REMARKS ON THE RECORD OF ARCHITECTURE

The subject of this article is an analysis of relationships between the language of the record of architecture and its material embodiment in the shape of an architectural work.

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The record of architecture is a collection of graphically recorded instructions, guidelines for the construction of defined architectural forms. If we know the language of record and we can read it, we understand its message. The code of record refers us to the form, function and construction of an architectural work.

We can distinguish two functions of record: referential and self-presentational.

a) The referential (defining) function is the technical record of a designed work in a standard, unambiguously understandable set of words, numbers and graphical symbols (normative architectural and constructional markings). Markings included here refer us directly and precisely to a meaning. First and foremost, this language serves communication between an architect, an investor, a contractor and a supervisor. Referential record is of universal character – it is understood by professionals from various countries and cultural zones. The wrong or free interpretation of this record while raising a building may lead to a catastrophe. This kind of record is bound up with the engineering side of architectural creativity and tells us to treat our visions seriously and responsibly because we may be accounted for them on construction site.

b) Self-presentational function.

In the language of self-presentation, similarly to painting, record has got some aesthetic values. An architectural work may be imaginary – there is no necessity of creating it in reality. The material of this language is fantasy and imagination. This kind of record is of notional character, to a large extent – it is independent of building materials and real conditions. The stronger this dependence, the more emphasized the referential aspect of record. The same sketch may be interpreted in numerous manners. When I sketch a vision of a future building, my expression refers the recipient to composition, form, colour, material. However, it presents something more: it informs him about me – my taste, abilities, involvement and talent. The language combines the function of communication with the creator’s self-presentation. The self-presentational function of the language of architecture may be completely ignored at the technical and constructional level of the record of a design but it is very important for the conception of a work. In the former case, the language renders the meaning; in the latter – the feelings and
the idea. Reality imagined by means of the language of self-presentation may be much richer than the really existing architecture. Its space may be much more attractive than the space of an implemented object. It can present nonexistent greenery around a house, nonexistent nice people walking along nonexistent pavements. This kind of language is sometimes used by developers in order to strengthen people’s will to purchase nonexistent houses.

To sum up, we may state that the language of record is an inalienable part of architecture just like a screenplay is an inseparable part of a film or a text is a part of a theatrical play.

Both embodiments of the language of architecture fulfill different functions. One serves communication and the transfer of technical and economic information necessary for the implementation of a work. The other enables an architect to present himself and to render his architectural vision before implementation. The contrast between an architectural design and its real embodiment as a materially existing work may prove the power of the language of the record of architecture or its weakness.