

## POLISH ARCHITECTURE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE FISH HATCHERY CENTRE IN ŁOPUSZNA

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### Summary

On the example of plan and construction of The Fish Hatchery Centre in Łopuszna, near Nowy Targ, constructed during the Second World War, exact analysis was carried out concerning forms and regional stylistic of its buildings. During the occupation Polish architects generally were not able to operate freely. However, many of them used every opportunity to make good and valuable architecture and they succeeded in designing excellent buildings despite severe restrictions imposed by Germans. The Centre in Łopuszna and some other projects were significant constructions free from the influence of German architectural style. Polish architects consciously and consistently tried to design buildings according to the characteristic features of Polish architecture. In that way, on the basis of the appreciation of local culture, the great architecture was made, which certainly is a flagship example in Polish architecture.

### Keywords

architecture • project • function • regional architecture

### 1. Introduction

On the example of plan and construction of The Fish Hatchery Centre (Ośrodek Zarybieniowy) in Łopuszna, near Nowy Targ, one can see what kind of regional architecture was made in Poland during the Second World War. Obviously, at the time Polish architects were not free to act as they wished. But Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, Zbigniew Kupiec, Zbigniew Olszakowski, Tadeusz Futasewicz, Bogdan Treter and many other architects made the most of every opportunity to create a high-quality architecture. And what is especially worthy of note, buildings of their design, constructed during the occupation of Poland, bear no signs of German architectural style.

Fish hatchery centres till 1939 were built by The Association of Fisheries Organizations, located in Warsaw, and National Fisheries Society seated in Kraków. Under occupation both organizations merged and fell under the German management with its head office in Krakow and were known as Hauptverband der Fischerei. Dr Hans Colas was its Commissioner, Prof. Bronisław Romaniszyn was its Fishing Department

Manager and Dr Władysław Kołder – its Secretary-General. As K. Treterowa writes in her book: “The Board of The Association of Fisheries Organizations was in need of designers, architects, and contractors to carry on with its operations in these changed conditions. It found them in the persons of architects: Stefan Meyer and Bogdan Treter (designers), Adam Pirgo (documentation and technical supervision)... This choice wasn't accidental. Stefan Meyer was friends with Romaniszyn – they both shared avid interests in the question of Podhale. The first to work was Meyer, then, after a few months, Bogdan joined in. Their work... was imbued with Polish spirit. The whole office and technical staff was Polish. One worked... with an idea in mind that the designed buildings would some day serve the country” [Treterowa 1972, 379–381]. The exceptionally favourable attitude of a small group of Germans working in AFO towards Poles was evidenced by the fact that one of the workers, eng. Johann Moschtelen, in December 1966 has been awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta for his services to Poland during the war.

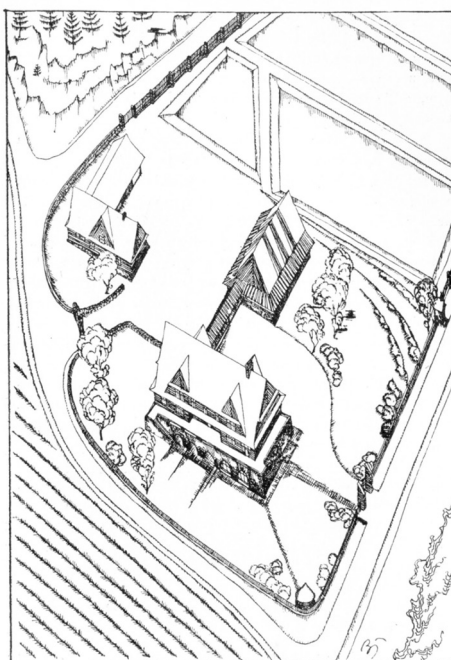
## 2. The object of the research

Bogdan Treter, at first with cooperation of Stefan Meyer, then working independently, realized a dozen or so projects of fish hatchery centres. In particular he put a lot of work into the centre in Łopuszna, which was realized almost entirely according to his concept. The plan of The Fish Hatchery Centre in Łopuszna for stocking salmon, trout and grayling was developed in 1941–1942 in collaboration with Stefan Meyer [Białkiewicz 1985].

The plan consists of four fundamental parts: administrative, a manager's house with its back-up facilities, farm buildings and a complex of hatchery tanks (Figure 1). On the southern slope, along the watercourse, a parallel array of fish hatchery tanks has been designed. The tanks were separated by natural earth levees. In the southern part, from the entrance side of the Centre, the administrative building was situated. In the eastern side, along the group of tanks, utility buildings were planned: hatchery buildings, cold and fodder stores and a power station. Manager's house was situated in the south-west side of the Centre.

