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The modernist administrative centre in Kharkiv (Ukraine) as cultural heritage: from the early 1920s to 2022

Today, the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv (Ukr. Харків), including its residential and public buildings, and its most famous administrative complex on Freedom Square (Ukr. Площа Свободи, until 1991 Dzerzhinsky Square) – one of the largest city-centre squares in Europe¹ – is one of the flashpoints of the war. The space is circular in shape in its western part, flattening to rectangular in the eastern part. To the south, the square complex is bounded by the green massif of Shevchenko Park. Its rectangular part abuts Sumska Street (Ukr. Сумська) to the east. To its north-west and west lies the residential complex of Zaderzhpromye (Ukr. Задержпром'є) (Fig. 1).

A flagship of constructivism

The grandiose ensemble has a complex history, and its development falls into several stages. The square itself was laid out in the 1920s as the huge new modernist administrative centre of the then capital city of the new Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, and was intended as a proving ground for the implementation of avant-garde architectural and urban ideas. After the formation of the Soviet Union, the republics' capitals were to emanate an image appropriate to their new status. Moreover, Kharkiv's population was growing rapidly, and its historic centre did not meet its new needs. In the early 1920s, territory in the north of the city was designated for housing development and the creation of a business sector. The circular layout of the area with radial streets was proposed by architect Victor Trotsenko in 1923–1924 and corresponded to the lie of the terrain. A broad new radial avenue led north. The likewise circular original square was connected with the main artery of Kharkiv, Karl Liebknecht Street (now Sumska St.), by a rectangular site.² The ensemble on the square was developed consistently and progressively, the architecture of each building decided by a competitive design process. To this end, the best architects were involved in the design of the ensemble. In the pre-war period, the appearance of the square was dominated by five main buildings, erected in the 1920s and 1930s. Three high-rise buildings grew up around part of the square: Derzhprom (architects

¹ It is 11.9 hectares in size, 750 metres in length, with the diameter of the circular part 350 metres, and the width of the rectangular part between 96 and 125 metres.

² SMOLENSKA (2016), 96.

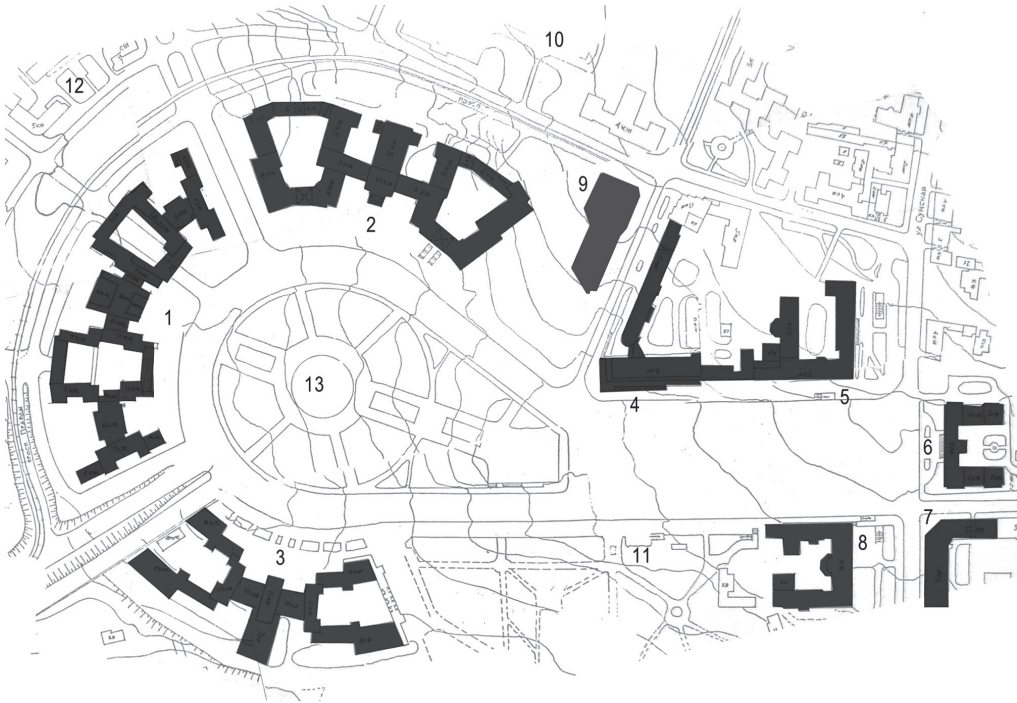


Fig. 1 Svoboda Square (the Dzerzhinsky Sq. in the past) in Kharkiv, layout plan, source: Author's archive. **1.** Derzhprom, Svoboda Square, 5; **2.** V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (The House of Cooperation), Svoboda Square, 6; **3.** V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (The House of Projects), Svoboda Square, 4; **4.** The Hotel Kharkiv (The Hotel International), Svoboda Square, 7; **5.** PromstroyNIIproject, Sumska Street, 39/8; **6.** The Kharkiv Regional State Administration, Sumska Street, 64; **7.** Giprokoks, Sumska Street, 60; **8.** The Regional Palace of Children and Youth Creativity, Sumska Street 37/1; **9.** Premier Palace Hotel Kharkiv, Nezalezhnosity avenue, 2; **10.** The medical complex; **11.** Shevchenko Park; **12.** The residential complex Zaderzhpromje; **13.** The new fountain.

