

FURNISHING OF THE NATIONAL REVIVAL HOUSE TO MEET MODERN DEMANDS

Bearing in mind the early period in which it was built the National Revival house testifies to the high standards of housing construction existing at that time. This fact is the basic prerequisite for the successful adaptation to the requirements of modern life without the necessity of any major changes in its composition.

In addition, the task of the adapting the National Revival house to modern needs, which now confronts Bulgarian architects, there is the task of finding suitable furnishings.

A few cases of successful furnishing show the importance of this last creative task in comprehensive work for the preservation of the National Revival house which thus obtains a full-fledged modern appearance.

The problem of its furnishing should be viewed from several aspects according to the possibilities for the present-day use of the buildings.

Public buildings such as schools, reading rooms and churches dating from the time of the Bulgarian Revival period today find a suitable use as museums and exhibition halls. Therefore, their furnishing is done according to the requirements of the museums and exhibition halls. It should bear the marks of the National Revival period without a superfluous overcrowding which could divert the attention of the visitors from the architectural and artistic values of the building as a monument of culture or from the exhibits in the museum and the exhibition hall.

The requirements for the furnishing of churches are also quite sparing if their architectural space as well as the frescoes and the wood-carving are the objects worth seeing.

The dwelling house dating from the time of the National Revival, on the other hand, cannot be adapted to and furnished for modern usage as easily as that because of the various possibilities for its use.

One current trend is for the larger houses with richer contents to be used for public purposes. They could, for instance, be turned into hostels for the members of the creative unions or into rest homes for holidaymakers.

We should be familiar with the means of expression,

which the old master-builders from the National Revival period have used, so as to be able to re-shape them skilfully and truthfully into those of modern furnishing or to create entirely new ones.

In those Revival houses which will be used as hostels for creative workers or as rest homes for holiday-makers the size of the chairs and beds as well as the situation and the correct type of beds should be considered.

For others, which will serve for receptions and representative purposes, we should select the best type of writing desk and armchairs for the study room. In the same houses suitable chairs and a round table for a small conference room should be also carefully chosen.

The furnishing of the old Bulgarian house is practical and simple, but comfortable. The Bulgarian woman succeeded in creating a fine atmosphere in her home by means of colourful home-made woollen rugs and carpets or tufted rugs and bed-spreads. Today, if successfully imitations are remade accord

1. Arbanassi. Hostel in an old house.



ing to the new requirements, they can form an important part of the furnishing of the National Revival house together with the Kotel and Chiprovtsi carpets or the Koprivshitsa purple tufted bed-spreads with their gay ornaments.

We can point to some of the big Plovdiv houses or other old houses in other regions of the country as examples of a successful furnishing. It was achieved by collecting original old furniture pieces which were used in the late Revival period and the first years after the Liberation from Ottoman domination. Great skill and knowledge are also necessary if some of the rooms are to be furnished with new pieces or if the architect is entrusted with the task of creating an entirely new single-style furnishing of the whole house. The Hadjianguelov House in Vidin and the Sarafska House in Samokov are good examples of successful furnishing.

The architect should also be very careful not to overcrowd or over-decorate the house and not to resort to harmful imitations.

In such cases the rule of the architect will near that

of a missionary, if he himself is convinced in the possibilities of suitable furnishing and if he is familiar with appropriate manufacturing sources. His "mission" consists in his abilities to persuade the inhabitants of the old houses in the importance and the necessity of period furnishing. The objections of the inhabitants refer mainly to the high prices of the period furniture, which in many cases is in fact less expensive than the modern standard furniture on sale in the shops. Thus they try to hide their submission to the magnetism of "modern" furniture. The valuable models of the old Bulgarian architecture which have remained from the time of the National Revival should be animated by a full-fledged contemporary meaning in order to offer the inhabitants not only necessary comforts but to serve as an example of the creative genius of the old Bulgarian master-builders as well as to be a source of inspiration for the Bulgarian architects for years to come.

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RESUME

Les maisons du Réveil national bulgare attestent les qualités et la culture de l'époque qui les a créées et peuvent être adaptées avec bonheur aux conditions de vie actuelle.

Parallèlement au problème de l'aménagement de ces maisons se pose celui de leur ameublement, qui doit être envisagé sous plusieurs aspects, selon le caractère qu'elles ont conservé et leurs utilisations possibles. Les édifices publics datant du Réveil national bulgare (écoles, églises, maisons de la culture) abritent des musées ou des salles d'exposition. Leur ameublement est donc fonction des nécessités muséographiques.

La grande variété d'utilisations possibles pour les maisons d'habitation pose des difficultés quant à leur ameublement. Nous devons apprendre à connaître les moyens d'expression des maîtres d'oeuvre de cette

époque, afin de réussir à leur trouver des équivalents dans le mobilier contemporain que nous y introduisons.

Il faut mentionner que certaines grandes maisons de Plovdiv et d'autres villes du Réveil national bulgare ont reçu un ameublement très réussi. Il a été composé avec des meubles anciens authentiques, caractéristiques de l'époque de la libération de la Bulgarie et des années qui l'ont suivie (milieu et fin du XIX^{ème} siècle). Dans ce domaine, le rôle de l'architecte est celui d'un missionnaire si, toutefois, il est convaincu de la possibilité de trouver un ameublement convenant à cette architecture et s'il connaît les sources de cet art.

1. Arbanassi. Maison d'accueil