



DETERMINANTS OF THE LOCATION AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE PROVINCIAL OFFICE IN KIELCE

UWARUNKOWANIA LOKALIZACJI I ARCHITEKTURY URZĘDU WOJEWÓDZKIEGO W KIELCACH

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Abstract

The article presents a very modest state of research on the, architecture of the then Presidium of the Provincial National Council in Kielce – currently the provincial and marshal's office. The research methodology was adopted to find new facts influencing the choice of place and the architectural form of the office. The study covered the period from the beginning of the 1950s to the end of the 1970s. An episode of socialist realism was shown, influencing its functionally and spatially planned location and the direction of modernism in architecture. Its similarity with the works of Le Corbusier was pointed out as a probable inspiration. As a result, a building was constructed that positively entered the postwar urban planning of the city. On the other hand, as an element of an unrealized modernist urban vision, it is a warning against the desire to irreversibly destroy the historic space of downtown Kielce.

Keywords: architecture, urban planning, Socialist realism, Modernism, Provincial Office in Kielce

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono bardzo skromny stan badań architektury ówczesnego budynku Prezydium Wojewódzkiej Rady Narodowej w Kielcach – obecnie Urzędu Wojewódzkiego i Marszałkowskiego. Przyjęto metodykę badań w celu poszukiwań nowych faktów, mających wpływ na wybór miejsca i formę architektoniczną budynku. Badaniem objęto okres od początku lat pięćdziesiątych do końca siedemdziesiątych XX wieku. Ukazano wpływ socrealizmu na jego zaplanowaną funkcjonalnie i przestrzennie lokalizację oraz kierunku modernizmu na architekturę. Wskazano na dzieła Le Corbusiera jako prawdopodobną inspirację. W ich efekcie zrealizowano budynek, który pozytywnie wpisał się na karty powojennej urbanistyki miasta. Z drugiej strony, jako element niezrealizowanej modernistycznej wizji urbanistycznej, jest przestrożą przed chęcią nieodwracalnego zniszczenia historycznej przestrzeni śródmieścia Kielc.

Słowa kluczowe: architektura, urbanistyka, socrealizm, modernizm, Urząd Wojewódzki w Kielcach

1. INTRODUCTION

Kielce has a rich history, most of which is recognized. The exception is the period after World War II. Then the city began to modernize and expand. However, in the 1950s, the concept of "modernity" was perceived politically, imposing the only correct architectural

direction – socialist realism. It was followed by modernism, which rejected all conditions of the past in favor of modernity and functionality, as well as the opening of space and the play of light. Did these factors influence the modernization of the capital of Kielce Voivodeship and the seat of their authorities at that time?

2. THE STATE OF RESEARCH

There are few publications on the architecture of Kielce offices and their space. Anna Cymer shows this as one of the examples of the evolution of postwar architecture [1]. Artur Hajdorowicz touched upon, inter alia, the complex of buildings of the Provincial Office in the context of the issues of protection and potential transformations of buildings important for the city space [2]. The Municipal Register of Monuments contains only the list of historic buildings and their locations. The conservationist *Address card of an immovable monument* for office buildings contains only its old and present name, time of creation, address, and administrative affiliation. Therefore, there is no broader knowledge about postwar town planning, from which one can learn about the reasons for the location of the Provincial Office and its architectural style. To obtain this knowledge, it was necessary to study the cartographic documents of its location and the analysis of iconography showing the planned and completed architectural forms of buildings.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Two complementary methods were used in the study of the topic. The first is the geographic (cartographic, spatial) method used to establish facts or relationships between them in a geographical – historically shaped environment. In terms of cartography, manifestations

of human activity are presented, which are suitable for spatial depiction. It consists, among other things, of associating and comparing cartographic materials of the same area from different time periods to determine changes in the area and its development. The second is the comparative (confrontational-contrastive) method, which is one of the most important tools of historical research. It is used not only to establish or reconstruct facts, but also to justify the hypotheses and their explanations. It consists in perceiving and associating various facts or phenomena and establishing their similarities or differences between them.

The research used archives from Archives of the Spatial Planning Office of the City Hall in Kielce, Museum of the History of Kielce, which have cartographic and iconographic resources, enabling the recognition of the determinants of urban composition and issues of architectural composition.