Sergey Serafimov, Samuel Kravets and Mordukh Felger, 1925–1928), the House of Projects (Design Organizations Centre, architects Serafimov and Maria Zandberg-Serafimova, 1929–1933), and the House of Cooperation (architects Aleksandr Dmitriev and Oscar Munts; designed in 1929, it was not completed before WWII). The International Hotel (architect Gregory Janovitsky, 1930s) served as a connection between the round and rectangular parts of the square. The building for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CC CPU, architect Jacob Steinberg, 1930s) completed the appearance of the square along the axis of its rectangular part.

A wide highway bypass around the square from Karl Liebknecht Street (Sumska St.) was proposed in the project of the architect F. Kondrashenko in 1929 and was realized in part.

Each of the buildings in the ensemble demonstrated characteristic features of the urban planning, architecture and technology of the 1920s–1930s, and was unique in its own way. Derzhprom (the State Industry Building), a multifunctional complex for a multitude of offices of industrial, financial, and administrative trusts and institutions which were concentrated in the capital, was the first high-rise building not only in Ukraine but in the entire USSR (63 m at its highest point), and was held up as the largest civilian building³ in the Soviet Union at the time. It was constructed between 1925 and 1928. A flat roof with a wonderful panorama of the city served as recreational terraces for employees. Two domestic engineers A. Presfreind and M. Paikov (developed an author's method for calculating statically indeterminate frame systems for the implementation of a complex multi-tiered and multi-span reinforced concrete structure of the building. The surface of the exterior walls was covered by plastering with marble chips and mica. Gallery bridges, 26 m in span, connected the three parts of the building.⁴ Derzhprom was intended to embody 'the strength of the country's industrial construction'.⁵ Advanced technologies were used for the functioning of the building. It was equipped with 13 lifts. An automatic telephone station for

³ It was huge: it had a total cubic volume of 347,000 cubic metres, a surface area of 67,000 square metres, and the building plot itself was 10,760 square metres in size. Derzhprom had 1,500 doors and 4,500 windows. Its main facade was 240 metres long. ANDRUSHCHENKO (2005), 35.

⁴ ZVONITSKY/LEIBFREID (1992), 16, 24–26.

⁵ DOVIDNIK (1929), 1.

1000 numbers was installed. Information about the modernist giant and its images were published in foreign architectural journals immediately after its construction. The building was much admired by European architects (**Fig. 2**).⁶

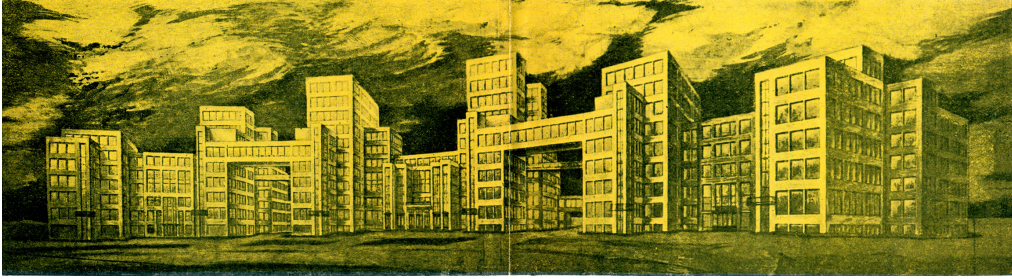


Fig. 2 The competition project of Derzhprom in Kharkiv (I prize). Perspective. Design by architects Sergey Serafimov, Samuel Kravets, Mordukh Felger. Image source: Ежегодник общества архитекторов-художников, XIII. Ленинград (1935), 111. [Year-book of the Architects-Artists Society, XIII. Leningrad: Edition of the Union of the Soviet Architects (1928), 111.]

In 1929, the decision was taken to build a House of Cooperation, to a design by the architects Dmitriev and Munz, which they had previously submitted for the competition Government House of the Ukrainian SSR and redesigned to encompass new functions. The composition of the building was symmetrical, with a high central part and two lower wings. It was combined with Derzhprom both in style and size (**Fig. 3**).

The House of Projects was created as an office centre for a number of design institutions which designed large factories. With its huge cubature (282,000 cubic metres),⁷ it fitted successfully into the complex of high-rise buildings in the round part of the square. The journal *Budivnitstvo* (*Construction*) wrote of the results of the competition for the design of the building: ‘The All-Union competition produced eight designs, with the first prize going to the design under the motto “Catch up and overtake” by Serafimov S. S. (Leningrad), the author

⁶ BADOVICI (1930), 2–3.

⁷ EINGORN (1934), 41.

