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Corporate Buildings in Armenian Contemporary Architecture

Abstract

One of the main problems of international and Armenian contemporary architecture is the coordination of available information on typological features, professional environment design directions, styles, research equipment and technologies. This study is made in terms of general construction and individual buildings in order to be able to fully describe the architecture of today.

The article includes the architecture of corporate buildings, which were almost not included in the practice of non-central republics of Soviet Union, relevantly in Armenia also. Actually such buildings regenerated in Post-Soviet decades. Today there is an urgent need to study and accomplish them in the building type catalogues of today, as well as carry out their comparative analysis with the contemporary world parallels. The purpose of the article is to study the architectural features of the indicated corporative buildings from Armenia. Scientific objectives are: their appellation, identification of professional environment sustainability directions, stylistic description of the buildings, complexes, as well as the presentation of research equipment used in design process, details of the involved construction technologies, etc. The research method is a qualitative, comparative and simulation study of corporate buildings. Scientific novelty is the classification and reveal of methodological characteristics of corporate buildings in Republic of Armenia with world parallels.

Keywords: Contemporary World architecture, contemporary Armenian Architecture, Corporate buildings, Embassies, traditional style, Soviet Modernism

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Корпоративные здания в современной армянской архитектуре

Аннотация

Одной из основных проблем как международной, так и армянской современной архитектуры является координирование имеющейся информации по типологическим особенностям, профессиональным направлениям, стилям, инструментам и технологиям. Это исследование сделано в плане и общего строительства, и отдельных построек, чтобы иметь возможность полностью отразить черты данного периода.

В статье включены Корпоративные здания, которых, в основном, не хватает в практике Советской Армении, и возникает острая необходимость их восполнения, а также необходимость их сравнительного анализа с международным опытом. Цель статьи изучение, в относительном порядке, особенностей современных корпоративных зданий в Армении. Научными задачами являются: их отабличивание, выявление профессиональных направлений, стилистическое описание зданий, комплексов, а также представление средств, инструментов процесса проектирования, подробностей задействованных строительных технологий и т.д. Метод исследования — качественное, сравнительное и подобное исследование зданий, а научная новизна — классификация и методологическая характеристика подтипов или типов корпоративных зданий Республики Армения.

Ключевые слова: новейшая мировая и армянская архитектура, корпоративные здания, посольства, банки, национальный стиль, советский модернизм

Introduction. Among the virtues of contemporary architecture it is worth highlighting the notable efforts made to reconcile the urban and natural environments. This issue occupies a place of special importance including some public buildings, institutions, and offices constructed as in world works practice [Cerver, The world of contemporary...]. The principal characteristic of the projects included, apart from their indispensable aesthetic and pragmatic values, is their relationship to the world of work cooperation which is new especially for small republics of former Soviet Union, as it is in the case of Armenia today. In the Post-Soviet decades the indicated buildings in an obligatory way are newly added architectural instances which are forming a special group of buildings from the contemporary times. However the major corporations and multinationals have finally recognized the need to harmonize architecture with the world system, not only as a sign of respect for environmental conditions, but also as a means of achieving an attractive corporation with companies worldwide [Kertmenjian, 2021, pp. 226–228].

As a result, the design of all these recent buildings have been based on two fundamental parameters — the construction of a meaningful, identifying image and the creation of a working and business environment that is pleasant, harmonious, and, above all-important human dimension for international activities. In fact, the importance today's society attaches to image which is reflected in the headquarters of the image corporations and in many public buildings, where top class architectural design has become the best way expressing a philosophy, whether corporate or governmental. In some cases, the emphasis has been placed on tradition and perpetuity; in others, on innovation and creativity. The common thread running through all the projects, however, is their attempt to present an image those accords with a philosophy of work and cooperation with the abroad.

