

SOVIET MASS-HOUSING IN VILNIUS:

EXPLORING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1955 HOUSING REFORM
AND THE REBELLION AGAINST ARCHITECTURAL HOMOGENISATION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE MSc DEGREE IN ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION



Author: Kristina Rimkutė, s0950924
First Reader: Dr. Ruxandra-Iulia Stoica

Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies
Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
Edinburgh College of Art
University of Edinburgh
2013-2014

During the Cold War the central logic of peaceful competition pulled these two systems together precisely because they were competing with each other. Competition requires a kind of common ground... like space, like the Olympics or the chess tournament or - as we showed in Cold War Modern [exhibition] - architecture and design.

Prof. David Crowley, 2014¹

¹ Aistė Galaunytė, “Interview with David Crowley: Talking About the Richer Picture,” *ALF Modernism: Between Nostalgia and Criticism* 1063, No 2 (2014): 137.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	2
ABSTRACT	4
I. INTRODUCTION	5
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	7
METHODOLOGY	8
II. SOME GENERAL POINTS ABOUT THE SOVIET SYSTEM OF MASS-HOUSING	10
III. THE MASS-HOUSING SYSTEM IN SOVIET LITHUANIA: EXPLORING THE METHODS OF ITS ORGANISATION, AND THE ARCHITECTS' ROLE IN DECISION MAKING	20
IV. EXPLORING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN LITHUANIAN ARCHITECTS AND THE PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENTS ABROAD.....	30
V. EXAMINATION OF THE CASE-STUDY DISTRICTS: LAZDYNAI, KAROLINIŠKĖS, AND ŠESKINĖ	41
VI. CONCLUSION.....	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	64
APPENDICES	69
APPENDIX A. "NEW COMMITMENTS MADE IN HONOUR OF THE FIFTY YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION" (1966).....	69
APPENDIX B. SOME ILLUSTRATIVE DESCRIPTIONS OF A MODEL CITY (ГОРОД ЭТАЛОН) IN SOVIET UNION	71
APPENDIX C. SOME EXAMPLES OF STANDARDISED PANEL BLOCKS.....	72
APPENDIX D. EXTRACT FROM ARTICLE "CITY AND ITS COLOURS" (1977)	74
APPENDIX E. POWER RELATIONS IN THE LITHUANIAN SYSTEM OF MASS-HOUSING.....	75
APPENDIX F. EXTRACT FROM "SOME SUGGESTIONS BY LITHUANIAN ARCHITECTS" (1966).....	76
APPENDIX G. EXTRACT FROM AN OFFICIAL REPORT ABOUT THE SOVIET DELEGATES' EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE TRIPS TO SCANDINAVIA AND WEST GERMANY (1958)	77

LIST OF FIGURES

*(UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, ALL PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR DURING THE RESEARCH TRIP TO VILNIUS ON THE 5-7TH OF JUNE, 2014.)

FIGURE 1. "KHRUSHCHEV: - START INDUSTRIALISATION!". POSTER DESIGNED BY FELIX NOVIKOV, PUBLISHED IN DRĒMAITĖ AND PETRULIS, "MODERNISM IN SOVIET LITHUANIA"	5
FIGURE 2. KHRUSHCHEV AND THE ARCHITECTS: THE SOVIET LEADER SPEAKS TO PARTICIPANTS AT THE CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ARCHITECTS, MOSCOW, 1958. <i>АРХИТЕКТУРА СССР</i> , No 8 (1958).	10
FIGURE 3. CARICATURE BY A. MERTINGAS, PUBLISHED IN <i>ŠVYTURYS</i> No 8 (1960)	14
FIGURE 4. RICHARD NIXON AND KHRUSHCHEV LOOKING AT THE MODEL KITCHEN DISPLAY, AMERICAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION IN MOSCOW , 1959.	16
FIGURE 5. SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF INNOVATIVE URBAN PLANNING IDEAS. DIAGRAM PUBLISHED IN JONAS MINKEVIČIUS, <i>MIESTAI VAKAR, ŠIANDIEN, RYTOJ</i> , 1964.	17
FIGURE 6. POSTER COMMEMORATING TWENTY YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF SOVIET LTHUANIA. PUBLISHED IN <i>ŠLUOTA</i> , No 14 (1960).	20
FIGURE 7. KAROLINIŠKĖS DISTRICT UNDER CONSTRUCTION, VILNIUS, 1974 – 1989. ORIGINAL SOURCE UNKNOWN. RE-PUBLISHED IN "FORUMAS MIESTAI"	22
FIGURE 8. CARICATURE WITH A CAPTION "WE ARE BUILDING COMUNISM" ("KOMUMIZMO STATYBOS"). PUBLISHED IN <i>ŠLUOTA</i> 19 (1961)	30
FIGURE 9. A PHOTOGRAPH AND DRAWING OF AN APARTMENT BLOCK IN KAUNAS, V. PUTVINSKIO STREET NR 60. DESIGNED BY BRONIUS ELSBERGAS AND BUILT IN 1933. THE DRAWING PRODUCED IN OCT. 1932, PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1956 BY J. SKEIVYS.	33
FIGURE 10. A PHOTOGRAPH AND DRAWING OF AN APARTMENT BLOCK IN KAUNAS, K. DONELAIČIO STREET NR 75. DESIGNED BY FELIKSAS VIZBARAS, JONAS ACUKAS, AND JONAS KRIŠČIUKAITIS. BUILT IN 1933-35. THE DRAWING PRODUCED IN THE EARLY 1930S, PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 2008 BY V. PETRULIS.	33
FIGURE 11. FRONT EXTERIOR AND CEILING DECORATIONS OF AN APARTMENT BLOCK IN KAUNAS, KĖSTUČIO STREET NR 38. DESIGNED BY FELIKSAS VIZBARAS AND BUILT IN 1932. THE EXTERIOR PHOTO TAKEN IN 2011 BY V. PETRULIS, THE INTERIOR PHOTO TAKEN IN 2007 BY J. ZALECKIENĖ.	34
FIGURE 12. AN EXAMPLE OF 'THE MILLION PROGRAMME' HOUSING IN HAMMARKULLEN SUBURB. GOTHENBURG CITY, SWEDEN. JENS JENSEN'S PHOTOGRAPH FROM HIS BOOK <i>HAMMARKULLEN 1974</i>	36
FIGURE 13. VILNIUS' EXPANSION TOWARDS NORTH-WEST. THE MAP INDICATES THE LOCATION OF LAZDYNAI, KAROLINIŠKĖS, AND ŠEŠKINĖ IN RELATION TO LAISVĖS AVENUE (ALĖJA).	41
FIGURE 14. A PLAN OF VILNIUS DISTRICTS. MAP FROM ALGIRDAS MOTULAS, <i>VILNIAUS DABARTIS IR RYTDIENA</i> , VILNIUS: MINTIS, 1980.	42
FIGURE 15. LAZDYNAI REPRESENTED ON THE COVER PAGE OF WERNER RIETDORF, <i>NEUE WOHNGBIETE SOZIALISTISCHER LÄNDER</i> , 1976.	43
FIGURE 16. MAP INDICATING BORDERS OF THE LAZDYNAI DISTRICT. "GOOGLE MAPS"	45
FIGURE 17. MAP INDICATING BORDERS OF THE KAROLINIŠKĖS DISTRICT. "GOOGLE MAPS"	46
FIGURE 18. MAP INDICATING BORDERS OF THE ŠEŠKINĖ DISTRICT. "GOOGLE MAPS"	46
FIGURE 19. A FIVE STOREY HIGH BLOCK AND ITS ENTRANCE, LAZDYNAI.	47
FIGURE 20. A FIVE STOREY HIGH BLOCK AND ITS ENTRANCE, KAROLINIŠKĖS.	47
FIGURE 21. A COMPARISON BETWEEN 12 STOREY BLOCKS IN LAZDYNAI AND IN KAROLINIŠKĖS.	48
FIGURE 22. 120V SERIES BLOCKS IN ŠEŠKINĖ.	48
FIGURE 23. MONOLITHIC BLOCKS, LAZDYNAI.	50
FIGURE 24. MONOLITHIC BLOCKS, ŠEŠKINĖ.	51
FIGURE 25. PLANS OF THE MONOLITHIC TOWER BLOCKS IN LAZDYNAI AND ŠEŠKINĖ.	51
FIGURE 26. LAZDYNAI IN 1974, FROM <i>АРХИТЕКТУРА СССР</i> , 11/1974.	52
FIGURE 27. TERRACED 5 STOREY HOUSES IN LAZDYNAI.	53

FIGURE 28. 1-464-LI SERIES BLOCKS POSITIONED ON THE HILL SLOPE, LAZDYNAI. ARCHITECTS B. KRŪMINIS, V. SARGELIS, A. UMBRASAS, ENGINEER V. ZUBRUS, 1962. ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN <i>VILNIAUS NAMŲ STATYBOS KOMBINATAS</i> , 1969.....	53
FIGURE 29. BROKEN CONFIGURATION BLOCKS IN LAZDYNAI.	53
FIGURE 30. TERRACED 5 STOREY BLOCKS IN LAZDYNAI.	53
FIGURE 31. MASTER PLAN OF LAZDYNAI, PREPARED BY V. BRĖDIKIS AND V. ČEKANAUSKAS, 1962.	53
FIGURE 32. CROSS-SECTION OF KAROLINIŠKĖS, PRODUCED BY K. BALĖNAS IN 1970.....	54
FIGURE 33. MASTER PLAN OF KAROLINIŠKĖS, PREPARED BY K. BALĖNAS.	54
FIGURE 34. THE ARRANGEMENT OF BLOCKS IN THE SHAPE OF A CROSS, KAROLINIŠKĖS.....	55
FIGURE 35. PLAN AND AN ENLARGED SECTION OF ŠEŠKINĖ'S PLAN, ORIGINALLY PRODUCED BY K. BALĖNAS.....	55
FIGURE 36. ROMUALDAS RAKAUSKAS' PHOTO OF THE CENTRAL AREA OF ŠEŠKINĖ, PUBLISHED IN SERGEJUS PANIZNIKAS, LAIMONAS INIS, <i>MŪŠŲ NEMUNAS</i> , 1987.	56
FIGURE 37. MAP INDICATING POSITION OF THE MONOLITHIC BLOCKS IN ŠEŠKINĖ, PRODUCED BY I. RUSECKAITĖ AND PUBLISHED IN HER 'MONOLITO EKSPERIMENTAS VILNIUJĖ' AND ŠEŠKINĖ'S PANORAMA SHOWING THE MONOLITHIC BLOCKS; PUBLISHED IN "FORUMAS MIESTAI".....	56
FIGURE 38. A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ARCHITECTURAL DECORATIONS OF 9 STOREY BLOCKS IN LAZDYNAI AND KAROLINIŠKĖS.....	57
FIGURE 39. UNIQUE BALCONY DECORATIONS AND VERTICAL CIRCULATION SCREENS IN ŠEŠKINĖ	57
FIGURE 41. THREE 12 STOREY BLOCKS WITH COLOURED RED CONCRETE PANELS, KAROLINIŠKĖS.	58
FIGURE 40. BALCONY TILES USED IN KAROLINIŠKĖS AND LAZDYNAI.	58

ABSTRACT

This paper contributes to the growing body of research in the field of Soviet mass-housing which started revealing the inherent complexities attached to the label of ‘Socialist Modernism’. In particular, this dissertation focuses on prefabricated housing in the former Soviet Lithuania, and analyses how the local building apparatus worked while also considering the role of the architect in this system. The historic research here relies heavily on articles published in the official architectural journal of Soviet Lithuania – *Statyba ir Architektūra*. Most extracts from this publication are presented in this dissertation for the first time in English translation. They serve as valuable insight into the contemporary politics of housing, as they help to reveal numerous contradictions in what was stated in propaganda literature and the actual reality of mass housing. As case-study districts for stylistic analysis, three residential areas in Vilnius are examined – Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and Šeškinė. What seems to be clear from this comparative analysis is that Lithuanian architects were greatly involved in the process of designing mass-housing, and the appearance of the Vilnius’ residential districts evolved as a response to local criticism. As with many other former Soviet countries, visual monotony was fuelling people’s concerns in Lithuania, and so the local architects deployed to the best of their abilities all of the available design tools in order to give a distinctive look to each district. Inspired by experience-exchange trips to neighbouring Scandinavian countries, the Lithuanian architects approached the call for mass-housing with uniquely progressive and somewhat Westernised underlying ideologies. All of these aspects contributed to creating a distinctive look to residential districts in Vilnius.

I. INTRODUCTION

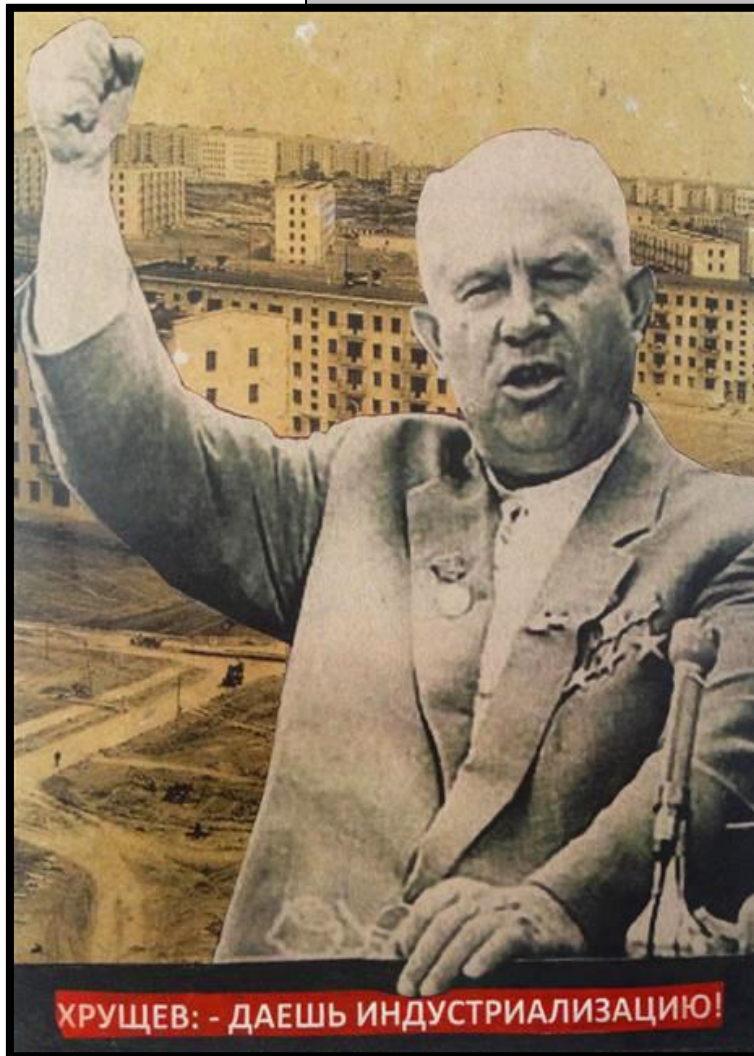


Figure 1. “Khrushchev: - Start industrialisation!”. Poster designed by Felix Novikov, published in Drėmaitė and Petrulis, “Modernism in Soviet Lithuania”, 64.

In her commentary on the physical environment of Eastern European during the Cold

War years, the renowned British cultural critic Catherine Cooke confidently asserted that “materialized manifestations ... [are] more revealing and enduring descriptions of their attributes and tensions than the ephemera of properly *political* analysis.”² Along with material consumer goods, architectural settings play an equally significant role in transcending both the government’s openly political goals and the people’s more subtle aspirations. The growing body of research in the field of architectural heritage concerning the former Soviet Republics in Central and Eastern Europe has revealed Cooke’s theory to be particularly elucidating.

Not so long ago, the study of prefabricated concrete panel blocks that dominate the cities of the former Soviet Union was not regarded as being worthy of serious academic interest; these structures were typically labelled as ‘grey and monotonous’ and criticised for becoming a purely pragmatic enterprise that was controlled by the totalising aesthetic philosophies of the state. Recent decades, however, have witnessed a significant change in attitudes towards this industrially produced housing. To mention just a few publications on this topic, Juliana Maxim’s “Mass Housing and Collective Experience: on the Notion of *Microraiion* in Romania in the 1950s and 1960s” (2009), Kimberly E. Zarecor’s “The Local History of an International Type: The Structural Panel Building in Czechoslovakia” (2010), Professor David Crowley’s papers on Polish architecture, and the recent publication by ICOMOS Deutschland entitled *Socialist Realism and Socialist Modernism* (2014) all deal with related issues. This recent surge of interest has started adding multiple levels of complexity to the previously peripheral subject by revealing that both individually designed and mass-produced Socialist projects reflect distinctive national variations, a heterogeneity of meanings, and an assortment of architects’ intentions. One idea that seems to emerge fairly unanimously from the recent publications is a general recognition of the inherent oversimplification that is typically attached to the style label of ‘Socialist Modernism’.

² Catherine Cooke, preface to *Style and Modernism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*, ed. Susan E. Reid and David Crowley (Oxford: Berg, 2000), vii.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The architectural legacy of the Soviet regime is a rapidly expanding research field in Lithuania. Interest in this topic is clearly reflected not only in the numerous publications from such authors as Marija Drėmaitė, Vaidas Petruolis, and Indrė Ruseckaitė, but also in various exhibitions³ and in the recent attempts to produce excursion routes for those interested in experiencing the local ‘Socialist Modernism’ first hand.⁴

In light of the contemporary popularity of the anti-reductivist approach to Soviet architectural heritage, the principal purpose of this paper is to reveal some of the distinctive characteristics that typify the Lithuanian version of mass-housing. Underlying my historical research and stylistic analysis is also the intention of opening up a broader discussion about the design features that played an important role in giving a unique and distinctive look to each residential district. Identifying and preserving these features is an issue of primary importance, as Soviet residential areas are rapidly losing their stylistic integrity due to the lack of cohesive guidelines for private schemes of urban regeneration for mass-housing in Lithuania.⁵

This dissertation was initially inspired by Indrė Ruseckaitė’s paper “Soviet Period Residential Districts in Vilnius: The Problem of Typical Character” (2010) which presents an overview of the distinctive stylistic features that are found in a variety of residential districts of Vilnius. Building on Ruseckaitė’s initial work, the aims of this paper are a little different. In what follows, I will analyse the character of three residential districts of Vilnius – Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and Šeškinė – and explain why they evolved

³ For example: “Cold War Modern: Design 1940-1970” (curated by David Crowley and exhibited at the V&A in London, 2008) was brought to the National Art Gallery in Vilnius in 2009; in 2011 the same gallery hosted exhibitions “Modernization: Art, Design and Architecture of the Baltic States of the 1960s and 1970s” and “Our Metamorphic Futures: Design, Technical Aesthetics and Experimental Architecture in the Soviet Union 1960–1980”. They were curated by a body of international scholars from the Baltic countries and Germany.

⁴ See Indrė Ruseckaitė, Aistė Galaunytė, and Liutauras Nekrošius, “Architectural Excursion as a Tool: Modernist Vilnius Case,” *Architecture and Urban Planning* 7 (2013): 65-71.

⁵ Tomas Grunskis and Matas Šiupšinskas, “Post-soviet transformations of public spaces in Lithuania: cases of Žirmūnai and Lazdynai residential districts,” *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 36, Issue 3 (2012): 220.

in the way that they did by setting them firmly in the context of the Lithuanian housing program. Given the fact that English language coverage of the issue of mass-housing in Soviet Lithuania is highly fragmented, and most academic publications concerned with this issue only appear in Baltic journals, my attention shall be focused on:

- explaining how the local building apparatus worked,
- exploring the Lithuanian architects' intentions and opportunities for stylistic variations, and
- investigating their distinctive relation to Western Modernism that was facilitated by Lithuania's geographical position and its brief period interwar independence (1918-1940).

It will be argued that – in contrast to other Soviet countries in which the exercise of building homes was in the hands of engineers – the Lithuanian architects actively participated in the process of designing panel blocks and planning residential districts. Some of the architects were also involved in popularising Western ideas and criticising the Soviet system through their writings. As a result of this, and in spite of highly restrictive building regulations, the residential districts of Soviet Vilnius reflect a moderate degree of inventiveness and some stylistic variations. These unique stylistic traits are worth documenting and preserving as they help to distinguish the Lithuanian mass-housing from other former Soviet countries.

