Bohdan POSATSKIJ*

CULTURAL FACTORS AND SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF LVIV IN 1945–1990

This paper presents main stages in the spatial development of Lviv in the years 1945–1990 and examines the determinants of the development of the city’s architecture depending on changing cultural trends in the USSR and Ukraine.

The spatial development of Lviv in the post-war period (1945–1990) was largely determined by general cultural trends prevailing in the USSR at that time. In order to provide a full picture of changes in architectural and town-planning conventions, the author discusses two important stages: I – 1945–1955 and II – 1956–1990.

The immediate post-war decade (stage I) was characterized by the pathos of victory. The architectural expression of this pathos is found in monumental buildings and spatial patterns. Their aim was to fill urban space with the solemn spirit of grandeur. Classical architectural patterns were the standard, along with decorative motives derived from folk art. In Ukraine, the main street of Kiev, Khreshchatik, after thorough reconstruction in 1946–1952 became a model for general imitation.

Adoption of a similar approach was impossible in Lviv because of the preservation of the historic spatial pattern. For this reason the development practice in Lviv in the post-war decade was a compromise between directives ‘from above’ and actual determinants of urban space.

The first post-war master plan for the city, elaborated in the years 1945–1948 under A. Natalchenko’s (Trekhubova, Mykh, 1989) supervision, was aimed at preservation of the existing urban structure. The plan envisaged location of new industrial projects and residential quarters on empty spaces in

* Technical University of Lviv, St. Bandery 12, 290-646 Lviv, Ukraine.
peripheral areas, as well as construction of a few new buildings – new landmarks – in the city centre. In general, the planned building projects did not go beyond municipal boundaries as of 1939.

A new spatial element was the airport building, constructed in 1955 next to the pre-war airport in Sknyliv. The project was designed by the team of I. Zholtovski, a renowned Moscow architect, consistently following in his production of 1930–1950 the classical Roman patterns of the Russian classicism. In this way a product of Moscow architecture was transplanted to Lviv, to provide a model to be imitated and a standard of socialist culture.

The same team elaborated the design of a building housing the Veterinary Academy, which was completed in 1961. The architectural style again follows the prevailing pattern. The main feature of the front elevation is a huge portico with Corinthian columns, while the garden side elevation is decorated with pinnacles typical of Russian architecture.

Imitation of classical models was also evident in the location of green areas. For example, the cemetery for Soviet soldiers, designed by A. Natalchenko, G. Shvecko-Viniecki and I. Persikov, completed in 1952, has a symmetrical spatial structure, whose general artistic impression reminds of the famous Treptow Park in Berlin. Historic models were followed in a similar way in the creation of a new park of culture and recreation, stretching over 25 ha, next to the well-know Stryjski Park.

The government of the USSR resolved to turn Lviv into a large industrial centre of Western Ukraine. Construction of new plants producing kinescopes, buses, loaders and electrical equipment was undertaken on the southern outskirts of the city. Residential housing was located on unbuilt areas between the city centre and peripheries. These were mainly small quarters of 4–5-storey buildings, decorated with elements derived from classical and folk architecture.

The development of Lviv at the beginning of the 1950s outpaced the directives of the first post-war master plan, and work on a new plan began. It was elaborated in Kiev under the supervision of A. Barabash and I. Persikov, and approved in 1952. In the years 1945–1955 the number of inhabitants of Lviv increased from 185 thousand to 380 thousand (in 1939 – 340 thousand). The plan assumed that in 1970 the number of Lviv dwellers would reach 520 thousand, and aimed to double the number of dwelling units. Large housing projects were realised in southern and eastern peripheries of the city, while industrial developments were located in the west (Trekhubova and Mykh, 1989).

Residential estates with low building were built first. The Lewandówka estate seems to be the most representative of its kind. It consists of one-two-storey semi-detached houses (up to 300 m²). It was completed in the 1950s.

Immediately after the war Lviv was the scene of creation of architects who come from other Ukrainian cities, mainly from Kiev and Dnipropetrovsk. They
adhered to the conceptions of the ‘Soviet classicism’ of the 1930s and employed Ukrainian folk art patterns, according to the principle that culture should be “socialist in the contents and national in the form”.

The year 1955 witnessed a sudden and definite move away from classical norms; that trend was criticised as glossing over the reality. The new trend declared the use of modern methods and technologies in architecture and building. It was a cultural change, at the base of which was opening up of the USSR to the west. Its protagonists declared development of industrial technologies in building, and creation on this foundation of modern examples of functional architecture. The practice, however, turned out to be slightly different.

Residential housing was limited to two types only: 5- and 9-storey buildings, produced by the Lviv Housing Factory. The designs for the buildings as well as building technologies were worked out in Moscow and spread across the USSR with strict orders for their application. Planning directives were changed as well. Housing estates were to be distributed in space randomly, with green areas between them, which meant a move away from the traditional pattern of residential quarters for about 30 years.

The new conception resulted in the appearance of a new housing estates on the outskirts of Lviv, completely different from the traditional townscape, grossly dissonant with the older type of building. This led to the uniformisation of built-up space and its detachment from the cultural roots of the city.