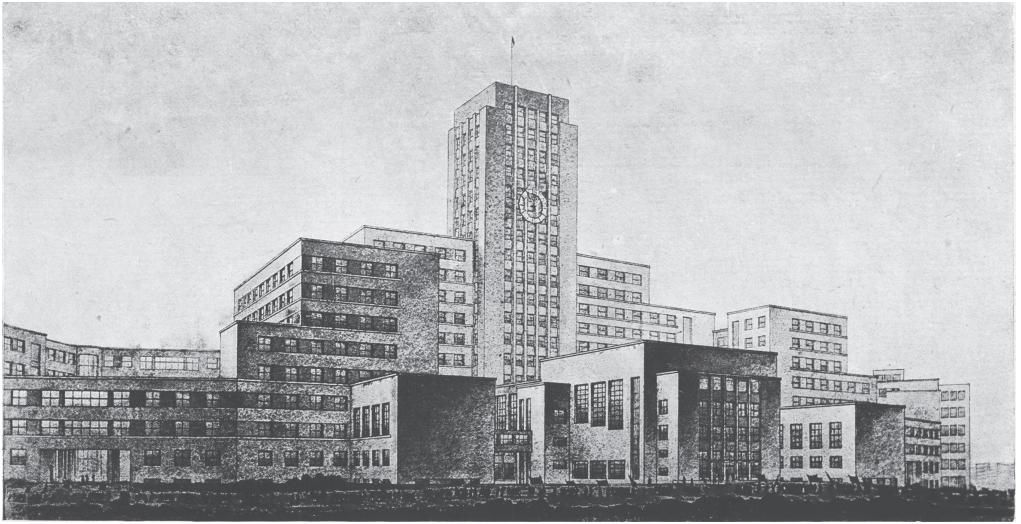


Fig. 3 The House of Cooperation. Design by architects Alexander Dmitriev, Oscar Munts. Image source: Ежегодник общества архитекторов-художников, XIV. Ленинград. (1935), 53. [Year-book of the Architects-Artists Society, XIV. Leningrad: Edition of the Union of the Soviet Architects (1935), 53.]

of Derzhprom [...]. With its simple forms and strictly architectural lines, Prof. Serafimov's design very successfully completes Dzerzhinsky Square, the area of monumental buildings that characterize these great days'⁸ (Fig. 4).

The competition for the design of the International Hotel (in which the project by the architect Janovitsky received first prize) was held in 1928, and according to archival data, construction began in 1930.⁹ The hotel was not only the largest and most luxurious building of its type in Ukraine at that time; it was also one of the most technically advanced hotels in Europe (in terms of elevators, sanitary equipment, etc.). Hotel rooms of different sizes (ranging from 12 to 21 square metres) with full sanitary facilities, halls on each floor, exhibition and reading rooms, a cafe and a restaurant seating 400, as well as a separate banquet hall, were among the amenities foreseen in the design. The windows afforded a beau-

⁸ VODOPJANOV (1930), 99.

⁹ State archive of the Kharkiv Region, Fund P-3770. Inventory 1. Folder 659, p. 31.



Fig. 4 House of Projects in Kharkiv, photo Babkin. Postcard from the 1930s.

tiful panorama of the main square and a view of the park, and on public holidays it was a good vantage point for taking in exhibitions, folk festivals, and colourful demonstrations. On its completion in 1936, the hotel had 495 rooms. The complex compositional solution of the building was dictated by the need to combine the ensemble of the round part of Dzerzhinsky Square with the rectangular side. The architect also used different numbers of floors in the hotel wings, ranging between eight and five, which contributed to the creation of an organic transition from the high-rise buildings in the round part of the square to the lower buildings/houses along Karl Liebknecht Street (Sumska St.) (Fig. 5).

In 1930 the architect Steinberg reconstructed two old houses on that street, and combined them in the constructivist spirit into one building, intended for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine. This building closed off the prospect of the square. The reconstruction project was very interesting and complex: the old buildings differed from each other in their numbers of floors, and their colour, texture and style. One house was “three-storey, in the Empire

