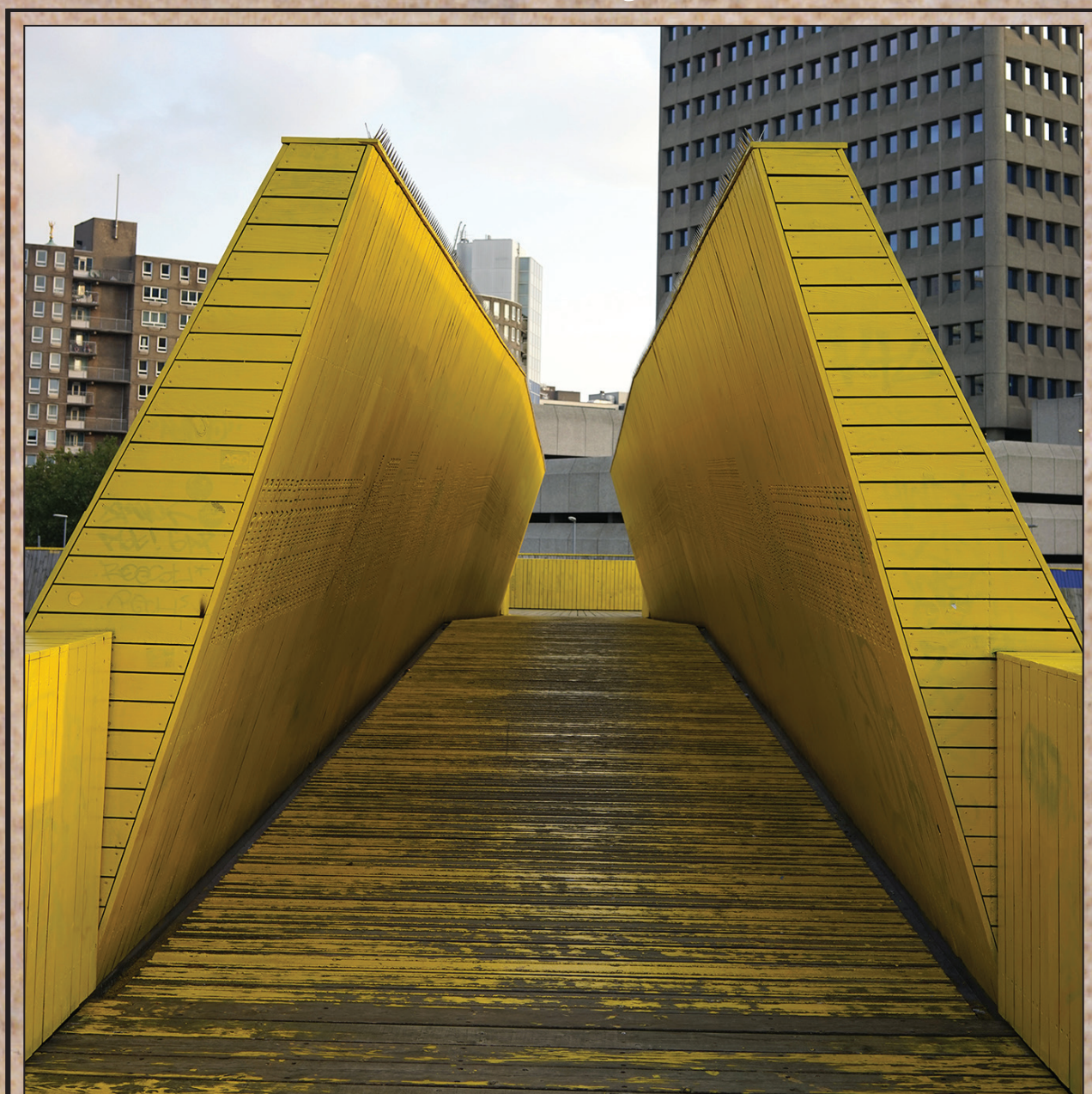


# ANNALES

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*Annali di Studi istriani e mediterranee*  
*Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies*  
*Series Historia et Sociologia, 31, 2021, 1*





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## CHALLENGES OF ADAPTIVE REUSE IN NEW FUNCTIONAL TYPOLOGIES OF SOCIALIST MODERNISM ARCHITECTURE: INTANGIBLE DIMENSIONS

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### ABSTRACT

*The paper explores the reasons for the difficulties to find an efficient adaptive reuse scheme for the abandoned socialist modernism buildings representing new functional typologies, which were established for emerging uses imposed by bygone socialist regime. The paper deepens into intangible aspects tackled by adaptive reuse: rising from modernism and socialism ideological backgrounds, resulting in comprehension of architectural objects, and featuring cultural significance attributed nowadays. New architectural typologies: Funeral Palaces in Soviet Lithuania and Museums of Revolution and memorial centers in socialist Yugoslavia, are discussed with a closer focus on Funeral Palace "Sorrow" in Kaunas, Lithuania, and Home of Revolution in Nikšić, Montenegro.*

**Keywords:** twentieth-century architectural heritage, socialist architecture, new architectural typology, adaptive reuse, Funeral Palace, Home of Revolution

## SFIDE DEL RIUSO ADATTIVO NELLE NUOVE TIPOLOGIE FUNZIONALI DELL'ARCHITETTURA MODERNISTA SOCIALISTA: DIMENSIONI INTANGIBILI

### SINTESI

*L'articolo esplora le ragioni delle difficoltà nel trovare uno schema di riqualificazione adattativa per gli edifici del modernismo socialista abbandonati rappresentanti le nuove tipologie funzionali istituite per gli usi emergenti imposti dal regime socialista del passato. L'articolo approfondisce gli aspetti intangibili che la riqualificazione adattativa affronta: il fatto di derivare dai contesti ideologici del modernismo e del socialismo, risultando nella comprensione degli oggetti architettonici, ed essendo caratterizzato dall'importanza culturale che gli viene oggi attribuita. Nuove tipologie architettoniche: Palazzi Funerari nella Lituania sovietica e Musei della Rivoluzione e memoriali nella Jugoslavia socialista vengono discussi ponendo particolare attenzione al Palazzo "Tristezza" a Kaunas, Lituania, e alla Casa della Rivoluzione a Nikšić, Montenegro.*

**Parole chiave:** eredità dell'architettura del ventesimo secolo, architettura del periodo socialista, nuova tipologia architettonica, riqualificazione adattativa, Palazzo Funerario, Casa della Rivoluzione

## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary societies face huge challenge of renovation, reuse, and conservation of 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, as they form a significant part of our built environment. The modernism legacy is an extremely important resource both in terms of social, economic and environmental sustainability, and as a part of architectural heritage to be preserved for future generations. Reuse is a common architectural practice to keep on buildings functioning. In general, reuse is applied for the buildings that lost their original (or previous) function, and do not meet the standards for efficiency or comfort and needs of society anymore; it is a pragmatic transformation of a building driven by functional and financial intentions. Whereas the strategy of adaptive reuse brings disciplines of architecture and conservation together, as it points to reuse of historic buildings driven by heritage preservation intention (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel, 2011). Internationally acknowledged *The Burra Charter* refers to adaptive reuse (adaptive re-use) that calls for minimal change and minimal impact on cultural significance of the place during the introduction of new uses (ICOMOS – International Council on Monuments and Sites, Australia, 2013), thus it points to the deep respect for cultural significance of an architectural object.