4. AN EPISODE OF SOCIALIST REALISM

The original development of the area was the result of the functioning of the Old-Warsaw Suburbs on the border of IX Wieków Kielce Avenue. Currently, it is illegible in the present city space. Construction of IX Wieków Kielce Avenue in the 1970s and numerous demolitions and new investments in this area practically obliterated the traces of the old layout.



Fig. 1. Land development in 1927-1935 with contemporary street names

Source: Own study.

During the German occupation, the area was within the Jewish ghetto, established in 1941 by the staroste Drechsel's¹ order to establish a Jewish residential district in the city of Kielce. This area was delimited by the following streets: Orla, Piotrkowska, Nowowarszawska, Pocieszka, and Radomska, surrounding the so-called large ghetto. On the other hand, the area between St. Wojciech, Bodzentyńska, and Radomska Streets was called the small ghetto. The following streets were included in the ghetto: Piotrkowska, Jasna, Stolarska, Wąska, Krzywa, Zagnańska, Okrzei, Nowy Świat, Starowarszawskie Przedmieście, Przechodnia, Przecznicza, Dąbrowska, Szydłowska, Targowa, Pocieszka, Nowowiejska, Silniczna, Kozia, Orla, Radomska, Cicha, Polna, St. Wojciecha (with the square), Bodzentyńska, Marszałkowska. The ghetto also included houses located to the west on Warszawska Street between Szydłowska, Pocieszka and Targowa Streets.

The main reason for the liquidation of Starowarszawskie Przedmieście and the remains of the ghetto was the functional and spatial transformations of the area and the demolition of buildings in poor technical condition. They took place mainly after World War II. At that time, Kielce retained the administrative statute of the voivodship city. This prestige mobilized local authorities to improve the city's image. One of

the activities directions was the reconstruction of the communication system and the modernization of the existing road and street network. The transit routes used so far ran through the center and even through the Old Town Square. The traffic in the north-south direction was partially relieved by Mielczarskiego (formerly Młynarska) and Paderewskiego (Focha, Buczka) Streets. There was no bypass of the center and the east-west connection. The city authorities outlined various communication variants in their urban planning plans. They were modeled on Soviet urban planning and the layout of Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg). Their concept was based on the central downtown, from which roads radiated, connected by successive rings, relieving traffic from the center. Such a plan for Kielce was created in 1948 and was corrected several times in the 1950s.

Based on the general plan of Kielce, in 1953 a detailed development of the northern area of the city was created. The project was developed by a team of town planners led by Z. Sowala. Their composition implemented the assumptions of socialist realism in the form of representative public squares, traditional quarters of buildings with lots of internal greenery, instead of outbuildings. Despite these assumptions, this trend also referred to the slogans of modernists: more space, light and greenery.



Fig. 2. Development project from 1953

Source: Archives of the Spatial Planning Office of the City Hall in Kielce.

¹ The surname Drechsel appears on the document of the regulation, while Dreschel is mentioned in the literature on the subject.

