Entrance portals and gates in downtown Lodz. Closures or Openings?

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Abstract. Entrance portals and gates are the elements of the city's architectural environment with which we commune on a daily basis, often unknowingly. Now and again they contain architectural codes that convey to us relevant information about the building or its function. Gates and Portals create an occlusive, orderly space which brings together, and at the same time divides three worlds: the street, the house, and the backyard. This article aims to show that the building entrances not only constitute its closure, but can and often are the carrier of information about the building and their functions or what is in their interior. Therefore, they are also openings to something new, often something interesting, hidden in the nooks of the buildings' architecture. In addition, portals and gates, and especially their doors, are sometimes small works of art that show extraordinary carpentry, woodcarving or metalwork craftsmanship. Others, on the other hand, do not stand out at all, but it are worth looking inside and searching for traces of splendor past and present. The entrance to a building is an important architectural element, which we use involuntarily when crossing the invisible barrier between the inside and the outside, between the private, semi-private and public zones.

1. Introduction
Residential buildings are one of the most durable and numerous components of the city's landscape. They consist of many elements that give the facade of the building a specific character and are a testimony to the middle-class culture of the period in which they were created. These elements include, among others, gates and portals, which can be a strong and characteristic accent in the composition of the facade. This cognitive article aims to show, on selected examples, what functions are fulfilled by gates and portals, what their architectural codes are, and how diverse their forms and details are. The main element of the entrance is the door opening, filled with the plane of the door with its jambs. Architectural and urban details may be its complementary elements. Architectural detail occurs most often in the form of columns, ornaments, decorative keystones, tympanums, atlants, etc. Urban details include driveways, stairs and small architecture. The occurrence of an informative element in the form of advertisements and other word markings or building numbers is also common. Doors located in gates and portals often show masterful craftsmanship of woodwork and woodcarving or metalwork. Walls and ceilings hidden by entrances usually have modest stucco with a delicate, repeating motif, but sometimes they are extremely rich. Wooden wall cladding, oil-painted paneling and ceramic tiles are also characteristic there. A well-planned entrance does not need an address, it works unambiguously with its color tone, well-balanced detail and form. It is both a closing and an opening. And although there is sometimes no urban distance between the observer and the entrance, usually the entrance portal or the entrance gate are the most expressive architectural elements of the building, having great significance as elements of the artistic decoration of the facade.
2. Research method
The article is based on the discipline of architecture and urban planning and aims to serve as a report on selected gates and portals located in downtown Lodz. The research, preceded by the examination of the available archival iconography and a review of the literature on the subject, was carried out using the method of observation, made during a field interview, as well as on the basis of photographic documentation, made by the author of the work. The article aims to show selected gates and portals, which, in the author's opinion, show a variety of forms and decorations, are information carriers and are not only closings of the tenement houses in Lodz, but often also openings, inviting inside and revealing their secrets.

3. Portals and gates of downtown housing development in Lodz
Simultaneously with the creation of enclosed space, arose a problem of making it available to people, as well as introducing light and air into it. The simplest solution was to make a hole in the wall. Such openings from the earliest times were included in a more or less rich frame, for which the name of the portal was adopted [1]. The location and design of the door is often closely related to the character and function of the building. It is known that the basic elements that give the facade of a house a specific style include the development of openings in the walls such as windows, portals or gates, as well as the development of plastic elements in the form of balconies, bay windows, towers, and loggias. The form of entry may indicate validity or invalidity, closing or opening, public or intimate character, etc. "The strong form is an easily noticeable form, (...), there are ambiguous and modest, as well as distinct and attractive forms, among them those that overwhelm the entire surroundings and constitute strong dominants" [2]. The architecture of the city center buildings in Lodz drew patterns from the past and created completely new ones based solely on designers' fantasies. The scale of an entrance and the place it has on the facade is the first source of information about the structure. If a gate or entrance portal has a rich architectural detail, or is distinguished by its size or color, usually it is the culmination of the building, because the function or meaning of the object requires such an emphasis.

