



## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE POLISH ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IN ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWNS IN LVIV REGION

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### Summary

It is very typical for a modern city and especially a smaller town to become a spot of a particular tourist attraction due to its economic and cultural factors. This applies to towns of Lviv regions in Ukraine, owing to historic reasons as well as to the specific geographic location, their culture and architecture acquired special features. The Polish state contributed much to the distinctive character of their town dimension. The architectural buildings and monuments constructed between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries are the important elements of the town dimensions of Lviv region. These elements play the vital role in the formation of town architectural attractiveness.

### Keywords

architectural attractiveness • town dimensions • town • architectural heritage

### 1. Introduction

The architectural dimension is the integral part of tourism. The architecture of a town should attract tourists and pilgrims. Many researchers of different fields study the question of city and town attractiveness. The research activity dwells on the problems of uniqueness and local architectural tradition preservation. A. Wojtowicz-Wrobel states: "The modern uncontrollable transformation of the town texture of cities and towns is one of the reasons why their uniqueness has been extinguished" [Wojtowicz-Wróbel 2009].

The above mentioned research activity is motivated by the question of regional architectural tradition preservation. Several critical remarks are made to the modern architecture. The architectural dimension may be interesting for a man due to various aspects: comfortable planning, functionality, historic value, identity. The statement is confirmed by the studies dedicated to the problem of the town image. The scholar activity of prof. Bohdan Cherkas [2008] is dedicated to the identity in the architecture. G. Curdes [1997] partially analyses the issue of uniqueness and exclusivity of architec-

tural dimension. He recalls the notion of *genius loci* (the spirit of the place). The works of I. Fomin [2002] focus on the aspect of the town dimension aesthetics. However the ability of the architectural dimension as the cluster of the objects that is supposed to attract the attention by its outer appearance and inner essence is not studied enough. We recommend to use the term “architectural attractiveness” (from Latin *attraho* “to attract”) to define such an ability of architectural objects.

## 2. Research object characteristics

The object of the presented research is the architectural dimension of the towns of Lviv region. A particular attention is paid to the role of Polish architectural heritage in town attractiveness formation.

## 3. Research methods

The historic, bibliographic and card-data sources have become the basis of our research. The analysis of the modern planning schemes of the towns was made. The real life examination was conducted as well as photo applications were analyzed.

### The body of the research

The architectural attractiveness of the object or dimension may be both essential and visual. Essential attractiveness is formed by some characteristic features of the object or dimension connected with the history of the location, with the objects situated there, with the events which took place in the past and are taking place in the present. A typical buildings marked by the events or famous personalities who lived there may carry essential attractiveness. Visual architectural attractiveness is created by means of form, colours, the dimensional location of the architectural object, without taking into consideration its meaning in the town dimension. Visual attractiveness acts on the level of instincts. It does not need to inform the spectator in advance.

The territory of Lviv region is interesting for its density in the location of its towns. It takes the first place in Ukraine for the quantity of the towns (up to 50 thousand of the inhabitants).

It creates a competition between the towns in the way of attracting visitors and tourists, especially in the tourism and recreation brunch highly developed in this region.

The territory of Lviv region is deeply rooted into the complicated history. Many peoples with their cultures contributed to the town dimension architectural formation. Lviv land was finally conquered by Polish Kingdom in 1349 [Istoriya L`vova 2006]. Since that time and up to the twentieth century it was under the influence of Poland. Polish architectural impact has become an integral part of urban landscape of the towns of this region. Two opposite directions have the tremendous influence on the appearance of the towns: regulative one was the result of the Polish cultural influences and traditions, and non-regulative one was connected with the natural situation of the

places [Dyda 2009]. The interconnection of these two concepts is more noticeable in towns, because of the several factors:

- a) the lack of finance for building purposes and building reconstruction,
- b) the lack of ideological motivation to promote total changes of urban dimension,
- c) the border status of many towns of Lviv region during the times of the Soviet Union has isolated them and preserved their architectural dimension,
- d) rather chaotic development of the towns after the collapse of the Soviet Union; it happened without active participation of the professional architects.