METHODOLOGY

Before going into my analysis of the particularities of the Lithuanian building apparatus (Chapter Three), I will briefly discuss some basic points about the Soviet building system (Chapter Two). This will be followed by an investigation into the Lithuanian architects' relation to Western Modernism and an exploration of the cultural exchange theme (Chapter Four). In my final section (Chapter Five), I will analyse the stylistic characteristics of three districts of Vilnius in order to show how each architect created within the parameters set by the Soviets.

In terms of the sources that I will use, the Second Chapter of this paper mainly relies on secondary sources concerning the Soviet Union's building system. However, the Third and Fourth Chapters are built upon my analysis of primary sources. Among the most revealing of them are articles published in the official architectural journal of Soviet Lithuania - *Statyba ir Architektūra (Construction and Architecture)*. I also rely on interviews with Lithuanian architects who were involved in designing Soviet mass-housing,⁶ and some archival material.⁷ The Fifth Chapter is based on the examination of Vilnius' development plans, the on-site investigation of the chosen districts, and a photographic survey.

⁶ The interviews were conducted by Professor Miles Grendinning in the summer of 2013.

⁷ As the primary sources are in the Lithuanian and Russian languages, all translations will be my own.

II.

**SOME GENERAL POINTS ABOUT THE SOVIET
SYSTEM OF MASS-HOUSING**



Figure 2. Khrushchev and the Architects: the Soviet leader speaks to participants at the Congress of the International Union of Architects, Moscow, July 1958. *Архитектура СССР*, No 8 (1958).

If there is a single aspect in the history of our built environment that encapsulates the power of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it is surely their legacy of mass-produced buildings. With regards to their impact on the physical environment, Professor György Péteri simply describes the Communist venture as “the largest deliberately designed experiment in globalisation in modern history”.⁸ In a period that spanned less than twenty years, nearly 38 million families from the Soviet Union moved into specially constructed private apartments, more than 100 new cities were built, and as early as 1959 the urban population of this empire for first time exceeded the 50% borderline.⁹

Such significant changes in lifestyles of the Soviet people resulted from what can be called the ‘Social Welfare Programme’ of the Nikita Khrushchev’s regime (1953–1964). There was an enormous shortage of urban accommodation and a great need to modernise the Soviet Union’s industry in the early 1950s; mass-produced prefabricated concrete panel systems presented ‘a systematic solution to a systematic problem’, and so the most progressive contemporary building technologies were logically appointed to tackle the issue.¹⁰

There were three decisive points in the history of the built environment that fuelled the modernisation of housing apparatus in the Soviet Empire. On December 7th 1954, Khrushchev addressed the country’s architects and builders at the All-Soviet Union Conference of Workers in the Building Materials Industry and urged them to abandon the ‘unjustified’ decorations and aesthetic adornments, to improve the functionality of modern apartments, and reduce the costs of construction by embracing all the advantages of standardised designs (1).¹¹ Adrian Forty notes that ‘on no other occasion, before or

⁸ György Péteri, “Nylon Curtain—Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe,” *Slavonica* 10, No 2 (2004): 117.

⁹ Elidor Mēhilli, “The Socialist Design: Urban Dilemmas in Postwar Europe and the Soviet Union,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13 No 3 (Summer 2012): 648; Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, “The Socialist Sixties in Global Perspective” in *The Socialist Sixties*, ed. Gorsuch and Koenker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 6.

¹⁰ Steven Harris, “I Know All the Secrets of My Neighbors: the Quest for Privacy in the Era of the Separate Apartment” in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 171-185.

¹¹ Nikita Khrushchev, “Remove Shortcoming in Design, Improve Work of Architects” in *Architecture Culture 1943-1968*, ed. Joan Ockman (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 185-188.

since, has a leader of state delivered such lengthy and well informed address about concrete' and the general situation of the state's building industry.¹² In the following years, Khrushchev's demands were made into an official state policy by

- the "Act of Development of the Means to Improve, Industrialise and Reduce the Cost of Construction", and
- the "Removal of Excess in Architecture and Construction Act" (2).

However, arguably the greatest 'push' towards the industrialisation of the housing system came in 1957 in the Party's bold promise to provide every family with an individual apartment (3).

Although undeniably significant, Khrushchev's personal charisma and building acts were not alone sufficient to have an impact on construction industries of all the Soviet Republics stretching from East Germany to Kyrgyzstan. The industrialisation was made possible by a number of distinct administrative mechanisms, and a system which enabled a fast transnational exchange of progressive technologies. The housing apparatus in the USSR can perhaps be best compared with a strictly regulated bureaucratic pyramid in which...

"central building committees, economic planning offices, regional institutes, and republican branches take part in a vertical flow of orders and guidelines. This structure permits almost no communication horizontally, and no constructive feedback between administrative branches."¹³

In addition to the extreme top-down approach, there was also a lot of propaganda about the advantages of using reinforced concrete and standardised, industrially produced designs. It is clear from looking at the official contemporary press that reinforced concrete was praised for its workability in all seasonal conditions, its lightness, and the ease with which it can be used in the construction of industrially produced elements.¹⁴ Standardised prefabricated panel block systems, on the other hand, received praise for their fast construction methods, the reduction in skilled labourers needed to work with it,

¹² Adrian Forty, *Concrete and Culture: a Material History* (London: Reaktion, 2012), 150.

¹³ Romano del Nord, "Housing Policies U.S.S.R.," *Industrialization Forum* 7 (1976), 8.

¹⁴ A. Aksomitas, R. Sakalauskas, "Surenkamasis Gelžbetonas – pagrindinė techninės pažangos krypintis" ("Reinforced Concrete: the Key Direction to Constructional Advancement"), *Statyba ir Architektūra* 10 (1964): 5-6.

and, of course, the massive reductions it afforded in terms of building costs.¹⁵

Another very practical measure that made the process of industrialisation so fast and effective was the constant pressure from the authorities to achieve certain targets of building efficiency. Results from all areas of the economy of Soviet Republics were determined by the notorious five- and one-year plans produced by the Central Committee of the Communist Party.¹⁶ This means that the general wellbeing and job positions of those officials, who were directly accountable to the central government in Moscow, depended greatly on the successes of their jurisdictions to meet the set goals (Fig.3). Additionally, various important state occasions were sometimes used to motivate productivity and increase efficiency levels even more. One of them, for example, was the Fifty Years Anniversary of the October Revolution in 1966. Appendix A presents a summary of the new efficiency commitments that were imposed on the building organisations in order to commemorate the event. One consequence of the constant pressure on the housing industry proved to be the serious limitation imposed upon any creative explorations in design possibilities. Enshrined in the very essence of the Communist Party's agenda was a mandate for rapid construction based on continuous serial production and the exploitation of replication methods. It is thus unsurprising that in these conditions the industry of housing in many Soviet Republics started to be seen as a sphere of work more appropriately associated with construction engineers rather than architects or designers.¹⁷

¹⁵ Marija Drėmaitė, Vaidas Petrusis, 'Modernism in Soviet Lithuania: the Rise and Fall of Utopia', *ALF Modernism: Between Nostalgia and Criticism* 1063, No 2 (2014): 64.

¹⁶ Armin Bohnet, Norbert Penkaitis, "A Comparison of Living Standards and Consumption Patterns between the RSFSR and the Baltic Republics," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 19 No 1 (1988): 34.

¹⁷ Marija Drėmaitė, "Modern Housing in Lithuania in the 1960s: Nordic Influences," *DOCOMOMO: Survival of Modern. From Cultural Centres to Planned Suburbs*, ed. Claes Caldenby, O. Wedebrunn (Copenhagen: Arkitektur B, 2013), 81.



Figure 3. Caricature by A. Mertingas, published in *Švyturys* No 8 (1960), 28.

Caption: ‘Keep holding guys. Building inspectors are just about to leave.’

The drawing depicts the sense of haste which accompanied the construction of most of the new residential blocks. In order to meet certain set targets, even poorly finished structures passed the initial inspections.

In addition to the problem of a severe housing shortage that standardised concrete panel blocks targeted to solve, there was also a broader political dimension attached to the modernisation of the building industry – the Cold War competition. Greg Castillo insightfully observes that “What was shared in Western and Eastern Europe was not lifestyle but lifestyle aspirations”.¹⁸ In the field of housing, both the Capitalists and the Communists acknowledged points of continuity with the Modernism theories of the 1920s, their hygiene standards, and their minimalist approach to modern aesthetics. Also, Khrushchev’s philosophy of building was significantly influenced by the principles promoted at the CIAM Conferences, in particular, “The Minimum Dwelling” (1929), “Rational Land Development” (1930), and “The Functional City” (1933).¹⁹ Baring this in mind, it follows that - along with the fields of design and modern technology - the Cold War competition found its greatest expression in the mutually inspired sphere of modern housing.

¹⁸ Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 177.

¹⁹ Marija Drėmaitė, “Pigiau Daugiau Greičiau“ (“Faster, Better, Cheaper“), *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai* No 8 (2006): 324-5.

The exchange of knowledge between East and West was one of the important ingredients in the race to build better lives for the people in the opposing economic systems, and it is known to have manifested in a number of ways. From the mid 1950s, Russian architects and engineers started to be sent on educational trips to Capitalist countries. Various construction sites in America, for instance, started to be visited by the Soviets as early as 1955,²⁰ and from 1957 onwards official visits began to be organised to West Germany (to see Interbau) and to the Scandinavian countries.²¹ The exchange process also manifested itself in books and journal articles that focused precisely on the dissemination of Western experience across the Soviet Union. Among the most revealing evidence of this sort is a book entitled *Types of Houses and Apartments Abroad: Construction of Mass-Housing* published by the USSR Academy of Construction and Architecture in 1959.²² However, the exchange, arguably found its most glorious expression in the exhibition halls. The tone for such endeavours was set at the 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow (Fig.4). It was in this event that the Americans launched their secret weapon: the intoxicating power of Western design and household equipment.²³ This ‘psychological warfare’ played a key role in stimulating consumer consciousness in Soviet countries, and, as Susan Reid argues, it prompted the Soviet engineers to be more concerned about the design and the visual appeal of all things domestic.²⁴

²⁰ Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front*, 131.

²¹ Marija Drėmaitė, *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje (Architecture in Soviet Lithuania)* ed. Marija Drėmaitė, Vaidas Petruolis, Jūratė Tutlytė (Vilnius: VDA Leidykla, 2012), 165-6.

²² В.Г.Калиш, В.А.Коссаковский, О.И.Ржехина, *Типы домов и квартир за рубежом. Многоэтажное жилищное строительство*, Москва: Академия строительства и архитектуры СССР НИИ жилища, 1959; the Soviets also published writing of Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto, see Drėmaitė, “Pigiau Daugiau Greičiau“, 326.

²³ Mėhilli, “The Socialist Design,” 645.

²⁴ Susan E. Reid, “*This is Tomorrow: Becoming a Consumer in the Soviet Sixties*” in *The Socialist Sixties*, 30.



Figure 4. Richard Nixon and Khrushchev looking at the model kitchen display, American National Exhibition in Moscow , 1959.

From Peter Monaghan, "When Design Lost Its Innocence," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 16, 2010, accessed August 05, 2014, <http://chronicle.com/article/When-Design-Lost-Its/65490/>.

The early impact of such prolific exchanges between the East and West was visible at the Eastern design competition that was intended to present viable mass-housing solutions for Moscow's development towards the southwest.²⁵ It was organised in 1960 and fuelled by the ideas presented at the fifth congress of the Union internationale des architectes in Moscow (1958) and the Interbau project in West Berlin. Among the novel trends presented at this competition was a decisive move towards the concept of large neighbourhood units or districts.²⁶ This urban 'organism' grows out and away from the old city centres and functions as a self-sufficient entity. Figure 5 schematically illustrates the hierarchical organisation of this concept:

- four large neighbourhoods or residential districts (3) are centred around the city centre (4)
- each district is then divided into smaller microrayons (2)
- and the smallest component in this composition becomes an individual group of prefabricated panel blocks (1).

Also evident in this competition were new tendencies in methods of arranging prefabricated concrete panel blocks within the districts. Instead of positioning them around the perimeter of the individual plots comprising the districts (as it was practiced under Stalin's regime, 1922–1952),

²⁵ Drėmaitė, *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, 166.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 166.

they are now freely composed in natural landscape.²⁷ Furthermore, all the necessary services – nurseries, schools, shops, sports and entertainment facilities – are located within the district making it a convenient place to live regardless of its distance from the city centre.²⁸ Marija Drėmaitė argues that this design competition for Moscow’s expansion was crucial for laying down all the most characteristic qualities of the standardised Soviet microrayon.²⁹ She also maintains that it was the progressive developments in the West – such as Auguste Perret’s scheme for rebuilding Le Havre (1945-64), the British efforts to deal with London’s overcrowding (i.e. The New Towns Act, 1946 and what resulted from it), and the American concept of neighbourhood unit – that made the most impact on modern Soviet planning.³⁰

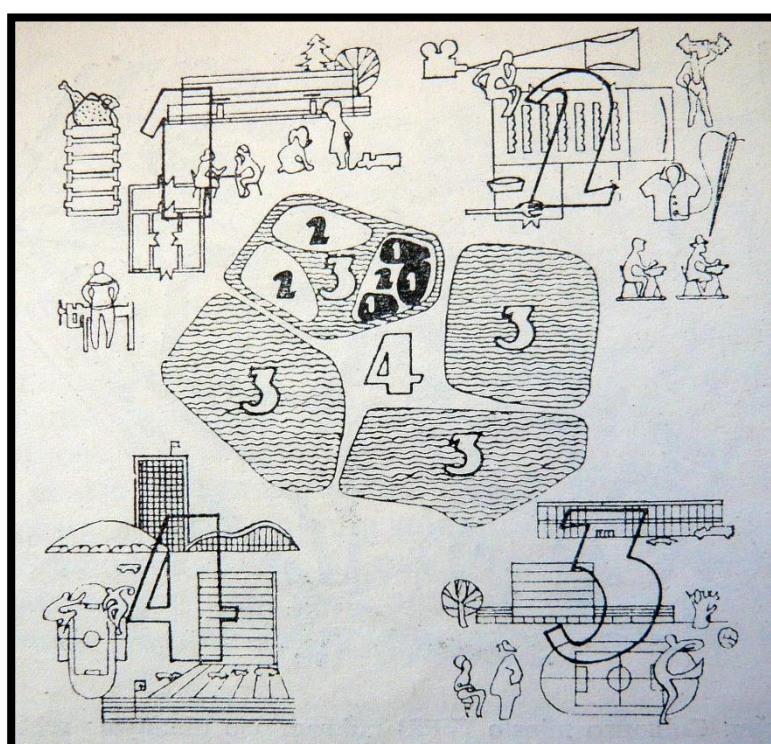


Figure 5. Schematic representation of innovative urban planning ideas. Diagram published in Jonas Minkevičius, *Miestai vakar, šiandien, rytoj*, 1964.

1. Group of houses (2000 residents)
2. Microrayon (6000–10 000 residents)
3. District or residential unit (25 000–50 000 residents)
4. The previously formed city

The drawings surrounding the central image illustrate the various services that were integrated into the fabric of standardised Soviet residential districts. For example, they normally included facilities for children’s education and play, as well as sports facilities, cinemas, catering institutions, and various shops.

²⁷ Ibid., 167.

²⁸ Ibid., 166-67; also see Appendix B for some more vivid descriptions about what the Soviet residential district were intended to look like.

²⁹ Ibid., 167.

³⁰ Ibid., 164-66. The exchange between East and West was twosided, for more information about the Soviet’s influence on British planning see Stephen Ward, “Soviet communism and the British planning movement: rational learning or Utopian imagining?” *Planning Perspectives* 27, No 4 (2012): 499–524.

The fact that Soviet planning was strongly influenced by the international trends by no means suggests that it was indistinguishable from them. The ‘default’ political philosophy in both the Capitalist and Communist countries retained a distrust for the other. Under Khrushchev the Soviets were particularly eager to overtake the West in the sphere of mass-housing, and indeed they succeeded - though not without a price to pay.³¹ As a result of this race, the Soviet residential districts became characterised by what is sometimes referred to as ‘hyper-standardisation’.³² Out of 225 standardised prefabricated panel block projects that had been designed in the USSR for mass-housing, only around 10 were actually applied in practice.³³ Moreover, in a number of Soviet cities, manufacturers of concrete panels were often producing only one or a maximum of two mass-housing designs.³⁴ In addition to this, the Soviet designers³⁴ were greatly restricted by building regulations called SNiPs (Rus. *Строительные нормы и правила*). These regulations are now considered to be responsible for making the Soviets measure their progress in terms of square meters of living space per person rather than rises in standards of living typically used by the West.³⁵ Furthermore, among the distinctively Soviet qualities of building industry was a chronic shortage of building materials, decorative finishes, and household goods in general.

In order to justify the state’s inability to compete with the West in terms of living quality and the availability of domestic goods, the Soviet Union’s officials coined the expression “the socialist way of life”.³⁶ Péteri explains that under Khrushchev the USSR was keen to embrace Western innovations, but at the same time Khrushchev’s goal was to construct an “*alternative* modernity” with “distinctly *socialist* characteristics”.³⁷ Living standards in this modernity were closely tied related to the state’s goals of achieving greater social equality and fulfilling the collective needs of Soviet peoples. Such a propagandistic agenda somehow made the constant deficits look more tolerable.

³¹ In the early 1960s the United Nations identified the USSR as the world leader in low-cost mass-housing. For this reason, the UN began organizing experience-exchange trips to Russia for engineers and planners from third world countries.

³² Mēhilli, “The Socialist Design,” 651.

³³ Albertas Cibas, “Mintys ir problemos iš IV visasąjunginio architektų suvažiavimo“ (“Summary of Ideas from the IV All-Soviet Union Conference of Architects”), *Statyba ir Architektūra* 11 (1965), 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁵ Drėmaitė, *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, 160-61.

³⁶ Bohnet and Penkaitis, “A Comparison of Living Standards,” 34.

