

PARTICIPATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE, FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY WARSAW IN EDUCATION OF ARCHITECT-CONSERVATOR OF ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS*

P. GARTKIEWICZ

Institute of History of Architecture and Arts,
Faculty of Architecture, Technical University Warsaw

Summary

The Institute of History of Architecture, Technical University of Warsaw, offers courses in monuments preservation. Beside theoretical knowledge, students are assigned problems of monuments preservation and rehabilitation, to be collectively discussed. Three problem solutions are quoted as an illustration.

Education in the field of preservation of monuments consists of three, in principle independent, programmes, the first of which is obligatory, the second facultative, while the third one is carried on within the Post-graduate Studies devoted to this subject. I limit myself here to the discussion of the first two items with a special regard to the second programme.

The first programme includes school on the 4th year during one semester, with four hours — teaching load — two hours — lecture and classes lasting the same time. Lectures concern theory and history of preservation and precise discussion of types and methods of preservation. It brings sufficiently wide basis of information for the first attempts of the analysis of the past activities in this field. During the classes students elaborate some selected buildings from Warsaw and environs, preparing a report concerning history of a building, characterization of the executed preservation or reconstruction works and critique of these procedure from the aspect of the theoretical foundations of the preservation of monuments. Reports are read by the authors and submitted to the critical discussion by students. This type of classes replaced the former programme, where students elaborated conceptional design of adaptation of historical buildings using the supplied measurements materials. The change of programme took place as a result of a statement, that designing procedure without knowledge of a building, even in the case of theoretical education, is mistaken in assumption and warrant for no proper effects.

* Contribution at the International Conference of Educational and Research Teams in History, Theory of Architecture and in Monuments Preservation. Budapest, December 4 to 7, 1984.

The second programme is realised in both semesters of the 4th year and during the thesis design. Both in the first and in the second case students are entitled to make a choice of a promoter and a choice of subject within the preservation of monuments from among a few designing disciplines. New programme of studies provides some sort of specialization consisting in elaborating the final semester design in preservation of monuments as a possible preparation for the thesis design.

In course of both semesters of the fourth year, designing classes are accompanied by one-hour guiding lectures led by the team of lecturers showing examples of research, designing and realization activities serving as information about possibilities of activity within the preservation of monuments of architecture. We have experience in preservation designing because the new programme will be only introduced in summer semester 1985. However, estimating from the numerous attendance at the guiding lectures, we anticipate over 20 per cent of students making a choice of this discipline. Thesis design is the last phase of this educational cycle. Our institute has been conducting designs of this kind which total about 10—15 yearly.

Thesis designs in preservation of monuments seem to be the most important and also the most valuable stage of the whole process of education. There were two opinions — one of them strictly concerning preservation of monuments and assuming the reduction of the programme of architect's interference to such procedures that are entirely necessary for the preservation of monumental values of the building, and second, the creative opinion expressed by the Board of the Faculty of Architecture demanding a graduate to show designing abilities. As a result of the clash of these two opinions a new programme has been worked out. It unites, within possibilities, both above-mentioned aspects. So thesis designs in preservation of monuments have to satisfy two conditions: elaboration of research and preservation and introducing a new function certified by newly designed architecture. It makes additional difficulty for the authors, because such a designing is to some extent limited by the demands of maintenance of existing values. Also it brings designing problems closer to the real demands. In Poland as throughout in Europe, new architecture is designed adjacent to the old one unlike, for example, architectural activity in the endless territories of Siberia, having no similar cultural and traditional limitations.

In such a way directed thesis designs enable underlining and exposure of the two, above-mentioned, extremely essential threads, which should form an architect's creative consciousness. Thanks to it he is prevented from stepping into devious paths of internationalism which finally leads to creating sub-standard architecture of big slab, fading individual character of the landscape. Tradition and attachment to the definite cultural circle should oblige an architect to maintain continuity of architectural climate. It does not mean any

surrender of new forms corresponding to the new aesthetic trends and to the contemporary life's demands.

The monumental complexes of the greatest value, well-known and under continuous care, make no subject for thesis designs. Design buildings are chosen by students or suggested by promoters from among provincial complexes representing specific values in respect of the individual climate survived despite war destructions and devastation in the course of the last forty years. In such a surrounding there is a drift towards the restoration of the ruined architectural and urban values with a special emphasis laid on reconstruction of historic sites, naturally, with the help of forms which should not be any re-creation of the old ones but their transformation. We have chosen as examples three average elaborations representative of the idea described above.

The first of them concerns the spatial restoration of a building i.e. the castle in Łęczycza, survived as a ruin and partially rebuilt copying historical forms. The subject was supplement the structure within the old plan with the old overall dimensions. Second work presents another task: re-creation of the historical spatial lay-out of the city zone around the church — rebuilding of the medieval presbytery and erection of the parish school on the spot of the one-time building of the same kind. This complex is situated in Szydłów, one of the best preserved but nearly dead medieval towns from the 14th century. The authoress was so inspired by the extraordinary landscape and historic qualities, that she went perhaps too far in the new architecture imitating the medieval one. However, the idea seems to be right but I am only anxious that in the case of building operations much of the preserved atmosphere of the place would be lost. Third and last work concerns the restoration of the townscape once formed by a street closed by a church façade in the little town of Pułtusk, not less interesting than the preceding. Advancing degradation of the existing structure caused the total disappearance of housing along the street and deformation of the mass of the towerless church. This problem concerns spatial restoration of the townscape involving the new housing architecture and rebuilding of the church.

I think, that above-presented examples are illustrative of the path of the prospective architect's consciousness-building. In his activity he should be prompted by esteem for traditions and for cultural heritage of the country he lives in and where he is going to create.

Dr. Przemysław GARTKIEWICZ Technical University, Warsaw