

MULTIMEDIA
A
CHANCE
FOR
REGIONAL
ARCHITECTURE

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“Comprehensive examination of both basic and derived forms [of the country architecture] (...) to develop them consciously, intentionally, consistently, shaping to new forms and the needs of life just as it has unintentionally been happening before, in the course of natural evolution - is the task of the present generation of Polish architects.”

[Stefan Szuller]

1 . A NEED FOR REGIONALISM IN ARCHITECTURE

The consciousness of identity, safety and identification of the individual in a social group, a nation or a place in which this person exists, can come into being and develop only if the continuing of tradition is secured. This continuing is in fact the person's indispensable and first need. It manifests itself especially through the cultural and spatial tradition of the person's own habitation, or more precisely - in the regional, native artistic expression of architecture.

Discussions concerning the regional architecture problems have been led for many decades and are intensified to greater or smaller a degree. In literature of the period up to the thirties of the XX century, the national " is exposed and the researches aim at the " all-Polish regionalism". From the beginning of this century the struggle for the national style had had its specified historic background. The national style was to unite the whole divided country and nation. Modernistic suggestions have appeared in the designs from the thirties, but due to the socio - political situation

this trend has not been carried on raising at the same time the indignation of supporters of the village regional landscape. [Bogdan Treter, 1937].

Modernism has appeared once again in the designs from the fifties. It has introduced simple revolutionary changes as to the solid figures (roofless "boxes"), and above all the program lack of ornamentation. Nevertheless some natural forms of substitute decoration (spontaneously - intuitive) have been created on the modernistic "boxes". (These natural tendencies to use decoration forms confirm the existence of a great need of ornamentation characteristic to a man.). The continuity of long tradition of the decorative detail use has been violently broken. It has even been easier as the traditional detail was a wooden one, and there were no not - wooden detail propositions in tradition. The present intensification of talks concerning the regional architecture overlaps with the protest against uniformized architecture. The search for relations to tradition and regionalism has become one of the basis for the creative program of the post-modernistic style. Despite these circumstances and the active attitude of innumerable propagators the regional architecture is not created. Why does it happen so? And even if it is created, it has the all-Polish or even European regionalism extent, rather than more literal, local one. In such a situation one can ask if it is reasonable or even possible for the regional architecture to be created. The question becomes more up-to-date now, when we face the post-modernistic style wear and tear. But if in our understanding eg.: the Zakopane style or mountaineer's regionalism exists and functions as category which transcends the limits of history, could it not mean the same with regard to all the other regionalisms? Moreover, leaving all the doubts and declarations to the matter aside, the common and amateur need for the regional architecture is the

unquestionable fact. It seems that the essence of the problem lies in the model used by the investor being not proper.

2. REGIONAL FEATURES

From the point of view of the village landscape formation, two groups of features are really important. The first includes: the shape of the village, the character of building structures, forms of solid figures. The second comprises the generally understood detail, the decorative one included. The first group of the features has presently rather a common and universal character, although it has also been regional before. The features of the second group do not shape the landscape in a direct way, but do influence its architectural expression and still show the regional differentiation. The quantitative and qualitative condition of the traditional forms preservation in Poland is miscellaneous. This comes, generally speaking, from the fact that the time and scale of exchange of the village building structure (from wooden to brick) are different. "Specific uniformity and common repetition of standards have always taken place in a wide spread village architecture." [Tadeusz Kachniarz, 1990]. The majority of created buildings is still standard and at the same time natural, based on different models or patterns. It is natural that some forms which make those standards more primitive do appear. So the true answer to the question "How?" should be given by the creators-designers.

3. REGIONALISM ORDINARINESS

As it has already been said, architecture regionalism is composed of features, not only these very distinctive and clear ones but also those more vague, creating some specific homely atmosphere. In addition to these difficulties, the information concerning regional features is usually dissipated, partial and often selective. Such an information, not classified nor directly and quickly available, is less

probable to be interesting for the professional creators-designers, not even for the common investor.

4. THE BARRIERS OF THE REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE CREATION

- * Insufficient awareness of the need for the continuity of tradition to exist

- * Shortages in education as far as the tradition knowledge is concerned

- * Difficulties in easy and direct access to tradition information

- Imperfection of the present means, eg.: regional forms registers that are only fragmentary and have not uniform shapes

- * Lack of integrated data base concerning the tradition

5. MULTIMEDIA DATA BASE

The newest hypermedia systems allow for the variety of information (from picture to sound) to enter the computer memory. Utterly new possibilities and the new quality in the user - computer communication arise. Affecting various senses of the user, more user friendly information can be passed in a shorter period of time. This is usually the correlated information so it can be easier acquired by the user.

The essence of the hypermedia system is the location of the whole information on the so called cards. The authors of the base using the specific system create data base.

6. MULTIMEDIA DATA BASE CHARACTERISTIC

- * Immediate and easy acquisition of the information stored in the base.

- * Data base information can be used by any other system, as well as be supplemented and published

- * The three-dimensional or spatial data base structure makes it possible for every regional architecture problem

interesting for the user be completely and thoroughly studied.

* Because of the system nature, the data base authors are obliged to prepare the information in an accurate, structural and multidimensional way.

7. THE PERSPECTIVES

Polish professional computer users work with the IBM PC class of computers. There was, unfortunately, no hypermedia system for such computers. It has only been lately (in mid-November last year) that Microsoft Access system has been introduced to the market. The system was to be available in Poland in mid-February, but the deadline was moved by one month. As in other hypermedia systems, text, sound and graphics can enter the data base. The advantage of the base is the fact that while working in Windows environment it is user friendly. The system has been created by Microsoft for the user who cannot and does not want to programme. Consequently, a real possibility to create the multimedia base exists. The base would comprise the whole widely understood knowledge of the aspects of regional architecture and its creation.

Correlation of the situations mentioned above predicts the use of new media to accumulate the input information in a full and relevant scope. Immensity of the dissipated knowledge after its collection and systematization would strike us as very wide and the presentation of the designing effects would surprise the average investor with its clarity.

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