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MATERIAL. HOUSE IN THE SPACE
OF THE URBAN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURAL
TEAM OF THE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY
“SATURN” IN CZELADŹ

TWORZYWO. DOM W PRZESTRZENI ZESPOŁU
URBANISTYCZNO-ARCHITEKTONICZNEGO
TOWARZYSTWA PRZEMYSŁOWEGO
„SATURN” W CZELADZI

A b s t r a c t

Interesting examples of houses as the material for the city can be found in the work of the urban planning and architectural team of the Industrial Society “Saturn” in Czeladź. The modernistic idea of the housing and urban reform is especially visible in two designs executed by Antoni Luft and the landscape architect, Prof. Stanisław Celichowski in 1923–24 in Czeladź. The context of place and the form of housing achieved in their designs create a unique spatial value in the industrial areas of the late 19th and early 20th century. The value was defined by Andrzej K. Olszewski as a contribution of manorial forms to the development of the Polish modernistic thought. Also of interest are the works of two designers working for the Industrial Society in Czeladź. First of them, Professor Józef Pius Dziekoński is primarily known for his outstanding achievements in sacral architecture. Never before, or after, did the “Foreman” (as he was called by his students) create designs for the mining industry. The other designer, Professor Stefan Celichowski, is commonly known for his planning work, especially for his designs of gardens for manor houses and villas. In this context, his designs of gardens in industrial areas constitute an interesting part of his architectural output.

Keywords: polish modernism, house, material

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Ciekawe przykłady domów jako tworzywa dla miasta, można odnaleźć w zespole urbanistyczno-architektonicznym Towarzystwa Przemysłowego Saturn w Czeladzi. Modernistyczna idea reformy mieszkaniowej i urbanistycznej widoczna jest

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zwłaszcza w projektach wykonanych przez Antoniego Lufta, i architekta krajobrazu prof. Stefana Celichowskiego w latach 1923–1925 w Czeladzi. Kontekst miejsca i forma zamieszkania uzyskane w projektach wcześniej wymienionych twórców daje unikatową w skali obszarów przemysłowych przełomu XIX-XX wieku, wartość przestrzenną. Wartość tę zdefiniował Andrzej K. Olszewski jako wkład form dworskich w rozwój polskiej myśli modernistycznej. Ciekawym zagadnieniem jest również twórczość dwóch projektantów pracujących na rzecz Towarzystwa-Przemysłowego w Czeladzi. Pierwszy z nich to profesor Józef Pius Dziekoński którego twórczość jest powszechnie kojarzona z architekturą sakralną i wybitnymi w niej osiągnięciami. Nigdy wcześniej ani później „Majster” (tak na niego mówili jego uczniowie) nie projektował dla przemysłu wydobywczego. Osoba drugiego projektanta pracującego dla Towarzystwa Przemysłowego „Saturn” Pana Profesora Stefana Celichowskiego powszechnie kojarzona z twórczością w zakresie planistyki, a w szczególności projektami ogrodów dworskich i willowych, w kontekście realizacji ogrodów w obszarze przemysłowym jest interesującym zagadnieniem w jego dorobku.

Słowa kluczowe: polski modernizm, dom, tworzywo

*For every generation its own house¹
Antonio Sant'Elia*

1. INTRODUCTION

The turn of the 19th and 20th century marks a highly interesting period in the history of architecture. It was the beginning of the era of steam engines and electricity. Just like today, people witnessed new technological inventions that were intended to improve their standards of living. Also, in architecture, new spatial and functional orders were born. People, such as Le Corbusier, or Sant'Elia, lay the groundwork for a new quality, which was called Modernism. Industrial architecture and the accompanying town-planning solutions were slowly turning into practical packaging for technology, which began to set the direction for the further development of mankind. Cities at that time were not prepared for the changes that were about to come. The clash between the old and the new is well exemplified by such designs as the Plan Voisin for Paris² and La Citta Nuova for Milan³. In the first example, objections were raised as to the necessity of demolishing part of the Paris historic building development and adapting it to the needs of the growing vehicle traffic. The other design entailed the necessity of relocating the existing railway station and constructing roads over the city's substance to improve communication. The design solutions proposed for the existing urban development

¹ Ch. Jencks, *Le Corbusier – tragizm współczesnej architektury*, Wydawnictwo Artystyczne i Filmowe 1982, p. 48.