³⁷ György Péteri, “The Occident Within – or the Drive for Exceptionalism,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9 No 4 (2008): 934-37.

~~~~~

The primary goal of this introductory chapter has been to provide some general background information about the philosophy of Soviet mass-housing and the ways in which this system worked. It has been argued that Soviet prefabricated concrete panel blocks and urban planning were not isolated from the wider international trends, but that these trends were adapted to meet the needs specific to the Soviet context. It had also been shown that it was the Cold War competition between two fundamentally different economic systems that fuelled the exchange of progressive ideas.

It has been acknowledged that the rivalry between East and West prompted new innovations on both sides. Although slowly and with numerous mistakes in the construction processes, the living conditions of Soviet peoples were gradually improved. Indeed, if measured in terms of new housing units built, Khrushchev's reformation of the building industry was a success as millions of families were moved into private apartments. In addition to this, Soviet industrialisation fuelled the establishment of a huge number of new manufacturers specialising in producing progressive building materials, as well as a general boost in design innovations in the domestic sector. Furthermore, the reform resulted in the rise in the international profile of the Soviet's achievements in the field of cheap prefabricated panel blocks.

The irony, however, is that, rather than an illustration of its advantages, the much praised housing projects of the Soviets became the most iconic representation of the constraints of mass-production. This happened due to the fact that a distinctively political agenda was attached to Soviet mass-housing from its inception; the new building industry primarily served as a tool for rapidly constructing Communism, with the principles of architecture only being considered as afterthoughts. Due to the enormous pressures to meet targets of building efficiency given limited material resources, the Soviets ended up constructing apartments for 'standardised' individuals and 'typical' families, or, in other words, made-up social categories that by no means reflected the diversity of peoples' needs.

**III. THE MASS-HOUSING SYSTEM IN SOVIET LITHUANIA:  
EXPLORING THE METHODS OF ITS ORGANISATION, AND THE  
ARCHITECTS' ROLE IN DECISION MAKING**



Figure 6. Poster commemorating twenty years anniversary of Soviet Lithuania. Published in *Šluota*, No 14 (1960), 5.

The period of Communist rule started in the Baltic region in 1945, and it is considered to be responsible for bringing immense changes in the lifestyles of local people and in the appearance of their cities. As late as 1940, 80% of the Lithuanian population still lived outside urban areas.<sup>38</sup> The country's building industry was also organised around the practice of producing individual design plans for each structure, and at the time it was mainly brick and timber buildings that prevailed.<sup>39</sup> However, hand in hand with the Soviet occupation came an extensive scheme of modernisation, urbanisation, and industrialisation.

The course of local building industry was fundamentally changed by the new building acts of 1955 and Khrushchev's promise in 1957 to provide families with individual flats (see pp.11-12). Following these events...

“all the unnecessary decorative elements were renounced, and the architects started to be creatively involved in developing a new Socialist style of modern architecture, which was fundamentally aimed to reflect the primary goal of the Union – the improvement of the wellbeing of Soviet people.”<sup>40</sup>

Marija Drėmaitė notes that Lithuania's entry into the advanced phase of the 'construction of Communism' took place in the period spanning from 1959 to 1965.<sup>41</sup> During these years, manufacturing centres of reinforced concrete elements were established in five largest counties of the country: Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, and Panevėžys. Local centres for calcium-silicate bricks and other modern building materials were also founded around this time. Strong governmental support for the industries of progressive building technologies unsurprisingly resulted in a significant increase in local reinforced concrete consumption and the construction of panel blocks. The statistics speak for themselves: in 1959 panel blocks comprised only 1.2 % of all domestic dwellings built in Lithuania, but by 1963 their number increased by 30%.<sup>42</sup> The greatest progress in the sphere of

---

<sup>38</sup> John Maciuika, “Baltic Shores, Western Winds: Lithuanian Architects and the Subversion of the Soviet Norm,” *Centropa* 1, No 2 (2001): 109.

<sup>39</sup> Jonas Minkevičius, *Naujoji Tarybų Lietuvos architektūra (The New Architecture of Soviet Lithuania)*, (Vilnius: Mintis, 1964), 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. [Lit. “Griežtai atsisakydami formalaus estetizavimo, nereikalingo dekoratyviškumo ir eklektikos, architektai siekia sukurti kokybišką naują, socialistinį architektūros stilių, išreiškianti novatorišką tarybinės visuomenės esmę ir jos aukščiausių principą – rūpinimąsi visų darbo žmonių gerove.”]

<sup>41</sup> Drėmaitė, “Pigiau Daugiau Greičiau,” 327.

<sup>42</sup> Aksomitas and Sakalauskas, “Surenkamasis gelžbetonas,” 5.

industrialising the housing system was seen in Vilnius. Three reinforced concrete manufacturers were based in this city, and during the boom years they tripled their production. The consequence of this growth in production was a great increase in consumption: in 1965, reinforced concrete panel blocks comprised 80% of all domestic dwellings built in the capital.<sup>43</sup> The massive increase in building activity was unprecedented in Vilnius, or in any other Lithuanian towns. To illustrate the huge changes that were happening in the Baltic States, Armin Bohnet and Norbert Penkaitis published a paper entitled, “A Comparison of Living Standards and Consumption Patterns between the RSFSR and the Baltic Republics” (1988); on this topic their comparative research revealed the extraordinary fact that the construction industry was actually more active in Lithuania than it was in Soviet Russia (Fig.7).<sup>44</sup>

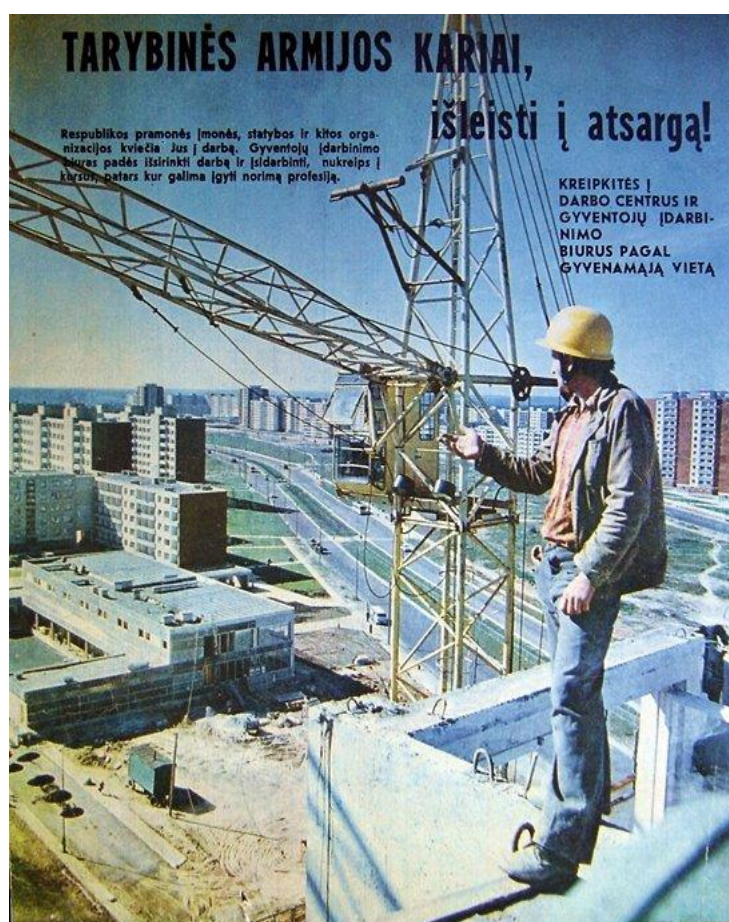


Figure 7. Karoliniškės district under construction, Vilnius, 1974 – 1989.

Original source unknown. Republished in “Forumai Miestai”, last modified August 04, 2014, <http://www.miestai.net/forumas/s/howthread.php?t=816&page=17>.

**Caption:**

“Soldiers of the Red Army, switch to military reserve forces!

Industrial manufacturers and other organisations are inviting you to work for them. Local recruitment offices will help you to pick a job that suits you, organise the necessary training, and will give you advice on where to apply in order to get the profession of your choice.”

---

<sup>43</sup> In 1959 they produced a total of 46500m<sup>3</sup> of reinforced concrete, but in 1963 they manufactured 155700m<sup>3</sup>. See Ibid., 5 and 7.

<sup>44</sup> Bohnet and Penkaitis, “A Comparison of Living Standards,” 43.

Among the most popular standard dwelling designs that were produced in Vilnius, was various instantiations of series 1-464 that dominated (Appendix C). Reinforced concrete manufacturers started producing a generic version of series 1-464 in 1959, but in the early 1960s a variety of standardised dwellings were designed specifically for the Baltic region.<sup>45</sup> In Lithuania this resulted in two new types of five storey high panel blocks: 1-464-1LT and 1-464-3LT.<sup>46</sup> The first dwellings built using these types of blocks started appearing in 1962, and from the late 1960s onwards type 1-464LI and type 1-464LI-51 were developed.<sup>47</sup> These modified designs offered a greater range of compositional variations, and could be built up to twelve storeys in height.

Alongside the development of standardised dwelling types evolved new ideas about progressive city planning. Cities were rapidly expanding, and during the 1960s general plans were produced for most of the larger urban settlements of Lithuania. As one might expect, the development of new residential districts was in many cases linked to the concentration of industrial manufacturers. This transpired not only because the construction industry attracted workers from rural areas, but also because factories were officially obliged to designate money for building accommodation.<sup>48</sup> It is clear from reading Jonas Minkevičius' book *Naujoji Tarybų Lietuvos architektūra (The New Architecture of Soviet Lithuania)* that progressive ideas presented at the 1960 competition for Moscow's expansion (pp. 16-17) reached Lithuania rather quickly; for example, in 1964, Minkevičius already boasts about how...

“he development of residential districts now proceeds into a new phase. The panel blocks are now composed into large microrayons (up to 9,000-12,000 people), which have all the necessary services [...] included in the area for the convenience of the residents.”<sup>49</sup>

In terms of official decision making power, Soviet republics had some freedom, but all the important decisions were normally made in Moscow. The concept of so-called

---

<sup>45</sup> Aksomitas and Sakalauskas, “Surenkamasis gelžbetonas,” 7

<sup>46</sup> Drėmaitė, “Pigiau Daugiau Greičiau,” 327.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>48</sup> Drėmaitė, *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, 167.

<sup>49</sup> [Lit. “gyvenviečių statyba dabar pereina į naują fazę. Naujieji gyvenamieji namai grupuojami į didelius mikrorajonus (iki 9000-12000 gyv.), kuriuose numatoma visos reikalingos kultūrinio buitinio aptarnavimo įstaigos... Tai labai patogu gyventojams.”] Minkevičius, *Naujoji Tarybų Lietuvos architektūra*, 5-6.

‘democratic centralism’ allowed the Lithuanians to make some independent judgements about those building matters that were financially very insignificant and of only local importance.<sup>50</sup> Formally, even the high rank officials of the Lithuanian building industry had very little capacity to influence the performance of their jurisdictions. All the big investments in the construction industry came from Moscow; they were centrally planned and strictly overlooked by the high officials of the Union.<sup>51</sup> Also, in exactly the same way as in all the other Soviet republics, SNiPs were severely restrictive; Lithuanian architects could not (officially) go over the limit of 9m<sup>2</sup> living space per person, 6m<sup>2</sup> for kitchens, 3.5m<sup>2</sup> for WCs and bathroom areas, and other established size norms for the rooms.<sup>52</sup> To complicate matters even more, the concept of a building designed by an individual architect did not really exist, as such. It is clear from interviews with architects Česlovas Mazūras and Mrs. Balanienė that residential district planning was a collaborative project.<sup>53</sup> A few planners would normally be appointed to prepare a general district plan, but the job of designing individual microrayons would be distributed among other architects who were not strictly obliged to stick to the original plan. The whole project would then be given to be approved by the transport department and all the other important governmental institutions. Substantial corrections to the original district plan could be made at any stage, and so the initial vision of the chief planners could often be quite significantly different to the final appearance of the district.

Such a disrespectful attitude towards a district’s original design can be explained by the rather unusual attitude of the highest Soviet officials towards architecture. Algimantas Miškinis explains that domestic architecture was detached from the sphere of creative arts, and it was subordinate to such fields as industrial production, economy of means, and technological prerequisites.<sup>54</sup> Also, in a manner comparable to that of Russia, the organisation of the building industry in Lithuania was very hierarchical. This system allowed little communication between the highest and lowest levels (see Appendix E),

---

<sup>50</sup> Bohnet and Penkaitis, “A Comparison of Living Standards,” 35.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>52</sup> Marija Drėmaitė, *Vilnius, 1900-2005: naujosios architektūros gidas* (Vilnius: Architektūros fondas, 2005), 140.

<sup>53</sup> Česlovas Mazūras, interviewed by Miles Glendinning (conversation interpreted by Indrė Ruseckaitė), Vilnius, June 06, 2013; Mrs. Balanienė, interviewed by Miles Glendinning (conversation interpreted by Indrė Ruseckaitė), Vilnius, June 08, 2013.

<sup>54</sup> Algimantas Miškinis, *Lietuvos urbanistika: istorija, dabartis, ateitis* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1991), 109.

and so design subtleties were sometimes simply neglected by the builders. Furthermore, constant pressures to meet certain efficiency targets combined with pressures to build cheaply to cause an unnatural shift in power relationship: a number of commentators note that the most influential figures in the local building industry became directors of factories that were producing standardised reinforced concrete elements.<sup>55</sup> Because they were in control of the standardised mouldings of reinforced concrete elements, they essentially became chief providers of the main ‘work tools’ of the architects and heavily influenced the appearance of residential districts.

As one might expect, not everything worked neatly in line with the official policies in an organisational system as massive as the Soviet Union. For example, the philosophy behind the Lithuanian apparatus of modern mass-housing is quite vague and occasionally contradictory. A review of contemporary propaganda literature reveals that the design of residential districts was regarded by the state as a sphere of artistic creativity. Such attitudes are reflected in both the aforementioned *The New Architecture of Soviet Lithuania* and in Jokūbas Peras’ *Daugiabutis gyvenamasis namas (An Apartment Block)* (1958).<sup>56</sup> However, both of these publications try to redefine the traditional notion of a beautiful house. In accordance with the prevailing ideology of the USSR, the emphasis is placed by both authors on simple designs and a high level of functionality. According to Peras...

“A residential house should be beautiful and functional. The attractiveness of the house is not achieved through using an abundance of decorative elements, but rather through modest design, good proportions, strict geometry, and functionality.”<sup>57</sup>

It can be sensed from this quotation that historic styles are considered to be conflicting with the modern approach to design. Peras indeed dedicates quite a few pages of his book to explaining how obsolete historic styles are, and he pushes the idea that new architecture should fully embrace all the available technical innovations. In order to make

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 109; Drėmaitė, *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, 164; Algimantas Polis, “Tas netipinis tipinis projektavimas”, *Statyba ir Architektūra* 2 (1987), 4.

<sup>56</sup> Minkevičius, *Naujoji Tarybų Lietuvos architektūra*, 29-30; Jokūbas Peras, *Daugiabutis gyvenamasis namas (An Apartment Block)*, (Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1958), 143.

<sup>57</sup>[Lit. “Gyvenamasis namas privalo būti gražus, patrauklus ir gerai atlikti savo paskirtį. Pastato grožis ir patrauklumas pasiekiamas ne dekoratyvių elementų gausybe, o paprastumu, geromis proporcijomis, griežtomis formomis, ekonomiškų sprendimų ir buitinių patogumais.”]. Peras, *Daugiabutis gyvenamasis namas*, 143.

his new approach to housing appear more valid, Peras even cites the English philosopher Francis Bacon (1561–1626), who argued that ‘houses are built to live in, not to look at’.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, the authors of both books argue that designing residential districts using standardised panel blocks is not artistically limiting. The creative factors in the design process of modern mass-housing include the compositional arrangement of the blocks, imaginative landscaping, a full exploitation of surface colour, and a variety of other exterior finishes.<sup>59</sup>

All these ideas, however, often conflict with what is written in contemporary periodicals. It is clear from quite a few articles published in the influential journal *Statyba ir Architektūra* (*Construction and Architecture*) that – in practice – a greater emphasis was placed on fast construction rather than on creative designing. For example, the article “Reinforced Concrete: the Key Direction to Constructional Advancement” (Oct., 1964) calls for greater specialisation of industrial manufacturers, more standardisation in constructional elements, and the ability to apply exactly the same building elements to functionally diverse structures (e.g. social institutions, farmhouses, industrial administrative buildings).<sup>60</sup> Additionally, limiting factors for designers not only included the scarce supply of building materials, but also the strict regulations regarding their usage; “How can we talk about improving the quality of our architecture when the central government is greatly limiting our resources in order to make the process of building less costly, and the manufacturers do not provide cheap and good-quality building materials” complained architect Albertas Cibas in 1965.<sup>61</sup> However, the principal ideological haziness is reflected in the Lithuanians’ attitudes towards modern architecture.<sup>62</sup> Despite the fact that the official state programme was in favour of panel blocks, in reality many people found it hard to associate themselves with concrete homes, and to adapt to such a sudden shift from rural to urban life. It is unclear whether it was intentional or intuitive, but most architects acknowledged this problem, and – as is reflected in the extract from the “Miestas ir jo spalvos” (“City and its Colours”) article (Appendix D) – were trying to

---

<sup>58</sup> Francis Bacon cited in *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 145-6; Minkevičius, *Naujoji Tarybų Lietuvos architektūra*, 4.

<sup>60</sup> Aksomitas and Sakalauskas, “Surenkamasis gelžbetonas,” 8.

<sup>61</sup> [Lit. „Kokia kalba gali būti apie architektūros kokybės kėlimą, kai centriniai organai daro eilę suvaržymų siekdami atpiginti statybą, o statybinių medžiagų pramonė naujų pigių ir kokybiškų apdailos medžiagų neduoda.“] Cibas, “Mintys ir problemos iš IV visasąjunginio architektų suvažiavimo,” 3.

<sup>62</sup> This subject will be returned to in greater detail in my third chapter.

‘camouflage’ the deeply unappealing appearance of the Soviet urban environment. However, only foliage and exterior colours were available to the architects in this respect.

Power relations in the Lithuanian building industry were often not as straightforward as was officially stated. One significant trait that distinguished Vilnius’ building industry from many other Lithuanian (and Soviet) towns was that within the capital a few groups of architects specialising in designing mass-housing had begun to form.<sup>63</sup> Among these groups prevailed a feeling that in spite of the restrictive regulations that limited their creativity, Khrushchev’s reforms brought a certain degree of liberation; to an appreciable extent, they freed the architects from the “neo-classical terror of Stalin’s regime”.<sup>64</sup> The ability to once again participate in progressive architectural developments combined with a huge demand for architectural skills and resulted in a growing confidence among the Lithuanian architects. Most of these architects understood the advantages of industrialisation and were generally in favour of it.<sup>65</sup> However, they were also wary of the prospect of over-standardisation, and their concerns were reflected in the polemic about mass-housing in the contemporary press. An example of this is found in the disapproving ideas concerning the restrictive working conditions for architects that were expressed during various discussions at the IV All-Union Conference of Architects – a summary-report from which was published in Lithuania in 1965. Exclusively Lithuanian criticisms of the Soviet building system begun appearing the following year, and on a few occasions it was surprisingly direct. An extract from Vytautas Balčiūnas’ article of 1965 summaries many of the early concerns of the Lithuanians

“We should get rid of the practice of building one or two types of houses for the whole country. Our aim is to achieve that not only each republic, but also different reinforced concrete factories would have their own standardised designs... We categorically disagree with the idea that the standardised projects of 1970-1975 will be centrally produced for the whole country. The new designs should be prepared not for abstract conditions, but moulded for specific situations... We should review the huge number of recently released building and planning regulations which restrict the architects’ work and slow down their progress. We recommend changing the standardised planning system and its financing

---

<sup>63</sup> Kazimieras Balėnas, “Vilniaus mikrorajonai – projektai ir tikrovė,” *Statyba ir Architektūra* 10 (1985), 5; Drėmaitė, *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, 163-4.

<sup>64</sup> Drėmaitė, “Pigiau Daugiau Greičiau,” 326.

<sup>65</sup> Vytautas Balčiūnas, “Lietuvos architektų pasiūlymai” (“Some suggestions by Lithuanian architects”), *Statyba ir Architektūra* 11 (1966), 4-5.

by bringing back the previously operating right of the republics to prepare and finance standardised design projects locally... It is time to give the republics more sovereignty, and by so doing to make them be more inventive and more accountable for their decisions.”<sup>66</sup>

In addition to these suggestions, the early 1960s began to see fresh complaints concerning the poor quality of panel blocks. Such a situation resulted not only from a lack of quality building materials,<sup>67</sup> but also from the frequent practice of assessing newly built panel blocks in an uncritical manner. Faulty new apartments often went through initial inspections without any objections, as the inspectors were motivated to meet their building targets.<sup>68</sup>

It was not, however, the direct and open complaints in the contemporary press that were the most powerful tool influencing the Lithuanian architects designs for residential districts. Interviews with architects Mazūras and Balanienė revealed that Soviet architects were sometimes able to achieve substantial modifications in panel design through good personal relations with directors of reinforced concrete manufacturing factories.<sup>69</sup> Some of these directors genuinely cared about the appearance of their cities and wanted to improve living standards in their country; when motivated by these aspirations, some exceptional cases saw the standardised panel designs changed according to the architect’s project.<sup>70</sup> Of course, this was done entirely behind the backs of Moscow’s officials.

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 5. Due to the length of the translated section, the original quotation is provided in Appendix F.

<sup>67</sup> In 1977 only 11% of all building materials produced in Lithuania were categorised as ‘high quality’. Česlovas Jasiūnas, “Gaminsime daugiau geresnių medžiagų,” *Statyba ir architektūra* 8 (1977), 2.

<sup>68</sup> Antanas Aksomitas, “Gerinkime namų stovybos kokybę,” *Statyba ir Architektūra* 1 (1979), 3-4.

<sup>69</sup> Balanienė and Mazūras, interviewed by Miles Glendinning (conversation interpreted by Indrė Ruseckaitė), Vilnius, June 0-8, 2013. Balčiūnas, “Lietuvos architektų pasiūlymai,” 5.

<sup>70</sup> Balanienė and Mazūras, interviewed by Miles Glendinning.

~~~~~

The primary purpose of this chapter has been to provide insight into the organisational system of Lithuanian mass-housing after the implementation of Khrushchev's housing reforms. The review of contemporary publications has revealed numerous contradictions in what was stated in propaganda literature and the actual reality of mass-housing; while official publications called for beautiful and functional homes and residential districts, the imposed time-pressures and limited supplies of building materials made working conditions particularly unsympathetic to any creative activity. It has also been shown that although all the standard all-Union regulations applied in Lithuania were essentially totalitarian, from the mid-1960s onwards architects started looking for new ways of improving the standardised bland designs. Particularly significant in this context was the fact that a number of architects specialised in designing mass-housing, and so they felt a certain entitlement to design liveable districts. Their stance against over-standardisation as well as their informal relations with directors of reinforced concrete manufacturing companies were particularly significant factors in creating a climate that was open to new but modest design explorations.

IV. EXPLORING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN LITHUANIAN ARCHITECTS AND THE PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENTS ABROAD



Figure 8. Caricature with a caption "We are building communism" ("Komunizmo statybos"). Published in *Šluota* 19 (1961), 2.