In the center of Lodz, you can find many tenement houses whose facades catch the eye. However, we are not always aware that the entrance of these objects is one of the most important elements of the building, which contains many extremely interesting architectural details and information. The first, quite numerous group of gates and portals in the downtown residential buildings of Lodz is the most representative. Their entrances are richly decorated, with interesting architectural details, usually located centrally on the axis of the building, emphasizing its importance. The buildings in which they are located are usually entered in the register of monuments and constitute the cultural heritage of the city of Lodz. One of them is the tenement house of the printer Jan Petersilge, built in 1896 [3]. The eclectic façade of the building, with elements of Neo-Gothic, Neo-Renaissance, Baroque and Art Nouveau, strikes with the variety of ornaments and decorations (figure 1). According to the design, on the axis of the entrance, above the arch of the arcade, in the decorative coat of arms was the place that the building’s date of construction was located, but now it is no longer there. The façade is dominated by a central bay and above it a gable with fanciful volutes. In the bay window, in the main axis of the building, above the gate, there is a sculpture of Guttenberg, the inventor of printing. On the sides we find a number of other figures, of both historical and symbolic meaning [4]. The image of the façade is completed by human heads, cupids, fantastic animals, mascarons, leaves, flowers and wreaths. The entrance gate is here the culmination of the facility, emphasizing the importance of the building to a large extent (figure 2). Situated on the axis, it stands out due to its height and richness of architectural details. The entrance arcade is two stories high, with two massive graphite columns on the sides. The passageway is divided into two parts separated by a metal door. The first part of the hall is vaulted with a cradle, while the second part has a flat vault with crossing ribs, fastened in the middle with
decorative keystones. The door of the gate is double-leaf, decorated with interesting motifs in the form of geometric and floral patterns that are forged from iron. Above the gate there is a beam, decorated with a floral ornament, supported on the sides by two brackets in the shape of women's heads entwined with volutes, ropes and wreaths. On the axis of the beam, we find a magnificent sculpture of three little angels standing on a decorative bracket decorated with plant and animal motifs. Metal gates invite you to enter a transitional courtyard, which is opened by another gate, much more modest in design, indicating walking direction.

Nearby, at 90 Piotrkowska Street, stands another neo-baroque tenement house built in 1895 according to the design of F. Chelmoński, the façade of which, especially the entrance gate, attracts attention (figure 3). This tenement house was once the property of Teodor Steigert, an industrialist from Lodz, who opened his first weaving workshop deep inside the property. The axis of the façade is emphasized by a two-story bay with a balcony with a baluster railing. The windows of the tenement house have various finials and are decorated with volute tympana and conchs. The fields between the windows are lined with glazed bricks [3]. On the axis of the building, under the bay window, there is a magnificent arched gate, flanked by two massive Corinthian columns standing on high plinths (figure 4). On the sides of the gate, there are two beautifully decorated, three-axis store windows with entrance portals in the middle, preceded by two steps (figure 5). This tenement house is one of the few in Piotrkowska Street, the commercial ground floor of which has retained its original appearance. The gate has rich decorations in metal and wood and decorative, elliptical glazing in the upper part of the opening. Above the gate there is a bay window and a simple cornice supported by two harpies with lions' maws and outstretched wings embracing a cartouche in a frame decorated with a floral ornament and a man's head. The door of the gate is metal, two-leaf with an interestingly resolved decoration showing floral motifs and two letters B and M woven into the grating, perhaps denoting the initials of the name and surname of the architect Maurice Bornstein, who designed a villa for Adolf, son of Teodor Steigert (figure 6). The initials of the tenement house owner were woven into the grille decorating the cartouche at the top of the tenement house. The door of the gate opens into a passageway, which is divided more or less in half by a wide beam with a decorative keystone on the axis, above which there is another, arched glazing, covered with a metal grate showing the amazing metalworking abilities of its craftsman (figure 7). The gate opening on the other side of the hall does not have a door, it is topped with a gentle arch and leads into a long, transitional courtyard, where numerous dining options and a disco are hidden. Thus, this gate is a representative element, emphasizing the beauty of the building and at the same time it is an opening inviting inside, where, especially in the summer months, it is full of life.
It is impossible to pass indifferently by the interestingly designed entrance located in the former house of Pabianice factory owners “Krusche i Ender”, located at 143 Piotrkowska Street (figure 8). It is an eclectic, four-story building with Renaissance and Gothic elements, designed by David Lande in 1898. It was originally a two-story building, and in the 1920s two more floors were added [5]. In 1899, the wall polychrome of the tenement house was made, which distinguished this building in a special way. The designer's project has not been fully implemented, especially the upper part of the tenement house and the gate. The implementation differs from the design, especially when it comes to the asymmetrically positioned entrance gate in the extreme axis of the façade. The top of the gate proposed by the architect does not have gothic pinnacles and frogs, but has an arched top, in the middle of which there is a cartouche-shaped keystone with images of weaving shuttles placed on a tape running diagonally across the cartouche and two lion heads holding the same shuttles in their mouths. Above the gate arch, there are two dragons painted on the wall, clad in golden chains to symbolize two tycoons. The door of the gate on the front elevation is metal, double-leaf, while the second door on the courtyard is wooden. Next to the gate there is an arched portal with a wooden door.

