

## Partially Realized Modernist Heritage of Vilnius

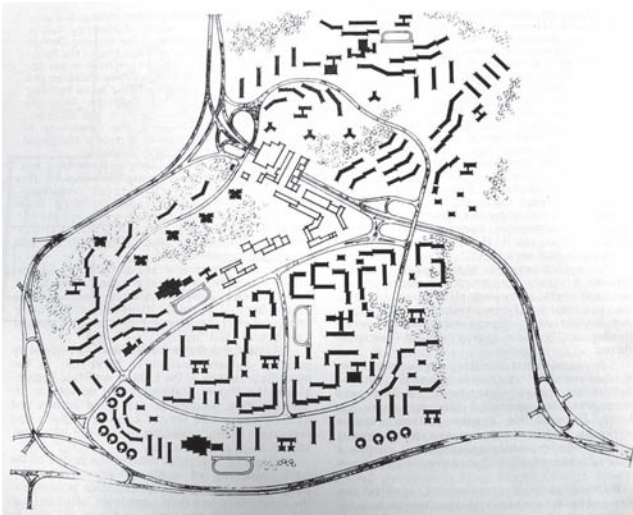
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### Introduction

During the World War II Vilnius lost more than a half of its population, the whole generation of architects, almost a half of its buildings were destroyed. But in the second half of the 20th century, like many other European cities, Vilnius experienced major urbanization and industrialization processes. Till the early 1990s the city's area increased several times, as well as the number of its citizens exceeding half a million. This new city that emerged in the light of "construction of communism" still is considered controversial. On the one hand, during the post-war period industrialized mass construction was practised in the whole continent (in the East, as well as in the West). But, on the other, in the Eastern Europe it had a strong political flavour – the mass construction here served as an attribute of new communist regime. Such rapid expansion had led to essential changes in the city structure and cityscape.

Within the period of 1945–60, the city was developed by densifying or restoring the building structures devastated during the war. During the times of Soviet occupation, architecture in Lithuania evolved in compliance with the political directives of the USSR and legislation framework of the time. Thus in the post-war period, in Lithuania, as well as in the remaining part of the USSR the retrospective stylistics in architecture was followed. In 1955, based on the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR "Considering the Elimination of Intemperance in

1. Lazdynai residential district (transparent – unrealised public centre), Project 1962–63, corrected 1965–66, realization 1967–73, Arch. Vytautas Brėdikis, Vytautas E. Čekanauskas. Čekanauskas archive



Design and Construction", Lithuania as well as the whole USSR shifted to designing industrialized and typified architecture. The earliest modernist objects designed after the war were realized only in the late 1950s. But most were created and constructed starting with the beginning of the 1960s. Today the architecture works of this period are understood by many architecture researchers as an integral part of the epoch of Modernism. Return to the modernist ideology in architecture coincided with the processes of rapid urban development. Previously grown mostly within its historic boundaries, after the 1960s, both the area of Vilnius and its population grew by several times. This was the time of design and construction of huge mono-functional residential, industrial, health care and educational districts. They contained not a few realizations of public and residential buildings, as well as other functional structures, not merely original in artistic sense, but also responding to relevant architecture challenges of the time.

### Development of the heritage

A few dozens of such works of Vilnius architecture and town planning of the 1960s and 1970s won different soviet prizes and were widely enlightened in professional and popular, local and international press. The positive image of the Soviet Lithuania architecture – sometimes still manifested nowadays – had been formed in society, not a few designs of the period had become certain benchmarks for later architectural works. In the 1970s, 40 objects of late Vilnius Modernism were enlisted as the protected heritage objects. They encompassed the town-planning objects (two residential districts, students' campus in Saulėtekis Ave., the New Town Centre and complex of the Parliament buildings), architecture objects (17 public use buildings, 3 public interiors and 14 apartment houses), as well as engineering structure (1 bridge). Within the whole town scale, the heritage objects of Vilnius contemporary architecture represent a relatively small (40 out of more than 2,500), but rather significant – due to their typological composition (most important public objects and districts of the city) and geographical location (centres and sub-centres) – group of buildings highly influencing the image of the capital city<sup>1</sup>.