The history of Lithuania serves as a remarkable illustration of the old saying that ‘geography is destiny’.⁷¹ From the mid sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries Lithuania played a junior role in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1795). Following the rise of Tsarist Russia (1795–1918), rights of the state were suppressed even more. Also, following the outbreak of World War I (1914–18), Lithuania’s borders were directly affected by the frequent geographical fluctuations of the neighbouring German Empire, Russian Empire, and the Second Polish Republic. As a result of its troublesome position, the brief period of autonomy that stretched from 1919 to 1939 became highly significant as a time during which the political and cultural identity of the nation could be reaffirmed.⁷² One force that has consistently dominated Lithuanian architecture from the early years of the interwar independence is the so-called ‘Westward gaze’.⁷³ It will be argued in this section that this Westward orientation remained significant during Khrushchev’s rule.

Geographically diminished and somewhat dispirited by the loss of historic capital city of Vilnius, the newly-born Republic of Lithuania was subjected to immense pressures in the early 1920s;⁷⁴ not only did it have to assert its legitimacy in the ruthless arena of international politics, but it also had to affirm its cultural identity locally. John Maciuika argues that in order to achieve this twofold agenda, the Republic’s officials relied heavily on architecture, and their focus became the temporary capital city of Kaunas.⁷⁵ The architects’ inherent fondness for a “restrained use of ornament, broad, smooth surfaces, and a rational organisation of massing” led them to embrace the tradition of what they understood as ‘International Style’.⁷⁶ Such a choice was also fuelled by the architects’ aspirations to engage with the latest stylistic developments in democratic countries, and, by doing so, to symbolically distance themselves from their history of totalitarian rule.⁷⁷ By the late 1920s, the survival of the Lithuanian Republic was fairly secure, and this

⁷¹ John Maciuika, “East Bloc, West View: Architecture and Lithuanian National Identity,” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 1 Vol. 11 (1999): 23.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷⁴ I refer here to the first Republic of Lithuanian (1919–1939). The second time Lithuania became an independent republic was after the dissolution of the USSR (1991–present).

⁷⁵ John Maciuika, “Modernist Architecture and Nationalist Aspiration in the Baltic: Two Case Studies,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 1 Vol. 65 (2006): 94.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁷⁷ Maciuika, “East Bloc, West View,” 24.

political stability provided the right conditions for the explosion of building activity in Kaunas.

It is important to mention that stylistic influences on the Lithuanian architects came from a wide variety of sources, and the architects' understanding of Modernist philosophy was very fragmented. Examples of progressive architecture from Berlin, Prague, and Stuttgart, as well as other European cities reached the architects via easily accessible professional journals. However, prior to the establishment of the Lithuanian Republic, there existed no tradition of Modernism in this country. Also, up until the early 1920s architectural training was not offered as a subject by any national academic institutions; instead, architects typically received their educations in stylistically diverse schools abroad, including those in Riga Krakow, Warsaw, and St Petersburg, and even those in Germany, Austria, or France.⁷⁸ The lack of a consistent academic foundation and the absence of a local tradition of modern architecture were important factors that contributed to the development of the rather unique local 'Modernism' of Kaunas. Although the exteriors of the apartment blocks captured in Figures 9-11 conform to the contemporary designs abroad, this kinship does not translate into methods of their construction or interior decoration. Indeed, most of Kaunas' structures built during the first Republic were constructed using stucco-covered, manually-laid bricks.⁷⁹ Figure 11 illustrates how elaborate stuccoed ceilings are shielded behind the modern façades of these houses. Although somewhat superficially progressive, Kaunas' 'Modernist' buildings nonetheless represent the genuine first attempts of the Lithuanians to participate in Western architectural developments.

The short and fruitful period of natural evolution in Lithuanian architecture was brutally disrupted by the Soviet occupation in 1940.⁸⁰ Along with the loss of political sovereignty, artistic freedom was also greatly diminished. Under the direct influence of the Communist Party, the local 'Modernist' style had to be replaced by Socialist Classicism, or by the so-called Stalinist Style. This fashion prevailed up until the death of Stalin in

⁷⁸ Maciuika, "Modernist Architecture," 107.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 96.

⁸⁰ Gediminas Baravykas, "Vakarų Vėjai" ("The Westward Winds"), *Krantai* 15 (March, 1990): 10.

1953, and was imposed country-wide by pro-Soviet Lithuanians and foreign architects who were appointed to work in the chilly Baltic.⁸¹

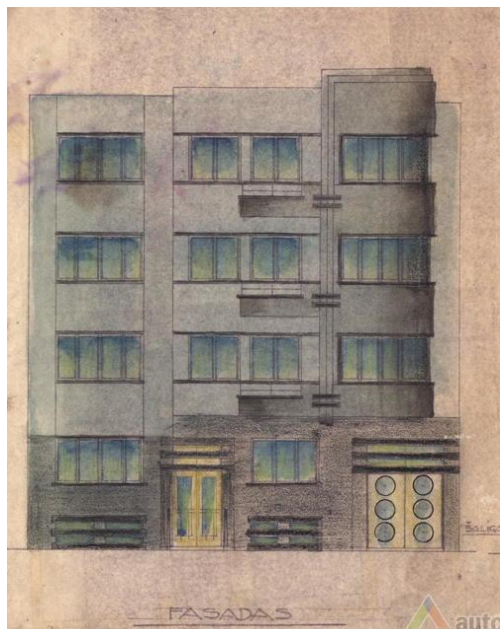


Figure 9. A photograph and drawing of an apartment block in Kaunas, V. Putvinskio Street Nr 60. Designed by Bronius Elsbergas and built in 1933. The drawing produced in Oct. 1932, photograph taken in 1956 by J. Skeivys.

Source: "Autc", accessed August 06, 2014, <http://www.autc.lt/public/HeritageObject.aspx?id=164>.

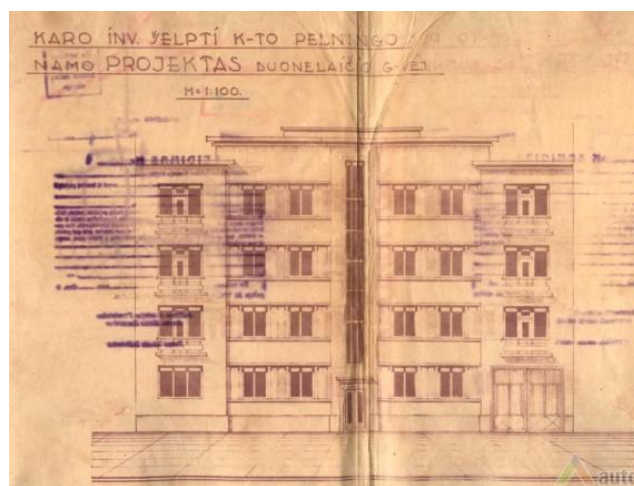


Figure 10. A photograph and drawing of an apartment block in Kaunas, K. Donelaičio Street Nr 75. Designed by Feliksas Vizbaras, Jonas Acukas, and Jonas Kriščiukaitis. Built in 1933-35. The drawing produced in the early 1930s, photograph taken in 2008 by V. Petrulis.

Source: "Autc", accessed August 06, 2014, <http://www.autc.lt/public/HeritageObject.aspx?id=144>.

⁸¹ Ibid., 10.



Figure 11. Front exterior and ceiling decorations of an apartment block in Kaunas, Kęstučio Street Nr 38. Designed by Feliksas Vizbaras and built in 1932. The exterior photo taken in 2011 by V. Petrulis, the interior photo taken in 2007 by J. Zaleckienė.

Source: “Autc”, accessed August 06, 2014,
<http://www.autc.lt/public/HeritageObject.aspx?id=1026>.

When bearing this background information in mind, it becomes much easier to understand why Khrushchev’s architectural reforms could have been seen by Lithuanian architects as a sort of long-awaited liberation. ‘Socialist Modernism’ was welcomed by the architects as it signalled the return of the interest of the highest state officials in the progressive architectural developments in the West. As it has been argued in Chapter Two (pp. 14-16), the Cold War climate fuelled competition between the Capitalists and the Communists and encouraged a certain degree of cultural exchange. In Lithuania under Khrushchev, this atmosphere of rivalry manifested itself in the ability of local architects to once again get access to information about Western technological developments. From the early 1960s *Statyba ir Architektūra* started publishing news about various architectural innovations in the USA, France, Japan, and other countries.⁸² Additionally, this journal had begun running a special monthly section entitled “Architectural News from Abroad”, which covered innovation from both Eastern and Western blocks.⁸³

⁸² Juozas Baršauskas, “Ateities miestų prignozės” (“Some predictions about cities in the future”), *Statyba ir Architektūra* 12 (1968), 5-7; Jonas Minkevičius, “Nacionalinės išraiškos ieškojimai užsienio architektūroje” (“A search of expression of national identity in architecture from abroad”), *Statyba ir Architektūra* 3 (1961), 9-10.

⁸³ See, for example, “Iš statybos naujienų” (“News from abroad”), *Statyba ir Architektūra* 1 (1961), 26-28 and *Statyba ir Architektūra* 12 (1966), 29.

One recurrent and unusual feature that becomes apparent in issues of *Statyba ir Architektūra* published during the course of the 1960s is great concentration on the developments in Scandinavia. Although Nordic architecture had never been seen as an inspiration for the Lithuanians, numerous articles started featuring works of Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) and Aarne Ervi (1910–1977) alongside discussions of Scandinavian building systems and their urban planning strategies.⁸⁴

This shift in focus was primarily influenced by the Soviets' interest in the technological advancements of the Scandinavian countries. For example, following the end of World War II (1939-1945), there was a great shortage of housing in the Nordic countries.⁸⁵ In a similar way to the USSR, this situation was coupled with a lack of building materials and skilled builders. When push came to shove, the Danish, Swedish and Finish governments began investing into developing non-tradition building methods. They essentially became known as various types of reinforced concrete panel systems – the modern invention which powered mass-housing in the Soviet Union (Fig.12). However, what was particularly interesting to the Soviets were the innovative planning methods applied in Scandinavian cities. For example, the Swedish planning concept known as the 'ABC town' communicates essentially the same ideas as the Communist residential districts of the 1960s. Claes Caldenby explains that 'A', 'B', and 'C' stand for workplace (*arbete*), housing (*bostad*), and centre (*centrum*), and the key idea is to keep these three elements together.⁸⁶ This concept was applied in the early 1950s in the suburbs of Stockholm in a residential district called Vällingby. In the manner of an ideal Soviet district, Vällingby provides its residents with all that they need (housing, work, leisure), while maintaining convenient connections to the capital. A significant fact to bear in mind is that neither Scandinavian planning nor their concrete panel systems could have appealed to the Soviets so much, if not for friendly diplomatic relations between the USSR and the

⁸⁴ See: Minkevičius, "Nacionalinės išaiškos ieškojimai užsienio architektūroje," 9-12; Algimantas Mačiulis, "Apie suomių architektūrą" ("Some notes about the Finish architecture"), *Statyba ir Architektūra* 1 (1961), 20-23; unknown author, "Statybos metodai Švedijoje" ("Sonstruction methods in Sweden"), *Statyba ir Architektūra* 1 (1961), 23-26.

⁸⁵ Claes Caldenby, "Urban Modernity Nordic-Baltic Experiences," *ALF Modernism: Between Nostalgia and Criticism* 1063, No 2 (2014): 44-45; Charlotte Bundgaard, conference paper "Prefabricated industrialized building of the 1960's – in the light of the *new industrialization*," International Conference on the Research of Modern Architecture in Jyväskylä, Finland (Aug.30, 2002).

⁸⁶ Caldenby, "Urban Modernity Nordic-Baltic Experiences," 43.

Nordic countries.⁸⁷ Also, Scandinavia was conveniently located in close physical proximity to North-West of the former Soviet Russia, and it had a similarly harsh climate.

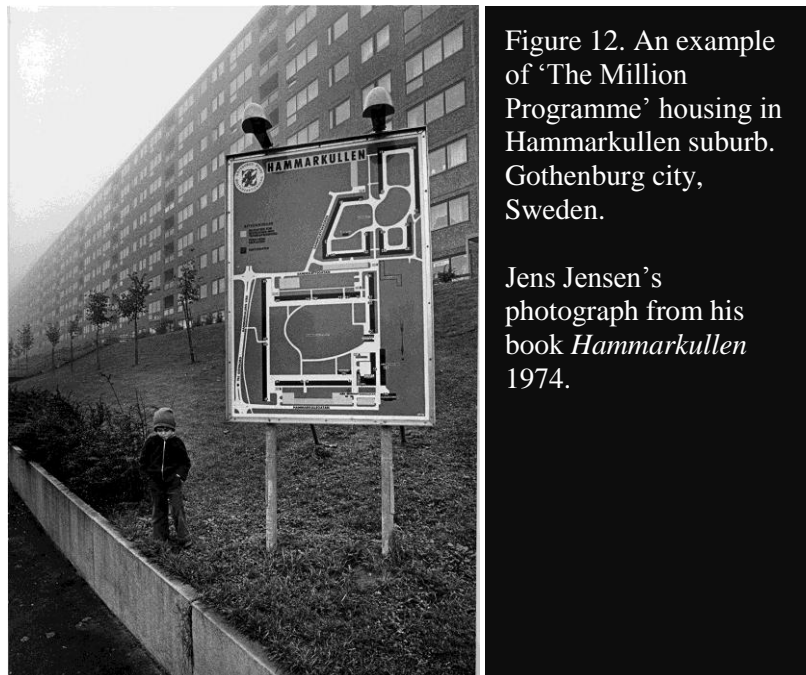


Figure 12. An example of ‘The Million Programme’ housing in Hammarkullen suburb, Gothenburg city, Sweden.

Jens Jensen’s photograph from his book *Hammarkullen* 1974.

In relation to Lithuanian mass-housing, this topic is the one of the research subjects of Marija Drėmaitė and John Maciuka. They focus on the dissemination and impact of Northern design ideas in Soviet Lithuania. Indeed, the Lithuanian architects enjoyed not only good coverage of news about Nordic architectural developments in the press, but also had a chance to see Scandinavian Modernism with their own eyes. It was good diplomatic relations with the Northern countries and the Cold War competition that made the ‘experience exchange’ trips possible. In 1959 the Central Tourist-Excursion Bureau passed a new regulation which made it easier for the Soviet trade-unions to arrange visits to certain foreign countries.⁸⁸ Although all the tourists were carefully selected and attended by KGB people, these trips opened the door for certain Lithuanian architects to explore some of the most progressive developments first hand. Drėmaitė’s archival research reveals that architects were even able to place travelling requests for sites that interested them.⁸⁹ Among the places they visited were such countries as Czechoslovakia

⁸⁷ Relations to Finland were particularly good due to historic connections between Finland and Russian Empire (1809-1917).

⁸⁸ Drėmaitė, “Modern Housing in Lithuania in the 1960s,” 82.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

and France,⁹⁰ but by far the largest number of travelling requests were placed for trips to Scandinavian countries.

The Lithuanians started travelling to Finland in 1959, and the first two trips (in June and in August) were organised by the Union of USSR Architects.⁹¹ In each of these excursions only six Lithuanian architects were invited, and they travelled in a group with architects from Russia, Latvia, and Estonia. These trips were successful and considered worthwhile, and so the following year saw an explosion of interest in Scandinavia by the Lithuanians. In 1960 three more trips were organised to Finland, and one of them was comprised exclusively of Lithuanian delegates.⁹² Similar excursions also took place in 1961, 1963, 1964 and even later. According to Drėmaitė's analysis of the official travel reports, the architects' focus was primarily directed to Nordic residential areas, architectural landmarks in major cities, and to manufacturing companies that focused on producing construction parts.

Interviews with Lithuanian architects, who were invited to participate in the 'experience exchange' trips, reveal that travels to Scandinavia had an enormous impact on how they approached their work afterwards. For example, in his interview with Gabrielė Nemeikatė, architect Justinas Šeibokas said that a chance to directly experience contemporary Finnish architecture had opened his eyes to new design possibilities and made him work with concrete in different manner.⁹³ Similar ideas about their experience abroad are also reflected in the interviews with architects Vytautas Čekanauskas, Vytautas Brėdikis,⁹⁴ and brothers Algimantas and Vytautas Nasvytis.⁹⁵ What seems to be collectively embedded in the memories of all of these architects is the ease with which they could relate to the Scandinavian modern tradition, their appreciation for the harmony between Finnish residential blocks and surrounding landscapes, the admiration of the

⁹⁰ Drėmaitė, Petruolis, "Modernism in Soviet Lithuania: the Rise and Fall of Utopia," 66.

⁹¹ Drėmaitė, "Modern Housing in Lithuania in the 1960s," 82.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 82.

⁹³ Gabrielė Nemeikatė, "Lithuanian Architects' Connection to the West in 1955-1985", Appendix 1 (BA thesis, Vilnius University Faculty of History, 2010).

⁹⁴ Drėmaitė, "Modern Housing in Lithuania in the 1960s," 84.

⁹⁵ Algimantas Mačiulis, *Architektai Algimantas ir Vytautas Nasvyčiai* (Vilnius: VDA, 2007), 102.

creative employment of a variety of concrete panel systems, and their reverence for the ingenious combination of concrete and natural timber.⁹⁶

It is significant to mention that although only the hand-picked architects travelled to Scandinavia, their newly acquired knowledge was widely disseminated across Lithuania. Since these trips were strictly educational in character, the architects brought back catalogues of various Scandinavian concrete panel constructions, a copy of Finish building regulations, architectural sketches, photographs, and even some video recordings.⁹⁷ It was compulsory to share the official reports from these trips with high officials of the Soviet Union, and they were also disseminated across local Unions of Architects in all Soviet Republics.⁹⁸ Additionally, the state building agency – Gosstroj – was officially assigned to publish news about the experience exchange trips and to implement the appropriate construction and building methods in the USSR.⁹⁹ Numerous articles about Scandinavian architecture that appeared in *Statyba ir Architektūra* might well be directly influenced by this obligation of Gosstroj.

Both Drėmaitė and Maciuika argue that it was not only the news about progressive developments abroad that influenced Lithuanian architects, because a significant role was also played by the legacy of the interwar period of independence. Many architects who were active during the 1960s-1980s - i.e. Čekanauskas, Brėdikis, the Nasvystis brothers - were born in the late 1920s-early and 1930s. This means that they spent their youths in an independent Lithuania, during which architects believed they had a noble role of designing contemporary, yet nationally distinctive buildings.¹⁰⁰ Roughly twenty years later (in the early 1950s), these men received their architectural education in the Vilnius Academy of Art. Although their training was mainly neoclassical in character (a style favoured by Stalin's regime), many of these students were taught by architects who were well familiar with the modern tradition of Kaunas. In fact, a number of lecturers in the

⁹⁶ Drėmaitė, "Modern Housing in Lithuania in the 1960s," 84.

⁹⁷ Drėmaitė, *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, 166.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁰⁰ Maciuika, "Baltic Shores, Western Winds," 111.

academic institutions had been building during Lithuania's First Republic.¹⁰¹ Gediminas Baravykas, one of the students in the early 1960s, remembers that the early days of the modernisation of the building industry was an exiting time to be a young student in Lithuania. It

“brought back those times in the Vilnius Academy of Art, when [the academics] would have to pull out their foreign architectural journals from under the tables and study them in order to remember what architecture *actually* looked like.”¹⁰²

This reflective quotation suggests that the older generation of architects was secretly keeping the old Western journals for better times, or for a period when they can once again openly express their stylistic aspirations.

It is interesting note that both Drėmaitė and Maciuika make a direct link between the interwar modernism and a somewhat vague notion of ‘national style’. For example, Drėmaitė writes that,

“The Thaw encouraged the process of cultural liberation that could be characterized by a clear re-emergence of national, Western-orientated, and modernist aspects of culture”.¹⁰³

Maciuika similarly – though perhaps more pretentiously – argues that,

“Both during the first period of national independence in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as during the Soviet period, leading architects have equated the expression of Western architectural sensibilities on Lithuanian soil with two important, linked ideas: distance from Russian dominance, and participation in a Western community of democratic nations.”¹⁰⁴

Drėmaitė and Maciuika's observations about the historic context in which the Soviet Lithuanian architects grew up and matured as professionals indeed show a connection between the interwar modernism and the young generation of architects. However, their link between the use of Western/Northern architectural ideas and a ‘national style’ seem to be slightly over-stretched, especially with regards to mass-housing. Khrushchev's reign did open the door to a certain degree of cultural liberation, but neither the quotation from Baravykas, nor any other interview with Soviet architects of Lithuania that I came across suggest that the Lithuanian architects associated Western/Northern ideas with the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 116.