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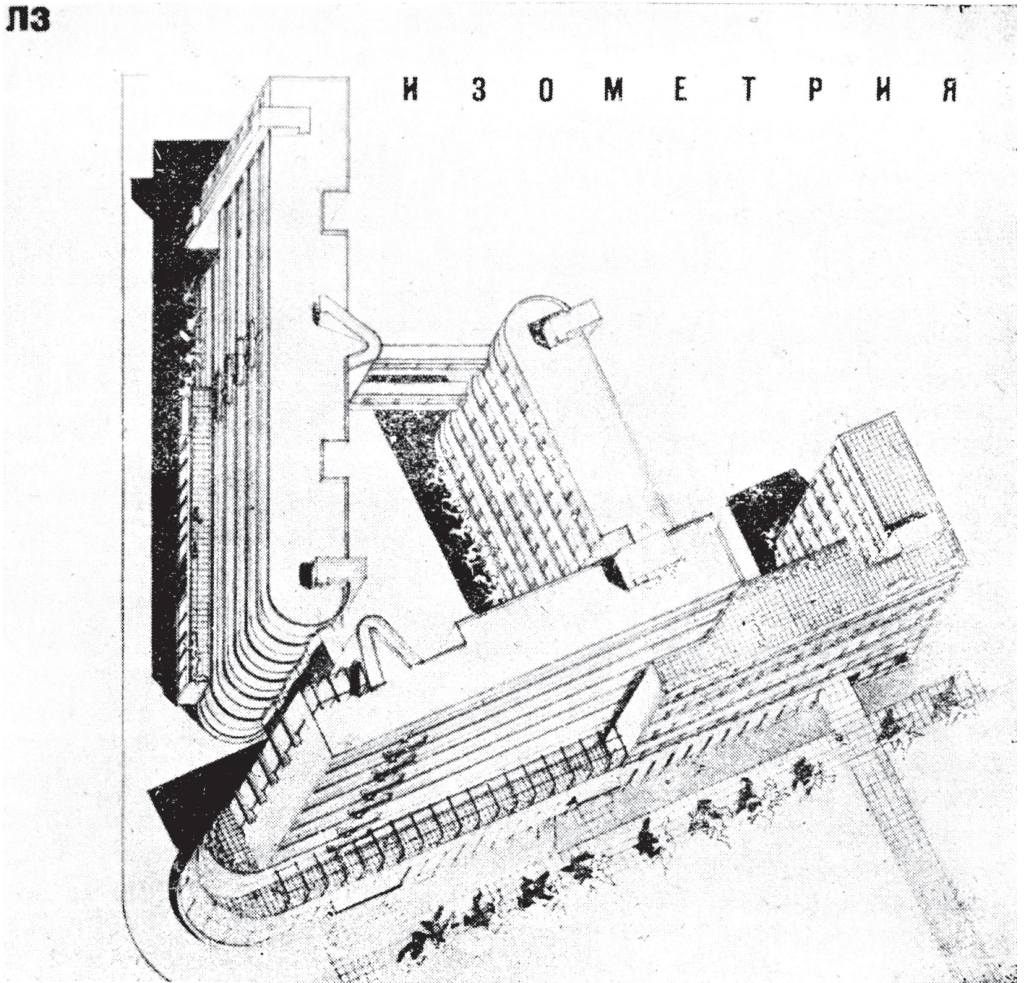


Fig. 5 The Hotel International. Design by architect Gregory Janovitsky. Image source: *Budivnitstvo* [Construction], № 1–2 (1931), 21.

style, grey, plastered with terrazzo; the other was two-storey, in the Renaissance style, white in colour, with a gypsum-lime plaster render”.¹⁰ The architect skillfully built them up, bringing the number of floors in both to five, complemented the composition with a corner entrance, and used modern forms. He gave profound meaning to the combination of previous styles and avant-garde ideas in one building. In his article about the design, he emphasized that “the architectural design of the building is made in four dimensions” (the fourth dimension is time), because “recording the movement of time” permits the creation of an “ensemble of dynamics instead of an ensemble of statics”, when “a new house is superimposed onto old styles”. House styles, the author is sure, can be alternated not only along a street, but also along the height of the house. He interprets the belt of the upper modern floors as “a functionally correct natural ‘entablature’ with extended stripes of [alternating] windows and interwindow belts”, rising above the columns of the old houses, which retain their stylistic features and “are not falsified by new ones.” This gives the building dynamic.¹¹ It was indeed unique and, apparently, one of the first examples of the combination of previous styles with modernism (Fig. 6).

The huge size of the square and its main multi-storey buildings, with their highly advanced architectural forms and innovative construction, corresponded with the mood of the industrial era and the prevailing spirit of the time. The editors of the Moscow-published all-Union journal *Stroitel'naya Promyshlennost* (*Construction industry*) were impressed by the scope of construction in Kharkiv and in 1929 expressed their opinion on the creation of the grandiose new administrative centre, comparing the architectural activity in the new capital of Ukraine to that in Moscow (unfavourably to the latter):

“Correctly and aptly implemented, the idea of organizing an imposing administrative centre – Dzerzhinsky Square – in an area completely free from old layers, and fairly central – is boldly interpreted in the spirit of new architectural principles. In this, Kharkiv is ahead of even Moscow, so confident in its superiority, with its unprincipled plan of ‘Greater Moscow’, scattered construction, cowardly trimming of the ‘unapproved’ towers of the Izvestia and Gostorg buildings, and inappropriate

¹⁰ STEINBERG (1931), 33.

¹¹ STEINBERG (1931), 35.