There are huge number of references studying the Modern and Contemporary Architecture. Considering the subject of this study due to attention are the following publications cited below: Farrington, Architecture: Banks; Bony, L'Architecture Moderne, 2012; de Bure, Architecture contemporaine, 2015; Иконников, Архитектура XX века, 2002; Jencks, The story of Post-Modernism, 2011; Jodidio. Architecture Now! 2009; Taschen, L'Architecture Moderne de A à Z, 2016.

In the presented article within 9 different sections are comparatively manipulated: 1. buildings of public bodies, 2. public service buildings, 3. offices, 4. banks, 5. corporate buildings of different agencies, 6. exhibition centers, 7. research centers, 8. IT factories, 9. skyscrapers of companies etc. which accordingly at the end

came into results describing the contemporary architecture of Armenia today.

1. The Public bodies.

Public institutions at international level have been caught up in the general trend for updating and reviewing the architectural principles of their buildings. There is a clear desire to dispel the myths surrounding the role of public bodies in the personal life of the individual and what better than a change of image and structure. It is a question that: is it to try to create a friendlier face? But this is not simply a question of redesign. The idea goes much further than this. It also involves the inclusion of environmental considerations in the construction of these buildings, which house anything from the parliaments of major countries to city halls, law courts, embassies, and courts of human rights. In following this new direction, landscaping and environmental activities place these new on the threshold of the fresh, intensely ecological millennium.

From all mentioned above for this article are real components the examples of foreign embassies built in Armenia in the period of Independence. They created a new image in the urban life of the capital Yerevan.

A. However some international examples of public bodies are the followings: court of Human rights in Strasbourg; Deutscher Bundestag in Bonn; Finnish Embassy in Washington D.C.; European Free Trade Association in Brussels; Reichstag in Berlin; Federal building on Foley Square in New York; Court building on Foley Square in New York; Government offices for the Department of Bouches-du-Rhone in Marseilles; Tokyo City Hall; City Hall in the Hague; Reze-le-Nantes City Hall; Portugal Pavilion in Lisbon [Cerver, The world of contemporary..., pp. 586–609].

B. Armenian examples of the public bodies are: the government house 3 in Yerevan, Government house 4 in Yerevan. Many courts of different types constructed in the period of Independence, The New city hall in Yerevan, as well as the construction activity of many embassies built after the dissolve of Soviet Union, Such as, the embassies of: Russian federation, France, United Kingdom, USA, Taiwan, Uruguay, Brazil etc [Kertmenjian, Architecture of administrative-governmental... 2018].

2. Public Services' buildings.

The focus of attention in this section will be on those small urban buildings which for practical purposes form part of the urban furniture of every large town and city. These might be small medical facilities, weather centers, water circulation control centers, or shipping navigation beacons and lighthouses, the proper use of which enhances the quality of life for the local population. They have been chosen for inclusion

in this selection of contemporary architecture because of the innovation of their design; they have given added value of the landscape of each individual city.

A. Very typical examples from world parallels are: Manliusmountain area in La Cardana, Spain; signal box in Basle, Switzerland; Montfort Werbung GmbH in Klaus, Austria; Pincelli in Sassuolo Italy etc [Cerver, The world of contemporary..., pp. 610–624].

B. The Armenian instances of Public Services' building are too much and at the same time few. However there is so much renovation examples performed. Beside there are new such buildings as: they are of limited types: clinics, such as: the polyclinic center on Kotchar street in Yerevan, Medical centers and laboratory centers, such as "Armenia", "Izmirlyan", "Apollon", "Arabkir", "Arfa-Med Hearing Aid Center", "Avanta Stomatology and cosmetology", "Cardiological Clinic", "Vicmed of Aesthetic Medicine", "Medical Generics and Primary health care", "Mamo center", "Shengavit medical center" etc. Actually the spread types of services' buildings are medical centers in the role of private polyclinics in the system of cities.