¹⁰² [“grąžino tuos laikus Vilniaus Dailės Institute, kai iš po stalo išsitraukdavo vakarietiškus žurnalus ir žiūrėdavo kokia ta architektūra yra iš tikrųjų.”] Baravykas, “Vakarų Vėjai,” 10.

¹⁰³ Drėmaitė, *Baltic Shores, Western Winds*, 82.

¹⁰⁴ Maciuika, “East Bloc, West View,” 24.

expression of their ‘national identity’. Instead, they simply admired progressive Western developments and wanted to emulate their styles.¹⁰⁵ This hypothesis of mine will be reaffirmed in the following part of this paper, where I analyse three residential districts of Vilnius.

~~~~~

This chapter has evaluated various sources of influence that played a role in shaping Lithuanian architects’ attitudes towards ‘Socialist Modernism’ and Khrushchev’s housing reforms. It has been argued that the interwar period of independence was fundamental for launching the modern architectural tradition in this country. Western Modernism in that context was associated with such concepts as democracy and progression, and it embodied the political and cultural aspirations of the newly established Lithuanian Republic.

Khrushchev’s reign brought a wave of gentle liberation to the architectural scene that had previously been dominated by the Stalinist Style. The professional press and experience exchange trips offered the possibility for the young architects of Soviet Lithuania to learn about architectural innovations abroad. Interviews with these architects revealed that it was not the Russian architecture, but rather the progressive developments abroad that captured their imagination and inspired their work. However, in comparison to the times of the First Republic, the main source of inspiration for Lithuanian architects during the Soviet years shifted from the Western to the Northern examples.

---

<sup>105</sup> This mainly applies to mass-housing. Such buildings as the Lithuanian Parliament (1976-80) and National Drama Theatre (1974-81) are more complex in terms of the architects’ intentions.

V. EXAMINATION OF THE CASE-STUDY DISTRICTS:  
LAZDYNAI, KAROLINIŠKĖS, AND ŠEŠKINĖ

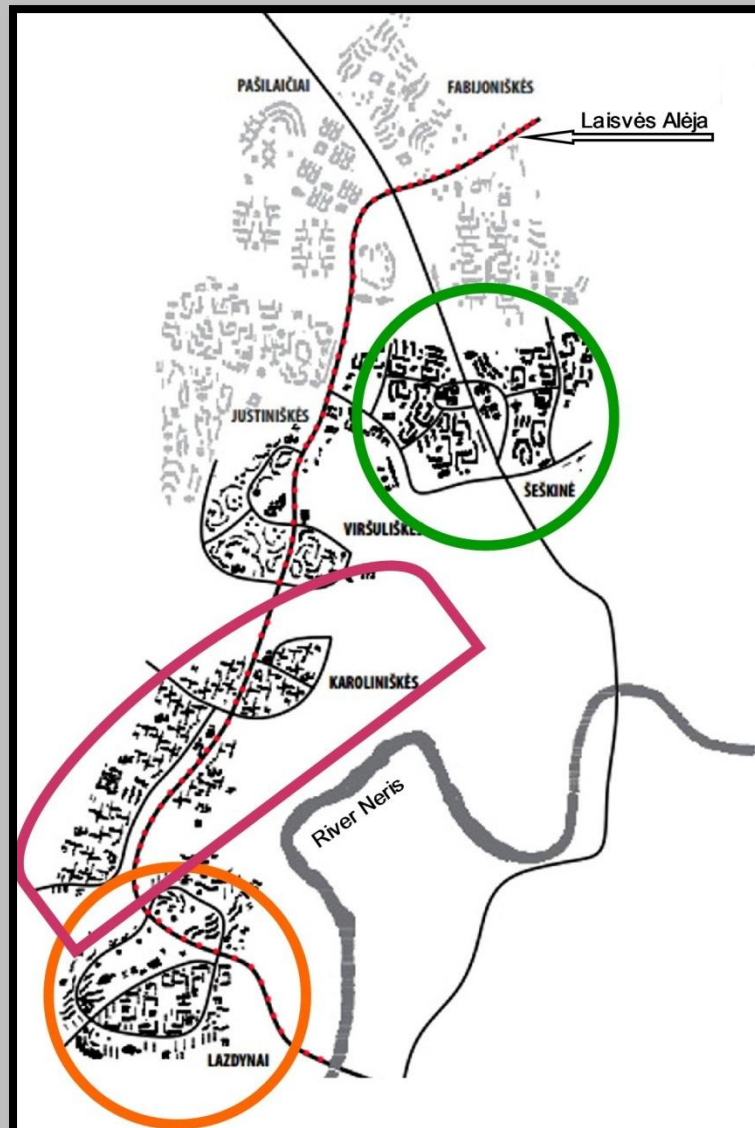


Figure 13. Vilnius' expansion towards North-West. The map indicates the location of Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and Šeškinė in relation to Laisvės Avenue (Alėja).

The map was produced by Indrė Ruseckaitė and published in her "Soviet Period Residential Districts in Vilnius: Problem of Typical Character," *Town Planning and Architecture* 5, Nr 34 (2010), 271.

Khrushchev's housing reforms of the mid 1950s manifested themselves in Vilnius in a boom of new residential districts that were concentrated along the wide and busy avenue of Lasvės Alėja (Fig.13). This expansion of the city towards the North-West was guided by the master plan for Vilnius' development which was officially approved in 1967 and adhered to up until 1980 (Fig.14).<sup>106</sup> The most intense period of building activity under this master plan lasted for around three decades – from the 1960s to the 1980s – and the three case-studies that I have selected are representative of this interlude.

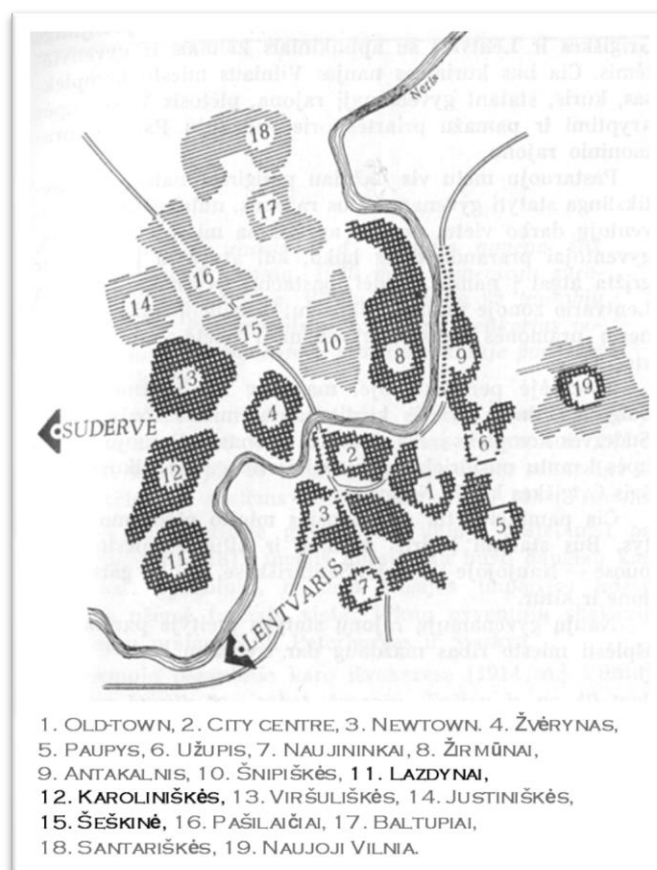


Figure 14. A plan of Vilnius districts. Darker areas indicate districts that had already been built; Lighter areas indicate districts under construction or to be constructed. Map from Algirdas Motulas, *Vilniaus dabartis ir rytdiena*, Vilnius: Mintis, 1980.

In order to present a clear comparative analysis of the character of the Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and Šeškinė districts, I have organised my discussion into various themes that are indicated by the subtitles in this chapter. Although this section of the dissertation is mainly focused on a visual examination of the districts' design qualities, I intend to put the architects' choices into context, and will highlight some of the reasoning that likely underpinned their decisions. Since public buildings fall into a completely different category of standardised structures than residential buildings, they will not be included in my discussion.

<sup>106</sup> Indrė Ruseckaitė, "Soviet Period Residential Districts in Vilnius: Problem of Typical Character," *Town Planning and Architecture* 5, No 34 (2010), 271.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Lazdynai is the first and the most acclaimed residential district that was built along Laisvės Alėja. It was designed by a team of architects led by Vytautas Brėdikis and Vytautas Čekanauskas, and constructed in two phases; most of the district was constructed in the period spanning from around 1965 to 1977, with some additional high-rise structures and public buildings being built between 1981-1985.<sup>107</sup>

Inspiration for the design of this district is considered to have come from the Scandinavian examples. Both Brėdikis and Čekanauskas went on the experience exchange trips to Finland on two occasions (in 1959 and in 1960), and they were greatly impressed by what they saw.<sup>108</sup> Their familiarity with and admiration for the Nordic residential designs led to the architects' choice of human-scale housing,<sup>109</sup> and a respectful approach to the surrounding wildlife in Lazdynai.

The emergence of an unusually well-thought-out design for a residential district in Lithuania was a particularly significant event in Soviet housing in the mid 1970s. As was discussed in my Third Chapter (pp.27-28), mass-housing from the mid-1960s onwards had begun to receive criticism from the architects of the Soviet Union. Visual monotony was at the very heart of their concerns, and they were beginning to take a stand against the repetitive replication of standardised concrete panel systems. In this context, Lazdynai came to conveniently reaffirm the idea that it was actually possible to build out of



Figure 15. Lazdynai represented on the cover page of Werner Rietdorf, *Neue Wohngebiete sozialistischer Länder*, 1976.

---

<sup>107</sup> Miškinis, *Lietuvos urbanistika*, 98.

<sup>108</sup> Maciuika, "Baltic Shores, Western Winds," 112.

<sup>109</sup> By 'human-scale' housing I mean blocks built predominantly between 5 and 9 storey high.

standardised elements with artistic variation.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, only widely available materials were used for the external and internal finishing of Lazdynai, and the cost of the district fell within its budget.<sup>111</sup> Given how crucial the industry of cheap housing was for the politics of the Soviet Union, it is unsurprising that in 1974 the district of Lazdynai received one of the most prestigious awards in the USSR – the Lenin Prize. It was the first time in history that this prize was awarded not for a scientific achievement, but instead for the design of a residential district.

Karoliniškės and Šeškinė represent a slightly later phase of the residential expansion of Vilnius. Although Karoliniškės had been finished earlier, both of these areas were designed in the late 1970s and built in the 1980s. Kazimieras Balėnas was in charge of producing master plans for both Karoliniškės and Šeškinė, though a significant contribution to the character of Šeškinė was also made by architect Gediminas Baravykas, who was responsible for the main shopping centre in the area.

After the hype over Lazdynai had died down, the early 1980s brought new challenges for the industry of mass-housing in the Soviet Union. In the field of theory, various Post-modernist ideas had slowly begun to emerge, and the issue of visual repetition came to the forefront of architects' considerations as never before. The homogeneity of the residential districts turned out to be almost unavoidable due to the fact that building regulations had been increasingly tightened throughout the 1970s. For example, the limits on population density and building height were raised, and the financial resources for construction had been reduced.<sup>112</sup> As a result of these changes, Karoliniškės and Šeškinė were designed to be much more densely populated than Lazdynai.<sup>113</sup> Also, it is significant that in the early years of its construction Karoliniškės received a significant amount of criticism in the contemporary press. It was condemned for both the design choices of the architect and the high density of the district.<sup>114</sup> Following such an unsympathetic

---

<sup>110</sup> Jurijus Jaralovas, "Kiekvienam naujam kompleksui savitą veidą," *Statyba ir Architektūra* 1 (1988), 7.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>112</sup> Drėmaitė, *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, 170.

<sup>113</sup> Juozas Budrys, "Karoliniškės šiandien ir rytoj," *Statyba ir Architektūra* 2 (1976), 8; Kazimieras Balėnas, "Vilniaus mikrorajonai – projektai ir tikrove," *Statyba ir Architektūra* 10 (1985), 4.

<sup>114</sup> Budrys, "Karoliniškės šiandien ir rytoj," 6-8.

reception, the number of articles in which Lithuanian architects discussed their designs for new residential districts decreased significantly.<sup>115</sup>

What Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and Šeškinė have in common is the general template of an ideal urban residential settlement that had been widely employed across the whole Soviet Union. In line with all the characteristic qualities of the standardised model of a Soviet residential district (see pp. 16-17), each of my case-study examples was designed as a self-sufficient urban entity that is well-connected via transport links with the central Vilnius. The Lazdynai and Karoliniškės districts consist of four microrayons, while Šeškinė has six of them. Tightly woven into the fabric of the prefabricated housing blocks in each of these districts are such structures as schools, nurseries, and basic facilities for shopping and sports. Also, each of these three districts has a network of pedestrian pathways that conveniently connects open public spaces and the main facility centres.

### SITE SPECIFICS

Lazdynai is situated in a green area to the West of Vilnius city centre. On its West, South, and East sides its borders are defined by the path of the River Neris. The district differs from most typical Lithuanian (and Soviet) residential areas because of its unusually hilly location. It was a common practice in the Soviet Union to flatten sites of mass-housing, as it made the process of construction much easier. In Lazdynai a decision was taken to use the sharp changes in its surface relief as a natural guiding force for composing the district.



Figure 16. Map indicating borders of the Lazdynai district. “Google Maps”, accessed August 06, 2014, <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Lazdynai,+Vilnius,+Lithuania/>.

---

<sup>115</sup> Ruseckaitė, “Soviet Period Residential Districts in Vilnius,” 275.

Karoliniškės is located further to the North-West of the city centre, and is defined by its rather elongated shape. Through the very centre of this district runs an important transport artery – Laisvės Alėja – and a large area in the Eastern side of Karoliniškės is occupied by a local nature reserve. In contrast to Lazdynai, the surface relief of this site is predominantly flat. Given the fact that Karoliniškės’ architects were using only standardised prefabricated blocks, their task of designing a uniquely styled residential district was significantly more challenging than it was for the architects of Lazdynai.

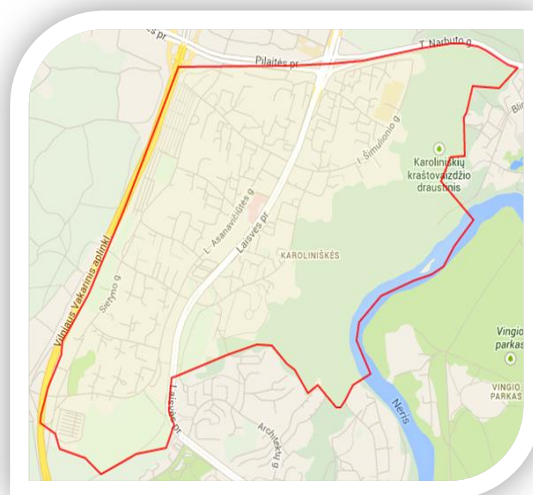


Figure 17. Map indicating borders of the Karoliniškės district. “Google Maps”, accessed August 06, 2014, <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Karoliniškės,+Vilnius,+Lithuania/>.

Of the three districts under examination, Šeškinė is located furthest to the North of the city centre. This district is visually divided into four parts by Ozo Street (running East-West) and Ukmergės Street (running North-South). Further to the North of Šeškinė, Ukmergės Street becomes a highway that serves as an important transport link connecting Vilnius to the North-West of Lithuania. For this reason, Šeškinė has the feel of a busy transit area that is completely absent from a district like Lazdynai. However, in a similar way to Karoliniškės, the surface relief of Šeškinė is predominantly flat, and so the architects did not benefit from a particularly interesting or inspiring landscape.



Figure 18. Map indicating borders of the Šeškinė district. “Google Maps”, accessed August 06, 2014, <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Šeškinė,+Vilnius,+Lithuania/>.

## STANDARTISED PREFABRICATED CONCRETE PANEL SYSTEMS

Lazdynai and Karoliniškės are composed of 5, 9, and 12 storey blocks of the Lithuanian standardised series 1-464-LI. In a similar way to the Soviet 1-464 series, the Lithuanian type is based on 3.2m length standardised concrete panel (see Appendix C).<sup>116</sup> However, the Lithuanian series differs from the Soviet equivalent in virtue of a few minor improvements. For example, it benefits from slightly larger balconies, better designed kitchens, more storage space, and the separation of toilets from bathrooms.<sup>117</sup> Although this series was specially adapted to suit the specific requirements of the Lazdynai and Karoliniškės sites, the general appearance of 1-464-LI blocks in each of these districts is undeniably very similar (Figures 19-21).



Figure 19. A five storey high block and its entrance, Lazdynai.



Figure 20. A five storey high block and its entrance, Karoliniškės.

---

<sup>116</sup> Drėmaitė, *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, 163.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.



Figure 21. A comparison between 12 storey blocks in Lazdynai (left) and in Karoliniškės (right).

In the early 1980s a consensus emerged among Lithuanian architects that it was no longer possible to produce new and original district designs while using the same standardised series.<sup>118</sup> As a consequence of this, Šeškinė became the first district composed exclusively of the 120V series standardised concrete panel blocks. This series was designed in the mid 1970s by a team of architects led by B. Krūminis, and it was intended to circumvent the rigid box-like appearance of standardised blocks.<sup>119</sup> The 120V series allows an architect to compose housing in more diverse arrangements, as the length of the 120V is significantly shorter than that of the 1-464-LI series (Fig.22). Additionally, 120V blocks benefit from bigger kitchens and more storage space.<sup>120</sup>



Figure 22. 120V series blocks in Šeškinė.

<sup>118</sup> Ruseckaitė, “Soviet Period Residential Districts in Vilnius,” 275.

<sup>119</sup> Drėmaitė, *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, 163.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

## HIGH-RISE HOUSING

The erection of high-rise blocks in the residential districts of Vilnius was motivated more by aesthetic reasons than an actual need to increase housing density in the city.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, 12-16 storeys blocks built in Vilnius serve as visual landmarks that add character to the monotonous residential areas. However, the modification of the 1-464-LI series design for the purpose of providing visual landmarks proved to be a very time consuming process. It is for this reason that almost the exact same 12 storey blocks were erected in Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and a few other districts as well (Fig.21).

A major breakthrough in high-rise housing in Lithuania was the introduction of so-called monolithic construction technology. This type of housing is constructed from reinforced concrete that has been moulded into various shapes using custom-made shuttering. The main advantage of the monolithic technology is that it is cheap, quick to build, and it allows for relatively easy modifications in exterior designs. It was primarily for these reasons that this technology was widely adopted for building high-rise architectural landmarks in Vilnius.

Despite the fact that high-rise blocks were incorporated in the master plan of Lazdynai, they were constructed only after the district received its prestigious prize. The first monolithic tower blocks started to appear in Lazdynai in the late 1970s. These blocks were designed by architect Česlovas Mazūras and engineer Jonas Rusteika, and express some typically Brutalist features.<sup>122</sup> Figure 23 capture two types of monolithic blocks that were built in this district. The designs of these blocks stand out considerably from the surrounding 1-464-LI series, as their balconies on the upper and lower floors are significantly larger. They project outward from the massive-looking core structures, and in this way create dynamic visual accentuations to what might otherwise be rather static vertical constructions.

---

<sup>121</sup> Ruseckaitė, "Soviet Period Residential Districts in Vilnius," 276.

<sup>122</sup> Indrė Ruseckaitė, "Monolito eksperimentas Vilniuje: tarp idėjos ir pragmatiškumo," *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 3 Vol.36 (2012): 201.



Figure 23. Monolithic blocks, Lazdynai.

Monolithic blocks were not included in the master plan of Karoliniškės, but they play an important part in Šeškinė. In this district, 13 and 16 storey monolithic high-rises were designed by Bronius Krūminis and Danas Ruseckas, and they were constructed in the first half of the 1980s. The Šeškinė tower blocks differ from the Lazdynai ones not only in terms of their distinctively plastic modelling (Fig.24), but also in terms of their structural arrangement (Fig.25). The Lazdynai blocks consist of four flats on each floor that are arranged in a mirror principle along the axis that runs through the centre of the vertical circulation hub. The Šeškinė's tower blocks, on the other hand, consist of six flats on each

floor, and are arranged in mirror manner along the axis that runs diagonal to the central hub of circulation.



Figure 24. Monolithic blocks, Šeškinė.

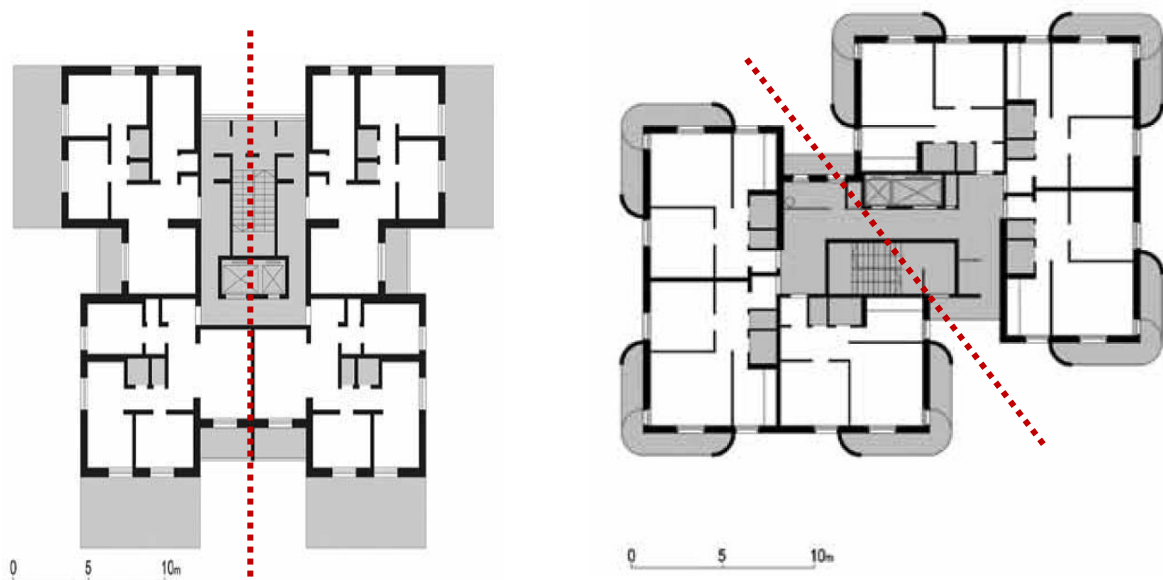


Figure 25. Plans of the monolithic tower blocks in Lazdynai (right) and Šeškinė (left).

## COMPOSITIONAL ARRANGEMENT OF HOUSING WITHIN THE DISTRICTS

The standardised prefabricated concrete panel housing, custom-designed monolithic tower blocks, and the natural relief of the sites were the main tools at the hands of the architects when they were designing Vilnius' residential districts. Given such limited resources, the creative compositional arrangement of housing blocks in the given landscapes became one of the key methods for achieving a certain degree of differentiation between the districts of Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and Šeškinė.

Lazdynai differs significantly from the typical Soviet residential districts because of its unusually dynamic silhouette (Fig.26) which is achieved through the utilisation of the hilly relief of the site. Instead of following the common practice of organising housing along the contours of the hills, some of the 5 storey blocks are positioned directly on the slope of the hill (Figures 27-29). In the manner of terraced housing, they step downhill creating dynamic lines with their silhouettes. The district also accommodates broken configuration 5 storey blocks that run along natural relief lines (Fig.30), rectangular 9 storey blocks, and unique monolithic structures (Fig.31). All these different types of building are distributed across the landscape in a manner that shows respect for the surrounding nature; the blocks look as though they are rooted in the surrounding greenery of Lazdynai, rather than dominating it.



Figure 26. Lazdynai in 1974, from *Архитектура СССР*, 11/1974.

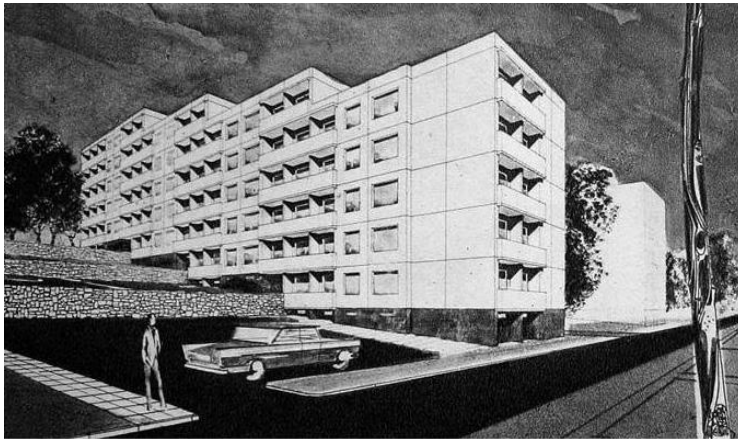


Figure 28. 1-464-LI series blocks positioned on the hill slope, Lazdynai. Architects B. Krūminis, V. Sargelis, A. Umbrasas, engineer V. Zubrus, 1962. Originally published in *Vilniaus namų statybos kombinatas*, 1969.



Figure 27. Terraced 5 storey houses in Lazdynai.



Figure 30. Terraced 5 storey blocks in Lazdynai.



Figure 29. Broken configuration blocks in Lazdynai.

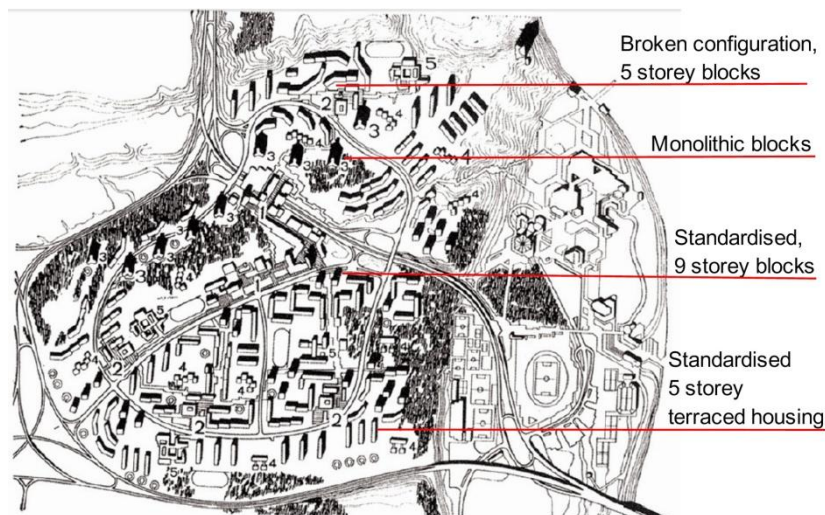


Figure 31. Master plan of Lazdynai, prepared by V. Brėdikis and V. Čekanauskas, 1962.

When explaining his compositional arrangement of Karoliniškės, architect Balėnas said that his intention was ‘to do what nature had not done – to create a beautiful [artificial] ridge on the flat site of this district.’<sup>123</sup> The cross-section of Karoliniškės (Fig.32) captures exactly this idea: the plateau is dominated by a massive TV tower that is surrounded by a cluster of much shorter structures of varying heights. In this district the concept of an ‘artificial urban hill’ is also reflected on a smaller scale in the arrangement of prefabricated blocks.<sup>124</sup> Throughout the whole area the housing is arranged in the shape of an irregular cross (Fig.33). This configuration creates an artificial hill; at the very centre of each cross composed of 5 storey blocks, there is positioned a single 9 storey block (Fig.34). This taller block acts as a focal point, or an artificial hilltop for each cluster of housing.

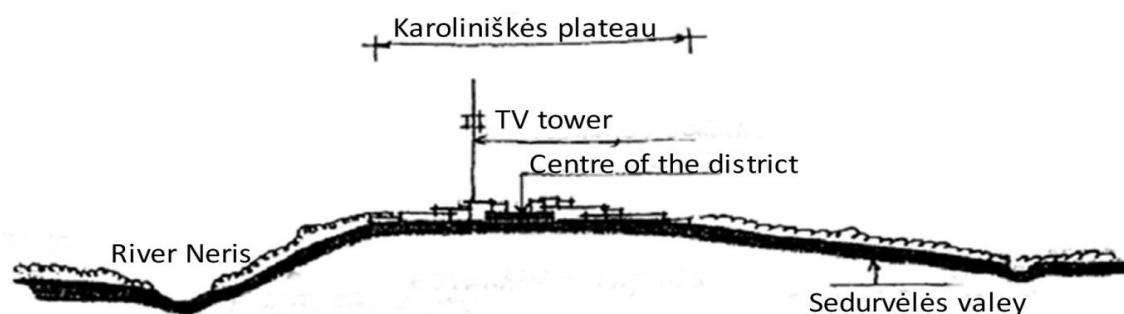


Figure 32. Cross-section of Karoliniškės, produced by K. Balėnas in 1970.



Figure 33. Master plan of Karoliniškės, prepared by K. Balėnas.

---

<sup>123</sup> [... padaryti tai ko nepadarė gamta – uždėti plokštikalnei gražią keterą] see Budrys, “Karoliniškės,” 6.

<sup>124</sup> Ruseckaitė, “Soviet Period Residential Districts in Vilnius,” 273.



Figure 34. The arrangement of blocks in the shape of a cross, Karoliniškės. The tallest blocks are positioned at the centre of the arrangement.

The application of standardised V120 series blocks in Šeškinė played a significant role in helping to distinguish the compositional arrangement of housing in this district from Lazdynai and Karoliniškės. In Šeškinė, the blocks are organised in various U-shape and L-shape configurations that – due to the short length of the blocks – are reminiscent of a string of pearls (Fig.35).<sup>125</sup> As one can see from the map, this district is also significantly more centre-focused than the other areas under analysis. Most streets (and pedestrian paths) here are directed towards the central facilities zone of the district which is clearly separated from the rest of the surrounding housing by a circular street (Fig. 36). To further emphasise the centre, a number of monolithic blocks are also positioned in close proximity to the main area of shopping and social facilities (Fig.37).

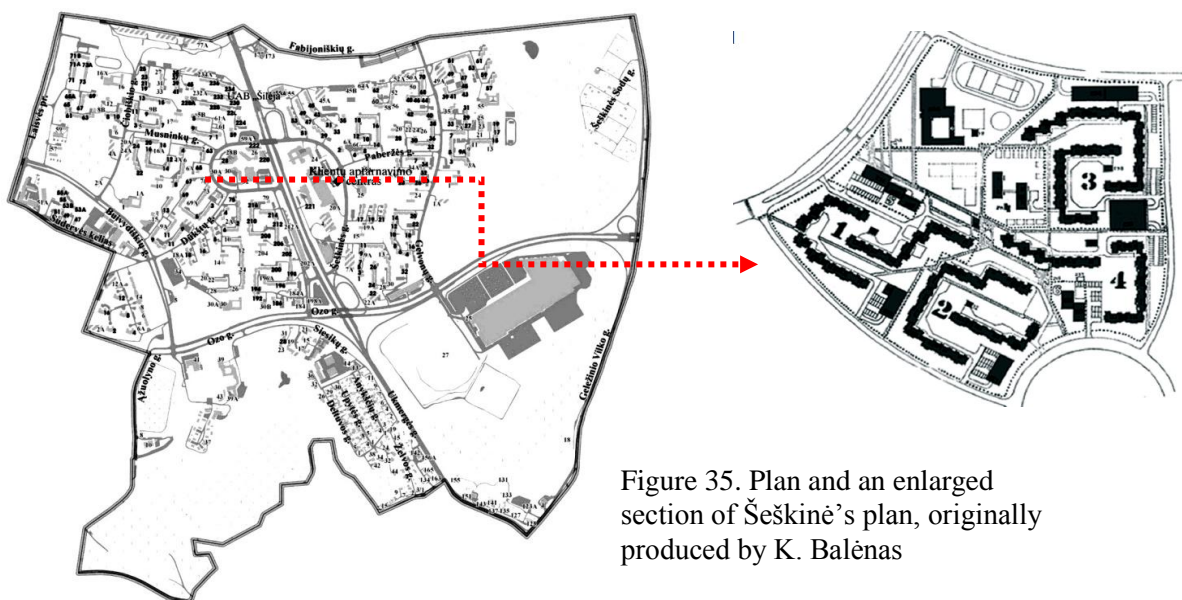


Figure 35. Plan and an enlarged section of Šeškinė's plan, originally produced by K. Balėnas

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 275.



Figure 36. Romualdas Rakauskas photo of the central area of Šeškinė, published in Sergejus Paniznikas, Laimonas Inis, *Mūsų Nemunas*, 1987.

Figure 37. To the left: map indicating position of the monolithic blocks in Šeškinė, produced by I. Ruseckaitė and published in her ‘Monolito eksperimentas Vilniuje’. To the right: Šeškinė’s panorama showing the monolithic blocks; published in “Forumus Miestai”, accessed August 04, 2014.



### CREATIVE USE OF COLOUR AND OTHER NON-CONSTRUCTIONAL ELEMENTS IN STANDARTISED HOUSING

In addition to the various creative ways of composing concrete blocks within the districts, a number of exterior detailing techniques were employed to differentiate the standardised housing in Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and Šeškinė. For example, the 9 storey 1-464-LI series blocks in Lazdynai can be differentiated from exactly the same series blocks in Karoliniškės by the concrete screens that indicate the vertical circulation axis in each structure (Fig.38). Indrė Ruseckaitė rightly points out that the decorative pattern employed in the Karoliniškės screens is reminiscent of the cross motif that dominates master plan of the district.<sup>126</sup> This suggests that the cross motif was intentionally used as one of the recurring design themes throughout the district.

---

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 273.



Figure 38. A comparison between the architectural decorations of 9 storey blocks in Lazdynai (left) and Karoliniškės (right).

In Šeškinė a considerable effort had also been made to give a distinctive look to the V120 series blocks. Here, the artistic intentions are clearly focused not only on the concrete screens indicating the vertical circulation axis, but also on the balcony fences (Fig.39). Architect Balėnas explained that the unique three dimensional diamond shape patterns that decorate the standardised Šeškinė blocks were specially designed for this district by the staff of the Vilnius Academy of Art.<sup>127</sup>

Figure 39. Unique balcony decorations and vertical circulation screens in Šeškinė



---

<sup>127</sup>Balėnas, “Vilniaus mikrorajonai,” 4.

The creative use of colour was another important design tool that along with the decorative detailing helped to add some character to the Vilnius districts. For instance, colour was introduced to Lazdynai and Karoliniškės through miniature tiles that were glued to the exterior surface of the balconies (Figures 19-21, 28, 40). Although green, blue, and white tiles were used in both of these districts, the distinctive character of Karoliniškės was given through the red colour concrete mix used in the 12 storey blocks. Figures 21 and 41 show how a few rows of coloured standardised panels are incorporated into the exterior of the Karoliniškės high-rises. Such bright colour had not been mixed into the concrete of any of the other district in Vilnius.

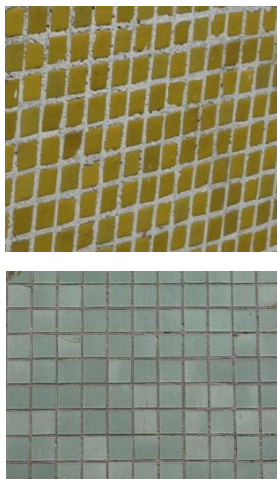


Figure 41. Balcony tiles used in Karoliniškės and Lazdynai.



Figure 40. Three 12 storey blocks with coloured red concrete panels, Karoliniškės.

If compared to Lazdynai and Karoliniškės, Šeškinė is the least colourful district. However, the colour scheme of this area works in accordance with the design concept applied to the whole district. In a similar way to how the master plan of Šeškinė shows a clear emphasis on the centre, the use of colour in this district is also focused in central part. Figure 37 perfectly captures how the public institutions built of red brick contrast with the predominantly grey concrete blocks. The very fact that brick was chosen for the construction of public centre buildings also indicates the first signs of a weariness with concrete as building material, and perhaps also the first attempts to return to the human-scale in architecture.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> This preference for brick was very likely fuelled by the emergence of Post-modernist philosophies.