² S. Giedion, *Przestrzeń, czas i architektura. Narodziny nowej tradycji*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1968, p. 351.

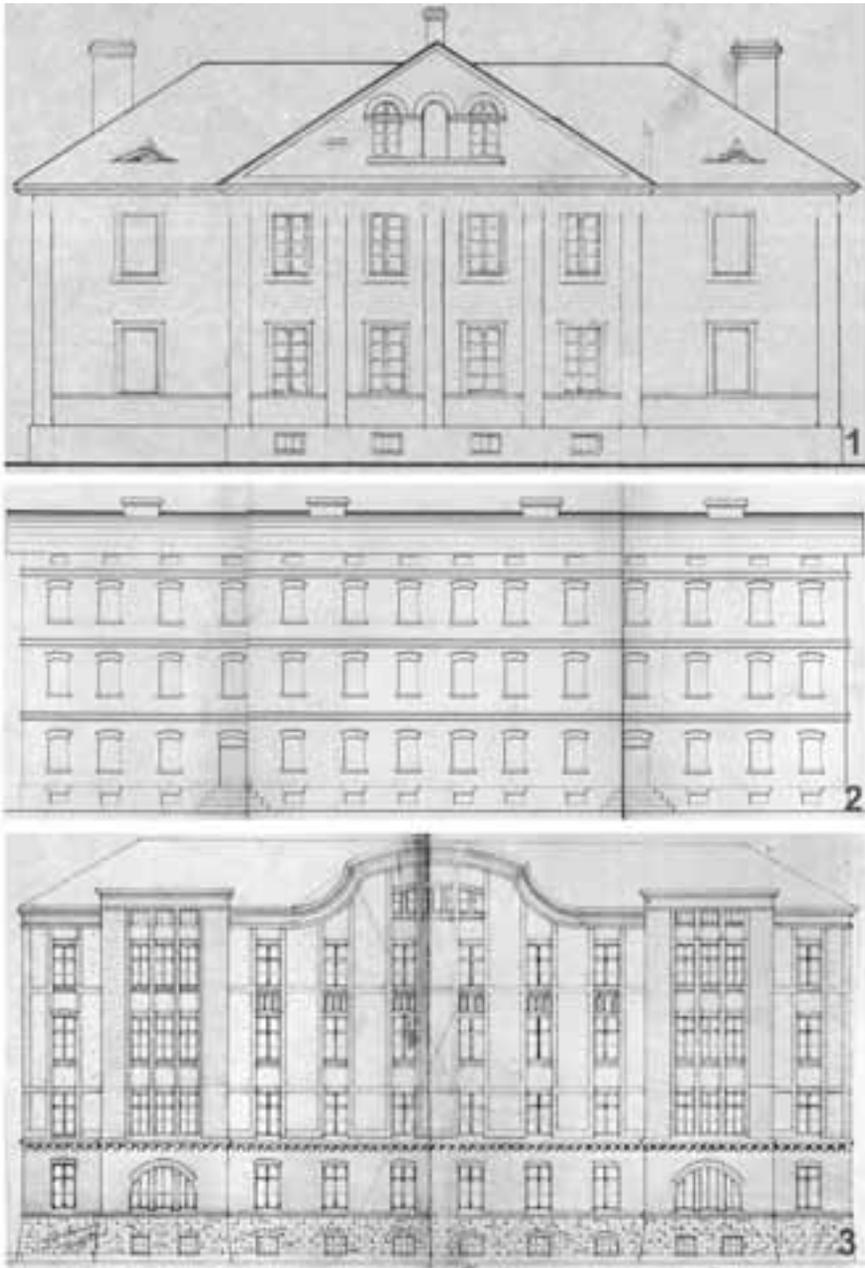
³ L. Niemojewski, *Dwie szkoły polskiej architektury nowoczesnej*, Przegląd Techniczny 1934, no. 26, p. 813.

