

Architecture in Warsaw, 1939-1944

Wojciech Wólkowski 

ABSTRACT

This text attempts to present a general view of the architecture of occupied Warsaw between 1939 and 1944. Based on both existing publications and new primary source material from the collections of the Polish Architecture Department at the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology, the article discusses the design and construction activities of the German occupation administration (i.e., those officially operated and recognized by the Germans authorities of Warsaw), private investors, and individual designers working in secret.

In this context, the projects the City Board commissioned are particularly interesting. These included the reconstruction of public buildings destroyed in September 1939 (theaters and the interior of the town hall) and urban plans for the transformation and reorganization of the center of Warsaw (e.g., the design of the north-south route). These projects went far into the post-war future.

Strictly connected with the design activity was the documentation of the city's monuments (especially those destroyed or damaged at the beginning of the war). The preparation of this documentation was supported and partially financed by the city authorities. After the war, these plans served—as their authors had intended—as the basis for reconstructing these buildings.

KEYWORDS: architecture, Warsaw, occupation 1939-1944, Governor-General of occupied Poland

Declaration on Possible Conflicts of Interest
The author has declared that no conflicts of interest exist.

Funding Statement
The author received no specific funding for this work.

Dr. Wojciech Wólkowski, Warsaw University of Technology, wojciech.wolkowski@pw.edu.pl,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0046-3729>

Architecture in Warsaw, 1939-1944 - ZfO / JECES 70/2021/4
(received 2020-08-07, accepted 2021-01-06)

DOI: 10.25627/202170411056 – eISSN 2701-0449, ISSN 0948-8294



When it comes to urban planning and architectural design in Warsaw during the German occupation, there are at least three categories to be considered: first, projects carried out by the occupation authorities with a future Germanized East in mind; second, official undertakings of the Polish city authorities, recognized by the German state; and finally, plans designed by Polish architects and urban planners, drafted undercover with varying degrees of extravagance.

The amount of research on each of these categories varies. Among the best known of these plans are the official Nazi plans to downscale Warsaw and to rebuild the Zamkowy Square area, mistakenly referred as the “Pabst plan” until the 1990s. Since they became public knowledge in the 1940s, they have reoccurred time and again in dozens of scientific, popular, and news publications. Early examples include texts written by Edward Sułkowski and Leon Suzin,¹ or Karol Małcużyński in his *Szkice Warszawskie*.² All these publications are largely based on a dozen or so unannotated design sketches, which were discovered after the war, as well as the very general descriptions by the Governor of the Warsaw District Ludwig Fischer and Friedrich Gollert, head of the Urban Planning Office of the Governor of the Warsaw District in the General Government. Niels Gutschow and Barbara Klain contributed to our understanding of the topic, reaching out to the author of the project, Hubert Groß, who was still alive at the time.³ The authors took it upon themselves to describe the plans in more detail, working (as did many others) with the theoretical texts promoting the principles of urban planning in the Third Reich. Gutschow and Klain were the first to distinguish between the plans prepared by Groß to construct a new city on the site of Warsaw, and the plans to rebuild the Zamkowy Square area, prepared by the German architect Hans Hubert Leufgen and chief building surveyor Friedrich Pabst. Later research has not expanded significantly on Gutschow and Klain’s conclusions.⁴

The state of research on the actual building operations of the occupation authorities, who accommodated various buildings in Warsaw to suit their needs, is vastly different. Except for the German wartime press, information on this kind of work has appeared only sporadically in monographs and articles on particular buildings, such as the Council of Ministers Palace (known

¹ EDWARD SUŁKOWSKI, LEON SUZIN: “Die neue deutsche Stadt Warschau” według planów niemieckich [“Die neue deutsche Stadt Warschau” According to German Plans], in: *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce* 2 (1947), pp. 179–187.

² KAROL MAŁCUŻYŃSKI: *Szkice warszawskie* [Warsaw Sketches], Warszawa 1955, pp. 14–15.

³ NIELS GUTSCHOW, BARBARA KLAIN: *Vernichtung und Utopie: Stadtplanung Warschau 1939–1945*, Hamburg 1994.

⁴ WITOLD MIESZKOWSKI, WALDEMAR SIEMIŃSKI: *Okres planistyczny 1945–1956* [The Planning Period, 1945–1956], in: *Atlas historyczny Warszawy: Plany zagospodarowania przestrzennego z lat 1916–2002*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 56–57.

today as the Presidential Palace).⁵ The only work with a broader approach to the topic is a chapter in a book on Juliusz Nagórski, written by Marek Tomiczek.⁶ The scope is restricted to only the few buildings that were designed by Nagórski, however. Richard Němec devotes a brief paragraph to the scant documentation of the activities of Deutsche Wohnungs- und Siedlungsgesellschaft m.b.H. Warschau.⁷

The body of projects developed under the tutelage of the Polish City Board under the occupation authorities has also been studied with mixed degrees of detail. Among the best described are the activities of the Urban Planning Experts Commission, which issued a position statement on the 1938 general plan for Warsaw, as well as guidance on other municipal construction projects. The Commission's activities are thoroughly discussed by Ewa Perlińska-Kobierzyńska, based on existing archival materials.⁸ Małgorzata Papiólek tackles one particular aspect of the Commission's operations, namely the reconstruction of Nowy Świat Street following its destruction in 1939.⁹ Because the archival materials were dispersed as a result of the war, however, it is still possible to come across new materials documenting the Commission and its activities.

In addition to the official activities of the Urban Planning Experts Commission, there were semi-official and unofficial groups tasked with designing the future development of the city or reconstructing its key parts, such as the Warsaw Escarpment. Some of these projects are particularly extravagant. Research on this topic is fairly advanced, and the extant visual materials are being published. The activities of such groups have been described by the

⁵ ZBIGNIEW BANIA, TADEUSZ JAROSZEWSKI: Pałac Rady Ministrów [Council of Ministers Palace], Warszawa 1980, pp. 138–148.

⁶ MAREK TOMICZEK: Juliusz Nagórski: Monografia architekta [Juliusz Nagórski: The Architect's Monograph], Warszawa 2015, pp. 395–421.

⁷ RICHARD NĚMEC: Planowanie i przebudowa "nowego niemieckiego wschodu": Generalne Gubernatorstwo. Warszawa (1939–1945) [Planning and Rebuilding the "New German East": General Government. Warszawa (1939–1945)], in: *Rocznik Historii Sztuki* 43 (2018), pp. 155–184, here p. 167.

⁸ EWA PERLIŃSKA-KOBIERZYŃSKA: Komisja Rzecznawców Urbanistycznych i jej wizja przekształceń Warszawy [Urban Planning Experts Commission and Its Vision of Transforming Warsaw], in: *Almanach Warszawy* 10 (2016), pp. 329–355, see also for all relevant sources and bibliographical references.