~~~~~

The key objective of this section has been to make a brief comparative analysis of the character of three residential districts constructed under the Soviet rule in Lithuania. Lazdynai, Karoliniškės and Šeškinė are representative of Vilnius' housing boom that had been directly fuelled by Khrushchev's housing reforms. Each of these districts was designed within the boundaries of tight building regulations, and they were mainly built of standardised prefabricated concrete blocks.

My comparison has reaffirmed the previously considered notion (pp.27-28) that Lithuanian architects were heavily involved in the process of designing residential districts. Indeed, all of the areas under analysis have revealed the genuine attempts of the local designers to add some individual character to what would otherwise have been stylistically bland, industrially produced housing.

Although Lazdynai and Karoliniškės are composed of exactly the same standardised series blocks, stylistic differentiation had been achieved between these two areas by exploiting the creative potential of the given landscapes, as well as through non-constructional design elements such as colour. Also, while the design of Lazdynai reflects some strong Nordic influences (predominantly in its respect for the natural landscape), Karoliniškės's design illustrates the concept of 'artificial urban hills' that was formulated by the local architects. Šeškinė's district, on the other hand, represents a fresh wave in the Lithuanians' efforts to deal with the increasing criticism concerning the homogenous appearance of standardised housing in the early 1980s. When there seemed to have been no way out from the cycle of visual repetition, the architects of Šeškinė's begun exploiting new planning possibilities offered by the short-span V120 series blocks. It was also around that time that the concrete shuttering technology had been fully embraced by the Lithuanian constructors, and the individually designed high-rise monolithic landmarks started appearing in both Lazdynai and Šeškinė.

What also seems to be clear from my brief analysis is that instead of functioning as a strictly hierarchical institution that is detached from the local realities, the industry of

mass-housing in Soviet Lithuania was – to a certain degree – receptive to the criticism and suggestions of local architects. It was precisely down to the good communication between these two sides that Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and Šeškinė evolved into stylistically unified and original looking urban entities.¹²⁹

When asked about the inspirations behind the residential districts that they designed, most of the Lithuanian architects admitted that they were motivated by two very modest incentives: to avoid monotony and to create liveable environments.¹³⁰ The architects also affirmed that their work was in many cases influenced and inspired by the progressive developments from abroad. However, the idea of a silent national resistance or the expression of ‘national identity’ that Drėmaitė and Macuika are pushing through in their writings (discussed in Chapter Four), seem to be absent from the designs of the residential districts.

¹²⁹ Each of the discussed districts, however, reflect a different degree of good communication. For example, in Lazdynai the relation between architects and builders was slightly better than in Karoliniškės.

¹³⁰ Balanienė, interviewed by Miles Glendinning (conversation interpreted by Indrė Ruseckaitė), Vilnius, June 08, 2013.

VI. CONCLUSION

For the casual observer, Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and Šeškinė might appear to be ordinary examples of Soviet housing. As we have seen, however, these Lithuanian examples stand out from their more strictly Soviet counterparts, and hint at a hidden agenda and a distinctively local approach to the designing of urban homes from prefabricated concrete elements.

In the process of trying to understand what influences contributed to the unique characters of these Lithuanian residential districts, this paper has revealed that Lithuania's geographical position - on the periphery of the Soviet Union – was favourable for allowing this country to be actively involved in a degree of cultural exchange between the Eastern and Western blocks. The relatively open circulation of progressive building ideas in the local press combined with the Lithuanians' trips Scandinavia and proved to be significant factors in shaping the local architects' approach to modern housing. It has also been shown that the Lithuanians' appreciation for progressive architectural ideas fell rather neatly in line with the historic longings of the architects of independent Lithuania (1918-1940); during the interwar years they launched their own local brand of 'Modernism', and had serious ambitions to participate in the Western architectural movement. In tandem with Khrushchev's reign, the competitive climate of the Cold War once again opened door for Lithuanian architects to be informed about what was happening abroad.

In spite of the popularity of the Western influence, it was not alone sufficient to overcome some of the universal aspects of the insuperable Soviet mass-housing machine. As has been shown, the Lithuanian architects worked with a small budget that was appointed and controlled by the high officials of Moscow, and they had to operate within highly restrictive building regulations. Furthermore, and in a manner similar to that of all other communist countries, Lithuanian manufacturers for a long period of time were producing only a few varieties of standardised concrete panel blocks, and the country's architects had only a limited selection of building materials available. Moreover, due to continuous

urge to build faster and cheaper, the prefabricated concrete blocks were often poorly finished.