The paper approaches the problem of adaptive reuse of socialist modernism public buildings that feature cultural significance. The question is complex. Basically, it covers questions that are general to adaptive reuse of modernist buildings. Moreover, modernist buildings built under socialist regime are loaded with ideology that melted away along with geo-political overturns. Post-socialist societies face challenge of adapting buildings of socialist modernism that lost their original function. However, in certain cases, efficient reuse scheme is not achieved, and abandoned buildings are left to devastation. The more culturally significant architecture of a building is, the more anxiety its degradation causes.

The paper explores the reasons for the difficulties to find an efficient adaptive reuse scheme for the abandoned buildings representing new functional typologies in socialist architecture. New functional typologies, that had no prototypes and were expected to be developed up to repeatability, were established for emerging uses imposed by socialist regime. New functional typologies represent the problem of adaptive reuse of socialist legacy in the sharpest way as these buildings accommodate programs guided mostly by ideological rationale by bygone regime. The studies of buildings of pioneering socialist typologies, functions of which lost their relevance in contemporary post-transitional society, help to reveal the importance of functional and ideological

manifestation in their architecture that cause a lot of specific challenges in their adaptive reuse at present. The fundamental questions explored by case studies point to functional and ideological resilience of socialist modernism architecture: as *“Can you distinguish a building from its function? Can the building be separated from the ideals that lie at its core? Does that result in anything other than an empty shell?”* (Hatherley, cited in de Boer, 2008); rephrased, if the project was designed to propagate socialist ideology, can the building be adapted to the relevant needs of the post-socialist society under the changed political, economic, social, and cultural contexts?

The paper focuses on intangible dimensions, or, referring to the dichotomy of form and content, on the content of an architectural object, leaving the material dimensions of adaptability, which is a planar-spatial or technological flexibility of an architectural object, aside. In the theoretic part, it deepens into intangible aspects that abandoned building accommodates and its adaptive reuse is going to face: rising from modernism and socialism ideological backgrounds; resulting in perception of architectural objects; and featuring cultural significance attributed to it by contemporary post-socialist society.

Further, the new functional typologies are discussed that were developed in socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1992) and Soviet Lithuania (1944–1990). Although both countries have suffered a transition from socialist to capitalist state at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to political upheavals, they represent different types of socialist regime. Soviet Lithuania, as a republic of Soviet Union, represents country of highly centralized government and planned economy, while socialist Yugoslavia deliberately positioned itself halfway between the Eastern and Western blocs as a federation based on self-managed system and market economy. Alongside with new urban planning and architectural concepts and practices that are characteristic for Eastern Bloc, these two socialist states, have developed new functional typologies that were unique for these particular countries and not applied elsewhere: Funeral Palaces in Soviet Lithuania, and Museums of Revolution and memorial centers in socialist Yugoslavia. Each typology's specific ideological background, architectural design peculiarities and the use of this legacy at present is analyzed with a closer focus on a selected representative. The selection criteria for the representatives: the building is characteristic example of modernist architecture of a new functional typology; its original function is abandoned and it has been degrading; it draws attention of professional community as a high-quality piece of architecture. The selected representatives are Funeral Palace “Sorrow” in Kaunas, Lithuania (arch. A. Paulauskas, completed in 1978), and Home of Revolution in Nikšić, Montenegro (arch. M. Mušič,

competition in 1976 – not completed). Both case studies enable to understand the impact of modernism and socialism ideologies on architectural design, its perception through meanings communicated and atmosphere produced, and attribution of cultural significance nowadays, having in mind the differences of political, social and economic contexts of the building time and the present time.

#### CONTRADICTIONS IN ADAPTIVE REUSE THAT RISE FROM IDEOLOGY OF SOCIALIST MODERNISM

##### Ideological implications in socialist modernism architecture

Socialist modernism covers the architecture from the socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe in the period from Stalin's death resulting in the end of Stalinist socialist realism in 1955, until the end of socialist era in early 1990s. Modern Movement tendencies in socialist modernism architecture were followed in the specific ways, mostly determined by political, economic and social reasons.

In spite of geo-political peculiarities, the basic challenges towards conservation and adaptive reuse of architecture of modernism, and socialist modernism as well, rise from functional integrity as a central theme in Modern Movement. The truth of architecture, among the other aspects, was understood as the relationship between the form and the use of the building. Modernists were not interested in continuity or eternity: for the sake of objectivity and truthfulness, they often proclaimed total replacement of a building instead of its adaptation (Perkkio, 2016; Kuipers, 2016). In such a way, ideology of modernism presupposes limited possibilities for functional flexibility. Two concepts – adaptive reuse, and function as a reason for the existence of a building – contradict and predetermine questions addressing the very idea of reuse of modernist architecture. The *Madrid – New Delhi Document* calls to “establish limits of acceptable change” in implementing conservation planning processes in adaptive reuse of 20th century modernist buildings (ICOMOS & ISC20C – International Scientific Committee on 20th Century Heritage, 2017). Identification of the limits of acceptable change of function is one of the key questions in the field.

It is difficult to mark the distinction between socialist and international architecture of modernism. In Lithuania, international professional experience, by means of architectural magazines or study trips to Finland, was leaking through the Iron curtain. In Yugoslavia, the possibilities to follow international tendencies in architecture were open. The main differences between socialist and international architecture of modernism lie not in stylistic tendencies,

functional or aesthetic priorities, but in saturation with ideology of political regime. The socialist architecture was deeply influenced by the socio-political and economic agenda of the countries. In socialist countries, state apparatus turned architecture into an ideological tool of communication targeted to impact social behavior towards the one of the so-called ‘socialist society’. Architects were intended to create the ways to communicate the ideological ‘truths’, especially in design of public buildings.

After the collapse of socialist regime resulting in sovereignty of Lithuania and breakup of federation of Yugoslavia, political, socio-economic and cultural circumstances in these countries changed significantly. However, socialist public buildings that were designed to carry ideological load explicitly, still keep the potential of political codes, for example, heraldic symbols, and resonate ideological meanings memorizing indoctrinated functions, narratives or practices. G. Brooker describes such a building as politically or ideologically ‘contaminated’, therefore, it is subjugated by its past; the infection lies in domination of “*the propagandistic role that it once contained and subsequently is therefore corrupted by the associations and memories of its previous purpose*” (Brooker, 2006, 2). In the eyes of post-transitional society, ‘contaminated’ socialist buildings are dissonant to contemporary mindset. Society would favor the maintenance or reuse of symbolic buildings excluding communication of ideological codes and meanings (Petrulis, 2019). Is it possible to strip off ‘contaminated’ codes, meanings, and associations from a building without undermining its cultural significance? This could be explained by program.

##### Program as a uniting principle in modernist architecture

The primacy of the program became one of the ultimate strives of modernist architecture. “*In 1960, the fundamental question was the nature of the “program” conceived of in the widest possible sense, adopted for architecture, a program that comprehended and subsumed both function and form*” (Vidler, 2003, 73), along with environmental concerns, technology, into an integral single discourse. According to U. Eco, beside the primary function *utilitas* or the use of the building, there is a secondary – communicative – function of architecture or, as he calls it, architecture’s symbolic connotations. He calls “*the symbolic connotations functional because although they may not be immediately identified with the functions narrowly defined they do represent (and communicate) in each case a real social utility of the object*” (Eco, 1997, 179). The logic that initially grounds the implementation of the integrity of form, function, symbolic connotations and other concerns is determined by program.