⁹ MAŁGORZATA PAPIÓLEK: Powojenna odbudowa ulicy Nowy Świat w Warszawie [Reconstruction of Nowy Świat Street in Warsaw after the Second World War], Warszawa 2012; EADEM: Koncepcja sanacji przestrzeni miejskiej Warszawy na przykładzie ulicy Nowy Świat: Działalność Komisji Rzecznawców Urbanistycznych przy Zarządzie Miejskim Warszawy w latach 1939–1944 [The Idea of Curing Urban Space in Warsaw, on the Example of Nowy Świat Street: Activities of the Urban Planning Experts Commission by the City Board in Warsaw, 1939–1944], in: EWA PERLIŃSKA-KOBIERZYŃSKA (ed.): *Między formą a ideologią: Architektura XX wieku w Polsce*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 133–143.

people involved¹⁰ as well as the aforementioned Gutschow and Klain,¹¹ Mieszkowski and Siemiński,¹² and others. One such group, described particularly well, was the Architectural-urbanistic Workshop, supported by commissions from the Social Building Enterprise (Społeczne Przedsiębiorstwo Budowlane), which was tasked with the construction of cooperative housing buildings, but in fact designed projects all over the city, including new housing schemes, the western districts of the city, and the entire Warsaw Urban Complex. The designs were often at an early draft stage, including theoretical visions for the future city, and were created by Polish architects out of their own initiative, as an intellectual exercise, rather than commissioned by city officials. The designs created in those years were often used after the war. Perlińska-Kobierzyńska discusses these projects at length in her article.

In contrast, the architectural designs for single buildings commissioned by the Warsaw city government and its institutions remain largely unknown and unresearched. Sometimes, as in the case of the project of rebuilding Lubomirski Palace, such activities are briefly mentioned in monographs devoted to the buildings at stake.¹³ Similarly, broader publications on topics such as the reconstruction of Staszic Palace mention such works as well.¹⁴ A similar lack of attention can be observed with architectural projects commissioned by church institutions or individuals. The above-mentioned research by Popiołek covers this area to a certain extent, albeit in the case of just one street.¹⁵ Marek Tomiczek describes a number of projects reportedly co-authored by Juliusz Nagórski.¹⁶ A more general overview of the issue is still lacking, however.

This article presents two lesser-known groups of projects, both strictly architectural. First, I consider those carried out by and for the German occupation authorities by German and Polish architects (read in parallel with the widely-known plans for the construction of a new German city). Next, I discuss the projects and documentation commissioned by the Polish administration of Warsaw (sanctioned by the German government), which, similarly to the German construction activities, have been largely under-discussed, especially compared to the well-described plans and urban planning designs. The

¹⁰ HELENA SYRKUS: *Działalność architektów i urbanistów polskich w czasie drugiej wojny światowej (1939–1945)* [Activities of Polish Architects and Urban Planners during the Second World War (1939–1945)], in: CZESŁAW MADAJCZYK (ed.): *Inter arma non silent musae: Wojna i kultura 1939–1945*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 303–313.

¹¹ GUTSCHOW/KLAIN.

¹² MIESZKOWSKI/SIEMIŃSKI.

¹³ TADEUSZ S. JAROSZEWSKI: *Pałac Lubomirskich* [Lubomirski Palace], Warszawa 1971, p. 47.

¹⁴ JULIAN KULSKI: *Zarząd Miejski Warszawy 1939–1944* [Warsaw City Board 1939–1944], Warszawa 1964.

¹⁵ POPIOLEK, *Powojenna odbudowa*.

¹⁶ TOMICZEK.

discussion will be based not only on materials already known to scholars of the topic but also on never-before published projects from the Polish Architecture Department at the Warsaw University of Technology, as well as archival research in the German-language specialty press, which has not been included so far in research on occupation-era architecture in Warsaw. I will also attempt a preliminary assessment of the projects carried out in that time.

As mentioned above, German urban plans seem to have been the most researched and best described, mostly on account of their spectacular and suggestive nature. This is true both for the plan to downscale Warsaw, prepared by the Würzburg architect Hubert Groß,¹⁷ and for the later project to build a People's Hall on the site of Zamkowy Square, prepared by architect Hans Leufgen and chief building surveyor Friedrich Pabst.¹⁸ Both projects, it seems, were a result of the local dignitaries' eagerness to win their supervisors' approval. This can be seen in the dedication of the Groß plan to the Governor-General, written by Oskar R. Dengel, German mayor of Warsaw (4 November 1939 – 5 March 1940) and originator of the plan:

“The work was carried out by the Würzburg city planners, whose plan for the city of Würzburg was appreciated by the Führer on 20 June 1939. I thank my collaborators for their work and I present it to the Governor-General of Occupied Poland, Reich minister and party comrade, Dr. Frank. Signed by City Mayor, Dr. Dengel, Warsaw, 6 February 1940.”¹⁹

There is another shared characteristic to both plans: for technical reasons, neither was to be realized. Neither considered the local soil conditions (the People's Hall project) or the costs of replacing virtually all of the existing city infrastructure—an issue especially prominent in the Groß plan, where the curvilinear street layout precludes using the existing sewer systems, power and water lines, etc., which constitute a non-trivial part of the costs in all urban planning projects. It also seems that neither the Groß nor the Pabst plan reflected the position of the authorities of the Warsaw district, a position that had not been long established (this point raises doubts especially for Groß's project, which was promptly shelved). Based on a memo from Ludwig Fischer, the district's governor, in early 1944, the occupation authorities had a rather vague and largely incoherent vision for the future city. It offered only general statements about the need to stop the city's growth, reduce Warsaw to a provincial city status, Germanize it (albeit still as a city of hundreds of thousands or even millions of inhabitants, as the Fischer memo states, including the relevant calculations)²⁰, or de-densify industrial facilities in the district.²¹

¹⁷ GUTSCHOW/KLAIN, pp. 28–41.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 103.

¹⁹ MAŁCUŻYŃSKI, p. 14.

²⁰ JÓZEF KAZIMIERSKI: Memoriał Ludwika Fischera z początku 1944 roku w sprawie Warszawy [Memorial of Ludwik Fischer from the Beginning of 1944 Regarding Warsaw], in: *Rocznik Warszawski* 1 (1960), pp. 323–324.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 323.