Above the top there is a keystone decorated with a floral ornament. Above the portal, supported by decorative brackets, runs a three-story bay window, the cross-section of which changes on each floor. The central axis of the façade is occupied by windows, of which the most outstanding are those on the
ground floor next to the portal. There are slats running around this window, forming a curtain arch. At
the junction of the arms, there is a decorative cartouche with the letters E and K - the initials of the
former owners. There is a decorative keystone on the window axis, decorated with the image of a
gargoyle (figure 9). This tenement house was a proof of the wealth of the owners and was an excellent
showcase of the company. Today it is impossible to pass by indifferently either. The facade decoration
and the development of architectural details increase the rank of the tenement house and distinguishes
it from its surroundings. The gate and portal become a characteristic part of this building, which
invites passers-by, leading through the barrel-vaulted entrance hall into a typical, unremarkable
courtyard.

The tenement houses presented above and their entrances in the form of portals and gates show us
that despite the lack of clear lines and planes leading to the entrance and the lack of urban distance
between the observer and the entrance, they are noticeable and distinguishable from the surroundings,
and emphasize the value and importance of a given object, inviting into them. These entrances are the
culmination of the facility in which they are located. They are both closures and openings to the past
and present. They are a representative element of the facade, emphasizing the beauty and function of
the building in which they are located.

Another group of gates and portals in the residential buildings in downtown Lodz are the
entrances informing about the style of the building. These are portals and gates whose architectural
detail and form indicate a specific historical style. The style is primarily determined by the character of
the facade, and more specifically the character of the architectural detail [6]. In the downtown
architecture of Lodz, the dominant trend in architecture is historicism, which is characterized by the
use of style forms of past eras. This is reflected in the appearance of gates and portals - they are
diverse. The former Herman Konstadt tenement house, built in 1885 according to a design by Juliusz
Jung, is a perfect example of this (figure 10). The façade of the tenement house received the forms of
the French Neo-Renaissance with elements of the “Francis I style” [7]. The most expressive accent of
the facade is a two-story bay in the central part of the facade, with two pairs of herms, carried by a pair
of Atlanteans. It is topped with a galvanized dome, in which there is a semicircular window
surrounded by volutes, vases and two boys carrying an intermittent pediment. The entrance gate with
wooden doors is flanked by Atlanteans girded with drapery, placed on huge volutes decorated with
floral ornaments (figure 11, 12). Figures of Atlanteans are one of the most recognizable motifs of
Baroque architecture in Central Europe [8]. Thus, the gate refers to the Baroque style, opening onto a
barrel-topped hall leading to a typical, long courtyard, limited on two sides by two-story outbuildings.
Around 1900, Art Nouveau entered Lodz architecture, and with it a new type of architectural decoration. Nature, especially the organic world, became the source of drawing decorative motifs. The wavy, flowing line has become the basic means of artistic expression. One of the first buildings to receive an Art Nouveau character after the reconstruction is the two-story tenement house of Oszer Kohn - one of the most famous Lodz entrepreneurs at the beginning of the 20th century, designed by Gustaw Landau-Gutenteger [7]. The front façade is decorated with floral ornaments in the form of stylized branches, vines, roots, flowers and leaves (figure 13). The entrance gate has two metal, openwork doors and is centrally located in the central avant-cors. The gate clearance is flanked by two trunks of a laurel tree, whose branches support a small balcony on the first floor. The space between the balcony and the gate's top is filled with bunches of leaves and a roll-up cartouche ornament (figure 14). There is no doubt about the nature of the gate's interior and its style. The gate invites you to the hall, where we can find wooden paneling on the walls with the motifs of flowing lines resembling flowers and wooden doors leading to the staircase. The entrance hall leads to an interesting courtyard marked out at an acute angle to Piotrkowska Street. It is a record of the course of the fields of formerly agricultural Lodz (figure 15).