There is no precise information, why such just newly built objects had been listed as the cultural heritage monuments. According to former head of the Department of Cultural Heritage of Lithuania Albinas Kuncevičius, thus the head representatives of the communist party were attempting

1. Nekrošius Liutauras, Sovietinių metų architektūra kaip kultūros vertybė. Vilniaus atvejis (Contemporary Architecture as Cultural Value. Vilnius Case), [in:] *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*, No. 1, Vilnius: Technika, 2012. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3846/20297955.2012.679786>



2. A new series of 15 typical apartment buildings, designs for the Lazdynai. The apartment houses were arranged in sections across the relief grade, and of the "broken" plan – along the relief. Photo by M. Sakalauskas in *Vilniaus architektūra, Vilnius: Vaga, 1978*

to reduce the relevant number of protected sacred objects<sup>2</sup>. A hypothesis of a certain collision between the architecture of Modernism and Stalinist architecture could be also considered.<sup>3</sup> A critical mass of architects that designed post-war modernist Vilnius were educated in Vilnius and Kaunas universities, whereas most authors of the Stalinist buildings came from Leningrad. In part, this is confirmed by the list of cultural monuments of the time. It has just a few buildings of the Stalinist epoch. It is noteworthy that opposite to Lithuania, in western countries architectural works of late Modernism are protected only in exceptional cases, and in Russia (as the successor of the USSR) legal protection is applied only to the early works of Russian Constructivism.

According to the present legislation, a piece of architecture may be listed as an object of architectural, urban or engineering cultural heritage only following more than 50 years after its implementation. By exception, some objects may be qualified for such legal protection earlier, and these are: objects significant to the statehood; new derivatives of cultural heritage objects and sites in continuity of and supplementing valuable qualities of their historic parts; objects by deceased authors awarded with significant prizes; objects that feature exceptionally outstanding examples of architectural solutions of the time, or are important to the historical memory and/or identity of the local community.

Nevertheless, all objects listed as cultural monuments during the Soviet times (except the monuments with political content) were automatically shifted to the newly formed Register of Cultural Values (further in this text referred to as the Register) following the restoration of Lithuanian Independence in 1990. This move let the people in charge avoid any hasty decisions. Although very few of such buildings have got more or less serious attention from the responsible institutions, some of them have been saved for future generations only because of their status. Some of such objects have been altered regardless even of their conservation status and as a result lost their initial architectural concept and compositional unity. It has become a constituent pattern that with time any restrictions on the use of such buildings are recalled. For example, in 2010 the conservation status was revoked to the former hospital complex<sup>4</sup>, in 2012 – to

the Žirmūnai residential district<sup>5</sup> and the new town center in the Konstitucijos Avenue<sup>6</sup>. Presently, the expedience of the legal conservation status for the university students' campus in Vilnius is under consideration. But there are a few good examples too – the master plan of Vilnius suggests conferring the status of the urban conservation area to the Lazdynai residential district<sup>7</sup>. Following the 1990s, some buildings gained new values. A good example could be the Palace of the present-day Parliament of the Lithuanian Republic<sup>8</sup>, former largest complex of administration buildings that was listed as a cultural monument back in the Soviet times. Today, in the light of restored Lithuanian Independence, it has obtained some memorial value.

As it has become customary, after celebrating their 50th anniversary public and residential buildings of the Stalinist era implemented according to the custom-made and unified design projects gain the cultural monuments' status. An important step towards the conservation of the late Modernism architecture pieces however was made in 2005 – the legal conservation status was conferred to the Concert and Sports Palace in Vilnius<sup>9</sup>. For a few decades already, due to its unique suspension structure roof and the aesthetic of Brutalism characteristic for the time, it has been considered to list this building as a cultural value. The memorial value gained in the events of 1990 has granted an additional relevance to the Concert and Sports Palace. Afterwards, considering the real threat of obliteration, the legal conservation status was granted to a few more outstanding architectural objects of the 1970s and 1980s – the funeral home in Kaunas, University of Technology Campus in Kaunas and Juknaičiai settlement just to mention a few.

#### From partially realized to indeterminate structures

Some of the modernist heritage objects have remained implemented only partially. This is true speaking about design projects of different scale, but could be especially obviously seen in urban complexes. As mentioned earlier, the urban modernist heritage of Vilnius has different status and prospects: the Lazdynai residential district is pending to become a protected area, the New Town Centre and Žirmūnai – to be turned into attractive construction sites, and the fate of the students' campus is Saulėtekis Ave. is still unclear. There is no doubt the former socialist city that emerged in the suburbs of Vilnius over the recent 30 years and that still makes up a significant part in the housing fund, should be reconsidered and regenerated in the twenty-first century. Therefore, these four urban monuments should be considered in more detail and their initial concept should be analysed, specifying the reasons of their turning into cultural monuments, present-day changes and clarifying the necessary form of regulation.