Julian Kulski, the Polish mayor of Warsaw appointed by Germany recalls that despite the Groß and Pabst plans, “the war-time administrators had clear aspirations to play significant roles as local officials after the war, in charge of a great, million-plus metropolis, with a political or economic significance larger than that of the General Government’s capital, Cracow.”²² The attitude of the Governor and his subordinates to the existing architecture of Warsaw was also not clear. The aforementioned Fischer memo discusses the necessity of making reference to the Saxon era in Warsaw’s history, as well as the times of the Prussian Partition. “Warsaw [...] has a decidedly German past with great extant monuments of culture, which were created centuries ago by Germans and which speak to us today as stone witnesses of the erstwhile German rule on the Vistula river.”²³ Interestingly, these observations, made by Fischer (or rather his subordinate, Friedrich Gollert), are in line with the opinions expressed by German architects and art historians at the beginning of the occupation. In this context, it is worth mentioning the article, “Zur Historischen Baugeschichte Polens”, published in a specialized journal, where Helmut Kern opposes the alleged Polish erasure of German/Saxon influence on the architecture of Warsaw.²⁴ Similar conclusions can be reached from Karl Grundmann’s²⁵ publication on the city’s historical architecture.²⁶

Perhaps the only detailed testimony of the plans of the German authorities for the architecture of the future city was a sketch of a modest house designed for a future German settlement, published by Gollert in his book, *Warschau unter deutscher Herrschaft*.²⁷

²² KULSKI, p. 53.

²³ KAZIMIERSKI, p. 324.

²⁴ HELMUT KERN: Zur “Historischen Baugeschichte Polens,” in: *Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung* (1940), 157, p. IV.

²⁵ KARL GRUNDMANN (1909–1944), born in Wągrowiec. Graduate of the University of Warsaw, where, at the Faculty of the Humanities, he defended his doctorate in history in 1937, titled *Studien zur Speerkampfschilderung im Mittelhochdeutschen: Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklung des höfischen Stil- und Lebensgefühls*. Prior to the war, he was Assistant to the Chairman of the Department of German Studies, Zygmunt Łempicki, and author of several academic publications in linguistics, historical material culture studies, and literature. During the occupation, he worked as a clerk at the Propaganda Office in the Warsaw district and author (together with Alfred Schellenberg) of a city guide and album on Warsaw, published during the occupation. He founded and edited the magazine *Warschauer Kulturblätter*, and was also appointed German administrator of the “Gebethner i Wolff” publishing house. MAREK GETTER: “Warschauer Kulturblätter”—pismo dla społeczności niemieckiej (1940–1943) [“Warschauer Kulturblätter”—a Magazine for the German Community (1940–1943)], in: *Dzieje Najnowsze* 42 (2010), 1, pp. 81–90, here pp. 83–84.

²⁶ KARL GRUNDMANN: *Führer durch Warschau mit zahlreichen Abbildungen, Verzeichnis der Deutschen Behörden, öffentlichen Einrichtungen, Angaben über den Distrikt und Stadtplan mit neuen deutschen Straßenbezeichnungen, Warschau 1942*.

²⁷ FRIEDRICH GOLLERT: *Warschau unter deutscher Herrschaft, Warschau 1942*, p. 233.

In contrast with the long-term (but not very specific or feasible) plans for the city as a whole, the actual construction carried out by the occupation authorities was radically different. First, one needs to emphasize its very limited scope and its focus on two areas: rail transportation and administration buildings writ large, used to accommodate German officials.

When it comes to works created as part of the modernization of the railway network, it is important to mention signal towers (including Warszawa Wschodnia Towarowa, WWT-6),²⁸ a multi-station workshop hall in the Praga district, constructed in 1940/41 (partially preserved today), and the resumed construction of Warsaw's Main Station. All of these projects can be characterized as utilitarian, and therefore all share a modernist architectural character fitting for their utilitarian purpose. This is especially visible in the straight-line façades, made of clinker brick, as well as the limited ornamentation of the workshop hall. Such an approach to designing railway buildings likely also influenced the continued realization of the modernist design of the main station. As a sidenote, it is worth mentioning the modernization plans for the Warsaw waterways. The newspaper *Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung* also reported plans to regulate the Vistula river and to connect it to the Bug river with a canal, thereby creating a route to the USSR. The project included creating the necessary water infrastructure (although initially only flood banks were to be created).²⁹ It seems, however, that no architectural objects were created as part of this enterprise.

Plans and projects for residential buildings and public infrastructure were very modest. Just a handful of projects were realized, which did not stand in the way of propaganda. And so, the transformation—or really, reconstruction—led by Günter Heidelberg (head of the Warsaw building authority between 10 October 1939 and 31 March 1940³⁰) of one of the Old Town townhouses into a beer hall became a news-worthy item for the *Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung*,³¹ probably due to the lack of bigger architectural topics to cover (although the project's social and propaganda-related dimensions should not be overlooked). The establishment comprised merely two rooms with seating for eleven patrons and the project involved chiefly decorative work. The article, accompanied by a blueprint and photographs of the beer hall, was written by Kern. There were other reports about preparations for the construc-

²⁸ JACEK WARDECKI: Nastawnie Warszawskiego Węzła Kolejowego: Funkcja i forma [Signal Towers of the Warsaw Railway Junction: Function and Form], in: KAROL GUTTMEJER, ANNA JAGIELLAK (eds.): Zabytkowa infrastruktura kolejowa Polski i Niemiec: Dialog konserwatorski Warszawa—Berlin / Historic Railway Infrastructure in Poland and Germany: Warszawa—Berlin Conservation Dialogue, Warszawa 2018, pp. 81–102, here p. 93.

²⁹ Ausbau der Weichsel: Deichbauten—Stromregulierungen—Talsperren, Neue Wasserstraßenverbindungen, in: *Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung* (1940), 19, p. VII.

³⁰ TOMICZEK, p. 402.

³¹ HELMUT KERN: Kleine Trinkstube im Keller: Entwurf Baurat Dipl.-Ing. Günter Heidelberg, Warschau, in: *Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung* (1940), 19, pp. 87–88.

tion of a new fitness gym and pool next to a broadly-outlined German school in Warsaw. As of May 1940, the search for a designer for the project was still underway.³² According to an extant sketch and press-mentions of the time, the Warsaw City Theater³³ (Theater der Stadt Warschau) was also rebuilt, including a modernization of the stage in 1942/43.³⁴ The German press also reported³⁵ on the transformation of the Council of Ministers Palace³⁶ into the German House between November 1939 and January 1941.³⁷ The works were overseen by the building authority of the Warsaw district, headed by the municipal building surveyor Heidelberg, as well as by architect Fischer. For obvious reasons, the press did not mention Polish designers and contractors hired for this last project. This is all the more visible considering that—unlike Cracow or cities located in the territories annexed by the Reich—Warsaw did not have a German design bureau that would prepare documentation for construction in the city. The modest German building administration subcontracted Polish construction companies and the architects hired by those firms (often coming with quite sizable teams). The architects were working with a fair degree of liberty. The transformation of the Council of Ministers Palace according to a design by Jan Łukasik is just an example of a whole host of projects realized for the German administration but designed and executed by Poles with a free, post-war Warsaw in mind, as they testified after the war.³⁸ To that end, they consulted on their work with underground monument preservation organizations (at the clandestine meetings of the Society for the Protection of the Historical Monuments of the Past³⁹). Such projects included the reconstruction of the burned roofs of the Brühl Palace (architect: Jan Łukasik, 1940) or the interior redecoration of the Belvedere (architect: Jerzy Müller, 1939/40).⁴⁰

The beer hall and the German House projects also paint a picture of the occupation authorities' taste. The interiors of the beer hall and the side wings

³² Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung (1940), 12, p. IV.