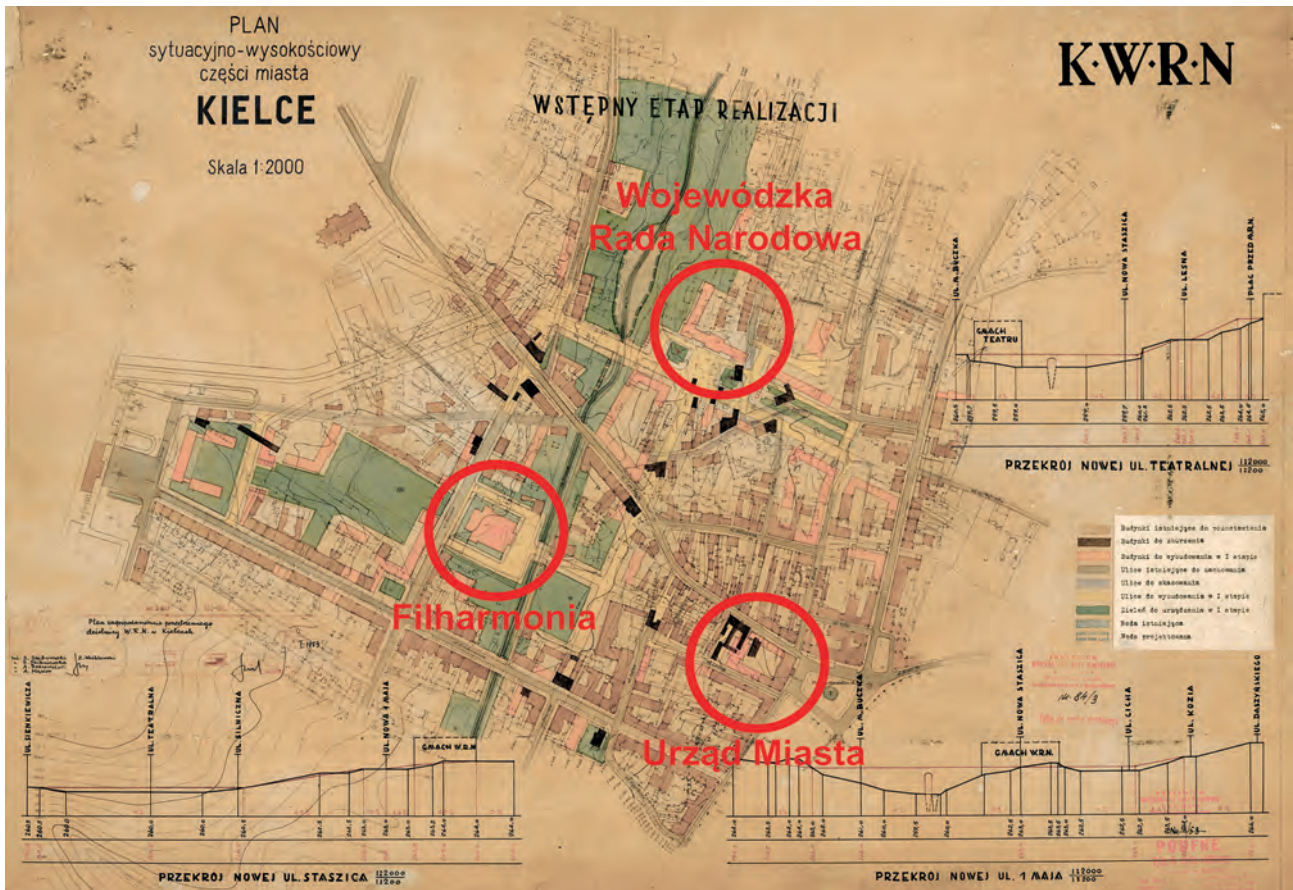


Fig. 3. Development plan for the WRN district (Provincial National Council) in Kielce
Source: Archives of the Spatial Planning Office of the City Hall in Kielce.

Another development plan for the district of the Provincial National Council, the authors of which were S. Skibniewski, S. Skibniewska, A. Dobrowolski, A. Maşior, presented a different development concept. It was more "conservative" than the earlier "revolutionary", which assumed numerous demolitions. Efforts were made to organize the existing space through selected demolitions and correction of communication.

As part of organizing the downtown space, three key urban investments were established that determined a new urban composition. It was the extension of the City Hall situated at the Market Square, the location of the philharmonic hall on the square at Paderewski (now the Irena Sendler Square) and the transfer of the seat of the Presidium of the Provincial National Council, located in the former bishop's² palace, to a complex of buildings in a new location. These four locations formed the composition of the cross for new development.

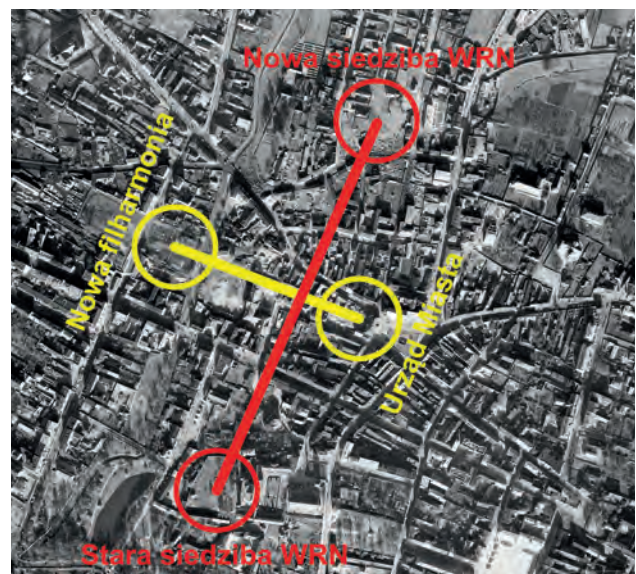


Fig. 4. New composition

Source: Own study. (Nowa siedziba WRN: The new headquarters of WRN; Stara siedziba WRN: Old WRN headquarters; Urząd miasta: City Hall; Nowa filharmonia: New Philharmonic)

² The seat of the office in the years 1945-1970.