The House of the Board was designed as the most representative. It is a stone building in the form of an elongated rectangular. High first floor above the ground level is covered with a gable roof. On both sides of the roof slopes two symmetrical triangular rooftops joined by the a pent roof were introduced. The roof was shingled. The architects, in designing the body of the building, put a particular stress on its representative character. In the visual aspect of the elevation stone facing plays a dominant role. From the ground level up to the windows heads of the first floor the building was laid with stripes of irregular shaped stones. Under the eaves the horizontal stripe of white plaster was used. The south or the front elevation and the west elevation from the entrance side of the Centre, as the most representative façades, were preceded by a large terrace. The south elevation was designed as seven-axis façade. In triaxial part of the first floor an arcade was built with large rectangular windows and doors openings. The other first

floor windows are rectangular and uniform. In the projection of the east side, the main building entrance was placed. (Figure 2, 3, 4) The rectangular windows openings of the first floor are matched with semicircular arcades in the ground floor that lend the air of lightness to the whole elevation. In the attic the identical rectangular windows were framed with stone irregular bands. The east and west elevation were designed as gable walls of the building. They were triaxial and repeated the decorations and windows trimming of the façade. The north elevation was arranged in a similar way, and right behind it there was a utility part of the building. In the looks of elevations symmetry and axiality stand out.

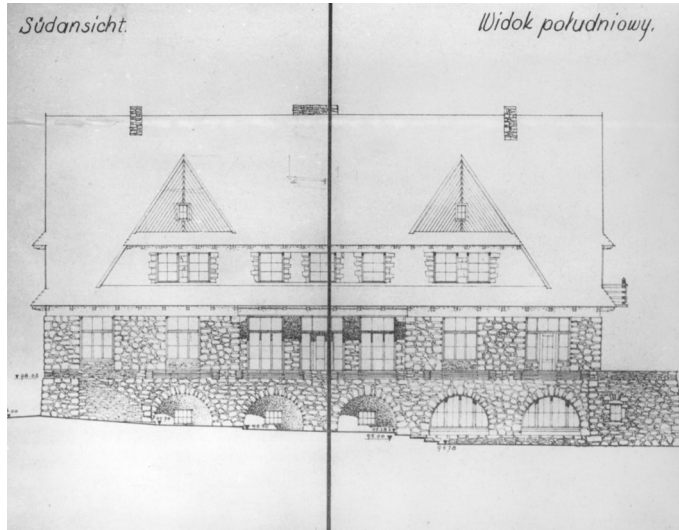


Source: The National Archive in Kraków, Wawel Branch, "Treter's Portfolios"

**Fig. 1.** Bogdan Treter. Perspective sketch of The Fish Hatchery Centre in Łopuszna

Inside the ground floor there is a laboratory, an archive, workshops, garages and utility rooms. In the first floor sessions-chamber, the Board's room, caretaker's and manager's apartments, kitchen with back-up facilities, and in the second floor – hotel rooms were designed. The sessions-chamber was planned as the most representative part of the building. The cross-axis of the composition is worthy of notice: it is emphasised by a fireplace located at the longer wall of the chamber and by a triad of doors leading to a large terrace. The wooden ceiling, supported by five bearing beams resting on three high cross beams, has a decorative design too. Interior layout is highly

functional. The rooms are grouped according to a definite functional scheme. Vertical communication was established by two staircases, one of which has representative and the other service character. In spite of partial en suite arrangement of rooms they form complexes with separate entrances.



Source: The National Archive in Kraków, Wawel Branch, "Treter's Portfolios"

**Fig. 2.** Bogdan Treter, Stefan Meyer. The design of The Fish Hatchery Centre in Łopuszna – administrative building, the south elevation

From the north side, perpendicularly to the administrative building, a fish hatchery was designed. Both buildings have been connected by a wooden roofing, open on the outside, from the inner side of the Centre. Recently, the function of this place has been changed and the roofing have been partially enclosed with walls. Hatchery is a one-storey building, on rectangular plan, covered with a gable roof. On both sides of the roof slopes, reaching from a roof ridge to the level of the gable, three symmetrical, long, evenly arranged small pent roofs were introduced. They add visual variety to monotonous roof surface and allow better lightning of the attic. The masonry walls are covered with stone, corners have small projections, made by a thickening of the walls, and under the eaves there is a strap of white plaster, similar to the one used in the administrative building.

Several dozen metres to the north from the hatchery cold and fodder store has been situated. It is a one-storey building on a rectangular plan, covered with a gable roof. (Figure 5) In both slopes of the roof a narrow small pent, axial roof was designed, reaching from the a ridge to the level of the gable. The texture of the walls is similar to what was used in the administrative and hatchery buildings. In the north-west corner there is an entrance under the arcade supported by two angular stone pillars. In the

south elevation a stone narrow shaft of a chimney was designed, narrowing upwards and ending above the ridge. It gives an air of slenderness to the whole elevation and emphasizes its vertical character.