*Program is understood as the system of intentions through which the future spatial system of the building is made, the relationship between space and masses, and even the standpoints of the architect towards different functions of architecture: the language, ways of communicating, goals of representation of certain beliefs, social relations and such.* (Konstantinović, 2013, 19)

As a system of determinants, program guarantees that any component of buildings and spaces cannot be omitted without affecting the others. The complex integrity established by program complicates reuse of modernist architecture, as the function is embodied in volumetric-spatial design and communicated by symbolic connotations. Accommodated program assures that in case the function is stripped off an architectural object, its integrity is violated, as it loses one of the determinants. In case of socialist public buildings, secondary function is fueled by Modern Movement's truths and doctrine of socialism. While the evidence of the first one is considered as an intrinsic mark of the 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture, the manifestation of the latter's political ideology at present is referred to as 'contaminated'. That is why rooted, and objectionable at the same time, position of socialist ideology in the very core of an architectural object complicates its adaptive reuse for the needs of contemporary post-socialist society even more.

### Pioneering practice in new functional typologies

Architecture is reproduced through functional types that express the continuing patterns and features, which connect them with the past. A need for a new use arises induced by exterior impulse like breaks (or lack) in society, economics, culture, etc. In case of new socialist typologies, a role of an exterior impulse is played by socialist ideology, directing towards an intended shift in society's mentality. When an architect got state commission to initiate and design a building for an emerging use, he had to invent the future building's program, forasmuch no prototype, no tested program was set to follow. In order to achieve a desired social behavior, an architect had to settle symbolic connotations and ideological standpoints into functional arrangement, and to translate programmatic ideas into a genuine form. That kind of creative process – setting interrelations to be developed up to repeatability, in other words, building a prototype – proves to be pioneering, as the new typology outreaches the unique solutions within the frame of existing typology.

*"When a new type emerges – when an architect is able to describe a new set of formal relations which generates a new group of buildings or elements – then*

*that architect's contribution has reached the level of generality and anonymity"* (Moneo, 1978). Generality allows repeatability; an object for an emerging use becomes a prototype for a new functional typology. Architectural, moreover, cultural significance of establishing new functional typologies by the means of architectural design lies in its pioneering practice and its complexity. The set up complexity proves that physical envelope of these buildings is just a constituent part of the whole, an output of system of correlations. Therefore, adaptive reuse scheme cannot focus on materiality of a building underestimating its intangible dimensions and integrity of the whole.

### IMPORTANCE OF PRODUCTION OF MEANINGS AND ATMOSPHERE

The further set of intangible aspects that are of major importance to adaptive reuse and enable deeper perception and conception of an architectural object, comprise meanings communicated and atmosphere produced as an outcome of the program. Notion of meanings in architecture refers to the definition given in *The Burra Charter*: "*Meanings denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses to people*" (ICOMOS Australia, 2013, 5). Architecture communicates with its users through meanings, both the meanings intended initially, and the symbolic connotations attributed by the people inhabiting it. They speak about the social utility of a building, about the values of certain groups using that building, state that ordered it, or the architect that designed it (Eco, 1997). Architecture is capable of multiple interpretations from the moment of conception to the moment of interpretation by the person using it, and the original idea of the creator may differ from the way the public interprets it (Whyte, 2006). The production of meanings is a continuous process, as meanings develop and change over time.

Another intangible dimension of architecture that relates to the production of meanings is the atmosphere (ambiance) of space that is linked to feelings, emotions and perception, and that refers to comprehension or grasping the meaning. The notion of atmosphere in architecture could be paralleled to the concept of spirit of place (*genius loci*) considering their content and significance. Concept of atmosphere of space does not disregard the rational approach, it is "*rather supplementing it with an additional contribution which would see it as a 'generator' of feelings and which adds comprehension to the explanation*" (Napoleone, 2017, 232). Preserving of the fragile atmosphere of space during the adaptive reuse is a vulnerable issue. Maintaining material elements is not enough to ensure the preservation of the spirit of place. Changes in atmosphere may cause

the feelings of loss or betrayal, and the quality of the new design is insufficient to compensate the loss (Napoleone, 2017).

In the buildings that lost their original function, the meanings architecture once expressed through its use, activities, shared values and interpretations by society at that time, remain as traces of their former selves, still readable in structural and physical elements, still alive in memories, narratives, associations, and still comprehensible in its atmosphere. Adaptive reuse strategies towards ideologised architecture, as Brooker argues, can be used to either activate or suppress meanings and memories a building evokes through the process of uncovering, clarification and interpretation; intervention can be destructive as much as it can be constructive. During the reuse, re-edification of these memories, values, and narratives leads to a complexity that is impossible to replicate in new build architecture (Brooker, 2006).

#### CHALLENGES BY CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE ATTRIBUTED BY CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Since the inception of international charters for cultural heritage, it is recommended to use historic objects in order to ensure the continuity of their life. *The Athens Charter* (1931) recommends that “they should be used for a purpose which respects their historic or artistic character” and “their use makes it possible to avoid the dangers of dismantling and reinstating the portions to be preserved” (ICOMOS, 1931). *The Venice Charter* (1964) turns recommendation into requirement that the reuse “must not change the lay-out or decoration of the building” (ICOMOS, 1964). Concentrating on the 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural heritage, *Madrid – New Delhi Document* emphasizes: “when change of use is under consideration, care must be taken to find an appropriate reuse that conserves the cultural significance” (ICOMOS & ISC20C, 2017). Therefore, adaptive reuse is required instead of insensitive reuse or demolition.

After the collapse of socialist regime, the buildings representing new typologies intended for socialist societies became hostages of a contradictory situation. They lose relevance and dissonate to the changed political-ideological and social-cultural contexts, although in many cases feature architecture of high quality – as V. Petrulis points out, objects that communicate strong message are often outstanding from artistic point of view (Petrulis, 2019, 24). In many cases, because of values attributed, this type of architecture becomes a part of heritage, either legalized or potential. As a witness of its time and political regime, socialist heritage is controversial by its nature. Using the term coined by J. E. Turnbridge and G. J. Ashworth, it is a representative of ‘dissonant heritage’, a culturally constructed heritage with a big variety of possible heritages, each shaped for the requirements of specific consumer groups (Turnbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Since the concept