However, among the traits that characterise the districts under analysis include the fact that Lithuanian architects – as oppose to engineers – were heavily involved in the design process. The architects' fascination with Western/Scandinavian Modernism and their good personal relations with the factories that produced constructional parts were also rather unique in the context of the USSR. Underlying their work was the genuine professional urge to design liveable urban environments that went hand-in-hand with the local architects' criticism regarding the over-standardisation of Soviet urban environments. This dissatisfaction with the contemporary situation was expressed not only in the then official architectural journal *Statyba ir Architektūra*, but also in the designs of Lazdynai, Karoliniškės, and Šeškinė. Through my analysis of these districts it has been revealed that the architects battled visual monotony by creatively exploiting all of the design resources available to them. For inspiration they used the surface relief of the districts, looked for original ways of grouping standardised concrete blocks, and played with exterior decorations such as uniquely designed balcony walls and surface colours. Another particularly significant tool used to add character to the residential districts were the high-rise monolithic blocks erected as visual landmarks distinctive to each district. It was through varying combinations of available design tools that the Lithuanian architects were able to create carefully composed and stylistically distinguished residential districts which stand out from their counterparts in other former USSR territories.

The creative touches added by the local architects in the spheres of planning and the exterior detailing of residential districts undeniably increases the heritage values of the investigated areas of Vilnius. My historio-stylistic study of three districts, however, can be regarded only as an introductory evaluation rather than a finished analysis; most Lithuanian residential areas that were built during and after the reign of Khrushchev lack a systematic investigation of their architectural character according to a set range of criteria. It is for this reason that it is currently impossible to determine their architectural value in the broader context of similar projects, and to introduce clear guidelines for privately funded projects of urban regeneration. Indeed, it is impossible to successfully combine the concepts of financial feasibility, habitability, and the preservation of

architectural value without knowing what is worth preserving. I would propose to start evaluating the districts according to the criteria of uniqueness of design solution, authenticity, representativeness, and value as an ensemble. The first step in such an endeavour, though, needs to be taken by the local community, or, more precisely, the heritage sector and city councils; these groups need to decide whether they want to and are able to afford to save the remaining architectural heritage of prefabricated housing.

If placed in the wider context of academic research, this dissertation adds to the growing international recognition that ‘Socialist Modernism’, or, more precisely, Soviet mass-housing, has inherent national complexities attached to its manifestations outside of Soviet Russia. What has become apparent through this investigation is that the concept of ‘socialist design’ did not have a single, consistent aesthetic standard across the Soviet Union. Instead, a distinctive architectural appearance was given to the cities of the former Soviet Republics by a cohesive institutionalised logic or a series of complex procedures of planning that had a negative affect on individual creativity and prevented fruitful communication between the lower and higher levels of the Soviet building industry. Flaws in this immense system of building combined with support from the local authorities of various Soviet Republics to allow a modest degree of independence of expression in relation to distinctively national approaches to mass-housing.

Bibliography

*(The titles of the Lithuanian articles that are of particular relevance to this paper are translated in brackets.)

- ❖ Aksomitas Antanas and Sakalauskas R. “Surenkamasis Gelžbetonas – pagrindinė techninės pažangos krypris” (“Reinforced Concrete: the Key Direction to Constructional Advancement”). *Statyba ir Architektūra* 10 (1964): 5-8.
- ❖ Aksomitas Antanas. “Gerinkime namų stambos kokybę” (“Lets improve the quality of the panel blocks”) *Statyba ir Architektūra* 1 (1979): 1-4.
- ❖ Balčiūnas Vytautas. “Lietuvos architektų pasiūlymai” (“Some suggestions by the Lithuanian architects”). *Statyba ir Architektūra* 11 (1966): 4-5.
- ❖ Balėnas Kazimieras. “Vilniaus mikrorajonai – projektai ir tikrove.” *Statyba ir Architektūra* 10 (1985): 4-5.
- ❖ Baravykas Gediminas. “Vakarų Vėjai” (“The Westward Winds”). *Krantai* 15 (March, 1990): 10-14.
- ❖ Baršauskas Juozas. “Ateities miestų prigozės” (“Some predictions about cities in the future”). *Statyba ir Architektūra* 12 (1968): 5-8.
- ❖ Bohnet Armin and Penkaitis Norbert. “A Comparison of Living Standards and Consumption Patterns between the RSFSR and the Baltic Republics.” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 19 No 1 (1988): 33-48.
- ❖ Budrys Juozas. “Karoliniškės šiandien ir rytoj.” *Statyba ir Architektūra* 2 (1976): 6-8.
- ❖ Bundgaard Charlotte. “Prefabricated industrialized building of the 1960’s – in the light of the *new industrialization*”. Paper presented at the international conference ‘Research of Modern Architecture’, Jyväskylä, Finland 30th August, 2002.
- ❖ Caldenby Claes. “Urban Modernity Nordic-Baltic Experiences.” *ALF Modernism: Between Nostalgia and Criticism* 1063, No 2 (2014): 41-52.
- ❖ Castillo Greg. *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- ❖ Cibas Albertas. “Mintys ir problemos iš IV visasąjunginio architektų suvažiavimo” (Summary of Ideas from the IV All-Union Conference of Architects”). *Statyba ir Architektūra* 11 (1965): 2-3.

- ❖ Crowley David. "Architecture and the Image of the Future in the People's Republic of Poland." *The Journal of Architecture* 1 No. 14 (2009): 67-84.
- ❖ Crowley David. "Socmodernism: The Architecture of Leisure in Poland in the 1960s and 1970s." Paper presented at the conference 'Different Modernisms, Different Avant-Gardes', KUMU Tallinn, Estonia, September 2007.
- ❖ Davies W. Robert, Ilic Melanie. "From Khrushchev (1935–1936) to Khrushchev (1956–1964): Construction Policy Compared." In *Khrushchev in the Kremlin: policy and government in the Soviet Union, 1953-1964*, edited by Jeremy Smith and Melanie Ilic. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011, 202-230.
- ❖ Drėmaitė Marija and Petrulis Vaidas. "Modernism in Soviet Lithuania: the Rise and Fall of Utopia." *ALF Modernism: Between Nostalgia and Criticism* 1063, No 2 (2014): 53-68.
- ❖ Drėmaitė Marija, "The (Post-) Soviet Built Environment: Soviet-Western Relations in the Industrialised Soviet Lithuania." *Lithuanian Historical Studies* No 15 (2010): 11-26.
- ❖ Drėmaitė Marija, Petrulis Vaidas and Tutlytė Jūratė. *Architektūra Sovietinėje Lietuvoje (Architecture in Soviet Lithuania)*. Vilnius: VDA Leidykla, 2012.
- ❖ Drėmaitė Marija. "Modern Housing in Lithuania in the 1960s: Nordic Influences." *DOCOMOMO: Survival of Modern. From Cultural Centres to Planned Suburbs*. Edited by C. Caldenby and O. Wedebrunn. Copenhagen: Arkitektur B, 2013, 80-91.
- ❖ Drėmaitė Marija. "Pigiau Daugiau Greičiau" ("Faster, Better, Cheaper"). *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai* No 8 (2006): 322-328.
- ❖ Drėmaitė Marija. *Vilnius, 1900-2005: naujosios architektūros gidas*. Vilnius: Architektūros fondas, 2005.
- ❖ Forty Adrian. *Concrete and Culture: a Material History*. London: Reaktion, 2012.
- ❖ Gorsuch E. Anne, Koenker P. Diane (Editors). *The Socialist Sixties*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.
- ❖ Grunskis Tomas and Šiupšinskas Matas. "Post-soviet transformations of public spaces in Lithuania: cases of Žirmūnai and Lazdynai residential districts." *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 36, Issue 3 (2012): 209–221.
- ❖ Harris Steven. "I Know All the Secrets of My Neighbors: the Quest for Privacy in the Era of the Separate Apartment." In *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, edited by Lewis H. Siegelbaum. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 171-90.
- ❖ ICOMOS Deutschland (Editors). *Socialist Realism and Socialist Modernism: World Heritage Proposals from Central and Eastern Europe*. Bergisch Gladbach: Hendrik Verlag Baessler, 2014.

- ❖ Ignatavičius Česlovas, Zavadskas E. Kazimieras and Ustinovičius Leonas. “Modernization of large-panel houses in Vilnius.” In *Modern Building Materials, Structures and Techniques. Vol.1: Selected Papers*. Vilnius: VGTU Technika, 2007, 258-264.
- ❖ Jaralovas Jurijus. “Kiekvienam naujam kompleksui savitą veidą.” *Statyba ir Architektūra* 1 (1988): 3-8.
- ❖ Jasiūnas Česlovas. “Gaminsime daugiau geresnių medžiagų” (“We commit to produce more building materials of better quality”). *Statyba ir architektūra* 8 (1977): 1-2.
- ❖ Jokūbas Peras. *Daugiabutis gyvenamasis namas (An Apartment Block)*. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1958.
- ❖ Khrushchev Nikita. “Remove Shortcoming in Design, Improve Work of Architects.” In *Architecture Culture 1943-1968*, edited by Joan Ockman. New York: Rizzoli, 1993, 185-188.
- ❖ Maciuka John. “Baltic Shores, Western Winds: Lithuanian Architects and the Subversion of the Soviet Norm.” *Centropa* 1, No 2 (2001): 108-116.
- ❖ Maciuka John. “East Bloc, West View: Architecture and Lithuanian National Identity.” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 1 Vol. 11 (1999): 23-35.
- ❖ Maciuka John. “Modernist Architecture and Nationalist Aspiration in the Baltic: Two Case Studies.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 1 Vol. 65 (2006): 92-111.
- ❖ Mačiulis Algimantas, *Architektai Algimantas ir Vytautas Nasvyčiai*. Vilnius: VDA, 2007.
- ❖ Mačiulis Algimantas. “Apie Suomų architektūrą” (“Some notes about the Finish architecture”) *Statyba ir Architektūra* 1 (1961): 20-23.
- ❖ Matijošius K., “Pas Suomijos architektus” (“Visiting architects of Sweden”) *Statyba ir Architektūra* 6 (1965): 10-11.
- ❖ Maxim Juliana. “Mass Housing and Collective Experience: on the Notion of *Microraiion* in Romania in the 1950s and 1960s.” *The Journal of Architecture* 14 (2009): 7-26.
- ❖ Mēhilli Elidor. “The Socialist Design: Urban Dilemmas in Postwar Europe and the Soviet Union.” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13 No 3 (Summer 2012), 635–665.
- ❖ Miknevičius Jonas and Rymeikis Arvydas. “Miestas ir jo spalvos” (“City and its Colours”). *Statyba ir Architektūra* 8 (1977): 4-6.

- ❖ Minkevičius Jonas. “Nacionalinės išraiškos ieškojimui užsienio architektūroje” (A search of expression of national identity in architecture abroad’ (“A search of expression of national identity in architecture from abroad“). *Statyba ir Architektūra* 3 (1961): 9-12.
- ❖ Minkevičius Jonas. *Miestai vakar, šiandien, rytoj* (Eng. *Cities Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*) Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1964.
- ❖ Minkevičius Jonas. *Naujoji Tarybų Lietuvos architektūra* (*The New Architecture of Soviet Lithuania*). Vilnius: Mintis, 1964.
- ❖ Miškinis Algimantas. *Lietuvos urbanistika: istorija, dabartis, ateitis*. Vilnius : Mintis, 1991.
- ❖ Motulas Algirdas. *Vilniaus dabartis ir rytdiena*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1980.
- ❖ Nemeikaitė Gabrielė. “Lithuanian Architects' Connection to the West in 1955-1985.” BA thesis, Vilnius University Faculty of History, 2010.
- ❖ Parusheva Dobrinka and Marcheva Iliyana. “Housing in Socialist Bulgaria: Appropriating Tradition.” *Home Cultures*, Vol. 7 No 2 (2010): 197-216.
- ❖ Péteri György. “Nylon Curtain - Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe.” *Slavonica* 10, No 2 (2004): 113–23.
- ❖ Péteri György. “The Occident Within – or the Drive for Exceptionalism.” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9 No 4 (2008): 929-937.
- ❖ Polis Algimantas. “Tas netipinis tipinis projektavimas.” *Statyba ir Architektūra* 2 (1987): 2-4.
- ❖ Reid Susan and Crowley David (ed.). *Style and Modernism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Berg, 2000.
- ❖ Ruseckaitė Indrė, Galaunytė Aistė and Nekrošius Liutauras. “Architectural Excursion as a Tool: Modernist Vilnius Case.” *Architecture and Urban Planning* 7 (2013): 65-71.
- ❖ Ruseckaitė Indrė. “Monolito eksperimentas Vilniuje: tarp idėjos ir pragmatiškumo.” *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 3 Vol.36 (2012): 194-208.
- ❖ Ruseckaitė Indrė. “Soviet Period Residential Districts in Vilnius: Problem of Typical Character.” *Town Planning and Architecture* 5, No 34 (2010): 270-281.
- ❖ Sargelis V. “Gyvenamoji statyba Švedijoje” (“Construction of residential buildings in Sweden”). *Statyba ir Architektūra* 11 (1966): 27-28.
- ❖ Scott Stephen. “The ideal Soviet suburb: social change through urban design.” *Panorama* (14th September 2009): 58–62.

- ❖ Unknown author. 'News from abroad' (Lit. 'Užsienyje'), *Statyba ir Architektūra* 12 (1966): 29.
- ❖ Unknown author. "Iš statybos naujienų" ("News from abroad"). *Statyba ir Architektūra* 1 (1961): 26-28.
- ❖ Unknown author. "Statybos metodai Švedijoje" ("Construction methods in Sweden"). *Statyba ir Architektūra* 1 (1961): 23-26.
- ❖ Wagenaar Cor, Dings Mieke and Linders Jannes. *Ideals in Concrete: Exploring Central and Eastern Europe*. Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2004.
- ❖ Ward V. Stephen. "Soviet communism and the British planning movement: rational learning or Utopian imagining?" *Planning Perspectives* 27, No 4 (2012): 499–524.
- ❖ Zareco E. Kimberly. *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960*. USA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.
- ❖ Zarecor Kimberly Elman. "The Local History of an International Type: The Structural Panel Building in Czechoslovakia." *Home Cultures* Vol. 7, No. 2 (2010): 217-236.

Appendices

Appendix A. "New Commitments Made in Honour of the Fifty Years Anniversary of the October Revolution"

SOCIALISTINIAI ĮSIPAREIGOJIMAI
DIDŽIOSIOS SPALIO SOCIALISTINĖS REVOLIUCIJOS
50-JŲ METINIŲ GARBEI

Lietuvos TSR Statybos ministerijos statybos-montavimo organizacijų ir pramonės įmonių kolektyvai stengiasi sėkmingai įvykdyti TSKP XXIII suvažiavimo nutarimus.

Statybos ministerijos darbininkus, inžinerijos-technikos darbuotojus ir tarnautojus naujiems darbo laimėjimams įkvėpia Didžiosios Spalio socialistinės revoliucijos artėjančios 50-osios metinės.

Sekdami respublikos statybos organizacijų ir pramonės įmonių iniciatyva, Statybos ministerijos statybos-montavimo organizacijų ir pramonės įmonių kolektyvai priima šiuos įsipareigojimus Didžiosios Spalio socialistinės revoliucijos 50-ųjų metinių garbei.

ratyvų planavimą pagal kompleksinius tinklinius grafikus.

6. Įdiegiant racionalizacinius pasiūlymus ir išradimus, gauti ne mažiau kaip 2,8 milijono rublių sąlyginės metinės ekonomijos.

7. Padidinti mašinų bei mechanizmų išdirbio ir pajamingumo normas 2%.

8. Taikant industrinius statybos darbų metodus, mažinant darbo laiko nuostolius, viršyti darbo našumo augimo užduotį 0,1%.

9. Taupiai naudojant medžiagas, sutaupyti ne mažiau kaip 100 tonų metalo, 400 tonų cemento, vieno milijoną plytų, 200 tonų bitumo ir 250 m³ misko medžiagos.

10. Taupant statybines medžiagas, geriau panaudojant mechanizmus ir autoransportą, mažinant negamybines išlaidas ir keliant darbo našumą, viršyti statybos-montavimo darbų savikainos sumažinimo užduotį 0,1%.

11. Apmokyti statybinių profesijų ne mažiau kaip 4150 darbininkų, pakelti ne mažiau kaip 5600 darbininkų ir 720 inžinerijos-technikos darbuotojų kvalifikacijas, t. y. metinį planą įvykdyti iki švenčių.

12. Pakelti gamybos kultūrą, pagerinti darbo, saugumo technikos, pramonės sanitarijos sąlygas ir darbininkų buitines sąlygas objektuose.

PRAMONĖS ĮMONĖS

1. Prieš laiką, iki 1967 metų spalio 25 dienos įvykdyti bendrosios produkcijos išleidimo 10 mėnesių planą.

2. Darbo našumo pakėlimo užduotį viršyti 0,2%.

3. Vienam prekinės produkcijos rubliui sumažinti išlaidas 0,1%, palyginus su nustatytu planu.

4. Pagerinti išleidžiamos produkcijos kokybę. Pakelti perdenginių tuščiaidurių plokščių gamyklinį užbaigtumą, visuomeninių pastatų gežbetoninius karkasus gaminti tik konduktorjuose.

5. Taupiai naudojant medžiagas, sutaupyti ne mažiau kaip 200 tonų metalo ir 4000 tonų cemento.

Lietuvos TSR Statybos ministerijos statybos organizacijų bei įmonių darbininkai, inžinerijos-technikos darbuotojai ir tarnautojai garbingai sutiks Didžiosios Spalio socialistinės revoliucijos 50-ąsias metines, išplės judėjimą už komunistinį darbą ir nukreips savo jėgas bei žinias sėkmingai įvykdyti objektų atidavimo naudoti planui, toliau gerinti statybos-montavimo darbų respublikoje kokybę ir mažinti jų savikainai.

1 STATYBOS IR SPECIALIZUOTOS ORGANIZACIJOS

1. Statybos-montavimo darbų 10 mėnesių planą įvykdyti iki 1967 metų spalio 28 dienos.

2. Didžiosios Spalio Socialistinės revoliucijos 50-mečio garbei:

2 a) viršyti gyvenamojo ploto atidavimo naudoti 10 mėnesių planą ir atiduoti virš plano 10 tūkst. m³ gyvenamojo ploto;

b) atiduoti naudoti visas 10 mėnesių plane numatytas bendrojo lavinimo mokyklas, profesines technikos mokyklas, vaikų daržėlius-lopšėlius ir ligonines;

3 c) atiduoti naudoti šiuos pramoninius objektus: 7,5 tūkst. m² gamybinio ploto kuro aparatūros gamykloje Vilniuje;

kartono taros cechą Vilniaus bandomojoje pluošto gaminių gamykloje;

trikotazo fabriką Utenoje (derinimui);

34 mln. plytų per metus galimumo Palemono keramikos gamyklą;

rugšėjo mėnesį parodų paviljoną Vilniuje;

kombinuotų pašarų gamyklą Rokiškyje (derinimui);

kultūros rūmus Panevėžyje;

dešrų cechą Panevėžio mėsos kombinate;

subrangovinių organizacijų bazę Kaune;

Klaipėdos medžio apdirbimo kombinato lentpiuvės cechą.

3. Ne mažiau kaip 82% objektų atiduoti naudoti, įvertintus „gerai“ ir „labai gerai“.

4. Pastatyti pilnai surenkamų pastatų už 42 milijonus rublių.

5. Pastatyti ne mažiau kaip 5 objektus, taikant ope-

Source: *Statyba ir Architektūra*, 12 (1966), 31.

Summary translation:

1. In order to commemorate the anniversary, the Lithuanian building organisations commit to complete all the scheduled construction works of the following 10 months by October 28th, 1967.
2. The building organisations commit to surpass their scheduled work plan for the following 10 months by producing 10,000m² of living space more than previously expected.
3. They commit to produce 7,500m² of heating equipment in one of the specialised factories in Vilnius.
4. They commit to build a new ceramics factory in Palemonas that will be able to produce 34 million bricks per year.
5. They commit to raise the quality standards of buildings. After the initial inspection at least 82% of all built structures will be ranked as 'Good' or 'Very good'.
6. They commit that by means of industrialisation and the efficient management of work, targets of work efficiency will be increased by 0.1%.
7. They commit to economise work methods and save not less than 100 tons of metal, 400 tons of cement, one million bricks, 200 tons of bitumen, and 250m³ of timber.

8. In order to commemorate the anniversary, the Lithuanian manufacturers of building materials commit to surpass their targets of work efficiency by 0.2%.
9. They commit to surpass their targets of reducing their expenditure by producing 0.1% more value for each Ruble spent on production.
10. They commit to economise their use of materials and save at least 200 tons of metal and 4000 tons of cement.