Fig. 5. Landscape study showing the potential impact of the new office of the Presidium of the Provincial National Council on spatial connections with the former seat

Source: Museum of the History of Kielce, ref. No. S-428.

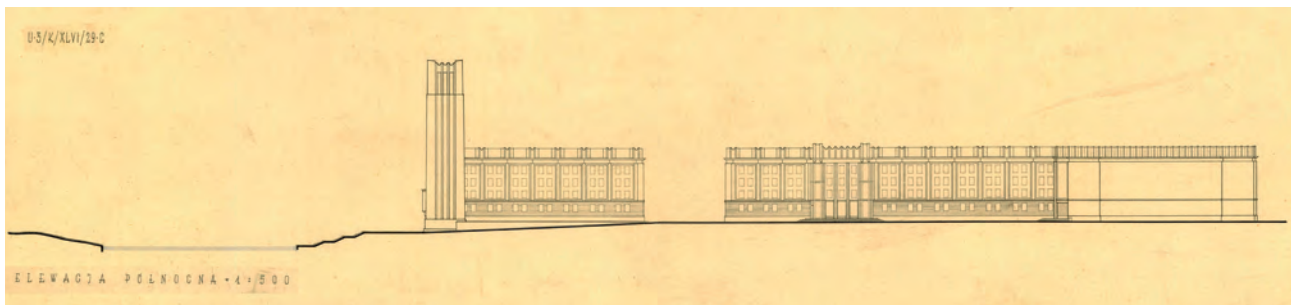


Fig. 6. The northern elevation of the buildings of the Presidium of the Provincial National Council

Source: Museum of the History of Kielce, ref. No. S-429.

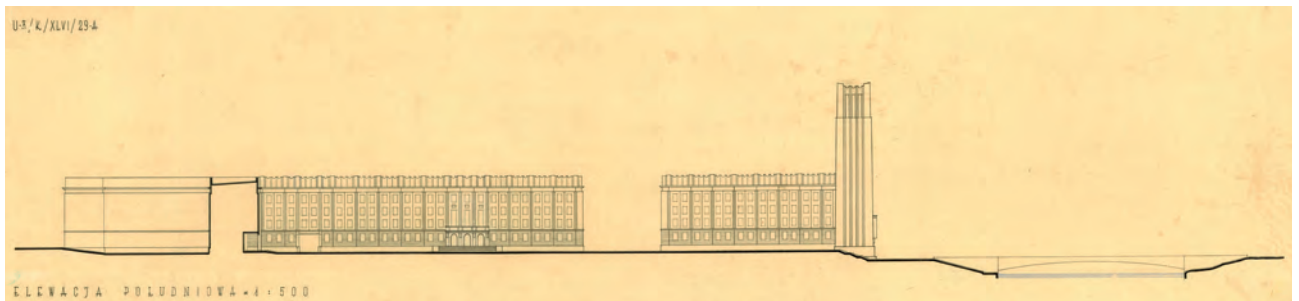


Fig. 7. South elevation of buildings

Source: Museum of the History of Kielce, ref. No. S-430.

This composition of the plan determined the location of the new seat of the Presidium of the Provincial National Council, which was completed in 1971. The original, unrealized design of the new office building has been preserved. Unfortunately, it has no date and no author. The building, designed in the style of socialist realism, proves that it was built in the 1950s on the basis of designated urban planning directions. The design includes a landscape study, which confirms the design relationship between the old palace and the new office as two dominants in the city silhouette.

In 1961, at the Miejska Pracownia Urbanistyczna, a team of architects consisting of H. Stawicki, T. Koralewicz, S. Godzic, and E. Dąbrowski developed another concept for the development of the city center. The aim of the study was to improve the image of the center of Kielce and its functioning. After the technical condition of the buildings was assessed, the necessary demolitions and modernization of the communication system were indicated. The priority was to move the burdensome traffic outside the downtown area by creating a new east-west line in the north.



Fig. 8. The target concept for the development of the city center of Kielce, study from 1962
Source: Archives of the Spatial Planning Office of the City Hall in Kielce, file no. 169.



Fig. 9. Development status in 1954
Source: Own archive.



Fig. 10. The beginning of the implementation of the new communication in 1967
Source: Own archive.