Construction of residential districts in Vilnius was implemented in the spirit of slogans "Faster, Cheaper, Better!" and "An Apartment for Each Family!" At the same time some of them were highly appreciated all-Union wide for excellent planning. Žirmūnai (located in the north-eastern part of the city) was awarded the USSR State Prize in 1968, Lazdynai was the first residential district awarded with the highest Lenin Prize in 1974. Some pieces of architecture found in the aforesaid districts were also awarded a range of various state prizes.

2. By Architects Birutė Kasperavičienė and Bronislovas Krūminis, 1962–1969; the USSR prize in 1968.

3. Planned by Architect Algimantas Nasvytis (1966–67); implemented up to 1984; the prize of the USSR Council of Ministers, 1977.

4. Arch. Vytautas Kęstutis Balčiūnas, Vytautas Brėdikis, Vytautas Edmundas Čekanauskas; proj. 1964–67, implementation 1967–1973; 1974 Lenin prize.

5. 53, Gedimino Ave., Vilnius: 1) the Palace of the Supreme Council, 1982, Arch. Algimantas Nasvytis, Vytautas Nasvytis, Robertas Stasėnas; 2) the Republican Council of the Trade Unions, 1979, Arch. Česlovas Mazūras; 3) the Ministry of Finance, 1978, Arch. Andrius Gudaitis.

6. 1, Rinktinės St., Vilnius, Arch. Chlomauskas, Kriukelis and Liandzbergis; 1973 – the SSRL Prize.

7. Nemeikaitė Sigita, *Sovietmečio architektūra – akistatoje su istorijos ženklais (Architecture of Soviet Times in Confrontation with History Signs)* [in:] *Styba ir architektūra*, 2006 <http://pramogos.delfi.lt/kultura/article.php?id=11212915>

8. Maciuika John Vincent "Baltic Shores, Western Winds: Lithuanian Architects and the Subversion of the Soviet Norm." *Centropa: A Journal of Central European Architecture and the Related Arts* 1, No. 2 (May 2001), pp. 108–116. <http://faculty.baruch.cuny.edu/jmaciuika/documents/journals/centropa.pdf>

9. Antakalnio St., Vilnius; Architects Eduardas Chlomauskas and Zigmantas Liandzbergis; implementation year: 1966, 1974, 1983; the USSR prize in 1967.



3. Ideas of reticular structuralism are represented by a school in Lazdynai, constructed in the epoch of the late Modernism; Erfurto St., Architect Česlovas Mazūras; 1974, the Komsomol Prize in 1977. Photo by Nekrošius, 2011

Žirmūnai was one of the earliest modernist residential districts in the country. The legal protection was applied as to the first-built "micro-rayon", which gained significant professional, political and social recognition. It was built according to the linear plan and functionalist town model, where recreational, residential, social and industrial functions were strictly separated from one another. The system of public spaces in this district is unclear, social-purpose buildings located alongside the central street do not form any architectural complexes (in difference from the other districts). The territory has been developed evenly and gradually, thus the recent changes in the district are of the spot character. This strongly influences the initial silhouette of the district – high-rise buildings are erected, separate parts of the district are densified by inserting new buildings and complexes. As soon as the military and industrial territories have been given to social needs, the initial – linear character of function location has been destroyed. The position of Žirmūnai in point of the downtown area and the river Neris, as well as lower initial development density in comparison to other later residential districts of the city, has determined the exclusive interest by real estate developers. Considering the functional changes, development character, moral and physical depreciation of the district, the decision to recall its legal protection is quite understandable. In Žirmūnai case it is important to prepare as soon as possible its complex regeneration project, which could help at least for fragmentary conservation of its architectural peculiarities. The Lazdynai district is in essentially different position.

