

Innovations in the Language of Contemporary Culture and the Problem of the Preservation of Cultural Heritage

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ABSTRACT

In the beginning of the new century, the issues of connection between the problems of preservation of cultural heritage and aspects of globalization and development of mass culture are still relevant. The desire to combine somehow the preservation of heritage and the shaping of the new creative architecture is obvious in many projects. At that, as one can see from the material of the global practice of reconstructions, the problem of creativity is solved in different ways depending on the adherence of a certain author and a customer to Classical or Non-Classical trends of contemporary culture. The article offers a brief analysis of architectural practice of the recent decades in the field of adaptation or transformation of objects of cultural heritage. The authors make accent at the connection of such works with the peculiarities of the humanitarian culture of our time; they stress some aspects of the looming conflict of the heritage and actual trends in the architecture of the new century.

Keywords: *Preservation of heritage, Creative architecture, Non-Classics, Innovations, Cultural landscape.*

1. INTRODUCTION: A NEW PARADIGM OF BEING AND THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

The subject of the article is connected with the fact that, in the beginning of the new century, not only the issues of the connection between the problems of preservation of cultural heritage and the development of mass culture are still actual, but also some aspects of globalization should be taken into account. The essential transformation of the cultural sphere in general is getting more and more obvious. As Viktor Bychkov noted, "the human kind is trying to live... in a fundamentally new paradigm of being — in the technogenic society and post-culture". [1] Vanguard 'Non-Classics', which is inherent in both theory and art practice

"the cult of the absurd, disharmonious, ugly, etc.", retains its place in the cultural sphere. [2] An extreme measure of manifestation of the same aspirations can be seen in the so-called contemporary art, for which, as researchers note, "absolute cynicism is very important, in no case there should be anything human, no philosophical". [3] According to experts, one of its goals is to transform the traditional cultural and social landscape. [4] It is clear that these features of the new cultural situation do not always and everywhere prevail or dominate, but it is quite essential that they are antipodes of goal-setting in the field of preservation of heritage. The analysis shows that adherence to the ideas of contemporary art is fraught with various negative interpretations of objects of cultural heritage.

In the field of architecture, the norms of Non-Classics are now poorly implemented, but, one way or another, they still affect the cultural landscape of countries, at the reconstruction and restoration

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activities. Nowadays, Non-Classics and Classics coexist everywhere — both in professional culture and in everyday consciousness, shaping differences in the general tendencies of work with heritage. Noteworthy is a comparison of design solutions for the restoration of the cathedral in the St Francis of Assisi Monastery in Assisi and the burnt-out Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. In the first case, contrary

to even the norms of the Venice Charter, a complete restoration of the unique historical monument was carried out without alternative; in the other case, along with the traditional ones, fantastic projects were proposed to change the lost upper parts of the cathedral introducing innovative topics which would destroy its historical image ("Figure 1"). [5]



Figure 1 Paris. A project of the reconstruction of the Notre Dame Cathedral (arch. V. Callebaut).

2. ON THE WAYS OF ADAPTATION OF THE HERITAGE TO THE CONTEMPORARY LIFE

The both above-mentioned cases are unique. But in the broader architectural practice, there are many examples of changing attitudes to the heritage. This can be seen most clearly when working with local historical objects; in some cases, there is a desire to significantly change their image, to deform a monument of the past. Along with the well-known reconstruction of the Military History Museum in Dresden by David Liebeskind (2011), we should recall the expansion of the Royal Museum in Ontario (Toronto, 2007) made by the same author a bit earlier, where the new façade is a bunch of wedge-shaped forms breaking out into space; that has nothing in common with the historical environment. They partly capture the old pseudo-Romanesque building of the reconstructed museum (it was built in 1914). The broken crystal-like forms of the new building, completely devoid of the usual tectonic architectural logic, show a changing attitude towards the Canada's largest museum and towards the city as a whole. (The completed project equally aroused approval and indignation of the public.) [6] It is symptomatic

that, simultaneously with the museum in Toronto, an edifice of the Department of Health was built in Bilbao, Spain, among the houses of the second half of the twentieth century, also resembling a lump of stuck together grandiose crystals (arch. H. Call-Barro and D. Gutierrez Zarza). And there, too, freedom from the centuries-old practice of housing construction, from the logic of the Cartesian coordinate system was declared. Let us emphasize that in this case we are not talking about a purposeful new attitude towards monuments, but about a turn in attitude towards culture as a whole.