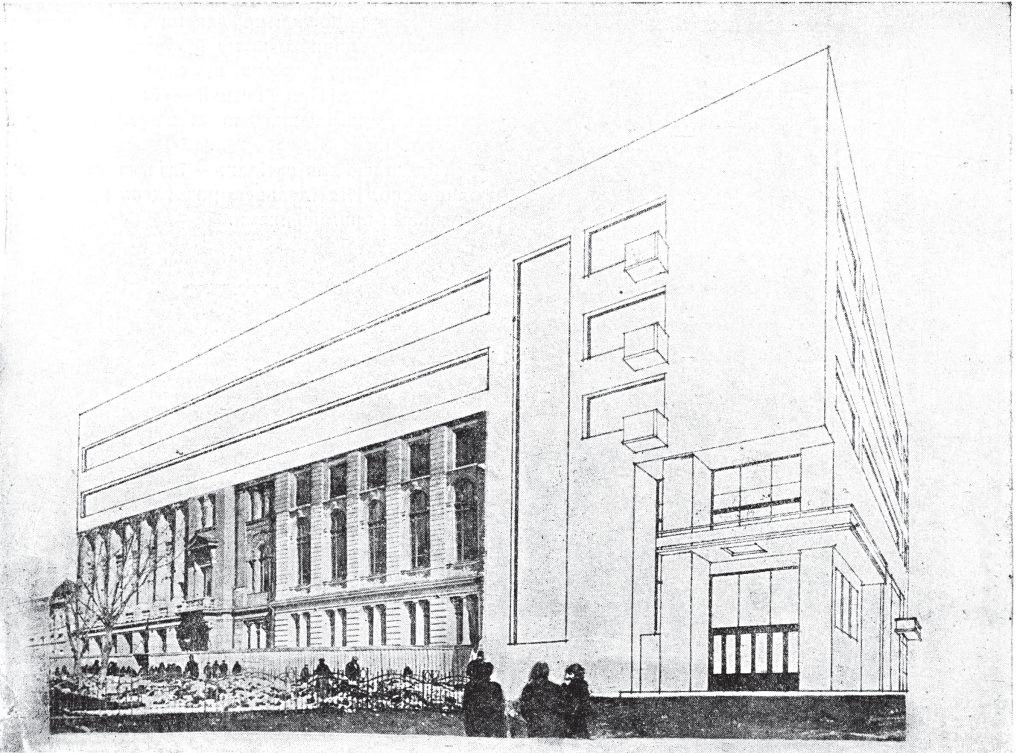


Fig. 6 The building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine. Project (architect Jacob Shteinberg). Image source: *Budivnitstvo* [Construction], № 9 (1931), 35.

construction of 'enlarged' old-fashioned residential buildings on its free outskirts – all this is levelled under its single, old-fashioned construction model. Moscow can be proud of many of its architectural achievements, its Zoo, its Park of Culture and Recreation, but it does not have the sense of a big city, a new administrative centre, the new capital of the Soviet Union, and the struggle of modern architecture with inertia and routine still in many cases ends with the victory of obsolete tradition."¹²

Neoclassical re-modelling and reconstruction after WWII

State intervention in the creative process, in the form of a directive imposing the 'single course' of neoclassicism in Soviet architecture in the early 1930s and the official prohibition of Modernism (Constructivism), gave rise to a unique situation: a moratorium on construction of some buildings and/or processing of designs previously approved for construction in the classical style. Construction of the House of Cooperation had already been halted after Kharkiv lost its status as Ukrainian capital in 1934. A new competition for the adaptation of the unfinished building for the Kharkiv Military Economic Academy in the new approved style was announced. The International Hotel was also under construction at that time, and it, too, was immediately subjected to changes. Its author, architect Janovitsky,¹³ 'enriched it a little' and decorated the façade with terrazzo plaster in the course of its construction. However, the distinctive constructivist character of the floor plan and the architectural composition was impossible to modify.

Thus, the constructivist metropolitan ensemble – a grandiose piece for its time – found its form before World War II. Only the construction of the Kharkiv Military Economic Academy was not completed (**Fig. 7**). During World War II, the complex of the square suffered greatly. Its post-war reconstruction totally changed the style of the existing buildings (except Derzhprom) to neoclassical socialist realism in a very short period: between the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. Nonetheless, the integrity of the ensemble was preserved.

¹² REDAKTSYIA (1929), 892.

¹³ JANOVICKIJ (1938), 53.

