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REVIEW
of the doctoral dissertation of MSc Eng. Arch. Jakub Bródka

entitled

**Late – modern architecture of single-family houses from 1945 – 1989 in Poland:
research and perspectives for protection on the example of selected objects
from the area of Silesian Voivodship**

developed at the Faculty of Architecture of the Silesian University of Technology
under the supervision of prof. dr hab. inż. arch. Magdalena Żmudzińska-Nowak
and

at the University of Pisa (Università di Pisa, UniPi), Department of Energy, Systems,
Territory and Construction Engineering
under the supervision of prof. arch. Marco Giorgio Bevilacqua,

The subject of the review is to assess whether the submitted doctoral thesis meets
the requirements of the Act of 20 July 2018 - The Law on Higher Education and
Science (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1571)

According to Article 187 of the Act (Part V, Chapter 2, Section 1):

*A doctoral dissertation presents the candidate's general theoretical knowledge in a
discipline or disciplines and the ability to independently conduct scientific or artistic
work, and the subject of the doctoral dissertation is an original solution to a scientific
problem, an original solution in the field of applying the results of one's own scientific
research in the economic or social sphere, or an original artistic achievement.*

I. Basis of review:

1. Commission of the Chairman of the Discipline Council of Architecture and
Urban Planning of the Silesian University of Technology, dr hab. inż. arch.,
Alina Panacewicz, prof. PŚ to prepare a review of a doctoral thesis dated
January 9, 2025.
2. A copy of the doctoral thesis.
3. Act of 20 July 2018 - Law on Higher Education and Science (consolidated text:
Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1571).

II. Review

1. Structure and content of the study

The doctoral dissertation of mgr inż. arch. Jakub Bródka submitted for review, entitled "Late – modern architecture of single-family houses from 1945 – 1989 in Poland: research and perspectives for protection on the example of selected objects from the area of Silesian Voivodship", is a single-volume work of 257 pages.

This dissertation consists of 10 chapters:

- I. Introduction and research assumptions (pp. 7-16)
- II. State of knowledge and terminological clarification (pp. 17-42)
- III. General research (pp. 43-96)
- IV. Detailed research (pp. 97-198)
- V. Recommendations regarding the protection of the subject heritage (pp. 199-200)
- VI. Discussion of research results and final reflection (pp. 201-204)
- VII. Bibliography (pp. 205-224 - items closely related to the subject of the study and legal acts)
- VIII. List of figures and their sources (pp. 225-234)
- IX. Abstract (pp. 235-240).
- X. Annex (pp. 241-257)

It should be noted here that the material collected and presented in the catalogue is impressive and reflects the vast amount of research work done by the PhD student. The structure of the work does not raise any objections.

2. The substantive content of the work

In Chapter I. - Introduction and research assumptions - the author clearly and properly presented the justification for undertaking the topic, the scientific problem, the purpose of the work and the time, territorial and substantive scope of the research undertaken. The research methodology and the method of collecting documentation are presented in diagrams (pp. 13-14). The map on page 12 shows the territorial scope in detail. It should be emphasized that the author used his own forms for the house catalog. The knowledge gathered and the methods presented can become the basis and model for other research.

The state of knowledge and terminological clarification presented in **Chapter II** are more than sufficient. They are evidence of extremely thorough preparation for the subject. Additionally, the definitions of terms used in the work, included here, facilitate its understanding.

In this part of the work, the author included extremely important issues concerning the protection of the architectural heritage of the 20th century.

General Research - Chapter III. - presents new trends in 20th century architecture, first concerning the first half of the 20th century, then the second. These are very well presented studies necessary to understand the changes that concern the period after World War II.

Part 1. It mainly concerns the interwar period. The author has properly outlined the social and political background of the changes. It is also worth noting the presentation of the various ways of popularizing new trends during housing exhibitions, through the activities of organizations and societies such as the Werkbund, Arbeitsrat für Kunst, CIAM or Praesens and through new ways of education at the Bauhaus.

The Werkbund's model experimental housing estates were of particular importance for shaping the single-family home. The houses presented there were the result of using a new frame structure and new materials that gave the possibility of shaping not only a new architectural form, but also a new apartment plan. Le Corbusier, describing this, formulated 5 principles of modern architecture. The author of the work also mentions Polish housing exhibitions.

He rightly recognizes the role of architectural magazines, which have contributed significantly to the popularization of new trends and the transfer of knowledge about modern solutions ("Die Form", "L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui", "L'Architecture Vivante", "Architettura e Arti Decorative", "Domus", "Casabella", "Stavba", "Architekt", "Architektura i Budownictwo", "Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie" and many others).

Describing the works of the avant-garde representatives, he correctly chose exceptional houses – icons that certainly paved a new path for architecture after World War II (for example – Villa Savoye by Le Corbusier, houses of Bauhaus professors by Walter Gropius, Villa Tugendhat by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Mrs. Schröder's house by Gerrit Rietveld and the Schminke family house by Hans Scharoun etc.). American houses by Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra and Walter Gropius were also mentioned. It is worth emphasizing that the author indicated not only functionalism presenting composition of rectangular solids, but also organic functionalism.

The reader, however, is left with a certain dissatisfaction regarding the illustrations presenting the revolution that took place in architecture in the first half of the 20th century.

Part 2 concerns the development of post-war residential architecture, with particular emphasis on single-family housing, which the author presents against the background of political and social changes in Europe.