contradicted the common-sense approach to urban planning. However, the absence of any urban planning solutions was equally unpromising in the long term. New technologies and ideas were embraced by industrial areas, which, just like medieval towns, were established on the so-called “root”. The only difference was that the role of the root was this time taken over by an industrial plant, rather than a church or an inn. We are dealing here with a very profound revival of a concept, which, after nearly 1500 years, once more came to underlie the creation of the new-old urban space. The new-old idea became a tool, which brought great possibilities into the modernistic housing reform. In industrial areas, new urban and architectural complexes were built whose characteristic feature was the proximity of residential architecture to the place of work. This relationship stemmed both from practical reasons, and the limited possibilities of transporting a large number of shift workers into one place, at one time. This is how a medieval concept of town planning solved the problems associated with the provision of supplies, education, health care and leisure. As early as at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, industrial areas started to be planned in a comprehensive manner. They were provided with facilities, such as inns, laundries, post offices, hospitals, schools, movie theatres, and workers’ hotels. All of the above significantly improved the quality of life of workers and their families, and increased their sense of security and identification with the place of residence and work. The new spatial order offered a much more functional layout, which, contrary to the historic urban substance, redefined the housing material. The situation existing in the 19th and 20th century Polish industry can be compared to the problems faced by Warsaw after the restoration of Poland’s independence. They were described by Niemojewski in the following words: *When the initial thrill of regained independence was over, the neglected mementos of the past were more or less tidied up, and the traces of russification were erased, the suppressed social idea shone with a new light, especially that with the huge influx of people into the capital, which doubled its population over only a couple of years, the problem of housing came to the forefront of architectural and construction issues*⁴. Under these circumstances, a new spatial reality of a city inside a city was shaped. The large influx of workers who found work in the industrial plants far from the city centres resulted in the formation of independent urban architectural complexes. Residential houses constituted the most ample material in that space. A very interesting form and function is demonstrated by the residential architecture designed for the Industrial Society “Saturn” in Czeladź. Its construction took place in three phases: 1892–1901, 1901–1914, 1918–1925, which overlapped each other, creating an increasingly richer urban complex.

2. THE YEARS 1892–1901

From 1892–1901, seventeen residential houses were built, including 1 hotel for commuting workers, 3 houses for the clerks, 4 multi-family buildings accommodating 8 families, 8 multi-family buildings accommodating 24 families, and one house accommodating 12 families. The architectural form of the buildings had the highly synthetic features of late Historicism and remained unchanged for all buildings in this area. It was also a very

⁴ L. Niemojewski, *Dwie szkoły polskiej architektury nowoczesnej*, Przegląd Techniczny 1934, no.26, p. 813.



- III. 1. Design documentation: *projekt domu dla robotników kopalni "Saturn" w Czeladzi (design of a house for workers of the Saturn Mine in Czeladź)*, 1982–1901, Archiwum Państwowe, Katowice
- III. 2. Design documentation, *projekt domu dla urzędników kopalni "Saturn" w Czeladzi (design of a house for clerks of the Saturn Mine in Czeladź)* 1901–1914, Archiwum Państwowe, Katowice
- III. 3. Design documentation, *projekt domu dla urzędników kopalni "Saturn" w Czeladzi (design of a house for clerks of the Saturn Mine in Czeladź)*, 1918–1925, Archiwum Państwowe, Katowice

attractive material during the initial period of construction of the urban architectural complex in Czeladź. The form changed its cubic capacity and functions according to the needs. For example: the clerks' house had a larger area in square metres and more rooms and functions, despite a small cubic capacity. By contrast, workers' houses contained flats with a much smaller area in square metres and fewer functions, but had a larger cubic capacity, which translated into a greater number of flats. The features of the described buildings remained unchanged. Residential architecture of the first construction stage of the urban complex in Czeladź can be compared to the large-scale production of cars that come in different sizes, but the model remains the same. It should be added that the buildings discussed above were created by mining engineers, which perhaps is why the architecture is not sophisticated in terms of form and function.