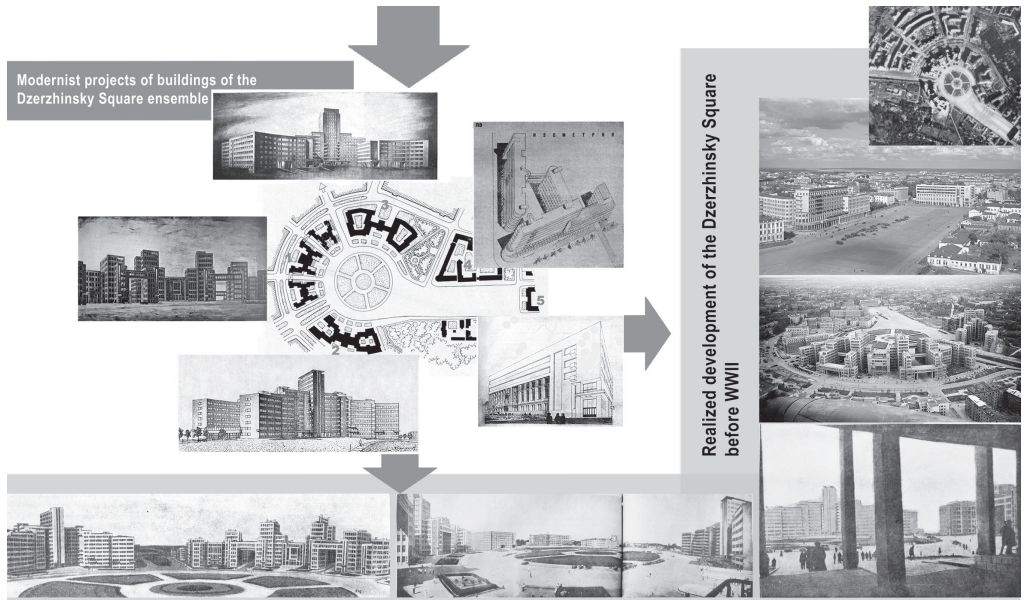


Fig. 7 Competition designs of the buildings of the Dzerzhinsky Square ensemble in Kharkiv and their implementation before World War II, source: СМОЛЕНСЬКА, С. О.: *Архітектура авангардного модернізму в Україні: генеза та спадщина* [SMOLENSKA S. O.: *Arkhitektura avanhardnoho modernizmu v Ukraini: heneza ta spadshchyna/Architecture of avant-garde modernism in Ukraine: genesis and heritage*], [Doctoral thesis, Lviv Polytechnic National University 2017], 314.

Only Derzhprom retained its authenticity. During the occupation, the Nazis tried to blow up the building, but the reinforced concrete structures were so strong that they withstood these attempts. Only the wooden elements were partly burned: flooring, window frames, and doors. Before the war, a special operational department was created, which was responsible for the maintenance and repair of the huge building. The specialists and workers in this department had themselves built Derzhprom, and their knowledge of the design and technical features of this unique complex structure facilitated its restoration to its original form.¹⁴ The television tower was added in 1955.

¹⁴ ZVONITSKIJ/LEIBFREID (1992), 56–57.

The House of Projects was given over to Kharkiv State University in 1950. Its post-war reconstruction for its new educational function in the socialist realist style was implemented to a design by the architects Veniamin Kostenko, V. K. Komirny, Victor Livshits, Ivan Ermilov, and V. N. Lipkin. The authors proposed the expansion of the central part of the building (thus effacing its harmony), and its crowning with a monument to Stalin, or, later, with a spire. Eventually, both ideas were rejected. The increase in the height of the two lateral wings, their facing with ceramic tiles, the alterations to some parts, and the re-planning to take account of functional and stylistic changes collectively caused the distortion of the initial shape of the House of Projects. Even now, it retains the volume and spatial composition of constructivism, but shows all the signs of the socialist realist style (Fig. 8).

The House of Cooperation also had a complicated history during its transformation from Constructivism to Socialist Realism. In the early 1930s it was still under construction. From 1934 it underwent considerable alterations in its transformation to the Socialist Realist style in order to meet the needs of the Military Economic Academy before and after World War II. The final post-war reconstruction project (architects Peter Shpara, Yevtushenko and others, 1950s) turned it into a brilliant example of Soviet neoclassicism, both inside and out. But this project, too, was not implemented in full, because of the government's declared 'struggle against excess' and a change in the official style in Soviet architecture: the replacement of neoclassicism with utilitarianism. The 15-storey central part proposed in the original design was reduced to 12 floors.¹⁵ Military symbolism was reflected clearly in the rich decor on the façades of the building.

The façades of the Hotel International (Hotel Kharkiv in the post-war period) and the interiors of the building were altered twice in the spirit of Soviet neoclassicism by its architect, Janovitsky: once during its construction in the 1930s, and again in the plans for its post-war reconstruction in the 1950s. The main entrance was accented by a large portico. The cornice and other elements of the classical order system decorated the façade on the side of the Square.

A new, pompous building for the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (architects Veniamin Kostenko, Vladimir Orekhov, B. Miroshnichenko, Larisa Savenko, 1955–1957) was erected in 1955–1957 on the site of the

15 SHPARA (1988), 39.



Fig. 8 V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (The House of Projects) during the reconstruction period. Photo 1959 © The archives of V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University library.

CC CPU building destroyed during World War II. In architectural terms, this is a striking example of a building for government administrative structures characteristic of the period of Socialist Realism (**Fig. 9**).



Fig. 9 The building of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, 1955–1957, design by architects Veniamin Kostenko, Vladimir Orekhov, B. Miroshnichenko, Larisa Savenko; currently building of the Regional Administration, state 2013. Photo Svitlana Smolenska.

The eastern part of Dzerzhinsky Square was supplemented by new buildings in the neoclassical style, which successfully completed the composition of the square in the area adjacent to Sumska Street. These were two buildings for design institutions – PromstroyNII project (architects Georgy Wegman], Esfir Belman, and D. Morozov) and Giprokoks (architect Elizabeth Lyubomilova) (**Fig. 10**, **Fig. 11**). Thus, by the 1950s, the Dzerzhinsky Square ensemble had actually lost its modernist spirit (with the exception of Derzhprom) and taken on neoclassical features (**Fig. 12**).

Back in the 1930s, many architects included in their designs proposals for a statue of Lenin at the intersection of the axes of the round and rectangular parts of the square. But the monument was not actually erected until the 1950s



Fig. 10 PromstroyNII project design by architects Georgy Wegman, Esfir Belman, Morozov. Photo Svitlana Smolenska.