³³ Built according to a project by Czesław Przybylski, opened in 1913. Before the war (and today) known as “Polish Theater” (Teatr Polski).

³⁴ Archiv des Architekturmuseums der Technischen Universität Berlin, inv. no. TBS 281,01.

³⁵ “Rebuilding of a large palace of the former Polish Council of Ministers into a German House with a banquet hall [Festsaal], a club hall, dining room, clerk residences, and additional rooms. City, contractor unknown,” in: Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung (1940), 22, p. IV.

³⁶ Erected around 1643 for Stanisław Koniecpolski, later rebuilt several times. Known today as the Presidential Palace.

³⁷ TOMICZEK, p. 402.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 406. See also for the account of Leokadia Rossochacka, who participated in the reconstruction design.

³⁹ STANISŁAW HERBST: Relacja [Account], in: STANISŁAW LORENTZ (ed.): Walka o dobra kultury: Warszawa 1939–1945, vol. 1, Warszawa 1970, pp. 130–142, here p. 132.

⁴⁰ TOMICZEK, pp. 413–417.

of the former Council of Ministers Palace (while the works in the central part of the building could be characterized as restoration, the sides were largely rebuilt and transformed into lodging and dining facilities) were designed in a rustic style, reminiscent of Bavarian or Tyrolese interiors.

Projects run by city authorities and institutions were much larger in scale. Most of these undertakings were carried out with the post-war period in mind, when it would be possible to realize city transformation and expansion projects begun before the war. This was initiated at the beginning of the occupation period by the Deputy Mayor of Warsaw, Jan Pohoski, himself an architect, and realized chiefly by the City Planning Department.⁴¹ Because the majority of the documentation created by the occupation-authorities-backed City Board was destroyed, our knowledge of these works is incomplete, as is the case of the German projects. What remains, however, is impressive, mostly on account of the long-term character of the urban planning solutions, the steady commitment to improving sanitary and social conditions in the city, and the care for preserving cultural heritage.

Before Pohoski's murder by the Germans in 1940, the city formed the Urban Planning Experts Commission, consisting mostly of professors and instructors of the pre-war Department of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology. The Commission was tasked with assessing the city plan for Warsaw that had been prepared by the City Planning Department, but it also offered its opinions on a range of other issues relevant to urban design. It is perhaps best known today for its opinions on the reconstruction plans for Nowy Świat Street following the damage the street sustained in 1939.⁴² Similar tasks, although somewhat more specific in nature, were assigned to the City Commission for the Protection of Historical Monuments; for example, on 21 April 1941, the Commission approved the projected size of the planned buildings on the south side of the Zakątna and Wójtowska Streets in the Nowe Miasto district.⁴³ Projects commissioned for Warsaw by the City Board were also prepared by other bodies. For instance, the Department of Urban Planning Studies created a planning study for the N-S route (North-South layout, largely overlapping with the John Paul II Avenue today), known as "NS from Złota Street to Wołyńska Street". In 1942, a large architectural model of the western part of the city was prepared and its photographic documentation has been preserved to the present day at the Polish Architecture Department of the Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology (Fig. 1). The project team working on the new route included Piotr Biegan-

⁴¹ KULSKI.

⁴² POPIOLEK, Powojenna odbudowa.

⁴³ Frontage drawing, in: Zakład Architektury Polskiej, Wydziału Architektury Politechniki Warszawskiej (ZAP WA PW) [Department of Polish Architecture of the Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology], sign. 00796.

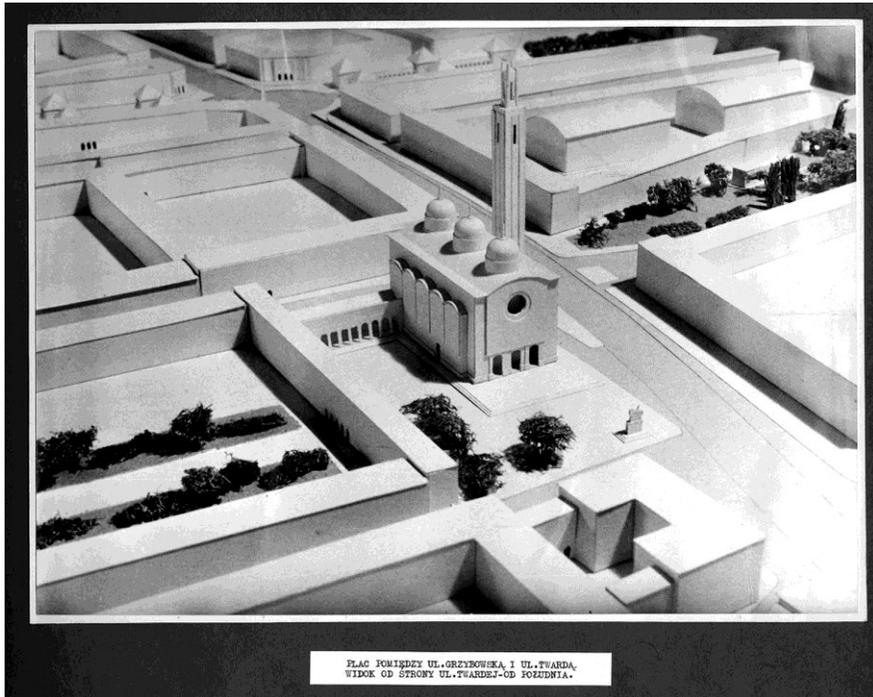


Fig. 1: Model of the surroundings of the North-South route between Grzybowska and Twarda Street (1942), photographic print, in: ZAP WA PW, no sign.

ski.⁴⁴ The project, of course, was a continuation and clarification of pre-1939 plans to build the route. It is also important to mention the projects prepared by the Warsaw Housing Cooperative (Architectural-urbanistic Workshop).

The guidelines for the reconstruction of Nowy Świat Street, Zakątna Street, and the N-S route offer some conclusions about the architectural character of the inner city preferred by the City Board. All these projects were located within the so-called “King Stanisław Warsaw” (Warszawa Stanisławowska), referring to the territory within the city boundaries from the late eighteenth

⁴⁴ Piotr Biegański (1905–1986), architect, graduate of the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology. In 1933–1939, he was Senior Assistant at the Department of History of Modern Architecture and Art, working with professor Lech Niemojewski, and, from 1936, with professor Oskar Sosnowski. During the occupation, he gave clandestine classes at the Faculty of Architecture and taught conservation at the Municipal Construction School. During the War, supervised by Olaf Chmielewski, he led studies on a functional transformation of Warsaw. After the war, he authored reconstruction designs for numerous historical monuments. He became a professor in 1965. JADWIGA ROGUSKA, STEFAN WRONA (eds.): 100 lat Wydziału Architektury Politechniki Warszawskiej (1915–2015): Nauczyciele [100 Years Department of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology (1915–2015): Teachers], Warszawa 2017.

century, which was the focus of the Urban Planning Experts Commission. All of them complied with the suggestions of the Commission, which prioritized historical architectural forms, particularly those of the times of King Stanisław August Poniatowski, but also the somewhat irregular layout of frontages of the era, featuring recesses and protrusions.⁴⁵ All the projects involved removing or transforming buildings constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century and at the turn of the twentieth century which did not harmonize with the planned image of the city in the future. An example of this direction can be seen in the proposition by the N-S route designers to remove the Mirów Market Halls (Hale Mirowskie) from the Saxon Axis and to reconstruct the King's Horse Guard barracks (Koszary Gwardii Konnej Korronnej) that originally stood in that place.