Fig. 11. Place of breakthrough of IX Wieków Kielc Avenue to Warszawska Street 1968
 Source: Own archive.

5. THE STIGMA OF MODERNISM

The 1970s were a period of profound economic, political and social changes. The increase in population and the development of the automotive industry as well as industrialized housing construction technologies have changed the perception of existing urban planning. This also applied to the city center. It was cramped and neglected. Therefore, it was necessary to improve sanitation and communication. The new spatial model was to create optimal conditions for a healthy life in the city. After Edward Gierek took power, there was a greater openness to Western solutions.

The basis of „new” urbanism was the Athens Charter adopted in 1933 at the International Congress for Modern Architecture. It states that after the mistakes of the past hundred years, the basic obligation of architecture is to come into accord with the fundamental needs of the individual and improve the quality of life. It must again serve people and be guided by humanistic values, providing them with more sunlight, space, and greenery. The representative of modernism, Tony Garnier, referring to the structure of cities at the end of the 19th century, wrote: „about narrow and winding streets, forming meanders which were never reached by a ray of sunshine, and which, as a result, not only presented a repulsive appearance, but also exerted a stigma on the psyche of the inhabitants, devoid of light and air” [3]. Le Corbusier, on the other hand, proclaimed that: „you must not dream of linking the city of the past with the present or the future (...) you have to redo everything, first destroying everything” [4]. A new issue raised was the hygiene of new residential districts and improving the functioning of the city, mainly in terms of communication and housing requirements.



Fig. 12. The modernist concept of the reconstruction of Paris by Le Corbusier
 Source: <https://www.businessinsider.com/le-corbusiers-plan-voisin-for-paris-2013-7?IR=T>



Fig. 13. The office building of the Trade Unions at Piotrkowska 12 Street
 Source: <https://kielce.fotopolska.eu/1047976.foto.html>;
<https://kielce.fotopolska.eu/foto/860/860747.jpg>.

In the spirit of this idea, in the urban projects in the center of Kielce, "modern" buildings began to displace the still preserved historical tissue. The forerunner of the new urbanization is the former seat of the Trade Unions, and now the hotel at Piotrkowska 12 Street.

This building is a witness to the unrealized project of a shopping and service center that was to be built near a medieval square. Despite the development of three variants of development, all of them transformed the historic space, leaving only its oldest fragment.