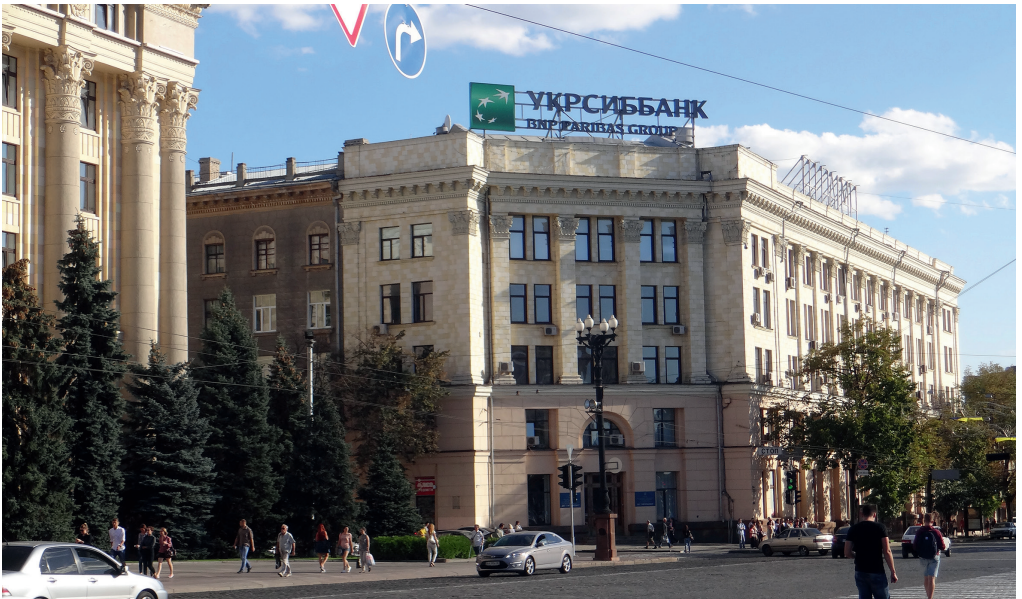


Fig. 11 Giprokoks, design by architect Elizabeth Lyubomilova. Photo Svitlana Smolenska.



Fig. 12 The Dzerzhynsky Square in the 1950s. Photo by V. Sychev, P. Moroz, 1959. Source: chronicle of the Radio Telegraph Agency of Ukraine (RATAU) © Lebedev Georgy Oleksandrovich, Central State Archive of Literature and Arts of Ukraine, Fund No. 1041, description No. 1, folder No. 42, pp. 51–53.

or early 1960s (it was unveiled in 1963). In the 1960s, a public garden was created in the centre of the round part (landscape architect Anna Mayak), and trees were planted where the extensive lawn and flower beds had previously been. During the Soviet period, the main buildings of the ensemble and the Lenin monument were inscribed only on the list of local heritage.

Svoboda Square in the independent Ukraine

In the early 1990s, Ukraine gained independence. There was real hope for national recognition of the value of the unique complex, which was already widely known and greatly appreciated abroad. However, the government took no care of its twentieth-century legacy. Neither the entire unique ensemble of the square, nor any of its individual buildings were even included on the list of national heritage (**Fig. 13**).

A scientific conference on the inclusion of Derzhprom, a masterpiece of 1920s modernism, on the UNESCO list was held in Kharkiv in 2005, initiated by Ukrainian scientists and architects. However, on the preceding day, the Kharkiv municipal authorities replaced all the building's authentic double wooden windows with modern single-chamber ones. This meant the loss of the building's authenticity, and the issue of recognizing Derzhprom as a world cultural heritage site was postponed. The renovation of its façades was also initiated by the authorities and lasted for many years, but the original terrazzo plaster was removed



Fig. 13 The bird's eye view of the Svoboda Square in the 2000s. Photo Yuri Voroshilov.

and replaced with modern plaster and grey paint. Of the old lifts, only one has survived; the rest have been replaced with new, modern installations (**Abb. 14**, **Fig. 15**).

The building of the Military Academy retained its 1950s authenticity until it was made over to the V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, which is one of the oldest universities in Eastern Europe in terms of educational function (it was founded in 1804). Unfortunately, the interiors have since been renovated, and the original finishing materials replaced with inappropriate modern ones, with the loss of some wooden windows and other details. Only the central part has retained its original appearance.

For the Euro 2012 football championships, a new building, the Premier Palace Hotel, was erected in the green space between the Hotel Kharkiv and the Military Academy (now the building of Karazin University). This was not a good decision.



Abb. 14 Derzhprom: new replacement window frames, state 2014. Photo Svitlana Smolenska.



Fig. 15 Facades of Derzhprom in the process of their repair, state 2014. Photo Svitlana Smolenska.

The building is unsuccessfully inscribed into the general plan of the square, and clashes with the overall composition in terms of not only colour, style, shape, and layout, but also its perception by the viewer (**Fig. 16**).