The highly past-oriented approach to designing Nowy Świat Street or the Nowe Miasto district seems to be an obvious choice from today's perspective. A similar approach, however, to the new North-South route (which only partially intersected with parts of the city that were of indisputable historical value) speaks to the vision of the new city center of the Polish capital, not merely its historical center, as seen by the City Board as well as by experts and designers. All projects display an ambition to organize street frontage and improve city layouts within street blocks, which consisted chiefly in the removal of outbuildings.

City authorities also governed project work on particular buildings. The project of rebuilding the seat of City Theaters, which had burned down in September 1939, was dated 31 December 1940 and was prepared by Lech Niemojewski (as main architect), Piotr Biegański (architect), and Marian Sulikowski (draftsman). The extensive documentation initially comprised 40 drawings. The project was prepared as a concept, scaled to 1:200, with no dimensions and specific design solutions (Fig. 2).⁴⁶ Design work was preceded by measurements of the theater ruins, also at 1:200 scale.⁴⁷ The project kept the historical façade facing the Theater square while rebuilding the interiors completely, leaving space for three stages (marked as "TW," "TN," and "TM," meaning *Teatr Wielki* (Grand Theater), *Teatr Narodowy* (National Theater), and *Teatr Mały* (Small Theater)) in the front part of the building, as well as office space, a hotel, and other lodging in the newly-built wings of the building. The building was supposed to be given a new façade from the south, with a courtyard in front of it flanked by new outbuildings.

In 1941, Jan Zachwatowicz prepared a preliminary design for the reconstruction of the Lubomirski Palace.⁴⁸ The documentation is an example of a continuation of the city authorities' pre-war activities and illustrates the ne-

⁴⁵ PERLIŃSKA-KOBIERZYŃSKA, p. 347.

⁴⁶ ZAP WA PW, sign. 01540-01542.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, sign. 18008-18022.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, sign. 14204-14211.

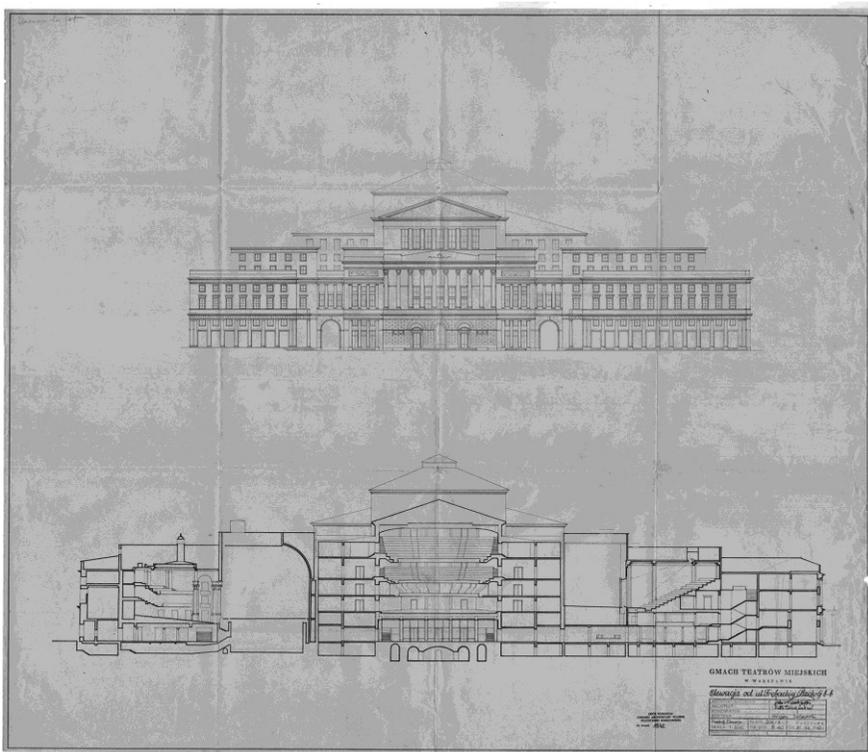


Fig. 2: Design for the reconstruction of the Warsaw Theaters Building, prepared by Lech Niemojewski and Piotr Biegański. Southern frontage and cross section (1940), drawing, in: ZAP WA PW, sign. 01542

cessity of rebuilding after the destruction of September 1939. In 1938, the city had bought the building with the intention of restoring it to its historical form.⁴⁹ In 1939, it was severely damaged. Based on the drawings, Zachwatowicz in collaboration with Gerard Ciołek planned its reconstruction as the seat of stock exchange.⁵⁰

Zachwatowicz was also behind the 1940/41 City Board project of rebuilding the Column Room at the City Hall, seat of the City Council meetings, which had been destroyed during the siege of Warsaw. Commonly known for its historical iconography, the openwork, cast-iron structure was supposed to be replaced with ferroconcrete. A cost estimate for the planned work was filed on 7 April 1941, amounting to 114,000 zlotys.⁵¹ The later fate of the project was described by Mayor Julian Kulski:

⁴⁹ JAROSZEWSKI, p. 47.

⁵⁰ Prace projektowe i realizacje Gerarda Ciołka [Gerard Ciołek's Project Works and Realizations], in: *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki* 11 (1966), 3, pp. 240–241.

⁵¹ Cost estimate held by ZAP WA PW, no sign.

“In 1942 [Stadthauptmann] Leist visited me to see our offices. The reason, or pre-text, for the visit was the issue of the reconstruction of the City Council meeting hall. Using Zachwatowicz’s design, I convinced Leist to back the project. The project eventually lost support as German authorities talked Leist out of the suggested city development, but he did want to inspect the state of the building and visited me specifically for that reason.”⁵²

The city authorities managed to carry out some of the projects, however. This was the case with the rebuilding of the Staszic Palace, which was completed due to the determination of Deputy Mayor Stanisław Podwiński. As a result of those “unauthorized” works, however, the German construction supervision authority’s approval was required for all work exceeding 40,000 zlotys.⁵³

One can speculate again about the shared characteristics of all the public utility projects mentioned above. All the cited examples concerned historical buildings, which meant that creativity was stymied on principle. Just like with the larger projects described above, however, one can discern a tendency to remove the transformations and additions of the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, as well as a drive to recreate missing historical elements (such as the mansard roof of the Lubomirski Palace). Tellingly enough, the newly-designed elements of these buildings also pointed to clear historical references, as can be seen in the case of both the new City Council meeting hall (built in place of the destroyed parts of the building, dating back to the second half of the nineteenth century) and the southern frontage of the Grand Theater, designed with a distinctly classicist look.