Appendix B. Some illustrative descriptions of a model city (город эталон) in Soviet Union

“Very simply, it’s a city where people will live comfortably and happily, where there will be no crowding—neither on the streets, nor in apartments, nor in the stores. And it will be beautiful—everywhere. It will be a city in which one can go by foot from one end to the other in an hour and do everything a person normally does: earn a living, pick up the kids from kindergarten, get a ticket to the sports palace or the cinema, have a look at the polyclinic, call on one’s mother-in-law, rest in a prophylactorium, make necessary purchases, order a table in a restaurant for Saturday, go on a yacht, swim in a pool, take a new novel off the shelves of the library.... This is not some pipe dream but an iron-clad reality of engineering.”

Source: Евгений Астахов, *Право на биографию*, 1979 cited in Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker (eds.), *The Socialist Sixties*, 71.

“It needs to be clarified that each large residential district will have its own sports stadium and a park, and the centre of this district will be dominated by various cultural institutions. A bit further away – behind a green belt – one will find farmhouses. All across the district will run beautiful streets with trees; they will be flanked on each side by fine houses and small-garden plots.”

[Lit. “Reikia pasakyti, kad kiekviena centrinė gyvenvietė turės savo stadioną, parką, o jos centre dominuos kultūriniai pastatai. Kiek toliau, atskirti žalia siena, stovės ūkiniai pastatai. Per visą gyvenvietę eis medžiais apsodintos gatvės, iš abiejų pusių — dailūs namai, o prie jų — sodeliai.”]

Source: Budrys R, “Auga mūrinė Lietuva,” *Švyturys* No 5 (1960), 12-13.

“Communist cities should be full of light, spacious, and filled with beautiful buildings which will work in harmony with nature, highways, pools, meadows, and gardens. These cities will be comfortable to live in, and their shopping and catering facilities will work according to modern standards.”

[Lit. “Komunistinės visuomenės miestai turi būti šviesūs ir erdvūs, užstatyti gražiais pastatais, kurių architektūra organiškai rištųsi su gamta, plačiomis magistralėmis, vandens baseiniais, parkais ir sodais. Miestai turi būti patogūs gyventojams; juose komunalinės ir visuomeninio maitinimo bei prekybos įmonės naujoviškai aptarnaus gyventojus.”]

Source: A. Stramentovas, “Šiuolaikinės tarybinių miestų statybos problemos,” *Statyba ir Architektūra* 12, 1962, 5.

Appendix C. Some examples of standardised panel blocks

All types of standardised prefabricated concrete panel blocks constructed in Vilnius.

No	Series of panel houses	Time of construction	The number of houses, in units	The number of apartments, in units	Total living space, m ²
1*	1605	1958 - 1961	25	1720	82439
2**	1 - 464	1961 - 1963	48	3240	154953
3**	1 - 464A	1963 - 1968	117	10040	435902
4	1 - 464LI	1968 - 1978	713	37278	1964641
5	120V	1978 - 1991	1278	39282	2208678
6	120	1991 - 2000	205	5332	298761
Total:			2156	89840	4764174

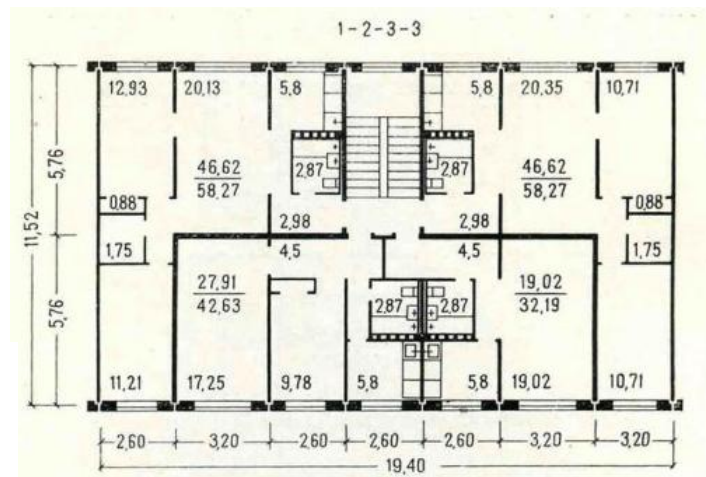
* Project prepared by Moscow Institute 'Giprostroindustrija'.

Source: Česlovas Ignatavičius, Kazimieras Edmundas Zavadskas, Leonas Ustinovičius, "Modernization of large-panel houses in Vilnius," in *Modern Building Materials, Structures and Techniques. Vol.1: Selected Papers*. Vilnius: VGTU Technika, 2007, 258.

Façade and plan of standard 1-464 series (Серия дома 1-464) apartment block



Source: Drėmaitė and Petruolis, "Modernism in Soviet Lithuania," 68.

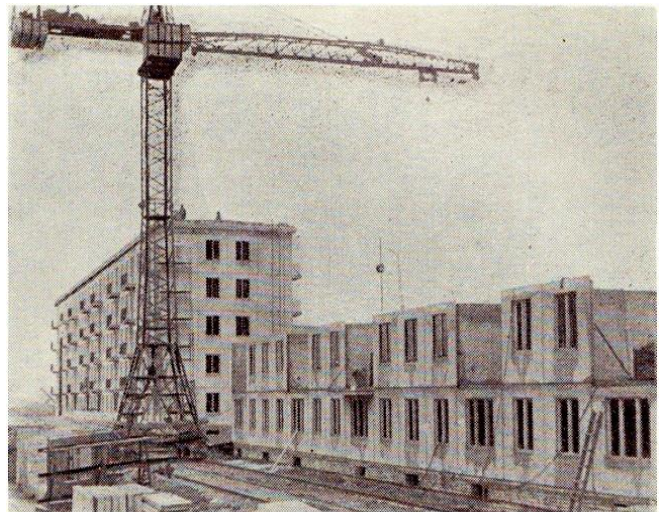


Source: "Tip Doma", last modified August 04, 2014, <http://tipdoma.com/2010/02/doma-1-464-serii/>.

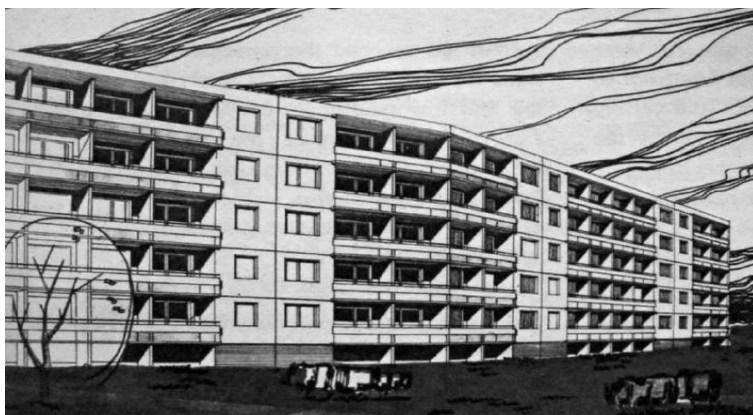
The construction of one of the first prefabricated blocks in Lithuania.

Formerly Daugpilio Street, now Birželio 23-iosios Street in Vilnius.

Most likely standardised series 1605.



Source: *Mokslas ir Technika*, 1960. Accessed via “Forumas Miestai”, last modified August 04, 2014, <http://www.miestai.net/forumas/showthread.php?t=816&page=17>.

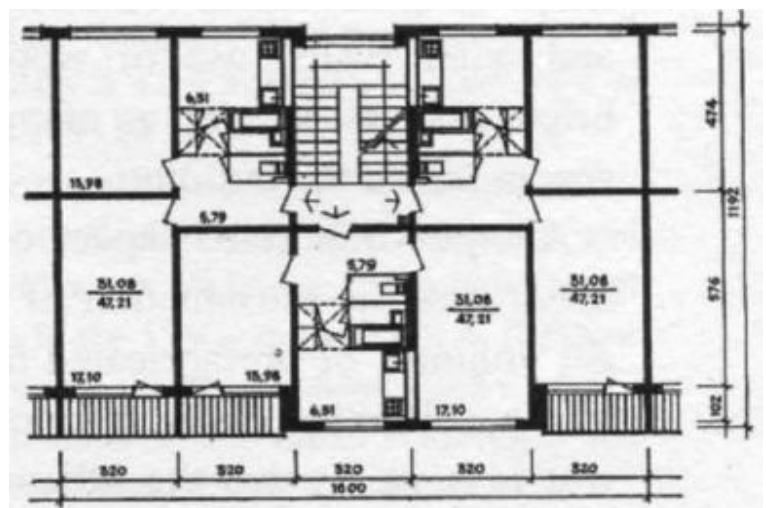


An example of Lithuanian series 1-464-LI in Lazdynai. Vilnius. Design produced by architects B. Krūminis, V. Sargelis, A. Umbrasas, and engineer V. Zubrus in 1962.

Source: Drėmaitė and Petrulis, “Modernism in Soviet Lithuania,” 68.

Standard floor plan of a 5 storey 1-464-LI series block. This arrangement has no transitional rooms, and thus it is more convenient than the arrangement of standard 1-464 series.

Source: Drėmaitė, “Modern Housing in Lithuania in the 1960s,” 89.



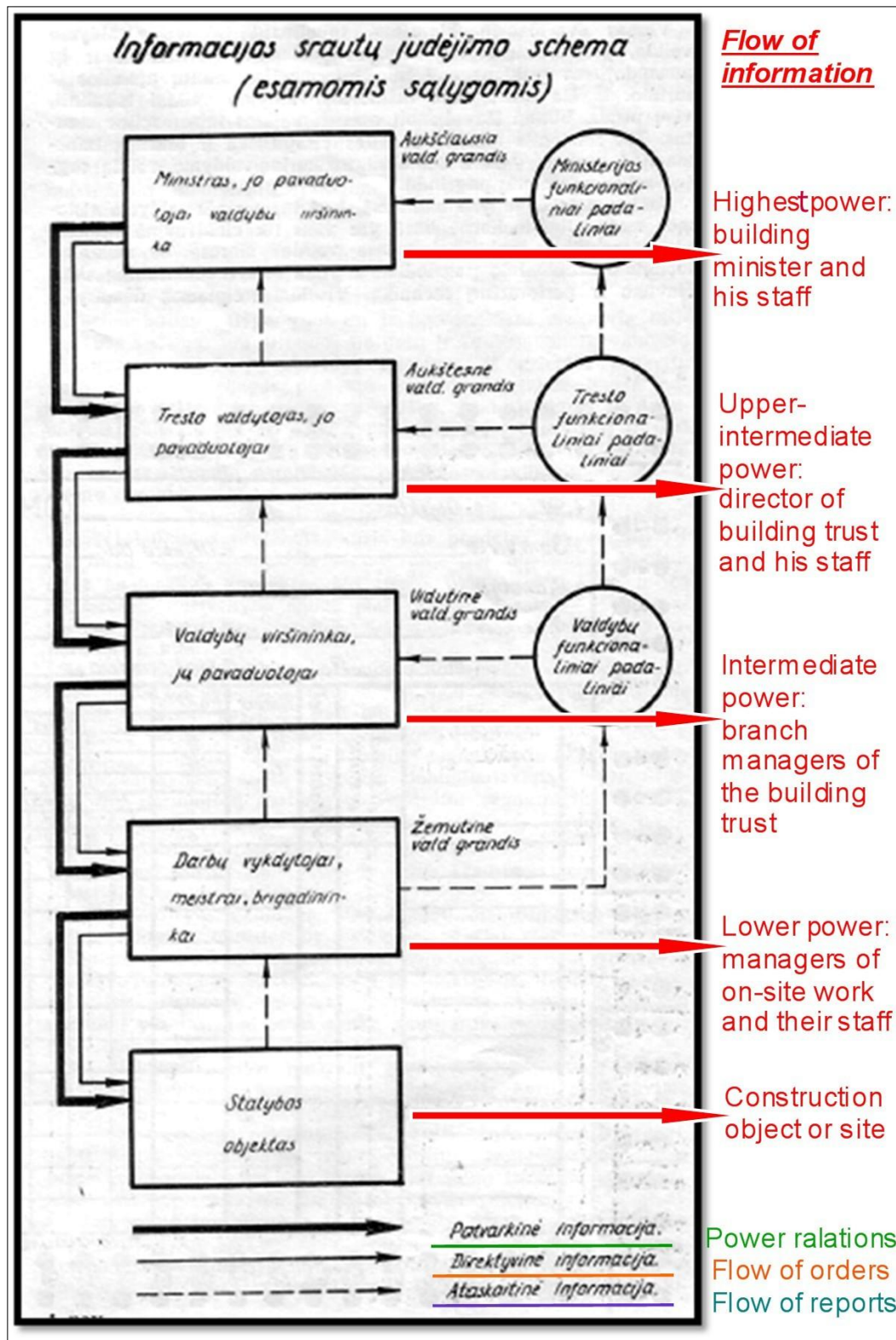
Appendix D. Extract from article “City and its Colours” (1977)

“Because nowadays people live grouped in big residential districts, they spend a lot of time in a man-made environment. Industrial methods of building introduced a completely new structure of life [into the daily existence of the local people]: city – block of apartments – private flat. The natural environment is now artificially replaced [by a man-made environment]; the unfinished landscaping in the domestic environment leads to the fact that a person now rarely sees familiar greenery or does not see it often enough. The purpose of architectural polychrome is to eliminate the contrasts between urban and natural environments by giving priority to the latter.”

[Lit. “Statant namus ištisais kompleksais, padidėja žmogaus buvimo antropogeninėje aplinkoje laikas. Industrinis statybos būdas sukūrė naują aplinkos struktūrą: miestas – namas – butas. Dirbtinai pakeista natūrali gamta, nesutvarkyti želdiniai veda prie to, kad žmogus retai bemato jam įprastą natūralią žalsvą spalvą arba mato ją nepakankamai. Architektūros polichromijos tikslas yra kiek įmanoma šalinti urbanizacijos ir gamtinės aplinkos kontrastus, teikiant pirmenybę pastarajai.”]

Source: Jonas Miknevičius and Arvydas Rymeikis,
“Miestas ir jo spalvos,” *Statyba ir architektūra* 8 (1977), 4.

Appendix E. Power relations in the Lithuanian system of mass-housing



Source: *Statyba ir Architektūra* 12 (1964), 19.

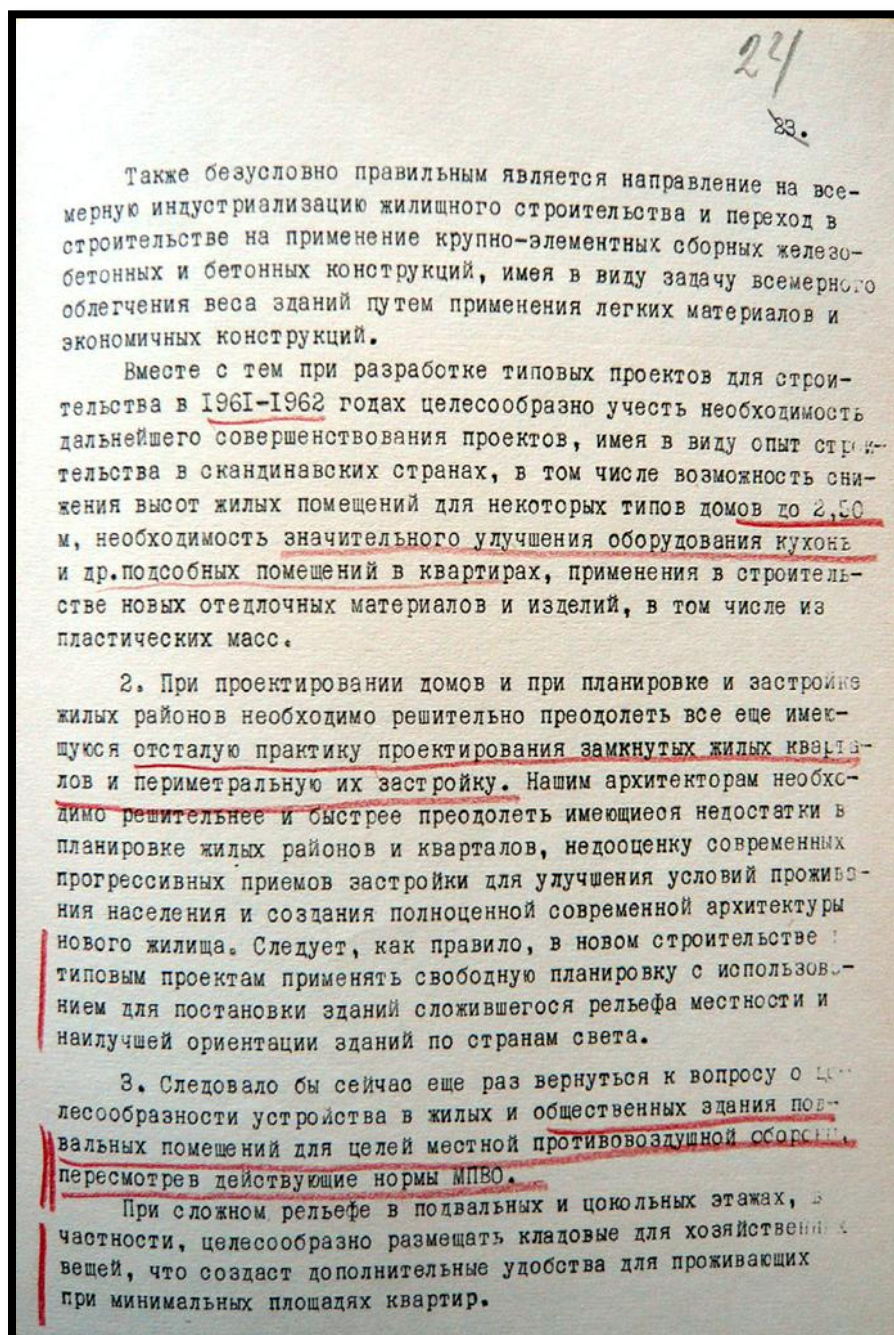
Appendix F. Extract from “Some suggestions by Lithuanian architects” (1966)

English translation in pp. 27-28.

[Lit. “Reikia atsisakyti nuo vienos ar dviejų tipinių gyvenamųjų namų serijų visai šaliai praktikos. Mūsų tikslas, kad ne tik respublikai, bet ir atskiroms įmonėms būtų ruošiamos skirtingos gyvenamųjų namų serijos... Kategoriškai nesutinkame, kad 1970-1975 metų stovyboms ruošiami projektai būtų centralizuoti visai šaliai. Nauji tipiniai projektai turi būti ruošiami ne abstrakčiam laikui, bet konkrečioms sąlygoms.... Būtina peržiūrėti ir panaikinti per pastaruosius metus masiškai išleistus projektavimo ir stovybos draudimus, kurie varžo iniciatyvą ir prieštarauja progresui. Siūloma pakeisti tipinio projektavimo ir jo finansavimo sistemą, grąžinant anksčiau turėtą teisę respublikoje ruošiamus tipinius projektus planuoti ir finansuoti respublikos statybos komitetui... Laikas respublikoms suteikti didesnę savistovumą, tuo pačiu suteikiant didesniąją iniciatyvą ir atsakomybę.”]

Source: Vytautas Balčiūnas, “Lietuvos architektų pasiūlymai,”
Statyba ir Architektūra 11 (1966), 5.

Appendix G. Extract from an official report about the Soviet delegates' experience exchange trips to Scandinavia and West Germany (1958)



Source: Drėmaitė and Petruolis, "Modernism in Soviet Lithuania," 66.
Originally from LLMA, f. 87, ap. 1, b. 227, l. 24.

Summary translation:

“An active movement towards the industrialisation of the building industry that manifests itself in blocks constructed of large reinforced concrete panels is great, as it is a very economical approach to building and it greatly reduces the weight of the structure.

However, our construction projects of 1961-1962 can be further improved by applying the experience of the Scandinavian countries. The height of the residential buildings for some series can be lowered to 2.50m, and the [design?] of fitted kitchens and storerooms needs to be improved significantly. Also, new [interior?] finishes, including those made of plastic, must be used.

2. It is highly advisable to overcome the outdated practice of designing closed residential blocks [?] and arranging them around the perimeter of the district. Our architects [...] must not undervalue the ability of modern building technologies to improve living conditions and create high-quality architecture in residential areas. The new residential districts should be arranged using an open plan [as opposed to the perimeter arrangement], and they should consider site relief and compass directions for best positioning of the blocks.

3. It would also be useful to revise the Local Air Defence's requirement [later called Civil Defence] to keep the basements in residential and public buildings for air defence purposes.

Given the stability in current military affairs, the basements and ground floors can be usefully repurposed for household needs and designed as storerooms; in this way they can add some comfort for those who live in tiny flats.