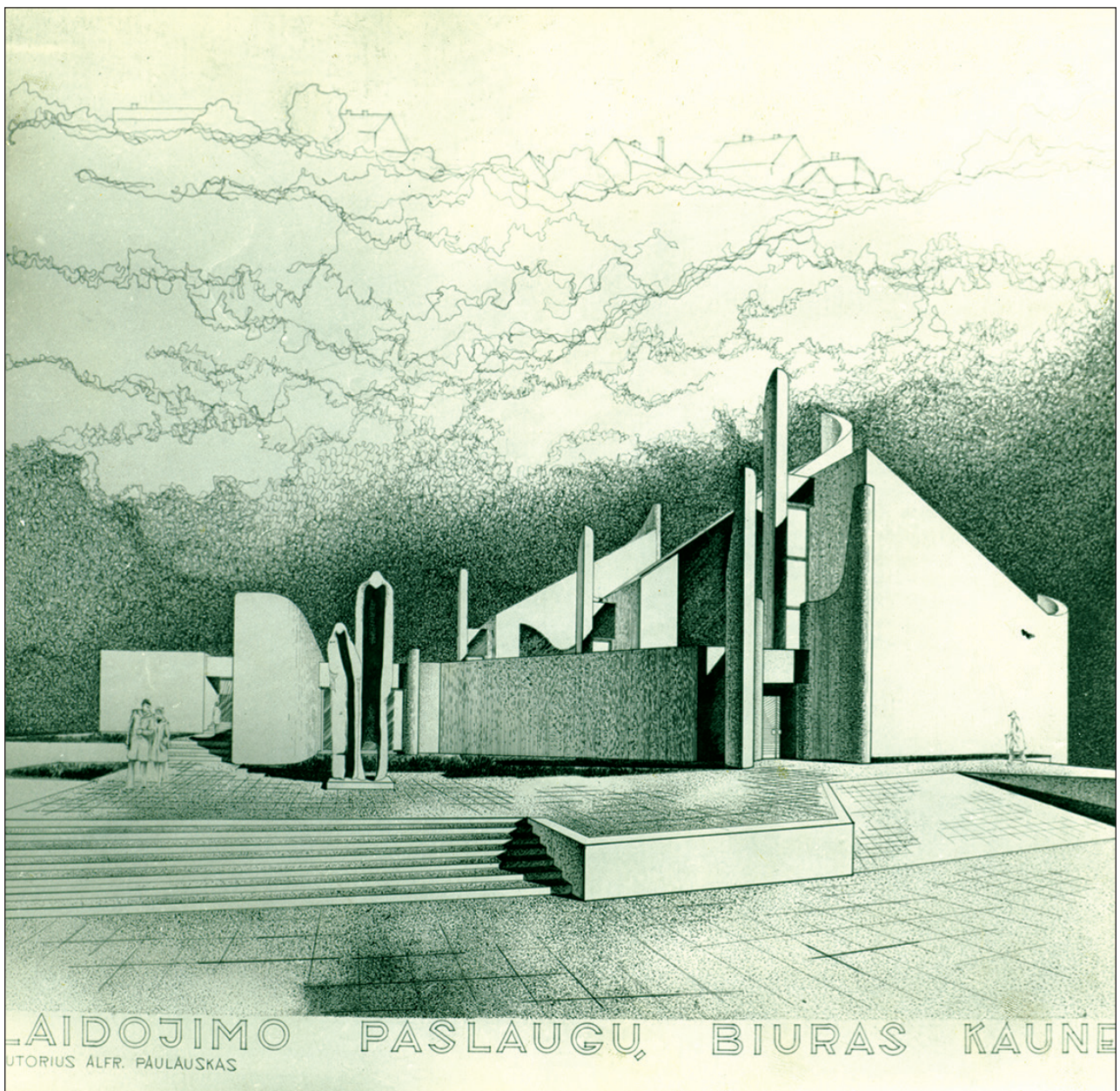
of cultural heritage covers the relationship between people, places and stories, the difficulties in evaluating and preserving socialist heritage stem precisely from the fact that it stands as a reminder of the previous system. Political narrative is recognizable and symbolic potential is readable, therefore, it revives controversial memories and emotions, and causes a negative stance of the public opinion in certain cases (Petrulis, 2019). However, *The Declaration of San Antonio* (ICOMOS, 1996) argues that conflicting interests if mediated successfully in a tolerant and inclusive way might actually increase and diversify values connected to the heritage site.

Evaluating 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural heritage, “its cultural significance may rest in its tangible attributes, including physical location, views, design [...]. Significance may also lie in use, historic, social, scientific or spiritual associations, or evidence of creative genius and/or in its intangible values” (ICOMOS & ISC20C, 2017). In order to keep peculiar, meaningful attributes during adaptive reuse, it is important to clarify what elements contribute to cultural significance. Referring to G. F. Araoz, “what really is crucial for and at the very core of conservation is understanding where those values rest, for that is what we are called to conserve and protect. These are what I call the vessels of values and significance” (Araoz, 2011, 59). In conservation of modernist architecture, the integrity of the building that is predetermined by its program is prioritized over mere materiality (Perkkio, 2016). Admitting that the values of heritage lie first of all in the content that is accommodated by and attributed to material substance (Petrulis, 2019), intangible attributes like use, symbolic connotations, and the resulting atmosphere, cannot be overestimated, even in the buildings with negative connotations.

It is crucial to preserve symbolic connotations and atmosphere during the adaptive reuse, in order to maintain continuity in communicating meanings and resonating feelings, as these intangible aspects, in synergy with material substance and use, determine what the place actually is, how people understand, perceive and feel it, and, therefore, vessel its cultural significance.

#### CASES OF NEW SOCIALIST ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGIES

The architectural typologies that provided domestic, cultural and social welfare of socialist people, were developed thoroughly on ideological foundation of socialist social and cultural policies, and standardized regulation. Besides the ongoing architectural typologies adapted and rearranged, there were new typologies established. They had to set ideologically programmed social behavior by accommodating newly founded social practices of socialist society. Focus countries experienced the new typologies on different basis. In socialist Lithuania, because of Soviet anti-religious policy, new typologies of civil ceremonial buildings were developed in order to replace the sacred spaces: Wedding Palace instead of church and Funeral



**Figure 1:** Drawing of Funeral Palace “Sorrow” in Kaunas, Lithuania by the architect A. Paulauskas (Source: Courtesy of private archive of A. Paulauskas. Reproduced with permission from his daughter).

Palace instead of traditional places of mourning rituals such as a cemetery chapel or home (Drėmaitė, 2017). The paper focuses on the latter functional typology as only Funeral Palaces remained unique to socialist Lithuania and were not implemented elsewhere. In socialist Yugoslavia, the specific hybrid typologies of Museums of Revolution and memorial centers, unique for the federation, merged memorial, cultural and educational functions. They were built upon the endeavor to use culture for spreading socialist ideology and to enable homogenization of Yugoslav peoples and nations (Stevanovic, 2017, 378).

#### Funeral Palaces in Lithuania

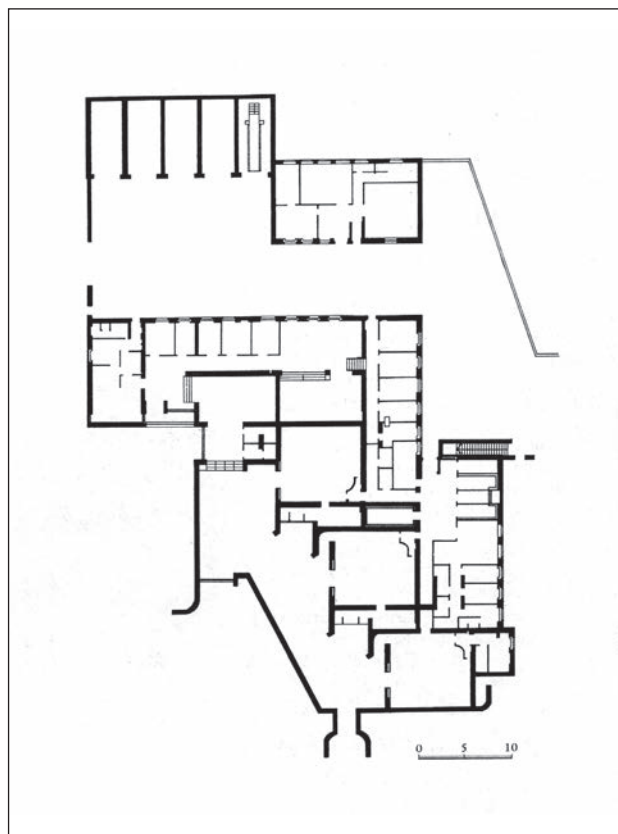
As Soviet regime directed its attention to so-called civil ceremonies of secularized society, the new functional typology of Funeral Palaces was commissioned in the 1960s. The typology was a result of atheistic politics of Soviet Union. It was intended as a place for socialist ceremonies and rituals based on traditional mourning rituals stripped off their religious content (Drėmaitė, 2014). Several funeral buildings were built in the largest Lithuanian cities with a creative aspiration for an original