Lazdynai<sup>10</sup> is one of the nine districts built in the north-western part of the city, along the 12 kilometer-long former Kosmonautų Avenue. The majority of other later implemented residential districts in the country just stayed in the shadow of this one. The new district conceived by the government of the time as a residential array in the North-West part of the city, was supposed to be a huge urbanized territory, where it was planned to eradicate a lot of underlying forest. But, according to one of the co-authors, Architect Čekanauskas, the project team suggested to retain a part of the green areas thus "dividing" the territory by example of Helsinki planning. The architects of the district visited Finland in 1959 and were introduced to the Tapiola settlement implemented in the Savikumpu district near Helsinki (1950–69). Some researchers even make a comparison of the relationship between nature and historic town and the new town developed in Lazdynai to the benchmark of the interwar modernist urban planning – the Amsterdam-Zuid Plan (1904, Architect Hendrik Petrus Berlage).

A new series of 15 typical apartment buildings, first in the city 16-storey residential buildings of in-situ reinforced concrete structures and three (the fourth remained

unrealized) micro-rayon public centres were prepared according to innovative at the time concept. For the first time in the country, unified design projects were fitted into the natural surroundings. The apartment houses were arranged in sections across the relief grade, and of the "broken" plan – along the relief. Two secondary schools built according to a single custom-made project emphasized the peculiarities of the landscape<sup>11</sup>. The climb-out of the relief terraces was accentuated by the 16-storey apartment buildings<sup>12</sup> arranged alongside the district following the terraces.

The Lazdynai district marks the quality transformation in the public space formation ideology. It was the first district in Lithuania, where pedestrian and transport flows were clearly separated. The transport system of the micro-rayon consists of one transit and three internal streets. Pedestrian lanes are located deep inside the blocks. They are leading to commercial and recreational centres, educational institutions and public transport stops. Abundant green areas are used as parks. But some connections of public spaces have remained unrealized. Architect Mazūras developed the concept of Lazdynai Commercial and Culture Center (1975) as a part of the district centre suggesting the integration not only of pedestrian streets, but even the transport mains<sup>13</sup>. Unfortunately, nowadays in the place of this unrealized public center not only public purpose buildings<sup>14</sup>, but also residential buildings are constructed essentially changing the functional and compositional concept of the block and, perhaps even the entire district. The appearance of church in the former representative socialist town is symbolical. Although the building so far is poorly integrated into the local public space system, it is important that it performs the function of the community home.

Today the exhibition and sports complex on the lower Lazdynai terrace designed by Architect Čekanauskas in 1968–1969<sup>15</sup> is also developed in variance from its initial concept. It was implemented only partially. The Exhibition Building of Achievements of the People's Economy<sup>16</sup> is the only object of the complex designed by Čekanauskas. The structure has avoided any major transformations – only its engineering

11. 23, Erfurto St. Vilnius; 1974, Architect Česlovas Mazūras; presently - Minties gymnasija; awarded with special Komsomol prize in 1977.

12. Architektų St., Vilnius, 1980–85, Architect Česlovas Mazūras.

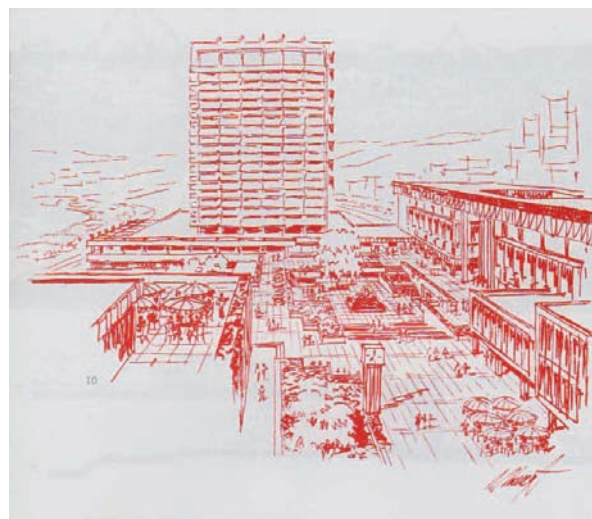
13. Drėmaitė Marija, Prekybos ir kultūros centras Lazdynuose (Commercial and Cultural Center in Lazdynai). [in:] *Archiforma*, Vilnius, 2001, No. 1, pp. 81–83.

14. e.g. St. John Bosco Church, by Architects Čekanauskas and Gerliakas, 2001.