3. Offices.

Dynamic action; flexibility, communications, and flow all terms used to define the designs for the offices included in this section. Technology now comes to the aid of those working at tasks which were hitherto monotonous and solitary and offices are no longer the exclusive domain of the bosses. Instead the areas destined for office use have become the venue in which both ideas and products are created by the office is studied in minute detail, with the same care that goes into designing a logo or planning a publicity campaign. Taken all in all the exterior of an office reflect equally the true spirit of the company.

A. Such examples in world contemporary practice are in behalf: Riddell's in Jackson Hole, USA; Loop Telecom in Barcelona; Elizabeth Alford Center in New York etc [Cerver, The world of contemporary..., pp. 634–648].

B. Armenian examples are: Moscow Center in Yerevan; AUA Center in Yerevan; Viva Cell telecommunication center etc. In reality they are agencies in contact with world famed firms, almost created by interesting images of contemporary architecture etc.

4. BANKS.

Private Banks are new for the Armenian practice from post- Soviet period. That so the design impulse of World architecture, if is a development towards the contemporary, in the Armenian sense they are new [Farrington, Architecture: Banks]. Money has not always been associated with good taste and the same is true of architecture. Traditionally, the biggest budgets have not always translated into the best designs, still less into the greatest innovations in

the field of architecture. In any event, it is certain that banks, deeply involved in their mergers and acquisitions still need somewhere to carry out and centralize their operations. Moving on from the names traditionally associated with bank buildings (Rocco Sen — Kee Yim, Nikkei Sekkei, Kohn, Pederson & Fox, for example), there has been a succession of new figures winning commissions for some of the big banks.

A. World Examples are: the Commerzbank in Frankfurt; Hypo Alps Adria Bank in Klagenfurt, Austria; Nord LB. North German State Clearing Bank Building in Hannover, etc [Cerver, The world of contemporary..., pp. 652–665].

B. Armenian examples are: "Kamar" bank, the bank beside the new municipality of Yerevan, Popular Bank of Armenia, Prometei bank Yerevan, and The Central Bank of Armenia etc.

5. Corporate buildings of different Agencies.

The corporate buildings described in this section consist of offices and their ancillary services, such as restaurants, conference rooms bars, and so on, as well as the areas around them, in the form of parks or squares. This type of architectural combination provides accommodation for companies, and apart from fulfilling a variety of different functions, these buildings also serve as publicity generators in their own right in other words. They put across a specific image which represents the interests and the distinctive features of the company. In this context, the work of the Architect is based on a clear understanding with the client, and the design will be the materialization of ideas born of the dialog between them. There are two clear objectives: first to construct a complex which will incorporate concepts of functional performance and comfort, and, second, to create an exclusive symbol to the elicit recognition on the format level.

A. Examples of world architecture contemporary practice are: Jean-Baptist Berlier Industrial Hotel in Paris; Central Beheer extension in Appeldoorn, Netherlands; German Federal Railway Costumer Service building in Duisburg; Oracle in Redwood, California; Grain treatment plant in Marche-en-Famenne, Belgium, NTT office Center in Tokyo; Morgan Stanley Dean Witter in Madrid; TRW Central Office in Lindhurst, Ohio; British Airways offices, Heathrow, London [Cerver, The world of contemporary..., pp. 670–690].

B. The Armenian examples from contemporary period are also of resting and entertainment places: within the first of many floors of a building (e.g. "Babylon"), others associated within the large complexes of entertainment and resting centers (e.g. "Pharaoh"). The freestanding examples are more interesting from the point of architecture, such as Gandzasar restaurant and hotel, Renaissance Restaurant in Yerevan, Kars Restaurant, Zey-

touna Restaurant in Yerevan, Four Seasons Restaurant in Yerevan, Caucasusrestaurant and hotel complex on the highway leading to Ashtarak city, Tufenkjian National Cousin-art center- Hotel etc. [Kertmenjian, Armenian Architecture of..., 2017].