Another interesting, though under-researched, area is the issue of the city’s protection of historical monuments, particularly the attempts to inventory them when rebuilding proved impossible. These activities carried on despite the prohibition of any kind of Polish activity in the sphere of high culture, which included the preservation of architectural monuments of the past. Under the pretext of maintenance and mitigation of the risk to pedestrians, the documentation of almost all of the valuable monuments destroyed during the war in 1939 was carried out, and many preliminary reconstruction plans were drafted. Documentation continued for those historical monuments which had not been inventoried before the war. The need for these activities was to be proven soon thereafter, when the process of rebuilding began following not only the destruction of 1939, but also that of 1944.

The technical level of the documentation produced at the time was high. It was created both by well-recognized architect-conservators and those who were just at the beginning of what would later prove to be their long careers working with historical monuments. Here, it is important to mention the Historical Monument Inventory Section at the Technical Department of the City Board. A number of measurements produced as a result of its work have been

⁵² KULSKI.

⁵³ Ibidem.

preserved to this day. In 1942, the section prepared the documentation for a townhouse at 3 Elektoralna Street,⁵⁴ a measurement inventory of an ex-Camaldolese church in the Bielany district (Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary),⁵⁵ and of the church and former monastery of the Order of Saint Augustine⁵⁶ on Piwna Street. In 1943, they inventoried the former Sapięha barracks on Zakroczymska Street⁵⁷ and measured the four frontages on the Old Town Square.⁵⁸ More works were carried out by other institutions and companies. As early as 1940, two students at the clandestine Department of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology, Feliks Kanclerz⁵⁹ and Kazimierz Musiałowski, measured the ruins of Szaniawski (Ostrowski) Palace on 8 Miodowa Street⁶⁰ and of Tepper Palace.⁶¹ Jan Zachwatowicz and Bohdan Guerquin, who would later become professors, measured the ruins of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reforms (formerly the Primate's Palace) on Senatorska Street.⁶²

In the following years, measurements were made for Raczyński (Czapski) Palace on Krakowskie Przedmieście⁶³ and the portico of Lubomirski Palace on Iron-Gate Square.⁶⁴ Work was carried out until the beginning of the Warsaw Uprising on 1 August 1944. Between July and May 1943, architect Leokadia Rossochacka measured St. Anne church and an adjacent bell tower.⁶⁵ As late as July 1944, the Polish Architecture Department measured the coir

⁵⁴ ZAP WA PW, sign. 15247.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, sign. 16221–16233. In August 1942, Kołakowski, Hass and Sawilski, and Kuźma carried out a measurement inventory of the church, sketched from January to March 1943 by Żukowski.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, sign. 16087–16089. From October to December 1942, Żukowski, Kołakowski, and Hass and Gajewski measured the church and former monastery (sketches were made in January 1943).

⁵⁷ Ibidem, sign. 00793–00795. From February to May 1943, Sawilski and Gajewski carried out the measurements; Gajewski made the sketches in May 1943.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, sign. 15639–15640. In April and May 1943, Gajewski and Sawilski measured the frontage; sketches were made from June to August 1943 by Sawilski.

⁵⁹ Feliks Kanclerz graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology in 1946. Later he worked as a designer for the Department of Historical Architecture of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office, next as head of the Department of Conservatory Inspection at the Board for the Protection and Conservation of Historical Monuments at the Ministry of Culture and Art. He held the position of Chairman of the Main Commission for Conservation at the Ministry.

⁶⁰ ZAP WA PW, sign. 15206–15213.

⁶¹ Ibidem, sign. 00556.

⁶² Ibidem, sign. 11464–11470.

⁶³ Ibidem, sign. 14381–14385.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, sign. 14193–14203.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, sign. 15959–15961.

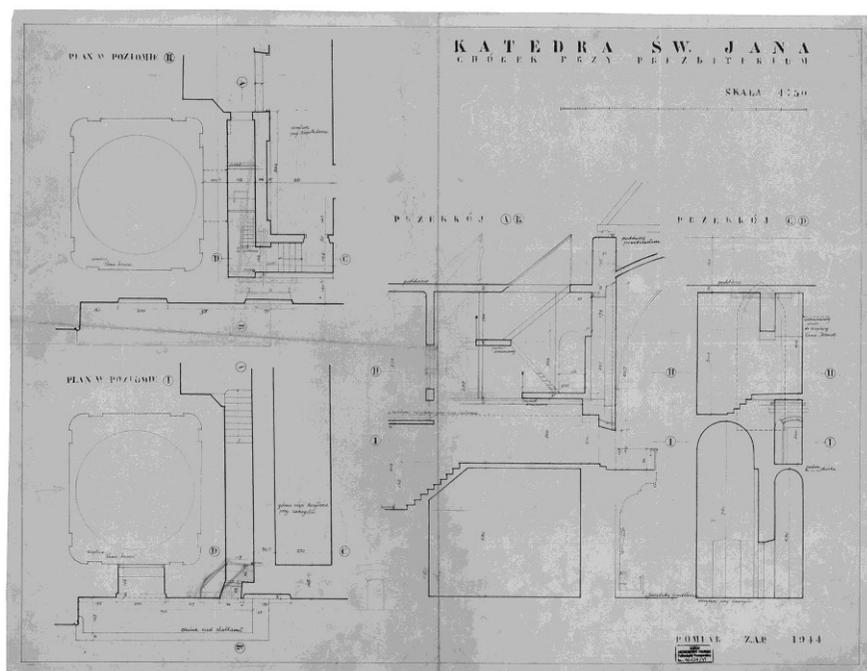


Fig. 3: Inventory of the sacristy at the St. John Cathedral (1944), drawing, in: ZAP WA PW, sign. 16124

by the presbytery of St. John Cathedral⁶⁶ (Fig. 3). Some measurements, such as those of the ruins of the Palace of Bishops of Cracow⁶⁷ on Miodowa Street in Warsaw or of the former convent boarding school owned by the Theatines on Długa Street,⁶⁸ included, as has been mentioned above, suggested forms for post-war reconstruction. These projects formed part of the larger vision of improving city layouts, which has been discussed above, and were premised on the idea of restoring the buildings' original forms. Such an ambition was perhaps most clearly visible in the case of the Palace of Bishops of Cracow, whose reconstruction project involved the demolition of an adjacent townhouse and a return to the dimensions of the building and facade decorations from the eighteenth century. Not only were all the discussed buildings inventoried, but their ruins were also protected from demolition or collapse, which helped them survive until 1945.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, sign. 16124.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, sign. 14318–14322.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, sign. 16066–16071.