piece of architecture featuring dramatic narrative and strong emotional impact. The first representative of this typology was built in Vilnius in 1975. Later, the Funeral Palace “Sorrow” was erected in Kaunas in 1978. Besides, two projects for a small funeral building were realized, one of them, in an identic shape in three Lithuanian cities (Drėmaitė, 2017).

Setting the program for Funeral Palace was a challenge for architects, as they had to construct a prototype. Besides the functional and spatial arrangement of the ceremony, the architectural program covered ideological load with secularized and re-developed rituals, narratives and meanings, and emotional effect on the observer.

*It seems that tradition (in a very broad sense) influenced the new architectural spaces created to practice new secular socialist rituals. Therefore, from the social point of view, these buildings are seen as substitutes for sacral spaces [...]. From the architectural point of view, they represent late Soviet mannerism in architecture as a certain simulacra filled with surplus meanings and decorations. (Drėmaitė, 2014, 64)*

All funeral buildings implemented share similar perception process and impact on the observer, which is reinterpreted manner of experiencing sacral buildings. The funeral buildings are situated distanced from neighboring buildings, and stand out natural environment or cemetery in the background. The volumetric structures feature the expressive dynamic composition of diagonal shapes and the contrast between one floor part of stowed standard spaces and the part for mourning rooms exposed in high volumes. In the mourning spaces, daylight penetrates through single stained glass surface or spotlights high above, both cutting off any connection to neighborhood and everyday life out there. A lot of attention is paid to create powerful dynamics of spatial experience. After enjoying the expressive sculptural exterior, one firstly enters cramped low space that eventually overflows in the mourning rooms. Specific architectural design solutions are used to resonate with the mourning rituals set by the particular function. Architecture reflects several ideologies intertwined. Modernism grounds the integrity of form, function and meanings, and sets late modernism volumetric spatial relationships and architectural language. Socialist ideology guides the intentions of functional organization and censors meanings. As any Christian symbolism is forbidden, signs and associations from ethnic tradition, like shape of archaic house or symbol of pagan sun-cross, replace them. The particular set that was never used before and that comprises volumetric spatial relationship, solemn inward oriented atmosphere rich in meanings and symbols, and specific way of perception organized to experience the ceremony – support the novelty of functional type, and quality of this synergy and its manifestation ground the artistic, historic and social values.



**Figure 2: The plan of Funeral Palace “Sorrow” in Kaunas, Lithuania (Source: Courtesy of private archive of A. Paulauskas. Reproduced with permission from his daughter).**

Comparing four implemented original projects as the only representatives of this specific typology, the one in Kaunas features perhaps the most expressive, meaningful and emotionally powerful architecture. Consequently, it has been listed on the Register of Cultural Property of Lithuania. Paradoxically, this Funeral Palace was no longer in use since 2006, as the owners did not wish to continue it, while most of the other ones were renovated according to the contemporary standards in order to be able to compete with traditional sacred spaces and modern well finished facilities to be used for funerals.

*Funeral Palace “Sorrow” (Laidotuvių rūmai “Liūdesys”) in Kaunas, Lithuania, was designed by the architect Alfredas Paulauskas (1928-2013) and was built in 1978. The building of Funeral Palace “Sorrow” in Kaunas represents expressionist architecture in the late modernism style. It features dynamic sculptural volumetric spatial arrangement, and visually effective architectural expression. The building’s exterior is a figurative interpretation of a church, its interior spatial structure and light articulation alludes to gothic chapels (Almonaitytė-Navickienė, 2018).*

When talking about the spatial distribution of functions that settle down the ceremony according to mourning



**Figure 3:** Interior photo of the hall in Funeral Palace “Sorrow” in Kaunas, Lithuania (Source: Courtesy of private archive of A. Paulauskas. Reproduced with permission from his daughter).

rituals, “Sorrow” has an elongated hall, with the entrance on one end, and the exit on the other end as an allusion to an existential journey. Both doors are seen from the main street – the entry is smaller and closer to the street. The bigger exit, more distanced from the street, forms a plateau in front of the building, marked by the statue “Sorrow”. Along the length of the hall, three mourning rooms are attached, where the coffins are displayed (Fig. 1, 2). The spatial order enables the full immersion into the ritual without distractions.

High emotional effect on its user is achieved by architectural means of spatial disposition, highlights and interior finishing. The spatial narrative is similar to the dynamics of spatial experience in sacral objects, as distinction between public and private spaces was strengthened by the differences of heights. “The dramatic feel of its interior space was heightened by black, violet and red ceramic work, sculptural details, local lighting, and torch-like glass light fixtures” (Drémaitė, 2017). The main hall offers only one source of natural lighting at the end of the hall. The mourning rooms are artificially

lighted with the aforementioned torch-like lamps (an allusion to archaic tradition), but also have a diffuse light with the invisible opening above the coffin. All of the interior elements and furniture used in the building were designed for this specific object. The synergy of interior arrangement and elements comprise a solemn, focused, and surreal atmosphere in line with the mourning ritual (Fig. 3). Inward exposed interior spaces are similar to other Funeral Palaces.

The distinctive intangible features of Funeral Palace derive from the aims of typology and the guidelines of the architectural program. The symbolic connotations and, consequently, atmosphere produced rise from secularized, yet spiritually rich, emotionally powerful and semantically meaningful architecture. The architect carefully constructed the communication through meanings and associations by means of smartly solved coherent function and articulated spatial performance, also through a subtle choice of materials, treatment of light, and interior details. A specific strong atmosphere overwhelms the user – it impresses in a ceremonial yet