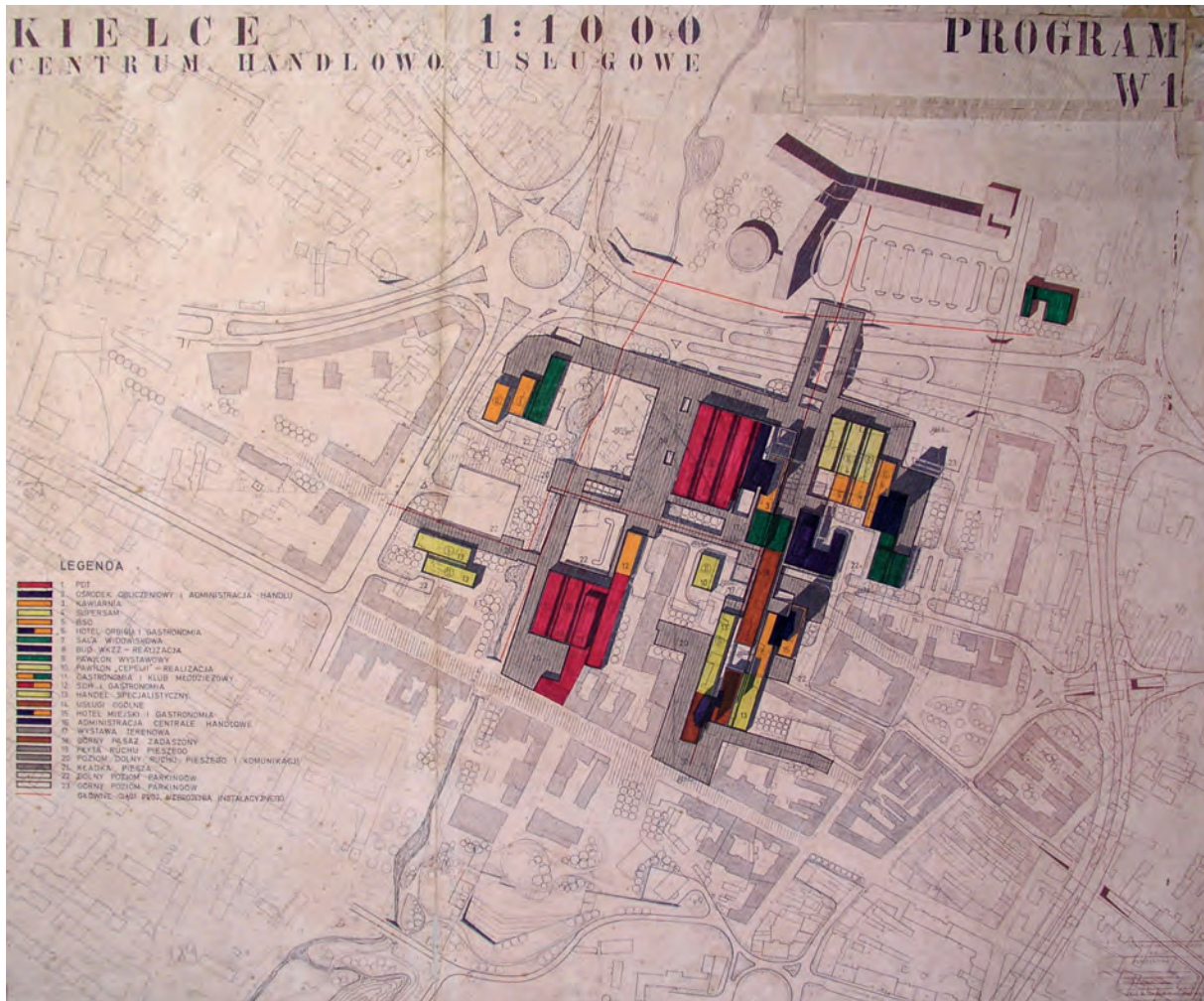


Fig. 14. Variant "W1" of a new shopping and service center in the center of Kielce
Source: Archives of the Spatial Planning Office of the City Hall in Kielce, file No. 334.



Fig. 15. Visualization of the "W1" variant of the new shopping and service center in the center of Kielce
Source: Archives of the Spatial Planning Office of the City Hall in Kielce, no reference number.



Fig. 16. Variant “W2” of a new shopping and service center in the center of Kielce
Source: Archives of the Spatial Planning Office of the City Hall in Kielce, file No. 337.



Fig. 17. Visualization of the “W2” variant of the new shopping and service center in the center of Kielce
Source: Archives of the Spatial Planning Office of the City Hall in Kielce, no reference number.



Fig. 18. Variant “W3” of a new shopping and service center in the center of Kielce.
Source: Archives of the Spatial Planning Office of the City Hall in Kielce, no reference number

The similarity of the variant “W3” to the Eastern Wall of the frontage of Marszałkowska Street in Warsaw is quite striking. At the intersection of Paderewskiego Street and IX Wieków Kielc Avenue, the rotunda building is planned just like in the capital at the intersection of Marszałkowska Street and Aleje Jerozolimskie. The composition of the longitudinal development is also similar. It is made up of a system of four horizontal buildings at the front, supplemented at the rear by four skyscrapers.



Fig. 20. The frontage of Marszałkowska Street in Warsaw (1962-70), which was the inspiration for the Kielce concept of “W3”

Source: https://66.media.tumblr.com/7cf04b48774aa7be4439d9c2337c9522/tumblr_inline_opn3x4kDzV1tu5dp0_1280.jpg.



Fig. 19. South view of the “W3” variant of the new shopping and service center from the office
Source: Archives of the Spatial Planning Office of the City Hall in Kielce, no reference number.

6. ARCHITECTURAL INSPIRATION

The designed complex of the buildings of the voivodeship and marshal offices is an example of a modernist way of thinking. It broke with the old

canons of shaping historical space and its architecture. On the other hand, in the 1950s it was a stigmatized enemy of the "one right" idea of socialist realism as a post-war alternative that was intended to break with the interwar modernism of the West. Changes in politics and opening up to Western influences resulted in the creation of an object inspired by the works of one of the main representatives of modernism: Le Corbusier.



Fig. 21. Le Corbusier's Marseille housing unit built in 1947-1952

Source: https://img.kingandmcgaw.com/imagecache/4/3/bmwcm-5.0_fid-880611_fwcm-2.5_ihcm-70.0_iwcm-100.0_lmwc-5.0_maxdim-1000_mc-ffff_rmwc-5.0_si-438086.jpg_tmwc-5.0.jpg.