After the Maidan in Kyiv and the shift of power in 2014, demolition of Soviet-era monuments began in Ukraine. The law on decommunization legalized this process. The monument to Lenin was destroyed. The competition announced for a new monument in 2017 was corrupt. The winning project did not suit the character of the square. The citizens of Kharkiv protested against its establishment, so it was not implemented. An alternative solution was the opening in 2020 of the largest 'dry' fountains in Ukraine, in the green zone at the heart of the round part of the square. It is 36 metres in diameter, and equipped with 150 jets that shoot water and LED lamps with a huge number of lighting options.



Fig. 16 Premier Palace Hotel Kharkiv, state 2015. Photo Svitlana Smolenska.

In 1999 a prominent Kharkiv businessman became the president of the closed joint-stock company Hotel Kharkiv. The hotel retained its original function and planning structure with its corridor system until 2019, but then the authentic 1950s interiors were completely destroyed. Only the vestibule has retained some of its authenticity (**Fig. 17, Fig. 18**).

In 2017, Derzhprom was included on UNESCO's Tentative List. But will it be included in the main list?

Svoboda Square was originally intended to serve several important functions, all of which it has retained throughout its history: administrative centre, transport hub, and venue for mass demonstrations, fairs, and festivities. Not only individual buildings, but the ensemble as a whole would be eligible for recognition as World Cultural Heritage in view of at least two criteria.¹⁶

¹⁶ JUKKA JOKILEHTO (2008).



Fig. 17 Destroyed interiors of the Hotel Kharkiv, state 2019. Photo Svitlana Smolenska.



Fig. 18 A fragment of the authentic interior of the hotel lobby of the 1950s, state 2019.
Photo Svitlana Smolenska.

Criterion (ii):

On the one hand, it is a unique urban legacy of the early avant-garde modernism of the 1920s and 1930s. But it is also a unique example of the coexistence of two opposing styles – modernism and classicism (Socialist Realism) – in a single ensemble, indicating the exchange of universal values in the short period of the 1920–1950s. The struggle between these two trends in architecture, and their complex relationship – from confrontation to interpenetration – is, in my opinion, the driving force behind the development of architecture in the twentieth century.

Criterion: (iv):

Svoboda Square and its buildings clearly illustrate the idea of revival of ruined cities. They are an outstanding example of an integrated post-war reconstruction of an administrative city centre in a single style with two types of structures:

1. Buildings originally designed and erected in the Socialist Realist style after the war.
2. Buildings constructed in the 1920–1930s Constructivist style that were extensively remodelled in the Socialist Realist style after the war. The 1964 Venice Charter (article 11) and subsequent ICOMOS documents recommend that valid contributions of all periods in the building of a monument should be respected; and when a building includes the superimposed work of different periods, the revealing of the underlying state can only be justified in exceptional circumstances.

Today, the war with Russia has put the safety and integrity of this heritage at risk. The building of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration (the former Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine) at 64 Sumska Street has seen the most damaged (**Fig. 19**). Many windows have been broken in the university building (the former House of Projects). There is damage to other buildings in the complex that can still be repaired (**Fig. 20**). But what will happen tomorrow? The unique Kharkiv ensemble is in danger today. It belongs not only to Ukrainian but to world culture. It must be preserved, restored, and recognized as world heritage.



Fig. 19 The building of Kharkiv Regional State Administration on Sumska Street, 64. June 2022. Photo Svitlana Smolenska.



Fig. 20 PromstroyNII project. A fragment of the facade, June 2022. Photo Svitlana Smolenska.

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Світлана Смоленська

Модерністський адміністративний центр у Харкові (Україна) як культурна спадщина: від початку 1920х до 2022 (Анотація)

АНОТАЦІЯ Стаття присвячена складній та суперечливій історії створення та трансформації одного з найбільших адміністративних центрів Європи – ансамблю площі Свободи (пл. Дзержинського у минулому) у Харкові, Україна. Ансамбль створювався поетапно у процесі конкурсного проектування на кожну будівлю із залученням найкращих архітекторів. На початку 1920-х території на півночі міста були відведені для житла та ділового сектору. Тут було закладено новий адміністративний центр Харкова – столиці України на той час. Його гігантські розміри – близько 12 гектарів – і його модерністська архітектура вражали сучасників і в країні, й за кордоном. Перший висотний багатофункціональний комплекс Держпром був

зведений у 1925–1928. Потім ще дві грандіозні висотні споруди (одна з яких не була добудована до 1941 року) з обох боків Держпрому оформили круглу частину площі. Будівлі для партійних органів та готелю завершили композицію ансамблю у 1930-ті в авангардному дусі. Друга світова Війна завдала значних збитків ансамблю. Післявоєнна реконструкція доповнила його двома новими спорудами, але тотально змінила стиль більшості інших, вже існуючих – вони набули неокласичного вигляду. Проте містобудівна та композиційна цілісність були збережені. У період 1990-х-2010-х років окремі будинки частково втрачають автентичність. Сьогодні війна з Росією ставить під загрозу збереження цього цінного містобудівного та архітектурного спадку: серйозних руйнувань зазнала будівля обласної адміністрації, отримали пошкодження багатьох інших споруд. Унікальний ансамбль площі Свободи у Харкові під загрозою. Він належить не тільки українській, але і світовій культурі й повинен бути збережений, відроджений і визнаний як світова спадщина.