

## INVENTORY WITH REGARD TO REANIMATION "

In the course of the last ten years the study of the protection of monuments has undergone important changes in its methodology. From an architectural point of view the center of interest has passed from individual structures to architectural groups and even to entire historic towns.

The historic town or village have become new concepts in the protection of monuments, concepts which have widely expanded the criteria applied to their realization. An important role is attributed to the study of the restoration of urban groups from the point of view of the plan of the site, its silhouette, its panorama, the height of the buildings, its characteristic quality, the level of the roofs ; its relationship to the natural environment etc. More importance is now being attached to different elements of these historic groups such as town houses.

This revolutionary change in the fundamental conception of protection of monuments in architectural groups, however, brought up new problems which were substantially unknown until then.

1. It was difficult to evaluate these groupes of dwellings because of the fact that they were almost unknown. In effect, the science of architecture in Czechoslovakia as elsewhere was oriented almost exclusively toward individual works of exceptional quality or, rarely, toward groups of buildings. The architectural value of urban groups and their components was recognized, to be sure, before the first World War, but this didn't result in any serious study of historic groupings. Practically no attention was paid to their development, notably to their urban aspects.

In 1950, the predecessor of the State Institute for the reconstruction of historic monuments and towns started an historic and architectural analysis of a group of houses in the Old Town of Prague. The new character of all these problems as well as the stumbling block which they presented only appeared when the work had already begun. The difficulty lay essentially in the successive transformations in style of buildings made of stone, bricks or masonry. The middle class houses had undergone, particularly

since the twelfth century, a complicated development which left on them traces of various modifications. In many cases these modifications had not only involved the surface of the buildings, the facades but also in some cases, certain vertical or horizontal extensions and changes in the masonry along with new vaults, new ceilings or new roofings were present.

These successive modifications resulted in a profound change in the appearance of the structure, a change which was then designated as a manifestation of a stylistic period in which it did not really belong. The majority of the houses were classified from the point of view of time and of style, especially from the character of their facades. This practice meant, of course, that the entire structure was judged from one detail, often the latest, in such a way that the anterior secondary development of the building's architecture was neglected.

It became necessary, therefore, to abandon totally the methods of study and evaluation applied up to this time and to create a new system of working and of investigating which would allow more profound understanding of the historic background of the buildings and architectural groups and more exact determination of their stylistic development. This is the only method which would permit the successful protection and preservation of the different buildings.

It was therefore necessary to create the fundamental conditions for work as well as methods. In the beginning we didn't know how to proceed to synthesize all the principal points of view-historical, artistic, architectural, urban, and technical.

The problem of methodology here lies essentially in the complexity of the project whose results represent a synthesis of the work of builders, historians, art historians and architects. A plan of the architectural structures was drawn up on the scale of 1/200, followed by complete inspection. Parallel to this, research on the historical development of the building was carried out as well as the assembly of the available plans of the site, of the city and, finally, of the relevant artistic sources pertaining to the site.

All the work is based on the plan on the scale of 1/200 which allowed us to group the information obtained on each of the buildings investigated within the framework of the entire project. In many cases this was the first time that an individual architectural entity had been investigated since its construction many centuries before.

Research in the field of historic architecture requires workers who have considerable experience and skill. In effect, the aim of this work is to acquire as complete a picture of the architecture examined from its appearance and to investigate its evolution which had remained hidden. Of course, our eyes are not capable of seeing through everything; we can't see what is under the plaster facades or behind the walls. Each break in the masonry must be investigated, each place where shrinkage occurs, each irregularity, each sign of renovation, each trace of a walled up door or window, the thickness of the walls on each floor and in comparison to the other floors. The majority of the spaces have usually been plastered over, only in the cellars, under the eaves and under the staircases can the real structure of the masonry be seen.

The workers who carry out this investigation must know the materials used as well as the structure of the building and the building styles in the different stylistic periods, especially the structure of attics which are sometimes remarkable indications of the level of architectural work.