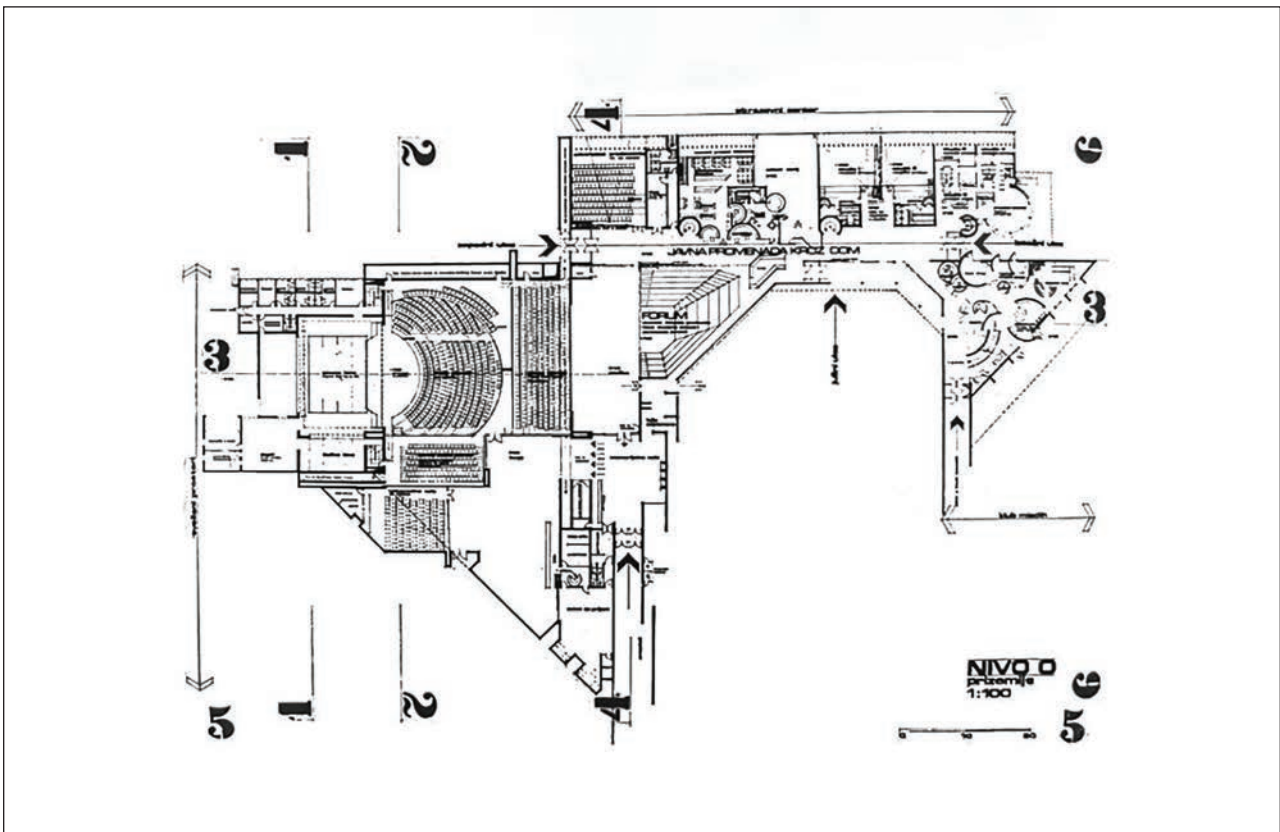
**Figure 4: Degradation of Funeral Palace “Sorrow” in Kaunas, Lithuania (Photo: Andrius Liakas, 2019; Reproduced with author’s permission).**

somber manner and, in such a way, it accomplishes the performance of the building in a full scope. The synergy of architectural expression and intangible qualities that saturate it, both rising from the pioneering program and peculiarities of function, should be acknowledged as the vessel of its values and cultural significance in terms of statements by G. F. Araoz (2011); consequently, these complex relationships should inspire, guide and enrich the re-interpretation of the object during the adaptive reuse.

Since the political situation changed after regaining the Independence of Lithuania in 1990, the mourning places are no longer restricted to secular ones, and this typology as a simulacra of sacred spaces is not in a demand as such. As many buildings from Soviet period, they need a thorough renovation to meet contemporary needs and standards. When the Funeral Palace “Sorrow” was sold to the private owner, he had a goal to demolish it and to build a commercial building. Architects’ community had an urgent reaction and due to their efforts, the building was included into the national Register of Cultural Property in 2009, where outstanding architectural characteristics, non-traditional creative approach and the fact, that it represents a rare functional typology were pointed out as the values (Kultūros paveldo departamentas, 2009). Legal

status prevented it to be torn down; nevertheless, it was left to devastation as an improvised cable storage for several years (Fig. 4). One of the main reasons given by the owner for not preserving the building was an economic one – high heating cost. Later on, there were changes in ownership and in attempts to reuse it for such functions as residential, administrative or a hospital. These attempts were ineffective for the object that features such a strong synergy between function, architectural expression and intangible characteristics, and these reuse projects were not carried out. It took more than a decade to realize that the building with such a powerful character and integral performance can accommodate nothing else but the ceremonial function for funerals. Meanwhile, the present owner restores the initial use of the building, and the implementation of its extension and renovation up to contemporary funeral house is on the way.

In spite of the attempts, the function was not changed neither in this Funeral Palace, nor in any other socialist funeral building in Lithuania. There are more reasons for irreplaceability of function in this typology besides the specific performance of building design set initially and rising from socialist ideology. The present-day social expectations that are fueled by the perception of these buildings, expanded by the collective memories, associa-



**Figure 5:** Plan of Home of Revolution in Nikšić, Montenegro (Source: Courtesy of “Arhitektura”, No. 158–159, 1976. P. 129; Reproduced with permission from Croatian Architects’ Association).

tions and atmosphere inscribed there, saturate heritage values by social dimension. In case a funeral building loses its initial use, a driver that determines what the building is and how society perceives it, the risk emerges that its cultural significance is violated because of exceeding aforementioned “limits of acceptable change” (ICOMOS & ISC20C, 2017).

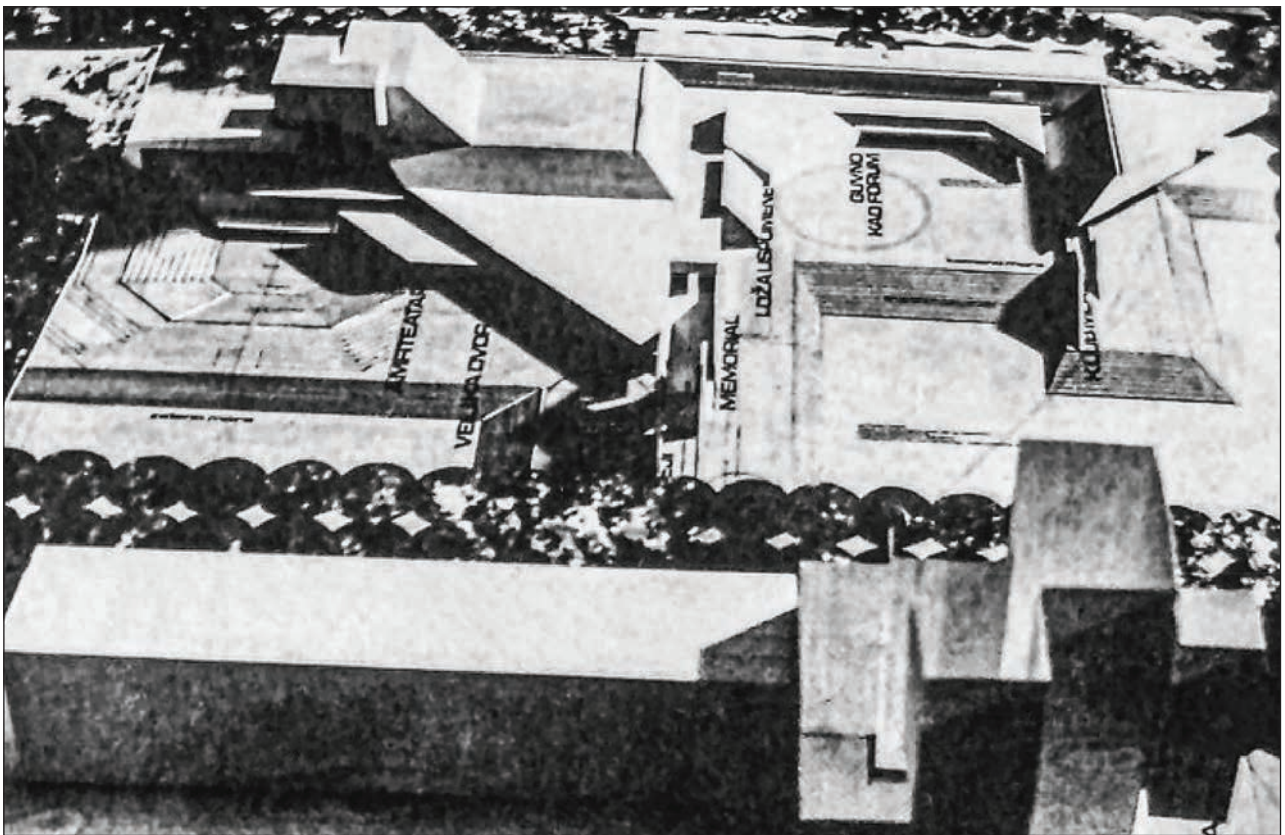
#### Museums of Revolution and memorial centers in socialist Yugoslavia