3. THE YEARS 1901–1914

From 1901–1914, three residential houses for clerks and one public utility building were constructed. Not many, but the quality of that material considerably enhanced the character of the entire complex under construction. The four buildings were designed by Józef Pius Dziekoński. *Creator of a national trend, architect of the Warsaw archdiocese, the first dean of the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology, honorary Professor of the history of architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology, honoris causa doctor at the Lviv Polytechnic*⁵. The architectural designs executed for the Industrial Society "Saturn" in Czeladź are unique in the context of Professor Dziekoński's entire work. Never before, or after did he design buildings for the mining industry. In terms of their form, the buildings represent the traditionalist trend, which was thus defined by Lech Niemojewski. *Traditionalism sought to completely eradicate foreign traces by constructing structures representing a highly archaic character, in which the role of cheval de bataille was played by the so-called Polish Baroque. I use the term "so-called" because the supposedly Polish Baroque frequently showed the distinctive characteristics of the German school which was followed by many Polish architects*⁶. The houses for clerks represented a higher housing standard, compared to their predecessors. Residential architecture of the second stage of extension of the Czeladź architectural complex is no longer a work that replicates itself in term of its form, but rather contains the synthetic features of Baroque architecture, or the elements of wattle and daub (Fachwerk). Therefore, it is a medium of valuable creative work that provides interesting spatial and functional solutions, and aims to enrich the residential environment at Saturn. The spatial layout of the complex was enriched by domestic gardens and parks, which considerably enhanced the residential value of the place. *Greenery is in abundance everywhere, there is a separate park for workers, and a separate one for clerks, there are also vegetable patches tended by the miners' wives and children*⁷.

⁵ J. Piłatowicz, *Sylwetki Profesorów Politechniki Warszawskiej, Józef Pius Dziekoński (1844–1927)*, Praca Historyczna, Biblioteka Główna Politechniki Warszawskiej, no. 91.

⁶ L. Niemojewski, *Dwie szkoły polskiej architektury nowoczesnej*, Przegląd Techniczny 1934, no. 26, p. 810.

⁷ S. Krzywoszewski, *Towarzystwo górniczo-przemysłowe "Saturn"*, Tygodnik Ilustrowany "Świat", Dodatek Przemysłowy Ankiety "Świat", no. 22, 3 June 191, p. 10.

4. THE YEARS 1918–1925

The third and last stage of extension of the urban architectural complex in Czeladź took place in 1918–1925, i.e. during the post-war period. Classicist and national forms began to appear in the urban substance of Saturn. Also, traces of the modernistic idea of the housing reform could be seen. *This issue was widely debated across Europe. Le Corbusier, who at that time was still unknown to a wider public, adopted it as his motto. But the young Warsaw architects, gathered especially around the Department headed by Prof. Rudolf Świerczyński, heard those slogans and enthusiastically embraced them. The modernistic leaven quickly began to ferment, spreading to other Departments of the University. One of the first such Departments was the Department of Urban Construction headed by Prof. Tadeusz Tolwiński. Also his students broadened their architectural and compositional approach to urban planning to include, on equal rights, also social, economic, health and other issues. In short, they undertook an immense effort to redefine the existing, deeply tarnished, and equally deeply ingrained concepts which in many cases should be viewed as superstitions*⁸. The new material at Saturn consisted of 36 buildings. They included: 4 residential houses for clerks, 27 residential houses for workers, and 5 public utility buildings. All those buildings were designed by Antoni Luft. The third period of extension of the urban architectural complex included creative elements, which had been used in the previous periods. The residential architecture represented the traditionalist trend, and was repetitive in terms of its structure and aesthetics in all buildings constituting the new urban complex. However, the form of the buildings, just like their structure, was subject to corrections. Like in the first stage of the urban substance formation, the material underwent slight corrections due to e.g. the different surface area of the clerks' flats and the workers' flats. The phenomenon of repeatability of residential houses in the urban substance can be compared to the modernistic idea included by Le Corbusier in his design of 1920. *He called his design "Citrohan" to imply mass production, such as in the automobile industry*⁹. Both the first and the second stage of formation of the Czeladź urban complex share a common feature with the concept described above. There is also a visible difference between the two stages. The form and function of the 1892–1901 architecture was characterised by low living standards, and resulted from the limited amount of investment and most probably also from the expectations of the residents. During the second period, from 1901 to 1914, the higher quality stemmed from the knowledge and experience of the author involved in the design process, as well as from the idea that inspired his work. *When searching for a definition for those activities, it is worth recalling the words of the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz who dreamed "that his books should stray under the thatched roofs". Likewise, our leftist modernists seek to discover the key to making the achievements of the modern culture available to the poorest social strata. They keep in mind the basic principle of Modernism which was beautifully expressed by Le Corbusier: "... C'est la richesse du pauvre et du riche, de tout le monde, comme la pain, le lait et l'eau sont la richesse de l'enclave et du roi ..."*.