The study strictly speaking, of artistic values is an important element of the investigation. The different parts of the structure as well as the ensemble are evaluated as works of art and also as plastic manifestation of a certain period, of a certain style. This is a difficult part of the project and often one must act very carefully to avoid serious errors which could have disastrous consequences for the practice of preservation of the monuments. We note, for example, that in second class structures certain forms of arches for example, can appear during several consecutive centuries without showing any significant changes. Groined arches can be Roman, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque or even classic and a simple superficial modification, for example, the removal or addition of a scroll can significantly influence our analysis of the structure.

Similarly, it is often difficult to evaluate the layouts of buildings and their successive modification. The science of the evolution of architecture has already elucidated the horizontal floor plans of churches, convents, fortified chateaus and castles, but the analysis of houses in the city is only just beginning.

In formulating a methodology, it was necessary to decide, as a matter of principle, whether in the historical and architectural evaluation we would evaluate only structures and details that are of a style or an era that are absolutely incontestable or whether to give an overall view, we would propose hypotheses where our view of the situation was fragmented. We chose the second method which

is the only one that permits the formation of a logical hypothesis of the development of a building or an entire group of buildings and which is subject to future modification by date obtained in the course of the restoration. Our experience until now has fully justified the validity of this procedure.

The investigation of the history of architecture and historical investigation are carried on at the same time, their conclusions are often complementary or identical.

Another part of the project is the scientific investigation of the construction of the building. Its aim is to evaluate the structure of the building from the point of view of quality and stability so as to judge the condition of the plumbing and drainage and all the other equipment of the building.

Efficient investigation of the technical aspects of a building requires much experience and a solid knowledge of historical structures. Their analysis, strictly speaking, is very complicated. It would be erroneous to be alerted by the discovery of each crack, filled in long ago. We all know that old buildings have cracks, some date from the original construction hundreds of years ago.

The results of the historical and technical development permit us, therefore, to formulate architectural conclusions concerning the restoration or demolition of buildings.

The work resulted in

- A. A notebook on each individual project containing :
  1. A brief history of the building.
  2. Sources, artistic references, plans, sourcebooks, literature.
  3. An architectural analysis of the building.
  4. A history of its architectural development.
  5. A technical description of the building.
  6. Valuable architectural details.
  7. Its most important architectural defects.
  8. Principles of restoration and renewal.The folder of information gathered contained, as annexes, the plans of all the levels of the architectural project on a scale of 1/200 with the graphic evaluation of the classification of the different walls in a given style, and the vertical plans of the facades on the street side.
- B. The description of the whole group of houses with an evaluation of their historical and architectural development by differentiating with colors the styles of vertical and horizontal structures on the plan at all levels on the scale of 1/200 ; a written description and photographs were also included. The report con-

tains the entire urban and architectural development of the groups examined.

- C. The architectural evaluation of the group of houses on the plans at all levels on the scale of 1/200 forms the final phase of the work. Here we evaluate the structure, the appearance of the building and the architectural details. The work is based on a detailed analysis of the historic background ; certainly the evaluation does not include only the architectural, artistic and historical aspects, the technical aspects of the building are taken into consideration also.

In the architectural evaluation those structure and areas which must be left absolutely intact are divided into categories. The surface of architectural details such as window frames, entrances, doors, articulations of ceilings, walls, painted or stucco surfaces, tablements and coverings cannot be changed by pipes or conduits. The same limitation applies to dressed stone facings, roman masonry or stonework of roman or gothic baked bricks.

The second stage in their evaluation involves those structures and spaces which may undergo certain partial modification in case necessary without the essence of the structure being changed, for example the construction of new doors, the partitioning of areas. Next the structures and spaces which, from the artistic or architectural point of view, have no importance are considered. The choice of whether to maintain them or to replace them by a new arrangement is left to the person who suggests a new idea for them.

In the fourth category are those structures or spaces which are defective and must be razed.

Finally, the last category concerns the parts of the group which can be removed immediately without their involving artistic or technical complications.