In some cases the principles of new buildings at the territory return to the old local traditions of non-regularity, stressing the mixed character of architectural landscape "East–West".

There are 73 towns in the Lviv region. The region has old traditions of wide autonomy in city governing. It is known that 38 towns were given a status of Magdeburg Law. Some of them later received status of town cultural centers in spite of their unsatisfactory local economy. Such a tradition was almost lost at the territories that found themselves under the influence of Russian empire. Near 78% of regional Lviv towns were founded in the period between the fourteenth and the nineteenth centuries. In the majority of them estate way of housing system prevails. Most of the buildings are located along non-regular planned streets, giving them rather rustically oriented character. At the central part the housing system creates the city architectural image – multi storey stone buildings, town hall, Roman Catholic church and so on. Sometimes the difference between the central part and the outskirts is very sharp and the view of town dimension differs at the length of some meters (Figure 1).



Photos by Dyda 2013

**Fig. 1.** Rohatyn town: the central square with the monument and the city view at the distance of some hundred meters far from the center

The results of photo fixing analysis show that the churches dominate (as a rule they are Orthodox, Greek-Catholic and the Polish Roman Catholic churches).

This two types of buildings make a contrast to their architectural surrounding in different ways in terms of size, proportions, and characteristic forms. The churches have their domes ended with the round and static shape. Polish Roman Catholic churches create more dynamic bias to vertical silhouette. At the modern stage the dimension of the towns is non regular and unpredictable. In order to preserve the image of the town, the role of historic house building is extremely important. The architectural impact of Polish architectural heritage influenced much the formation of essential, visual attractiveness of the small towns dimension of Lviv region.

**The content attractiveness** of the architecture of the period between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries is shown the following way:

1. At the urban level. The systematic itinerary of planned streets and the location of key objects in the town. The traces of Magdeburg Law town planning of the central part may be found in near 40% of the regional towns. As prof. H. Petryshyn puts it "The right-angled public square with the town hall in the middle and the city blocks housing surrounded is a distinctive feature of the planning of town settlement" [Petryshyn 2006]. In the 15% of the towns these squares still functions as main town's square. The initial structure of town's planning is the frequent object research and a unique carrier of information on historic development of the town. G. Curdes indicates: "The networks, originally created once (...) in fact are finally stable. The society may change something in the core features of the network structures in case of specific circumstances of mentioned above financial recourses mentioned above" [Curdes 1997]. Urban level includes the schemes of architectural objects location as well as civil and administrative objects in particular. The way of their location demonstrates the importance of the house building for the city.
2. On the level of separate architectural objects. Their content may become a single source of attractiveness or may be added by some interesting architectural form. Sacral and administrative buildings, defensive objects and residences, sometimes even civil buildings have content meaning. Sacral buildings identify cultural priorities of the society, its spiritual values. Up to the twentieth century the national identity was defined in accordance with the practiced religion. That is why the location of the sacral objects and their dimensional decision is connected with the practicing religion – an outstanding feature of civil identity. The number and types of sacral objects show the status of the town in the region throughout the history, as well as its financial recourses, the coexistence of different nationalities at the town's area, their number and social status.

The administrative buildings, as a rule, are represented by town halls. Their towers mark the location of the town centre as well as the town status of its inhabitants.

The defensive objects and residents have a rich content bias because they are connected with the famous historic personalities and events. They serve as specific markers, first of all because they show the traces of trade routes and the lines of the state borders. O. Matsiuk indicates: "Taking into consideration the fact that many towns and small towns were located at the crossroads of Tatar hordes movement as well as other conquerors, their inhabiting and trade development was only possible

if they were defended by huge stone walls of castles and other defensive buildings” [Macyuk 1997].

The residences may be the chief attractant both for the outskirts of one town and the whole region. The local castles influence the attractiveness tremendously. It is the attraction of particular interest in Ukraine. The reconstructions of such objects, “barbarian” from the professional point of view, have sometimes unexpected effect. In Komarno, for example, the stadium is located in the middle of the ramparts that remain as a part of renaissance castle. The inner side of ground fortifications works as tribunes for spectators. This is the sample of occasional architectural attractiveness. Today, the educational, administrative and clinical institutions are located in many of historic residences. It develops their content attractiveness.