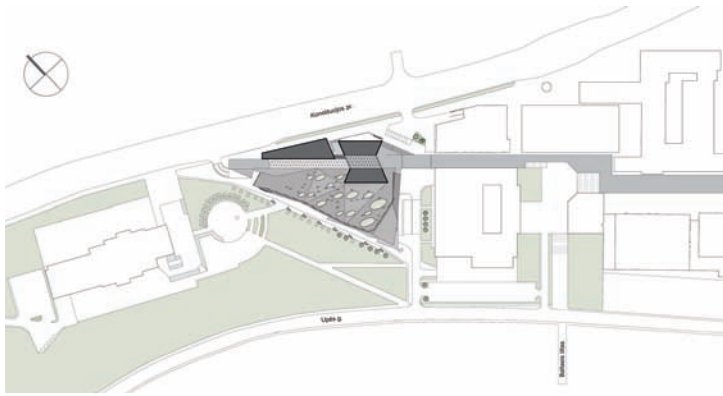
15. Budreika Eduardas, *Architektas Vytautas Edmundas Čekanauskas*. Vilnius: VDA, 1998, pp. 94–100; Mačiulis, Algimantas, *Vytautas Edmundas Čekanauskas*. Vilnius: VDA, 2011, pp. 72–75.

16. Today the main pavilion of LITEXPO, a heritage object, constructed in 1980 according to the project by Architect Edmundas P. Stasiulis.

4. Sketch of public space in The New Town Centre by Algimantas Nasvytis, 1966. Nasvytis archive



10. Project 1962–63, corrected 1965–66, realization 1967–73, Arch. Vytautas Brėdikis, Vytautas Edmundas Čekanauskas.



5. Integration of the new bank building into existing system of public space in the New Town Centre, Konstitucijos Ave., Ambrasas architects, 2007–2009. Ambrasas archive

networks have been repaired and newly installed, equipment in some premises replaced. A part designed for exhibitions is now developed according to its initial function and partially following the initial concept.<sup>17</sup> The remaining unrealized part of the complex causes a headache. Land plots here have been formed haphazardly and public purpose buildings erected<sup>18</sup>.

It could be stated in summary that complications in the existing public space system have been caused by physical depreciation, inappropriate maintenance, unrealized structures or structures realized not according to the district layout. The planned status of the protected area undoubtedly calls for an exceptionally careful consideration of the district's development possibilities. It is believed, however, that after appropriate identification of the district values and existing usage problems, the regeneration project could possibly be matured with developed centre for the entire district and complex regeneration of the systems of public spaces and communication. Nevertheless, it is important to understand: vitality of the district depends not only on the professional skills of architects, but also on consciousness of local

17. 5th Pavilion, Stasiulis, 1999–2001; 3rd Pavilion, Rolandas Palekas, Jurgita Garšvaitė, Bartas Puzonas and Alma Palekienė, 2005–2006.

18. Commercial center *Promenadas*, Arch. Saulius Gecas, Raimundas Pilkauskas, 1995; business center *L3*, Arch. Artūras Asauskas, Eglė Kirdulienė and Jurgis Dagelis, 2005.

communities. To this end by the initiative of the Architecture Fund<sup>19</sup> exploration excursions have been started in these and other “bedroom” districts. Architects who worked on the initial projects of these districts, as well as architects now working on their changes, architecture scientists, philosophers and initiative community members take part in these sightseeing tours. Architects’ Studio AEXN prepared the project *Vietos*<sup>20</sup> (from lit. – places), which aims to get the local residents involved into the regeneration process of the nearby public spaces. Let us hope that with the start of such cooperation among designers, administrators and residents the development of viable district will be successful and in line with its cultural identity.

The *New Town Centre*<sup>21</sup> is a large urban planning project launched in historical suburb of Šnipiškės from 1960s well-illustrating the Modernistic trends of town development (rising administration and public functions over the historic centres). The contemporary city nucleus has been developed in a new territory by transforming the urban structure of historically developed suburb, its development character and intensity. This new public centre has been integrated into the historical downtown area and other parts of the city by urban connections. Today the urban complex is further developed following different architectural concepts in response to the new esthetical, functional and economic needs. Due to these and some other reasons the legal protection to the complex was cancelled.