The interlinked functional typologies of Museums of Revolution and memorial centers were developed exclusively for the socialist Yugoslavia. A clear self-awareness of uniqueness of the federation, although deeply contradictory one, was used as an important ingredient in the construction of a new socialist culture (Kulić, 2009). Therefore, the new functional typologies were intended to provide ideological education and utopian vision in order to set up shared values and common goals of Yugoslav peoples and nations.

At mid-1950s, a new functional typology of ideological-historical museum – the Museum of Revolution – was established to represent ideological indoctrination and consumption of memory. It merged functions like an

educational establishment, a scientific institution and a memorial to the so-called “victory of the Yugoslav peoples in fighting for national liberation and effectuation of socialist society” (Stevanovic, 2017, 148). In the culturally and politically hybrid state, the major objectives of Museum of Revolution were to project political values into the memorial, and, afterwards, to construct and use the memorial values to get Yugoslav peoples together around the idea of brotherhood and unity. The prominence of representative status enabled positioning them as architectural landmarks situated in significant urban locations. Specific volumetric solutions comprise the elevated buildings on the pedestal, detached from the surroundings; floating concrete cubes above the ground floor; a feeling of lightness and openness. The designs of architectural icons achieved clarity, simplicity and delicacy in application of modernist postulates. While the main exhibition spaces are physically deliberated of any ideologically charged symbolical reference, ideological signs are highlighted in artistic inclusions (Stevanovic, 2017; Kulić, 2009).

Later, since mid-1960s, memorial centers, a similar functional typology was developed from Museums of Revolution. It merged functions of a museum (exhibition and memorial), and a cultural (educational, recreational)



**Figure 6: Model photo of Home of Revolution in Nikšić, Montenegro (Source: Courtesy of “Arhitektura”, No. 158–159, 1976. P. 129; Reproduced with permission from Croatian Architects’ Association).**

center according to social necessities of local communities in smaller towns. Memorial centres implemented specific cultural programme where culture was not only an artistic and intellectual product, but also an ideological instrument for spreading socialist ideology among the masses (Stevanovic, 2017). The hybrid function was supposed to reflect values of the socialist state, to present it as the democratic state based on the firm grounds of liberty, and to build the national Yugoslav identity (Konstantinović, 2013). A big number of memorial centres was built in Yugoslav republics with blurring boundaries of functional typology. From architectural point of view, memorial centres were manifestations of outstanding building design and complex flexible organizational scheme appropriate for multiple uses, where volumetric spatial fragmentation emerged from compound functional programme. Memorial centres were developed as composite and diversified structures with specific spatial relationship with the city at large, instead of a singular composition integrated into the urban fabric. Avant-garde late modernist or postmodernist design resulted in dynamic, unusual and vibrant forms, spatial fragmentation, expressiveness, symbolism, and diversity. It enabled particular interior flow, and created dynamic, multi-layered and flexible space, diverse in meanings and references (Stevanovic, 2017).

From ideological point of view, life’s continued triumph over death is celebrated. As Todorović argues, the juxtaposition of the contemporary and memorial priorities in new typologies is closely connected to the relationship between state spectacle (parade, performance or other event used to demonstrate the power of the state) and utopia. As the past, the present, and the future is exposed in every utopia, the past is there to remind of the Golden Age that might have never existed but gives the promise of a brighter future under the current reign (Todorović, 2010).

The decline of socialism and the introduction of the market economy and multi-party system in the newly emerged countries, besides many other effects, led to rejection of the bearers of symbolic capital of the former system. The memorial and aesthetic values of such objects were being questioned, challenged and/or denied (Social Fringe & ICOMOS Croatia, 2017, 3–4). As the role of educational institutions created for spreading socialist ideology vanished in post-socialist societies, a part of Museums of Revolution were adapted to updated needs of museums. After the alteration of program, they lost their former cultural significance and exceptional social status, even the ones that are well functioning. Many memorial centers are emptied and face degradation or damage



**Figure 7: Degradation of Home of Revolution in Nikšić, Montenegro (Photo: Jelena Mitrović, 2018).**

because of incapability to adapt them to present-day cultural needs and economic possibilities. Even buildings declared as cultural heritage continue to be neglected in terms of maintenance and adaptive reuse (Stevanovic, 2017, 375–380).

**Home of Revolution (Dom Revolucije) in Nikšić, Montenegro** was designed by Slovenian architect Marko Mušič (b. 1941). The competition for this memorial project was held in 1976. The architecture of the building represents the style of late modernism. The existing structure was originally intended to represent the socio-political structure of Nikšić, Montenegro and Yugoslavia itself, by a mega building that was unfinished due to its colossal increase in size and costs. The significance of the representative building for Nikšić city was enhanced by location in the city center, spatial domination over the settled urban structure and urban composition, its enormous size and concentration of social activities.

Functionally the building follows a hybrid program of a memorial center – a new functional typology unique to socialist Yugoslavia. It comprises the cultural facilities (educational and recreational ones, and a youth club) and the memorial to the fallen soldiers. As the author himself explains the functional scheme of this project, the group of educational-occupational contents is strategically located alongside the promenade. At the end of the promenade, the main auditorium is located. It is interconnected both with the youth club and workshop rooms, therefore, it enables the flow of activities throughout the building. The memorial rooms are situated on the opposite side (Fig. 5, 6). By its very character and significance, the group of memorial spaces is the strongest magnet for turning pedestrians into the depth of the complex (Mušič, 1976).

Ideologically, the memorial space – the past – is celebrated. It points to the idea that Home of Revolution is a contemporary cultural center established for the wellbeing of people on the grounds of revolutionary memory. Following utopian program, the memorial function reminds of the glorious past and, in synergy with the contemporary cultural function, offers a bright outlook towards the future. The volumetric composition and spatial arrangement is an agglomerate of fragmented volumes as ‘a city within a city’ with the very expressive formal outcome that features horizontal and vertical continuity, accented elements, interactive free spaces, visual connections the goal of which is to initiate creativity and diverse social activities (Konstantinović, 2013, 204; Stamatović Vučković, 2012, 167). The architecture delivers the message about the values of democracy, creativity and liberty of the socialist society, a new Yugoslav culture, enabled by revolutionary sacrifices in the past. The connection of the building with the surrounding urban context is realized through the promenade, suggesting that this building and social values it reflects are an integral part of the life of the city.