The same declarative freedom from tradition is manifested in some works of the so called 'Organic' architecture. In the sphere of work with cultural heritage, a bright example is the building of the Cinema Foundation in Paris created by Renzo Piano in 2014 on the site of the 'Rodin' Cinema (1934). Only a fragment of the main façade with a relief by Rodin was kept of the old cinema-theatre. From behind it, a body of some grandiose reptile with a smooth scaly surface is seen. [7]

A widespread technique is to build a new structure over the site of a historical one, with a contrasting separation of the new from the old. As in many other cases, the beginning of the

dissemination of the technique was started by 'star' architects. One can recall the corresponding works by Zaha Hadid or Herzog and De Meuron. But such technique has come to fairly ordinary historical buildings. A typical example is the Museum of Visual Arts in Zwolle (the Netherlands) ("Figure 2"), a small town with traditional low-rise buildings and architectural monuments the oldest of which date back to the fifteenth century. The museum is located near the cathedral in a building of the first third of the nineteenth century. The mansion has been rebuilt several times, but has retained its classic proportions and a six-column portico. In the

context of the emerging need to expand the space of the museum, in 2013, a huge volume, resembling a flattened egg, was erected on its roof; the surface of the new object was covered with light-colored ceramics. A wide window, illuminating two floors of the inside exhibition space, is cut out in the 'egg'. The elliptical superstructure suppresses the old mansion, but, judging on the publications, it is liked both by the townspeople and the museum visitors (which differs this example from the museum in Toronto). The addition is called a 'cloud with an eye'. The author of the project is B. Henket. [8]



Figure 2 Zwolle. Museum for the Visual Arts (arch. B. Henket).

Among numerous superstructures of the same type, we could mention a Russian example: the arrangement of a hotel edifice in the former building of the automatic telephone station (ATS)

in Bakuninskaya Street, Moscow ("Figure 3"). The building of 1927, made as one of the first four ATS of the city, for uncertain reason, was not classified as an object of cultural heritage.



Figure 3 Moscow. The project of reconstruction of the ATS in Bakuninskaya St. (arch. N. Tsymbal).

The new function demanded a significant increasing of the usable space. Having not received a permission of partial demolition of the Constructivist building, the authors made out a project with a complete preservation of the historical building and the restoration of its initial

main façade and the reconstruction of the Constructivist style of its interiors. But the edifice was completed with five new floors above the existing construction cut from the old part with an exploited roof (arch. N. Tsymbal). Now, the construction works are in progress, and it is

difficult to assess the result, although the trend is alarming. [9]

However, it is definitely possible to evaluate a similar solution found for a much larger object — the Dynamo Stadium (1928, arch. A. Langman, L. Cherikover). Its reconstruction was carried in 2011-2018. [10] Skipping the complicated history of its design project and the construction process, let us

note the main points of the result. The newly erected copy of the outer wall of the old stadium almost completely disappeared under the shapeless air-mattress shape of the cover form similar to that one of some new large stadiums ("Figure 4"). The old structure of the historical monument, its historical forms cannot be seen anymore. There is no chance to talk about any interaction of the old and the new.

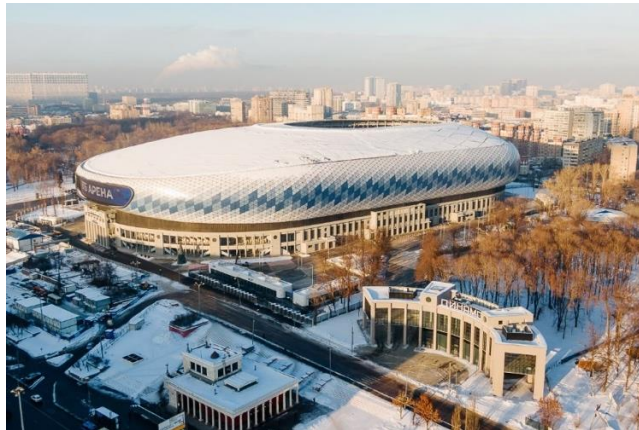


Figure 4 Moscow. Dynamo Stadium (arch. D. Manika and Arch. Bureau SPEECH).