Like other former urban monuments, the New Town Centre was implemented only partially. With time, it started developing according to other concepts. In the recent decade, the museum<sup>22</sup> and hotel *Lietuva*<sup>23</sup> were reconstructed retaining their initial function and architectural

19. [www.archfondas.lt/en/excursion](http://www.archfondas.lt/en/excursion)

20. [www.vietos.org](http://www.vietos.org)

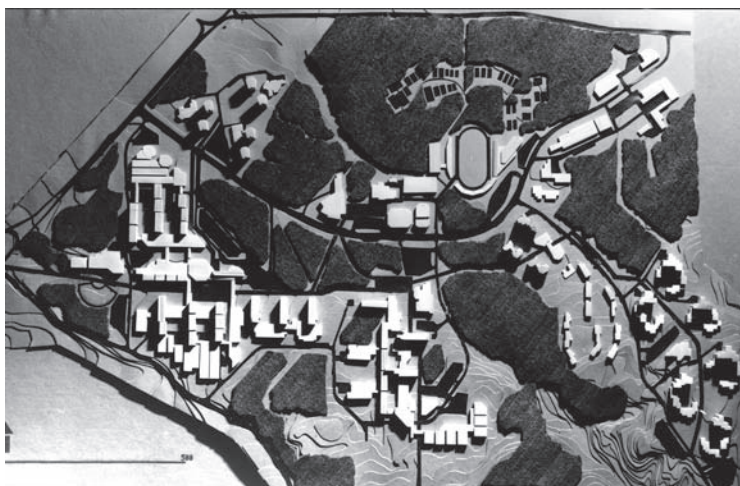
21. *The New Town Centre*, Konstitucijos Ave., planning Arch. Algimantas Nasvytis; *Public service palace* (1975), Arch. A. Nasvytis, Alina Samukienė; *Hotel Turistas* (1974), Arch. Justinas Šeibokas; *Central Department Store* (1973), Arch. Zigmantas Liandzbergis, Vytautas Vielius; *Hotel Lietuva* (1984), Arch. Algimantas and Vytautas Nasvytis; former *Museum of Revolution*; 1980, Arch. Gediminas Baravykas, Vytautas Vielius; competition – 1964, designing year 1966–67; realization 1966–84; the prize of the USSR Council of Ministers, 1977.

22. Konstitucijos Ave. 1966–80, Arch. Gediminas Baravykas, Vytautas A. Vielius.

23. Konstitucijos Ave. 1966–84, Arch. Algimantas Nasvytis, Vytautas Nasvytis.

6. Nowadays view of the New Town Centre. Photo by Ambrasas, 2009





7. The campus accommodating students of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University and Vilnius University, Saulėtekis Ave., 1964–85; Architect Zigmas J. Daunora, Rimantas Dičius, Julius Jurgelionis. Daunora archive

expression. Although retaining their initial function, the hotel *Turistas*<sup>24</sup> and Central Department Store<sup>25</sup> have undergone essential architectural changes. The territory now contains new structures in variance from the initial concept. One of such is a bank building<sup>26</sup>, which, the article author believes<sup>27</sup>, has been inserted contextually, enriched the existing complex and extended the existing (unfinished) public space system. On the western side of the complex, instead of the previously planned concert hall by Vilnius Conservatoire, the design project of the Forum Entertainment enter<sup>28</sup> was implemented in 2004. It still lacks the functional connection with the remaining part of the complex. The new administration-commercial centre intensely developed across the Konstitucijos Avenue in the recent decade has also changed in essence the perception of the public centre under analysis in the panoramas of the city and corrected its functional organization.

*Saulėtekis* is the campus accommodating students of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University and Vilnius University<sup>29</sup>. It reflects the city concept of separated functions that was prevalent at the time. Green, forest-covered territory of 175 ha on the north-eastern outskirts of Vilnius was selected for the campus. By the net of the planned main streets it had to be easily accessible from any location of the city. The call for the architectural competition was made in 1964. Based on the competition, in 1966 the design project of the unique in Lithuania of the time two universities students' campus was prepared and started implementing<sup>30</sup>. The territory of the campus was divided into three functional zones – educational, residential and recreational-sports<sup>31</sup>. Only the educational complexes of both universities functioned separately, but any other parts in the campus were common for both institutions. According to the initial project, a part of educational buildings of both universities was realized, a canteen accommodating 600 students, gymnasium with



8. The new library (implemented in 2013) by Palekas Arch Studio and modernist volumes Vilnius University, Arch. Rimantas Dičius, Julius Jurgelionis, 1971–75. Photo by L. Nekrošius, 2011

stadium and one of the residential complexes. The second residential complex was implemented only by the end of the 1970s adapting to the initial urban concept, but following the new architectural trends.

