the past was used as a furniture factory was adapted for its seat. As the history of Jews was to be the main subject of the exhibitions it was decided to leave the patina on the building and the new materials were supposed to harmonize with the post-industrial architecture.

The existing space can be improved not only in architectural but also in urban scale. All complements enriching the city fabric can be good examples of that.

The Exhibition and Information Pavilion Wyspiański 2000 is the most famous example of that type executed over the last few years in Cracow. It was erected in the place where the Pod Lipką House was demolished before the Second World War. That place for a long time was considered for an investment, however, no solutions that were prepared met the high requirements for a design located in such a prestigious place. The structure was supposed to commemorate the year 2000 when Cracow was one of the European Capitals of Culture. K. Ingarden's design whose execution lasted from 2006 and 2007 became the reason of numerous disputes¹⁶ [10]. It is worth, however, looking at the building itself. Its elevation is composed of ceramic tiles decorated with chest tree leaves to honor the patron. Placing them on movable rods controls the amount of light that is allowed inside. The elevation has stained-glass windows made in the 1:2 scale according to Wyspiański's templates. The architecture is modern but the use of natural materials integrates well with the surroundings. The distribution of elements also facilitates the dialog between old and new architectural forms.

¹⁵ Compare *Włoskie miasto sztuki w Krakowie*, „Architektura-Murator”, 10/2007, p. 24.

¹⁶ Compare *Pawilon z witrażami Wyspiańskiego jest już prawie gotowy*, „Polska Gazeta Krakowska”, 29.05.2007, <http://krakow.naszemiasto.pl/archiwum/1456258.pawilon-z-witrażami-wyspiańskiego-jest-juz-prawie-gotowy,id,t.html>, 27.10.2010.

Regardless of subjective judgments, the attempt at integrating into the character of the place which is a very difficult task should be appreciated.

The development of the infill buildings of the University of Economics located between Lubomirskiego and Rakowicka Streets had a different character. In 2004, a building of the Faculty of Finances was constructed there; after the swimming pool and the sports hall¹⁷ [4, 5] it is another design by Atelier Loegler in this area. The clinker brick is the building material which was used to refer to historic monuments, however, the very articulation of elevation itself, the use of large glazing areas and prominent steel structures is very modern in its expression. The new buildings became hallmarks of the school with their distinct appearance along Lubomirskiego Street.

As demonstrated in the examples the activities within the term of *cultura* that is attempts at improving and adjusting to the current needs of historic space of the city are clearly visible in Cracow. These transformations take place even in structures with significant historic value. This means that there is approval of invading that space, necessary further (continuous) adjustment of architectural and urban objects to contemporary needs. That trend is stronger than the recommendations included in conservation documents to limit intervention to necessary repairs and conservation.

Special attention should be paid to treatment of objects of post-industrial heritage. Due to their relatively not so distant date of creation, frequently poor technical condition and, as it seems, general lower appreciation, they undergo far-reaching transformations and sometimes they are totally lost during adaptation works. What remains is sometimes only architectural details and single elements such as the chimney of Bonarka complex.

As it is put in the *Cracow Charter 2000: Conservation of cultural heritage should be an integral part of the planning and management processes of a community, as it can contribute to the sustainable, qualitative, economic and social developments of that society*¹⁸ – so the investment processes should be managed in such a way that the changes which are made would be least devastating and most reversible because historic monuments are not obstacles for investments and the requirements imposed by them can make modern architecture more interesting as they add the context of the past.

¹⁷ M. Motak, *Architektura Krakowa 1989–2004. Nowe realizacje w kontekście miasta historycznego*, Kraków 2007, p. 55.

¹⁸ *Cracow Charter 2000*, op. cit.

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Architektura współczesna w otoczeniu zabytków – kultura w przekształceniach przestrzeni

W artykule przedstawiono rozumienie terminu „kultura” w nawiązaniu do pierwotnego, łacińskiego znaczenia tego słowa. Kultura – uprawianie mające na celu poprawę stanu obecnego, w przypadku architektury oznacza przekształcanie przestrzeni w nadziei na podniesienie jej jakości. Proces ten może zachodzić w istniejących strukturach architektonicz-

nych przedstawiających wartość historyczną. W jaki sposób podejście do przekształceń obiektów zabytkowych zmienia się? Osią analizy jest Kraków, miasto o bogatym architektonicznym dziedzictwie, poddawane nieustającym przekształceniom.

Key words: modern architecture, historic monuments

Słowa kluczowe: architektura współczesna, zabytki