The third successive post-war master plan for Lviv was also prepared in Lviv under the supervision of A. Rapoport and was approved in 1965. Its time span included the year 1990 and forecasted a population increase up to 700 thousand. The area of Lviv was divided into five sections, joining at the city centre (Trekhubova and Mykh, 1989).

In fact the number of dwellers grew from 516 thousand in 1966 to 790 thousand in 1990, so the municipal area was increased from 111 km² to 152 km². The growing industry needed labour force, so new industrial and housing projects were being completed rapidly. The large panel, a technological innovation, made such quick construction possible. New housing estates were built in the western, northern and eastern part of the city. In 1980 was undertaken the construction of the largest estate, Sykhiv, planned for 120 thousand residents, in the southern part of the city, between Stryjska and Zelena Street.

An important addition to the 1965 master plan was the elaboration of the development plan for the central area of Lviv in 1970. The work was carried out in Lviv, under the supervision of J. Novakivski, a graduate of the Technical University of Lviv. The plan represented a new approach to the spatial development of downtown areas and aimed to transform its monocentric structure into a polycentric one. It evidently followed trends prevailing at that time in the European town planning.
In the years 1960–1975 the largest project completed was the construction of a group of buildings housing the Technical University of Lviv. As regards architecture, this building complex is typical of that time, and it even reflects the proportions between the traditional and large-panel construction: the buildings are constructed using large panels, and two are built of bricks.

Although the exterior design and decoration are marked by simplicity, standing out in contrast to Secession elevations of the neighbouring quarters, the entire complex constitutes a new large quarter conforming in scale to the surroundings. It is interesting to note that the building complex was designed by the students and faculty members of the technical University of Lviv, under the supervision of V. Sidorenko (Posatskij, 1986).

Starting from the late 1970s the state of spatial development of cities, including new housing estates in Lviv, attracted more and more criticism. The most frequently pointed out drawbacks were the adverse social effects of the uniformisation of urban space, almost completely devoid of cultural traits.

One method to remedy the situation was increased employment of traditional building technologies, which allowed to obtain more diversity in architectural forms. An interesting example of such efforts is the housing complex Sriblastyj situated in the western sector. It was built in the mid-1980s, and may be regarded as a successful attempt at combining the new type of housing with the traditional way of urban space organisation in Lviv in the first half of 20th century.

The buildings have alternating heights (5–9 storeys), fairly diversified exterior decoration (white brick relief) and inner yards serving as playgrounds for children and for recreational uses, joined with pedestrian pathways.

The erection of the Sriblastyj housing complex broke down the monopoly of the large-panel construction and showed new possibilities for organizing the space in new residential estates.

Another example of traditional-style building was a housing estate in the northern sector. The elevations of 9-storey buildings were decorated employing the contrast between white bricks and plastered coloured surfaces, including balcony railings and loggias. It seems an allusion to traditional Ukrainian decorative patterns, using frequently colour contrasts.

In the late 1980s the sphere of culture broke free from ideological dogmas, which resulted in greater freedom in formal applications in architecture. Post-modernist trends reach Ukraine at about the same time. The traditional regional architectural detail, basing on the use of timber, brick, roof-tile and metal, returned to favour again. Attention to details was also the result of the generally applied building technologies, which made impossible a shift to new construction systems, necessary for the achievement of new forms. The only solution possible was ‘decoration’ of elevations with similar elements serving
different functions. There were mostly all kinds of little roofs, arches, mouldings, cornices, rails, posts, eaves, etc. This tendency was particularly popular in suburban one-family housing.

The problems of further development of Lviv in the second half of the 1980s again outpaced the master plan targets and estimates. The fourth successive plan was prepared in the Lviv design office Ukrzakhidevyilproekt by graduates of the Technical University of Lviv, Z. Pidlisnyj, V. Bugaev and A. Marev. It was approved at the end of 1993.

![Schematic plan of spatial development of Lviv](image)

*Fig. 1. Schematic plan of spatial development of Lviv. Source: *Lvov ..., (1990)*

1 – administrative and service centre; 2 – residential areas; 3 – industrial and warehousing grounds; 4 – green areas; 5 – main streets and roads; 6 – railway lines; 7 – grounds reserved for future housing developments

To sum up, it must be stressed that two stages in the post-war development of Lviv, presented above, differ considerably. The first one was marked by the principle of cultural ‘self-sufficiency’ within the former USSR and isolation from external modern tendencies in architecture. In the case of Lviv the shortage of ‘own’ supply of architects and town planners was also a decisive factor.

The years 1966–1990 were marked by attempts to integrate European trends into the architecture and building, but excessive standardisation of building patterns led to the atrophy of cultural identity in the spatial development of the
city. The late 1980s witnessed a turn back to regional architectural tradition. New teams of architects and town planners were educated at the Technical University of Lviv, in a number sufficient to fulfil the needs not only of Lviv, but also of the whole region of Western Ukraine, which was an important cultural phenomenon.

REFERENCES

Lvov. Informaciya, (1990), Komitet po Zhylischnomu Voprosu, Stroitstvu i Gradostroitstvu.