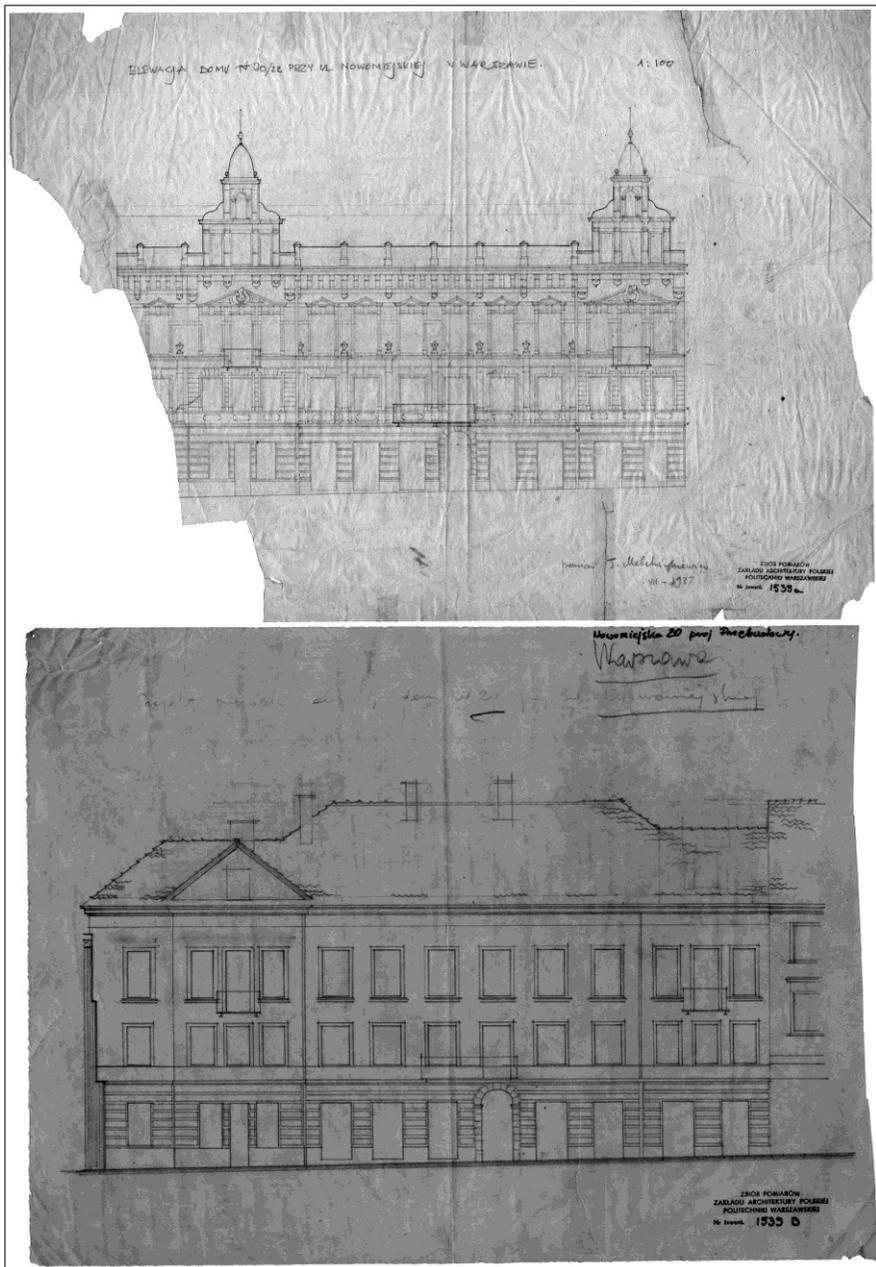


Fig. 4: Inventory and a design for the reconstruction of a townhouse at 20 Nowomiejska Street, prepared by Jan Zachwatowicz (ca. 1940), drawing, in: ZAP WA PW, sign. 01539

On top of city projects, there was, of course, a whole slate of endeavors undertaken by private individuals, companies, or churches; these projects were often financed by the National Economy Bank. According to Kazimierz Sasaki, over 1,500 projects were approved in Warsaw in 1940 and authorities issued about 500 construction permits.⁶⁹ The construction mostly consisted in removing wartime destruction or finishing works that began before September 1939. The very limited access to construction materials made other types of development impossible or very difficult to execute. Interestingly, the Polish city authorities attempted to use the complicated situation to rein in the chaotic sprawl of the suburbs. In December 1941, city authorities introduced a ban on new construction of residential buildings on unorganized squares and streets (with exceptions in place for Żoliborz, parts of Bielany, Śródmieście, Saska Kępa, and Grochów).⁷⁰

Construction practically died out in the entire General Government in June 1943 with the establishment of a uniform system of construction authorities and the ban on construction activities. The only renovations allowed had to be motivated by “life concerns,” such as work on removing the rubble caused by Soviet air strikes; the amount of materials that could be used, however, was limited (e.g., a maximum of 2,500 bricks).⁷¹

The documentation of project and construction work undertaken by private individuals and companies is very fragmented. This group also included works that were not only practical in nature, but also aimed to organize the city aesthetically and improve conditions in residential buildings of the future city. A project that is worth mentioning here is the wartime design by Jan Zachwatowicz for a townhouse on 20/22 Nowomiejska Street, which included adjusting the façade and overall shape of the building to the character of the Old Town. The project involved the removal of neo-Renaissance decorations and the addition of new decorative elements in the spirit of eighteenth and nineteenth-century architecture (Fig. 4).⁷² An example of a church project could be the intention to build new altars in the Church of Our Lady of Loreto in the Praga district, also designed by Jan Zachwatowicz in 1942/43.⁷³

Based on the extant source material, which is very fragmentary and random, it is impossible to advance any certain hypotheses about the vision for Warsaw’s future of either the German occupation authorities or the Polish city administration.

⁶⁹ TOMICZEK, p. 395.

⁷⁰ *Mitteilungsblatt der Stadt Warschau / Dziennik obwieszczeń miasta Warszawy* from 1941-12-18, no. 52/53.

⁷¹ *Erste Durchführungbestimmung zur Anordnung des Generalbevollmächtigten für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft betr. Bauverbot und Ausnahmeverfahren im Generalgouvernement vom 8. Juni 1943*, in: *Verordnungsblatt für das Generalgouvernement* (1943), 50.

⁷² ZAP WA PW, sign. 01539.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, sign. 07131–07158.