The preserved civil housing, as a rule, originates from the twentieth century. It demonstrates the age of the town, its old status, secures the location of the town centre.

3. The small architectural forms, the elements of town design. These are necropolis in particular. They are the important carriers of information about the history of the towns. Many of them originate from the Polish period. When the territories of the towns expend – these objects found themselves almost in the center of the town. It forced their content influence on the environment.

**Visual attractiveness** is formed on the following levels:

1. Town construction level. The street network naturally demonstrates dimensional, historic and cultural town structure. The system of dimensional boundaries is being created. They provide the orientation in space, facilitate the remembering of the roads, assist in the mental schematic image creating process. The location of the key objects in this system has an important visual constituent. They often have the specific forms and dimensions and dominate in the architectural space.

The character of the landscape where they are located plays a vital role as well as the distance from these objects to the center of the town.

2. On the level of separate architectural objects. Visual attractiveness of the separate object works on three levels:

A. Panoramic level. These are the objects well seen from the margins of the town. It covers transit roads, and the objects that are visually approachable from all the spots of the town territory. These are Polish Catholic churches well seen from the town scenery by their forms (high straight towers or high huge basilica with straight roofs and as a rule with a bell tower in the upper part).

Polish Catholic churches dominate in 48% of the panoramas of examined towns. The old town halls have the similar dimensional characteristics. It should be mentioned, that the tradition of the town hall construction as a symbol of self-governing sometimes proceeds after establishment of the Soviet power.

The castles and fortifications visually dominate as a rule. Olesko, Zolochiv are the most popular towns with fortification objects in Lviv region. Some palace-residences also have their potential in this aspect. For instance, Villa Anna in the town Stara Sil. Its dimensional and architectural decision turns it into the dominant in the town landscape (Figure 2).



- B. Internal town level. The objects are visual dominants only for the part of the town. These are residences, palaces, small castles, and so on. These objects form the closest environment for spectators and create special image for some parts of the town.

The preserved civil buildings are clustered in small architectural ensembles. They form the general image of the town. One may identify the ancient town centre that facilitates the orientation of a person in a town space.



Photo by Dyda 2013

Fig. 2. The Town Stara Sil. Villa Anna

- C. On the local level. Visual attractiveness may appear on the basis of stylistic contrast when the historic building is surrounded by the modern building construction. The monuments, memorials, sculpture compositions, fountains that work as space vectors, have a great influence in creating the architectural attractiveness of the town. Today, the construction process with the assistance of the Polish side in Lviv region is less noticeable. As a rule, these are restoration, renovation of the historic objects, ensembles (Polish Roman Catholic churches and monasteries), the renovation of cemeteries, as well as the building of the new facilities near these constructions. The renovated buildings get new colorful decorations, that make it more visual in the environment. During the con-

struction of the new Polish Roman Catholic churches the tradition of its visual approaching is preserved. Borynia town is an example of such a situation. It is located near the important international highway, but because of the specific relief is almost unnoticeable from that spot. A traveler views only a newly built chapel while going by (Figure 3). It is located at the outskirts. Such a location makes it a chief visual marker of Borynia.



Photo by Dyda 2013

Fig. 3. Borynia town. The view of the chapel from the highway

#### 4. Research results

1. The architectural environment of the towns of Lviv region was formed under the influence of West-European architecture. The Polish cultural influence was the mediator of the process.
2. The Polish Roman Catholic churches and fortification objects are the chief dominants in the majority of towns in Lviv region. Greater part of them were constructed during the Polish times. Along with the objects built according to the local architectural traditions they form a unique image combining at the limited territory different approaches to the town planning and the location of the architectural dominants.

3. The preserving of these two approaches to the formation of architectural environment of the town with the compositional balance promotes the unique view of towns of Lviv region and the formation of its architectural attractiveness.

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