6. Convention and Exhibition Centers.

Convention and exhibition centers and trade fair sites are characterized by the temporary nature of the events to which they play host. This means that there is a very intense flow of visitors and exhibitors passing through in specified periods of time, with the venue being cleared again before the next event begins. Added to this are the facts that, born of the desire to provide an air of exclusivity, the associated buildings seek to be aesthetically striking, while not overlooking their functional purpose. Trade fair complexes in turn are national flag bearers: they are structures which represent a country or a region; they are buildings which are intended for publicity, and their architecture must be capable of reflecting the most significant features of the geographical area which they represent. Over the past few years, exhibition pavilions have proved, for architects, to be the perfect area for experimentation, giving them the opportunity to test out structural solutions and new materials alike; in short, the chance to speak their own architectural language. Worldwide known some examples of the convention and exhibition centers are demonstrated below.

A. World Examples are: New Leipzig Trade Fair Building; Moscow city Trade center; Tokyo International Forum; Kunibiki Trade Fair Building; Lille Congress Center; EXPOLisbon'98; Cartuja 93 in Seville, Millennium Experience in Greenwich, London; Brussels Exhibition Center, Pedestrian Route; Valencia Congress Center, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Center in Australia; Torhaus in Frankfurt [Cerver, The world of contemporary..., pp. 696–716].

B. What about the Armenian instances, should be mentioned: The economic achievements pavilion in Yerevan built in soviet times. Today there are many buildings replacing such undertakings for temporary order. Such are the hall of Sportive concert complex, as well as, so many halls which have vast lobby serving for the period. Such a complex planned for the purpose is the Chinese trade exhibition center in Yerevan [Григорян, Товмасян, Архитектура Советской Армении, 1986].

7. Research centers.

The specific nature of some architectural categories means that additional strengths are required; this is the case with buildings intended for research, which call for a specialized process of design. Architects must be prepared to confront the technical challenges which the researchers pose for them. Accordingly, the

structures in this section are the result of teamwork, providing an answer to all the problems which arise in the course of development of the project. The main challenge is to support the technical research work by creating properly functional areas which at the same time will provide a pleasant working environment, i.e. paying particular attention to the use to which the building is to be put, but likewise to the people who are going to work in it.

A. Such international examples are the following renown complexes are: Seibersdorf Research Center and offices, Austria; University of Cincinnati Research center, OCAS in Ghent, Belgium; M&G Research in Venafro, Italy; Design Cube in Klagenfurt, Austria; Institute of Neurology in La Jolla, California; IMPIVA in Castellon, Spain; Skirball Institute of Biomolecular Medicine in New York; Wexner Visual Arts Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Social science Studies Center in Berlin; Heureka in Helsinki; Pacific Design Center LA; Hysolar Institute in Stuttgart; Lucille Halsell Botanical Garden in San Antonio, Texas; Graz Botanical Garden, Graz, Austria; ESTEC in Noordwijk, Netherlands [Cerver, The world of contemporary..., pp. 696–783].

B. Research centers from Armenian contemporary practice are not. What are in use are centers from Soviet period or some adaptations using former existing buildings.

8. IT Factories.

This is special type of the factories. However industrial activity has become an indicator of the extent of a country's development. The idea that people are a further factor in production has evolved thanks to a greater social conscience, so a new concept of "factory" has developed, according to which it has become quite a challenge to ensure that the worker feels like a human being within its walls. The architectural projects included in this chapter reveal a range of idiosyncratic industrial activities related to the products being made, which might be described as unusual. In spite of their obvious diversity, there are several constants that all of these buildings must adhere to, in order to be able to achieve optimum functionality. These include setting the plant up properly for the production process, elimination of superfluous elements that will increase costs, and installing the right equipment to ensure that the workers are operating under the most favorable conditions. Such buildings are the following type of factories meet in contemporary architecture.