Also at that time, exhibitions (Interbau 1957, Expo 58, etc.), magazines, and new technical and material possibilities contributed to the promotion of modern solutions. In this part, the author discusses exceptional American and European projects (Richard Neutra's Kaufmann House, Ray and Charles Eames' House, Richard Neutra's Kemper House, etc.)

Part 3 of this chapter is devoted to the main topic of the doctoral thesis, i.e. the architecture of single-family houses in Poland in the years 1945-1989. It describes the post-war conditions of the Polish People's Republic - factors determining economic policy, standardization regarding residential architecture, economic and legal possibilities. This very interesting part of Chapter III ends with a description of custom-designed single-family houses built in Poland after World War II.

Chapter IV, the most important part of the work, contains the results of detailed research based on collected archival documentation. An extremely important part of the work is the author's catalog of 30 houses included in this chapter, containing detailed descriptions and richly illustrated.

Part 1 presents the characteristics of the specific situation of the Silesian Voivodeship, in some respects a unique region of post-war Poland.

Part 2 concerns the role of architectural education in this region, job opportunities in state design offices and investors. An extremely important part are the biographies of professionally active architects associated with Silesia.

Part 3 covers non-standard, custom-designed single-family homes.

In part 4, the author discusses the location of the houses and their context.

Part 5 concerns the classification of houses according to their external form, functional and spatial layout, interior design and finishing materials.

Part 6 presents the state of preservation of the houses and the changes made in relation to the original design.

Part 7 supplements the research material with house designs never build.

Part 8 is devoted to the evaluation of the collected material and the described implementations that have scientific, architectural and cultural value.

Part 9 is the actual summary.

Chapter V contains conclusions and recommendations regarding protection and conservation guidelines.

Chapter VI is the actual summary of the research results.

This part of the work contains answers to the previously posed research questions:

- What is the state of research on the problem ?
- What factors influenced the shaping of single-family residential architecture during the studied time period?
- What is the scope of the resources of the subject architectural heritage in the study area?
- Is it possible to distinguish spatial types of these buildings?
- What are the characteristics of the buildings identified in the study area in terms of structure?
- What values are represented by examined resources?
- Can formal affinities with broader global stylistic trends be identified?
- What is the preservation or degradation state of the existing buildings?
- What factors are contributing to the deterioration of the examined buildings?
- Can effective global practices for preserving the studied architecture heritage be identified?
- What recommendations can be formulated regarding the protection of the subject architectural heritage?

All questions were answered appropriately and comprehensively.

Chapter VII is an extensive bibliography (269 items) and a list of 41 legal acts.

Chapter VIII is a list of illustrations with sources.

Chapter IX contains abstracts in English, Polish and Italian.

Chapter X is appendices - a sample full building card.

3. Justification for the selection of the topic and the research problem

The aim of the work was clearly defined by the author. The work does not put forward a thesis, but supplements and systematizes knowledge, which allows for the valorization of the discussed examples. Dissertations of this nature have their undeniable value. They constitute the basis for further, more cross-sectional scientific works.

The proper justification for taking up the topic was:

- unique cultural value of the heritage,
- incompleteness of the state of knowledge,
- state of preservation of the buildings studied,
- urgent need for protection,
- urgent need for education,
- and the interests of the author.

4. Detailed comments

In the assessed dissertation, the PhD Student's original effort was directed at developing and presenting the extensive material collected concerning single-family houses in the area of today's Silesian Voivodeship.

With his dissertation, mgr inż. arch. Jakub Bródka has excellently proven that he has the right tools as a researcher of the history of architecture. Above all, it is worth noting the collection of previously unexamined material, the proper placement of it against the background of the history of 20th-century architecture and the emphasis of the undeniable values of the described houses.

The author has correctly defined both the time and territorial scope of the study. A separate, perfectly developed catalogue supplements the knowledge and illustrates the discussed topic. The catalogue can be the basis for many other studies, primarily those concerning the protection of this heritage. The presentation of these materials is a lasting contribution to research on the architecture of the second half of the 20th century in Poland, so important for cultural heritage. It should be emphasized that the author has introduced systematization, valorization and typification of single-family houses. This is the proper, original, authorial part of the study.

The dissertation is very objective, written in correct language. The study is very good in terms of editing and almost properly illustrated.

5. Final remarks

The doctoral thesis of mgr inż. arch. Jakub Bródka was developed at a high substantive level and is excellent in terms of the researcher's skills. It is an original study of the problem posed and demonstrates the PhD student's extensive knowledge related to the architecture of the 20th century. It also demonstrates the

ability to independently conduct scientific work. The topic undertaken by mgr inż. arch. Jakub Bródka is extremely interesting, valuable and contributes a lot of information to the history of architecture, and the presented dissertation has significant cognitive value. The research conducted and newly acquired knowledge will enrich the existing resources. It will certainly play a very important role in the process of protecting this important architectural and cultural heritage.

Therefore, I believe that the thesis by mgr inż. arch. Jakub Bródka entitled **"Late modern architecture of single-family houses from 1945–1989 in Poland: research and perspectives for protection on the example of selected objects from the area of the Silesian Voivodeship"**, developed under the supervision of prof. dr hab. inż. arch. Magdalena Żmudzińska-Nowak and prof. arch. Marco Giorgio Bevilacqua, is an interesting and useful scientific work and may constitute the basis for applying for the degree of PhD of technical sciences in the discipline of architecture and urban planning in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

I therefore propose that the mgr inż. arch. Jakub Bródka be admitted to further stages of the proceedings and public defense, and after successfully passing these stages, I suggest that the work be distinguished or submitted for an award.

Pospisano odręcznie przez autora

Jadwiga Urbanik