Photo by Białkiewicz 1985

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**Fig. 3.** Bogdan Treter, Stefan Meyer. The Fish Hatchery Centre in Łopuszna – house of the board, the south-west view



Source: [http://www.lowisko.home.pl/pzwnsinfo/grw\\_lopuszna.htm](http://www.lowisko.home.pl/pzwnsinfo/grw_lopuszna.htm)

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**Fig. 4.** Bogdan Treter, Stefan Meyer. The Fish Hatchery Centre in Łopuszna – the house of the board, the south-west view



Source: <http://wmh.pl/article/2824> (accessed: 23.07.2014)

**Fig. 5.** Bogdan Treter, Stefan Meyer. The Fish Hatchery Centre in Łopuszna – cold and fodder store, the south view

In this row of buildings located northernmost and in the highest point of the Centre is the power plant (Figure 6). It is a small one-storey masonry building on a square plan, covered with a pavilion roof, with a sculpted *pazdur* – a wooden roof ridge decoration pin. The visual design of walls is similar to what was used in other utility buildings.

In the south-west part of the Centre the architects designed a manager's apartment building with the adjoining utility part. It is a wooden one-storey, log cabin construction house, placed on a small stone underpinning, on a plan of elongated rectangular, covered with a gable roof. From the north side a utility building adjoins it at right angles. In the elevations of the apartment building symmetry and axiality stand out. In the ground floor a study, a drawing room, a kitchen, a bathroom and bedrooms were designed. The utility part was designated to a garage and a coach house with back-up facilities.

In the south-east part of the Centre a small masonry chapel on a plan of an elongated rectangular was located. Its back, shorter wall has a semicircle top. Stone walls are covered with a slender conical roof. On both sides of roof slopes small dormer windows with triangular roofs were placed. From the eastern side, in the front façade, an entrance with a semicircular top was designed, preceded by two broad angular steps. A triangular gable over the entrance was topped with a wooden attic room (*wyżka*). The chapel is crowned with a wooden sculpted decoration (*pazdur*) with a wrought-

steel cross in the ridge. The chapel's composition is characterized by lightness, slenderness and ideal symmetry.



Photo by Białkiewicz 1985

**Fig. 6.** Bogdan Treter, Stefan Meyer. The Fish Hatchery Centre in Łopuszna – the power plant building, the south-east view

### 3. Results

In the design of Fish Hatchery Centre in Łopuszna particular stress has been put on its urban values that can be considered from two basic points of view. Firstly, the axis of the whole composition, dominating by its size and front location, is the administrative building. It was designed to give view of a driveway side and it is the axis of the composition from the north side, from the highest point of the Centre. Secondly, buildings were put in a natural landscape in a harmonious and scenic way. The whole composition together with natural array of hatchery tanks and levees using the lie of the land gives an impression of naturalness and especially emphasizes the ability to act discreetly in the landscape.

On the other hand, the arrangement of the buildings and the layout of technological functions are highly functional. And undoubtedly the design of the power plant was very innovative for its times.

The buildings' architecture is marked by unity and purity of style. Its character is expressed in the simplicity of the buildings' bodies and in graduation of plasticity and sizes of the objects. In the construction local material was used: stone and wood. Every detail, like *pazdurs*, *wyżkas*, wrought-steel hinges, handles, were worked out

with extreme precision. Their drawings prove excellent command of detail of wood construction in Podhale.

In describing Fish Hatchery Centre in Łopuszna it should be emphasized that it was built under German occupation. The architects intentionally and consequently tried to give their designed objects the style of Polish regional architecture. Generally, the design of the Centre was faithful to the prewar regional current of modernist architecture. With reference to that project, a few years after its realization, Kazimiera Treterowa said: "Designing to him was like giving shape to his regions related postulates from his conservator times. Instead of working on their realization by propagating his credo, by organizational and social work, he could express himself freely in architecture as an artist and he had an influence on landscape shaping, when he built into it his architectural objects. The work was the utmost pleasure and oblivion to him, an artistic – vivid and strong, and thoroughly Polish – an expression of longing for Podhale and its nature. The awareness that, in spite of the crushing German heel, he expressed himself in Polish, that he could represent this Polishness by means of architectural forms, gave him unparalleled freedom that characterized him at that time. When working on these projects, he breathed deeply the air of Polish village" [Treterowa 1950, 95–96].

#### 4. Appendix

Style of this execution is worth stressing, because in the history of Polish contemporary architecture one favours most of all Zbigniew Kupiec, who during the war was able to execute some significant construction works that marked the beginning of regional architecture in his work. At first he was the main architect of modernism, one of the most important designers of interwar Gdynia. During the occupation he worked in Kraków, where together with Zbigniew Olszakowski and Tadeusz Futasewicz they designed a residential complex on Królewska street.

The works on the project begun in the middle of forties and were finished in 1946. Four-storey buildings, with steep roof and stone finishings, were planned as a block peripheral development around square courtyards open to the street. Their style was discussed many times, and it was frequently ascribed to German Heimatstil, but Z. Kupiec was certainly aware of directing his style to more traditional architecture, shaped ultimately as a part of regionalism. The best confirmation of this statement is an execution of his Tourist House in 1951–1954, designed with cooperation of Tadeusz Brzozowski. It is an excellent architecture originating in appreciation of local culture and is certainly a flagship example of the Polish architecture.

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