In summary, one can conclude, however, that Germans did not devote particular attention to designing future Warsaw and treated the city in a strictly utilitarian fashion, using existing administrative buildings (with changes made only in a few cases), treating the city as an industrial and transportation facility for the front, and investing only in the railway junction. The top-down order to degrade the city politically and economically did not materialize in the shape of detailed projects before the Warsaw Uprising. An exception to this rule is, of course, the extermination of the Jewish population, which formed a large share of the city's inhabitants. The ghetto was completely leveled to the ground (with the exception of a couple of buildings) following the end of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in May 1943. The destroyed Jewish district did not overlap with the city center at the time, however, and public utility buildings were left purposely outside its boundaries.

The image of the planned architecture of a future city in the few extant accounts and objects is twofold. On the one hand, there were grand public areas and representative buildings drafted by Groß and Leufgen to replace the rubble of a historical city, and on the other hand, there were occupation authorities who took historical buildings for their headquarters (sometimes even renovated for that purpose), with interiors decorated to resemble the atmosphere of the *Heimat*.

The significant difficulty of administrating a metropolis of one million inhabitants by a few Nazi administrators, unprepared for their roles, gave Polish city authorities a fair amount of leeway in designing the post-war city. The vision of the city center that can be gleaned from the extant projects commissioned by the city council is one of a city trying to refer to its prime architectural traditions, understood primarily as the rule of Stanisław August and the times of the autonomous Kingdom of Poland. A very particular take on harmony and continuation was prioritized over bold visions of modern architecture. Everything outside the city center was characterized by urban planning and a distinctly modern architecture. It has to be remembered, however, that this set of ideas about the city and its appearance is tainted by the character of the examined archival material, which contains projects by individuals associated with the broadly understood preservation of historical monuments and those by the "most progressive" authors, associated with the Architectural-urbanistic Workshop. In this context, studies on private projects, which are the least examined, seem particularly important, as these projects could have significantly changed this vision of Warsaw architecture in 1939–1944.

Translated from the Polish by Krzysztof Rowiński

Bibliography

Archival Sources

Archiv des Architekturmuseums der Technischen Universität Berlin, inv. no. TBS 281.01. Zakład Architektury Polskiej, Wydziału Architektury Politechniki Warszawskiej, sign. 00793–00795, 00796, 01539, 01540–01542, 07131–07158, 14204–14211, 15206–15213, 15247, 15639–15640, 16087–16089, 16221–16233, 18008–18022.

Literature

- BANIA, ZBIGNIEW—JAROSZEWSKI, TADEUSZ: Pałac Rady Ministrów, Warszawa 1980.
- Erste Durchführungbestimmung zur Anordnung des Generalbevollmächtigten für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft betr. Bauverbot und Ausnahmeverfahren im Generalgouvernement vom 8. Juni 1943, in: *Verordnungsblatt für das Generalgouvernement* (1943), 50.
- GETTER, MAREK: “Warschauer Kulturblätter”—pismo dla społeczności niemieckiej (1940–1943), in: *Dzieje Najnowsze* 42 (2010), 1, pp. 81–90.
- GOLLERT, FRIEDRICH: *Warschau unter deutscher Herrschaft*, Warschau 1942.
- GRUNDMANN, KARL: *Führer durch Warschau mit zahlreichen Abbildungen, Verzeichnis der Deutschen Behörden, öffentlichen Einrichtungen, Angaben über den Distrikt und Stadtplan mit neuen deutschen Straßenbezeichnungen*, Warschau 1942.
- GUTSCHOW, NIELS—KLAIN, BARBARA: *Vernichtung und Utopie: Stadtplanung Warschau 1939–1945*, Hamburg 1994.
- HERBST, STANISŁAW: *Relacja*, in: STANISŁAW LORENTZ (ed.): *Walka o dobra kultury: Warszawa 1939–1945*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1970, pp. 130–142.
- JAROSZEWSKI, TADEUSZ S.: *Pałac Lubomirskich*, Warszawa 1971.
- KAZIMIERSKI, JÓZEF: *Memoriał Ludwika Fischera z początku 1944 roku w sprawie Warszawy*, in: *Rocznik Warszawski* 1 (1960), pp. 323–324.
- KULSKI, JULIAN: *Zarząd Miejski Warszawy 1939–1944*, Warszawa 1964.
- MALCUŻYŃSKI, KAROL: *Szkice warszawskie*, Warszawa 1955.
- MIESZKOWSKI, WITOLD—SIEMIŃSKI, WALDEMAR: *Okres planistyczny 1945–1956*, in: *Atlas historyczny Warszawy: Plany zagospodarowania przestrzennego z lat 1916–2002*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 56–57.
- Mitteilungsblatt der Stadt Warschau / Dziennik obwieszczeń miasta Warszawy from 1941–12–18*, no. 52/53.
- NĚMEC, RICHARD: *Planowanie i przebudowa “nowego niemieckiego wschodu”: Generalne Gubernatorstwo. Warszawa (1939–1945)*, in: *Rocznik Historii Sztuki* 43 (2018), pp. 155–184.
- Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung* (1940).
- PERLIŃSKA-KOBIERZYŃSKA, EWA: *Komisja Rzecznawców Urbanistycznych i jej wizja przekształceń Warszawy*, in: *Almanach Warszawy* 10 (2016), pp. 329–355.
- POPIOŁEK, MAŁGORZATA: *Koncepcja sanacji przestrzeni miejskiej Warszawy na przykładzie ulicy Nowy Świat: Działalność Komisji Rzecznawców Urbanistycznych przy Zarządzie Miejskim Warszawy w latach 1939–1944*, in: EWA PERLIŃSKA-KOBIERZYŃSKA (ed.): *Między formą a ideologią: Architektura XX wieku w Polsce*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 133–143.
- EADEM: *Powojenna odbudowa ulicy Nowy Świat w Warszawie*, Warszawa 2012.
- ROGUSKA, JADWIGA—WRONA, STEFAN (eds.): *100 lat Wydziału Architektury Politechniki Warszawskiej (1915–2015): Nauczyciele*, Warszawa 2017.
- SUŁKOWSKI, EDWARD—SUZIN, LEON: *“Die neue deutsche Stadt Warschau” według planów niemieckich*, in: *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce* 2 (1947), pp. 179–187.

- SYRKUS, HELENA: Działalność architektów i urbanistów polskich w czasie drugiej wojny światowej (1939–1945), in: CZESŁAW MADAJCZYK (ed.): *Inter arma non silent musae: Wojna i kultura 1939–1945*, Warszawa 1982.
- TOMICZEK, MAREK: *Juliusz Nagórski: Monografia architekta*, Warszawa 2015.
- WARDECKI, JACEK: *Nastawnie Warszawskiego Węzła Kolejowego: Funkcja i forma*, in: KAROL GUTTMEJER, ANNA JAGIELLAK (eds.): *Zabytkowa infrastruktura kolejowa Polski i Niemiec: Dialog konserwatorski Warszawa—Berlin / Historic Railway Infrastructure in Poland and Germany: Warszawa—Berlin Conservation Dialogue*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 81–102.