The above-mentioned examples show the line of development of contemporary architecture, that is not connected with tradition and consistently destroys the heritage objects, although, the language of modernity can be manifested itself in another way, in the dialogue of the old and the new on the common cultural field. Sometimes, one and the same authors are ready to express themselves as

followers of different concepts. Thus, Herzog and De Meuron built a seven-storey harbour edifice over with a huge concert complex of the Philharmonic Society on the Elbe (Dresden); but in Basel they reconstructed the Museum of Culture, creating a building corresponding with the environment, under the traditional pitched roof ("Figure 5").



Figure 5 Basel. Museum of Culture (arch. Herzog, De Meuron).

But, at that, the contemporary architecture of the museum, with its unusually shifted and transformed elements of the traditional structure, is far from imitation. It organically connects with the surrounding historical buildings. [11] Equally modern is their proposal for the development of the

Unterlinden Museum in Colmar (France), where the spatial development of the museum complex is realized with the inclusion of adapted historical buildings. In addition, they designed deaf brick buildings with rare meager openings and a pitched roof. This is a contemporary minimalism on the

territory of the monument and around it, organically connected with the Baroque mansion and with other components of the old buildings of the street. [12]

Of the same range of projects seeking to link the old and the new, is one of the recent ideas to

expand and to renovate a significant museum complex — the Textile and Decorative Arts Museum in Lyon. (The author, architect R. Ricciotti, won the competition for the renovation of that museum in January 2021) The concept of the project is to combine the preservation of heritage and shaping of the 'creative architecture'. [13]



Figure 6 Lyon. The project of reconstruction of the Textile Arts Museum (arch. R. Ricciotti).

The architectural or, rather, the design idea of the project is to "wrap with expressive drapery" the building of the museum complex facing the street, as well as the façades of the houses looking at the museum courtyard ("Figure 6"). The drapery should symbolize the "petrified fabric swaying in the wind, frozen in its movement". [14] The topic of the fabric is a symbol of the identity of Lyon, the capital of silk weaving. The inclusion of this symbol in the decoration of the museum should make it stand out from its surroundings. As we can understand, the creativity of the solution is manifested in the new technological attitude of the authors. It is noteworthy, that the choice of the winning project was due, in particular, to the planned preservation of the historical heritage and existing buildings. At that, a significant part of the historical buildings will be hidden by draperies, but this fact seems to be not so embarrassing. It should be noted that the aforementioned formula — preserving heritage and, at the same time, building new creativity — is manifested in most contemporary projects of transforming museum complexes. Museums may have a special place in setting the transformation plans. But it can be noted, as well, that the same formula is close not only to solutions possible in the field of museum construction.

3. CONCLUSION

The material considered in the article makes us think about contemporary features of assessing the heritage and working with it. We are to recall that even the Washington Declaration of 1987 pointed at the importance of preserving both material objects of cultural heritage and the figurative characteristics, images of certain place (locus). Then, they talked about the equal importance of single historical constructions and, besides, the environments determining the cultural value of urban formations. It was declared that both of them define the image and the cultural value of heritage in equal measure. Today, a similar question arises in the context of transformation of local structures. One can notice a tendency to preserve *materially fixable* components of historical object, leaving aside its whole artistic image. This is especially prominent in design solutions, purposefully destroying or deforming the existing architectural image (such as in the cases of the museums in Toronto and Dresden, the edifice of the Cinema Foundation in Paris).

But it is the image that speaks about the cultural traditions of the place; it makes the settlement or its fragment close and native for its inhabitant and the urban community. On a figurative basis, an urban

identity is emerging, the maintenance of which has been a concern in recent decades. [15]

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors of the current article consider an important task to note that images of cultural heritage can be under threat, in particular, by means of projects of transformation of the traditional cultural and social landscape; it was mentioned in the introduction to this article. The authors have been dealing with the problem of identity of historical settlement for a long time; [16] it prompted them to consider the topic which is the focal point of the current publication.

The authors' contribution is differentiated by the choice and analysis of the objects of research. The conceptualization of the collected material is their collaborative contribution. The introduction and the conclusion are written by A. Shchenkov.

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