Fig. 22. Palace Assemble

Source: <https://dwarchive.com/sites/default/files/resources/DWC2528.jpg>.



Fig. 23. Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye built in 1928-1931

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/pl/thumb/a/af/Villa_Savoye_2015.jpg/1280px-Villa_Savoye_2015.jpg.



Figs. 24 and 25. Building complex of the Presidium of the Provincial National Council after completion of construction
 Source: Own archive.

As you can see, the works of Le Corbusier were certainly a design inspiration for the designers of the office's architecture. Building "A" refers to a housing unit in Marseille, "B" to one of the facades of Palace Assembly, and "C" to Villa Savoye. It should be emphasized that inspiration from the works of Le Corbusier is quite common. An example is the Central Department Store (Smyk) in Warsaw, put into use in 1951 at Bracka Street at the intersection of Krucza and Aleje Jerozolimskie Streets. The inspiration is the column structure, the horizontal arrangement of the windows and the partially usable roof. Another Warsaw example is the Za Żelazną Bramą estate, whose residential buildings refer to the Marseille Unit.

The general designer of the entire investment in Kielce with a total usable area of more than 20,000 m² was a team led by Eng. Stanisław Skibniewski, cooperating with the Design Studio „Miastoprojekt” under the direction of Eng. Waław Hebda. The main designers were arch. Tadeusz Steiner and Stanisław Kawiorski. Construction was managed by Eng. Józef Kuciński from the Kielce Municipal Construction Company under the supervision of the Kielce Construction Association. In the summer of 1967,

the then chairman of the Provincial National Council, Antoni Mieśmiński, solemnly laid the cornerstone for the construction of the office.

The office complex consisting of three buildings was gradually put into use. In 1970, the main ten-story building "A" was completed with an area of more than 10,000 m². A year later, a seven-story building "C" with 8,000 m² of space, and in the following two years the smallest, but most characteristic of Kielce's inhabitants, part "B", called a „round log”, with more than 2,000 m². There are conference and training rooms and a canteen there. In addition to the usable space that was impressive for Kielce at that time, the cubature of these buildings was also substantial, amounting to over 80,000 m³, of which nearly half is the main building.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The area of the former seat of the Presidium of the Provincial National Council is formally located outside the border of the historic urban layout. However, historically, in terms of composition and landscape, it is closely related to it. Its location is the result of the historical evolution of the city's layout and the implementation in the 1950s of a socialist realist functional and spatial composition, combining the former palace of Cracow bishops, then the seat of the office. The architectural form, on the other hand, was inspired by modernism and the works of Le Corbusier's works. While socialist realism was an imposed political direction, modernism was the choice of architects according to their individual preferences of "modernity" and current "fashion".

The location of the object is not accidental. It is a fragment of the urban composition of the era of socialist realism. It consisted of two axes. One was to connect the City Hall and Irena Sendler's Square, where a philharmonic was planned to be located in the 1950s. The second axis connected the bishop's palace

with the former seat of the Presidium of the Provincial National Council with the new office buildings. It was a symbolic axis, connecting at its ends the buildings of historical – church and contemporary – state power.

The construction of a complex of buildings for the Presidium of the Provincial National Council and the implementation of a new communication system around the city center of Kielce, on the one hand, spatially cut off the office buildings from the city center, but on the other hand gave a new investment impulse in the early 1970s. The assumption of the position of the first secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party by Edward Gierek broke with the current vision of a socialist city and opened a view to the world and the developed countries of the West. The correction of the current political thinking also changed the view of modernism, alien to Eastern Europe, which began to supersede the socialist realist style preferred by the political system for government buildings and public spaces. As a result, new visions of transforming the city and its center began to emerge in the Kielce urban planning studio, adopting the ideas of modernism and the motto: more space, light and greenery.

While the principles of modernism introduced into the Old Town structures are criticized in the circles of art historians, it should be said that the implemented architecture of the Kielce office complex replaced the concept of a building in the style of socialist realism, politically promoted in the 1950s. The rich history of the place and architectural values of the office buildings contributed to its protection under conservation, as an example of historical, compositional and architectural values.

Each building and its surroundings hide its history, which is closed or constitutes the basis for further continuation or inspiration to meet the needs of the next generation.

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