⁸ L. Niemojewski, *Dwie szkoły polskiej architektury nowoczesnej*, Przegląd Techniczny 1934, no. 26, p. 813.

⁹ Ch. Jencks, *Le Corbusier – tragizm współczesnej architektury*, Wydawnictwo Artystyczne i Filmowe 1982, p. 48.

*The same thought was expressed in simpler and more beautiful terms by Pericles: We are lovers of beauty, but with cheapness*¹⁰. Moreover, it should be noted that between 1918 and 1925, the modernistic idea of housing started to germinate in the described urban space, which was reflected in the form of the Polish manor house. *The modernistic value of manorial forms lay in their integration with the idea of urban and housing reform, rather than in the use of new construction material*¹¹. The classicising design of the office building of the Industrial Society “Saturn” also falls within this context. In its design stage, the building was intended as a residential house¹². The architectural and urban concept was developed with the participation of Stefan Celichowski and Antoni Luft. The assumptions underlying this concept are best reflected in *“its relationship with the surroundings and landscape, and in the fact that it expresses the life of the community involved in its creation.” Wright expands on the concept of a building as an element of nature. When we take a somewhat broader view of e.g. the medieval defensive architecture, or water or communication devices, it will turn out that the idea of a harmonious – in broader sense – combination of human creation with nature stems from the very essence of a correct technical action*¹³.

5. CONCLUSION

The residential architecture designed for the Industrial Society “Saturn” in Czeladź is the first example, in the late 19th and early 20th century, of different forms and styles overlapping each other to create the substance of the industrial complexes in Silesia and the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie Mining Region. It is an example of a step-by-step, multidirectional development of an industrial area, which is unparalleled by anything created before, or after. Each time, the material in the urban complex got better and more practical in terms of its form and function. The changes in the material and its quality were visible to the naked eye of the residents. To support this claim, a fragment from a newspaper article from that period can be quoted: *In general, the landscape of the Mining Region looks sad, sometimes depressing. It is evident that all the riches of this land had been exploited, but those who profited from them did nothing to give back to the land at least a small part of what they had taken from it. That is why it is so pleasing to see an oasis such as the Saturn Mine. The coachman, who apparently noticed my surprise, or perhaps was himself struck by the sudden change in landscape, leaned towards me from his bench and shouted: And this is Saturn! One can immediately see a better order here*¹⁴. Józef Pius

¹⁰ L. Niemojewski, *Dwie szkoły polskiej architektury nowoczesnej*, Przegląd Techniczny 1934, no. 26, p. 816.

¹¹ A. K. Olszewski, *Nowa forma w architekturze polskiej 1900–1925*, Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków 1967, p. 70.

¹² L. Majdecki, *Rejestr ogrodów polskich. Twórczość planisty Stefana Celichowskiego*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1969, p. 70.

¹³ J. Bogdanowski, M. Łuczyńska-Bruzda, Z. Novák, *Architektura Krajobrazu*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Kraków 1981, p. 20.

¹⁴ S. Krzywoszewski, *Towarzystwo górniczo-przemysłowe “Saturn”*, Tygodnik Ilustrowany “Świat”, Dodatek Przemysłowy Ankiety “Świat”, no. 22, 3 June 1911, p. 10.

Dziekoński, Antoni Luft and Stefan Celichowski – creators of the architecture and urban plans described above – can be regarded as the pioneers of introducing noble spatial forms into the mining industry of Silesia and the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie Mining Region.

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