A. World examples are: Recola Warehouse in Mulhouse, France; The Box in Culver city California; Toto atelier in Kitakyushu, Japan; Holz Altenries warehouse and showrooms in Hergatz, Germany; technical center for Books in Marnela Valee, France; Phosphate plant in Berlin; Herman Miller furniture factory in Rocklin,

California; Vitra Conference Pavilion in Weil-am-Rhein; Funder Werk 3 Factory in Veit/Glan, Austria, Financial times corporate in London; West 8 MTR Terminal in Hong Kong [Cerver, The world of contemporary..., pp. 758–780].

B. Armenian examples are: the IT factories in Armenia signaled the contemporary epoch. The basic information about them included in the lists published in the official sites titled as "The factories of Armenia". Because of the lack of space, only possible to emphasize the indicated buildings are classified in 5 categories: 1. modern food industry factories, 2. modernized complexes of old energy producing complexes, 3. new light industry buildings, 4. buildings specialized for building industry, as well as 5. some readapted buildings of Heavy industry existed once etc. [Kertmenjian, Developments of Armenian... 2021].

9. Skyscrapers.

Skyscrapers are undoubtedly a celebration of technological progress, a grand gesture to man's capacity to construct ever higher in his attempts to reach the heavens. But they are also a product of territoriality of the property market, of speculation. The basic questions to be answered by today's architects are the same as those faced those who designed the first skyscrapers in Chicago at the end of the 19th century. How to relate the skyscraper to an environment alien to its scale? How to get to and from the ground? How to build the structure? How to dress the skeleton? Those erecting skyscrapers now are at least aware of urban problems and try to confront them by responding to the environment in which their giant projects are situated. Such challenges to build the higher are embodied in following projects.

A. World examples are: Petronas towers in Kuala Lumpur; Osaka World Trade Center; Suntec city in Singapore; Puerta de Europa Towers in Madrid; Umeda Sky Building in Osaka; Melbourn Central; 750 Seventh Avenue in New York; Moscow City; Carnegie Hall Tower in New York; Shanghai World Financial Center; Jin Mao Building in Shanghai; Millennium Tower in London [Cerver, The world of contemporary..., pp. 784–806].

B. In Armenia the last two items do not exist yet.

Conclusions:

1. The corporate buildings are the new type buildings specially formulated within the contemporary Architecture of Armenia. They include 9 sub-types which did not develop in the same rate of architectural creative values.

2. As usual, mainly built corporate buildings are in medium financial implementation capacity. Such as medical centers, courts of different type, city halls etc.

3. The buildings which need high financial implementation, as usual created in behalf of

reuse or regeneration of soviet existed buildings, such as exhibition centers, former research laboratories, former stopped factories etc.

4. Special category corporate buildings are the embassies built newly in Armenia. Other identic complexes are corporate headquarters which have rare examples yet, e.g. Viva cell telecommunication center, Marriott Armenia Hotel branches in different cities and other brand hotels and places for entertainment such as "Pharaoh" complex etc.

5. There are corporate buildings which are not compatible for Armenia and did not spread their use in the country, such as the contemporary factory types and the skyscrapers.

6. Actually there are some instances of contemporary corporate buildings in Armenia which have appropriate compositional features in their full meaning yet. Any case some successful examples are in behalf of "Kamar" bank center in Yerevan, the "Renaissance" square in Stepanakert, the AUA Business center, Moscow center, the American embassy complex etc.

7. Should be emphasized that almost all discussed buildings are ricochets of 20th century national architecture properties, such as:

a) national expressionism style (e.g. the new municipality square ensemble of buildings in Yerevan, Spitak and Gyumri; the governmental body buildings N3 and N4 in Yerevan, the Viva cell center);

b) soviet modernism style (e.g. the Restaurant and Hotel complex Caucasus, the Russian embassy, the UK embassy, the Embassy of France, the Popular Bank of Armenia);

c) some conservative rational style buildings, such as: the buildings on Nord Avenue, Main Avenue, and the Tufenkyan National Cousin-art center hotel branches etc;

d) there are some other world revival of styles, as Valeks-Garden hotel complex in Stepanakert, Congress hotel complex in Yerevan etc.

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