The descriptive report contains a resumé of the appraisal of the group of houses from the urban, architectural and technical points of view.

A special annex summarizes information on the actual layout of the spaces in buildings, the classification of the technical setup of basic structures and their technical features such as the population, the number of inhabitants of apartments, shops, stores, methods of using buildings and space capacities.

The architectural evaluation based on the results of the project provides a solid and thorough basis for determining the extend of protection and reconstruction of the historic structure.

At this point, the architectural monument is no longer a simple number, whose organic structure is unknown and in danger of damage from modernization, but on the contrary an ensemble of aspects, unequal from the architectural and structural points of view. From the very beginning of the project, the architectural evaluation carried out permitted us to isolate the artistic center of gravity of the building and simultaneously the parts which could be more or less intensively reconstructed or demolished. It enabled the project engineer to orient himself more easily and allowed him to get an idea of the plans for construction as well as the historical aspects of the job. Simultaneously, all those positive or negative elements of the project which interfere with it or alter its progress are sharply defined.

Considering the complexity of the procedure mentioned and the time that it requires, it cannot be used for the analysis of entire historic towns in general urban planning. But even here the pressing need to be thoroughly acquainted with the urban development of a town, changes in its structure and the layout of its streets, the principle stages of its settlement, including its system of fortification, is very necessary.

Investigation of the site, especially in the urban setting, usually takes in all the buildings and all the land within the limits of the historic settlement. It aims to evaluate the characteristic aspects of the development of an individual building and to uncover all the important relationships in its structure which, in the majority of cases, will permit the discovery of its original architectural essence. At the same time, mediocre later additions are eliminated, and the age when the street was constructed and the historical era of settlement are established.

Thorough investigation of the entire town, one house after another, contributes much to the detailed appraisal of all the partially hidden or indistinct elements of the system of fortifications, for example ramparts, bastions or perhaps gateways hidden in by more recent building.

Ultimately the document drawn up from data obtained in the investigation contains a sketch of the development of the town and a brief description as well as analysis of the historic architecture of all its buildings. This analysis is set in a plan on a scale of 1/1000 but only of the ground floor level. The stylistic character of different areas i.e. ceilings, vaults is masked out in different colors. And the style in which the principal vertical structures have been arranged is expressed by the setting out of the contours of the parcels of land.

The overall plan of the historic urban area on a scale of 1/1000 offers an expressive image of the urban historical and architectural structure of the city. In the last ten years more than sixty towns have been analyzed in this manner.

2. The investigation and evaluation of villages, that is, of Czechoslovakian folk architecture, which is outstanding, is a specific aspect of the work. Folk architecture becomes fragmented into defined territorial groupings which are distinct from one another not only because of the choice of building materials e.g. wood limestone, stone, but also because of their artistic character and spatial disposition. Research activity concerning folk architecture has begun much later than urban architectural research, only a few individual buildings have been investigated so far.

In general, the results obtained thus far permit us to proceed to more complex evaluations of the architectural and historic content of our architectural groups.

However, our work is not limited to the writing of reports for authorities on the protection of monuments for architects and for the building industry. As it turns out, the information which it provides on the scientific level is also quite important. The last ten years of research have revealed for example, the world framework of the evolution of architectural groups in Czechoslovakia since the beginnings of feudalism. In the course of the centuries, towns and villages with very advanced structures were founded. Their variety and their exceptional quality are almost unequalled. The architectural content of these groups of structures corresponds to urban prosperity. It is characterized by a wide variety of architectural expression, accompanied by simultaneous efforts to compensate for the contrasts.

In our towns, not only churches and convents, Town Halls, ramparts with bastions and gateways of diverse styles, but also thousands of dwellings of brick or stone are typically present. And the architecture of the villages is, moreover, characterized by diverse styles, a wide range of building materials and a high level of individual workmanship.

Research on and appraisal of historic groups of structures form an important element of contemporary culture. They contribute to our knowledge of the past and create at the same time the conditions for the preservation of urban and architectural values without which the cultural life of a people or of a nation would be deficient.

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