Today it is developed according to architectural and town planning principles in compliance with contemporary needs, so the natural (forest) and urban (new residential blocks within the campus territory and changed functional connections due to the city periphery development) environment of the campus has changed drastically. Therefore the question of relevance of further application of legal restrictions on the complex, the architectural image of which has essentially changed in comparison to the initial concept, is fairly natural. A part of its functions changed. In 1998 the commercial centre in the residential part of the campus was replaced with a library<sup>32</sup>. In similar time, the canteen building was reconstructed and adapted to the needs of the Business School of Vilnius University. In 2005 an administration building of the Science and Business Centre was erected nearby the educational blocks of Vilnius Gediminas' Technical University (further in the text – VGTU)<sup>33</sup>. Close to this structure the construction of VGTU administration building was started in 2004<sup>34</sup>. In proximity of the new residential complex, the commercial centre was erected in 2011. In 2013, in the territory of educational buildings of Vilnius University, the new library building was completed.<sup>35</sup>

After evaluation of the current and planned processes, the program of "Saulėtekis Valley" development was prepared in 2003<sup>36</sup>. It is a pity the project is orientated towards the attraction of investment only. The process of withdrawal of the legal protection status should be clearly based on scientific research: making an analysis, where based on the project material the object's initial concept should be identified, the reasons of its listing as cultural monument explored, current changes identified and explanations presented on why the legal protection is no longer needed. Thus a clear position of the protection strategy could be formed and valuable information defining the architecture of the period would be collected to be use for educational, as well as scientific and professional needs (in further development of the district architecture).

24. Konstitucijos Ave. 1966-74, Arch. Justinas Šeibokas.

25. Konstitucijos Ave. 1966-73, Arch. Zigmantas Lindzbergis, Vytautas A. Vielius.

26. Konstitucijos Ave. 2006-8, Konstitucijos Ave. 20A, Arch. Audrius Ambrasas, Vilma Adomonytė, Tomas Eidukevičius, Donatas Malinauskas

27. Nekrošius Liutauras, Banko centrinė būstinė (Headquarters of the Bank), [in:] *Archiforma* No. 3–4. Vilnius, 2009, pp. 32–39.

28. Konstitucijos Ave. 26, Arch. Gintaras Čaikauskas, Rolandas Palekas and Miroslav Šejnicki.

29. Saulėtekis Ave., 1964–85; Architect Zigmas J. Daunora, Rimantas Dičius, Julius Jurgelionis.

30. Balčiūnas Vytautas, Studentų miestelis Vilniuje (Campus in Vilnius) [in:] *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, Vilnius, 1966, No. 9, pp. 22–23.

31. LTSR istorijos ir kultūros paminklų sąvadas (Digest of Historical and Cultural Monuments of the Lithuanian SSR). Vol. 1. Vilnius, 1988.

32. Arch. Nijolė E. Bučiūtė.

33. Vilnius Architecture Studio.

34. Sigitas Kuncevičius Architects Bureau A.S.A.

35. Palekas Arch Studio.

36. Municipal company Vilnius planas.



9. Fragment of VGTU complex, Arch. Julius Jurgelionis 1970–85. Archfondas archive, 2004

### Conclusion

The residential districts of Lazdynai and Žirmūnai, the New Town Centre in the Konstitucijos Avenue and Students' Campus *Saulėtekis* analysed in this article are the brilliant examples of architectural, urban and engineering phenomena of their time. They have been justly awarded different prizes and declared cultural monuments. But the socio-cultural transformations of the recent decades have determined certain changes in their status and use. Today the four complexes have initiated four different directions of development. The Lazdynai district is pending the title of the protected area of contemporary architecture and urbanism. The Žirmūnai has been developed based on narrow-minded mercantile interests. The developers of the New Town Centre try to create an architectural image of a young bristling capital city on the foundation of the modernist heritage. And finally the Students' Campus should become a flagman

of technological progress. The history of Žirmūnai and the New Town Centre as cultural monuments has been already written, but without any doubt they will eventually become a part of modern architecture history. Whereas the students' campus and Lazdynai still can be turned into laboratories of innovative concepts matching the development and protection needs.

We can only image how would the city look like and function, if large urban design projects made under the conditions of the planned economy and public ownership had been fully implemented. But does the transformation of the complexes really threaten with loss of cultural values? Or does the fact that an urban structure can satisfy the changing needs of society represent the true value of these architectural works reflecting the relevant idea of the open creation (or indeterminate) architectural and town planning structure of the second half of the 20th century?