Home of Revolution was a very ambitious project that was never fully realized (Fig. 7). It started as a 9000 m<sup>2</sup> competition solution, but during building process from 1978 to 1989, it became a giant decaying complex of 24000 m<sup>2</sup> made from concrete, red metal trusses and abundant glazing. The building of such a size would never work in a city like Nikšić. Thus, it became a completely utopian project revealing the distinction between how the state viewed and wanted to present itself, and what were its real abilities. There were various causes why this building was never used and remained degrading for such a long period. The practical reason is obvious – its size that exceeded the needs and the

possibilities of socialist Yugoslavia, even more so of the contemporary Montenegro society. Reasons that are more complex lie in the incapability to adapt program of the whole building to new cultural needs of citizens and thus convert it into socially necessary and economically sustainable institution. Changed geo-political situation, social circumstances, economic possibilities, and negative attitudes brought to the disregard of its operative and cultural potential.

Efforts towards adaptive reuse of the building would focus on searching for a use in the contemporary capitalist state that would benefit from the monumental spatial structure, the ideas of democracy and liberty, and open atmosphere. What are the needs of the society where there is no revolution anymore? A public competition for a design proposal for reconstructing and redesigning the building was organized in 2015. The winning design by HHF Architects and SADAR+VUGA predicted the reconstruction and reprogramming of the building that was treated as an urban landscape rather than a building, and which would serve the city and its residents as a kind of social activator. They suggested to revitalize and settle a permanent social, commercial or educational function only in 10% of the building; the other part of the building would be secured and partly renovated (HHF Architects, n.d.). However, the competition design has not been implemented. The latest processes that take place in Home of Revolution are controversial. City initiatives started to crumble the building into small parceled pieces, some of them intended to be demolished, some – to be rented to local enterprises and renovated, regrettably, in a disconnected way. No overarching concept and strategy for adaptive reuse for the whole building is developed, at least how to avoid discrediting the cultural significance of existing architecture. The manifestation of original concept of the outstanding architectural object with a leading role to concentrate civic activities, to consolidate people and to contribute to their wellbeing is vanishing. Along with operational effectiveness, social and cultural potential of the building as all-encompassing medium is disappearing. The complex functional programme is breaking into self-sufficient fragments. Consequently, amplified secondary function of the representative of new typology, which was fulfilled through communication of paramount role, ideological meanings and democratic open atmosphere, is evolving to a source of collective memories and associations about bygone utopian ambitions in arts and culture of socialist Yugoslavia.

## CONCLUSIONS

Adaptive reuse of socialist modernism architecture is a big challenge as it is neither universal nor flexible. Adaptive reuse of buildings of new socialist typologies is even more controversial for complex reasons. The

ideological narrative embodied in architecture remains like ghost from the past. It is still present in architecture, communicated through meanings, associations, and atmosphere, although the reasons for such an architecture are gone, intentions are outdated, and geo-political, social and economic circumstances have changed. Ideology and enormous ambitions of socialist regime resulted in monumental and surreal pieces of architecture. At present, these expressive manifestations tackle rational priorities and pragmatism of contemporary capitalist mentality.

The values of architecture of a new socialist typology rest in its experimental nature and pioneering program, that flourish in a particular synergy of extraordinary designs, elaborated function and are expressed by abundant meanings and raw poetics. In order to preserve cultural significance of such a building, the complex interrelation between its material substance and its intangible elements like use, symbolic connotations, and atmosphere, which all together are predetermined by initial program and perceived by contemporary society that attributes meanings and values from today's perspective, should be considered. The "limits of acceptable change" that *Madrid – New Delhi Document* points to, should be questioned through this complex interaction in order to achieve successful results, in line with cultural significance and social role of such an architecture.

When contemporary society acknowledges cultural significance of a building of a new socialist functional typology, the possible scenarios for its adaptive reuse should be considered very carefully. Immaterial content like its use and its reflection in intangible dimensions lie in the core of this architecture. Acceptable tolerance of change of use should be critically acknowledged (like the case of Funeral Palace "Sorrow" proved to have a very narrow range of the tolerance for reuse). In adaptive reuse of buildings with contradictory connotations, original program should work as a generator to memorize, interpret, and manifest the original function through integrating traces of usage into redevelopments and creating the highlighted dialogue between the past and future. Thorough and respectful comprehension of a building, reading its site-specific narratives and tracing the collective memories enable reactivation of its cultural, social and operational potential and preservation of its meaningful history and symbolic power. Such manifestation of original use and social role would add vigour, multiplicity and exceptional qualities to a transformed object, which accordingly stand out a new build architecture. If the balance between original and new function is not equilibrated or the initial integrity breaks into pieces (like in the case of Museum of Revolution), the significant part of its core values are lost, and the building becomes an 'empty shell' accommodating random activities.

## IZZIVI ADAPTIVNE PONOVRNE UPORABE V NOVIH FUNKCIONALNIH TIPOLOGIJAH SOCIALISTIČNE MODERNISTIČNE ARHITEKTURE: NEMATERIALNE DIMENZIJE

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### POVZETEK

*Prispevek preučuje razloge za težave pri iskanju učinkovite sheme adaptivne ponovne uporabe zapuščenih stavb socialističnega modernizma, ki predstavljajo nove funkcionalne tipologije, ki so bile vzpostavljene za novonastajajoče namene, ki jih je narekoval pretekli socialistični režim. Prispevek se pogloblja v nematerialne vidike, s katerimi se spoprijema adaptivna ponovna uporaba: ideologija modernizma in socializma, razumevanje arhitekturnih objektov in danes pripisani kulturni pomen, ob upoštevanju razlik v političnem, sociokulturnem in ekonomskem kontekstu časa gradnje in sedanjega časa. Nove arhitekturne tipologije: Obravnavane so pogrebne palače v sovjetski Litvi in muzeji revolucije ter spominski centri v socialistični Jugoslaviji, podrobneje pa sta obravnavana Pogrebna palača "Žalost" v Kaunasu v Litvi in Dom revolucije v Nikšiću v Črni gori.*

*Vrednote arhitekture nove socialistične tipologije tičijo v njeni eksperimentalni naravi in pionirskem programu, ki cvetita v določeni sinergiji izjemnega oblikovanja, dodelane funkcije in pomenljive vsebine. Kompleksno povezavo med materialno substanco in nematerialnimi elementi, ki so jedro te arhitekture, je treba obravnavati v mejah sprejemljivih sprememb. Ponovna aktivacija kulturnega, družbenega in operativnega potenciala ter prikaz prvotne rabe in družbene vloge, ob hkratnem ohranjanju pomenljivih pripovedi, bi povečali arhitekturno raznovrstnost in dopolnili kulturni pomen.*

**Ključne besede:** arhitekturna dediščina dvajsetega stoletja, socialistična arhitektura, nova arhitekturna tipologija, adaptivna ponovna uporaba, pogrebna palača, Dom revolucije

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