Another project by Gustaw Landau-Gutenteger, located at 93 Kościuszki Avenue, has an Art Nouveau décor (figure 16). It is the Dejczman house, the entrance of which attracts attention with its original design and form. The entrance is a gate with two portals on the sides, slightly shifted from the axis. The tenement house was built in two stages, first the southern part was built in 1902, and ten
years later the almost identical northern part was built, designed by Romuald Miller [7]. The body of the building is emphasized by high gables with carved decorations and three-story bay windows running along their axes, connected with forged balcony railings. The arched gate has tripartite, kidney glazing over which there is a rose tree-shaped decoration [9]. There are also renal clearances above the portals, and above them decorations in the form of a bundle of pine needles and cones. The doors of the portals are wooden, finished with an interesting, carved detail in the form of intertwined leaves. The arched gate have interesting metalwork using motifs of plant flagella and flowers, and geometric patterns with spiral shapes. The gate passage has a barrel vault. Two masks of Greek gods, placed on the sides of the gate, become an additional decoration of the gate. The whole entrance is emphasized by a border between the ground floor and the first floor, filled with a rich pattern of flagella with s-shaped, flexible lines (figure 17). It is developed in plaster, while the walls are brick. The gate with portals emphasizes the stylish character of the tenement house and is an important artistic element of this facade.

In the downtown of Lodz, however, most portals and gates have simple forms that do not stand out with anything special. Often their only decoration is a bossaged face of the wall or a decorative keystone on the axis of the finial. Very often there is an information element in the form of an advertisement, a text or a pictogram informing us that it is worth looking inside. An example is the entrance gate in a tenement house at Więckowskiego 4 (figure 18). It is a three-story building with two side breaks, which have been emphasized by triangular gables. Its entrance is a modest, straight-crowned gate, located centrally on the bossaged ground floor. This gate has a double-leaf metal door, divided vertically with straight bars (figure 19). There is an inscription above it: "The Birth of the Day" - incomprehensible for the average passer-by, but also eye-catching - why? One has to look for the answer behind the gate. After passing through the hall, he appears to the courtyard, which has received an unusual graphic design. Two paintings: "The Birth of the Day" and "Birds in Paradise" by the outstanding artist Wojciech Siudmak were transferred to the walls of outbuildings and a tenement house. The interior space has been changed. It is no longer a gray, typical backyard well, but a fairy-tale, magical little world (figure 20).
An equally unusual courtyard reveals another inconspicuous gate located in a two-story tenement house at 3 Piotrkowska Street. Originally, one of the first hotels was located at this address: "Hotel Polski" [3]. Today it is a residential tenement house which was stripped of its decorations after World War II. Also, the entrance gate with metal, double-leaf doors does not stand out with anything special. Located in the center of the rusticated ground floor, it was topped with a basket arch. It is flanked on both sides by metal bumpers in the form of cones ending with spheres. However, it's worth taking a look inside. Sometimes inconspicuous portals and gates open to something amazing, which surprises, evokes strong emotions, arouses admiration. This is the courtyard that we will see when crossing the entrance hall. Here, the walls of the outbuildings were lined with pieces of mirrors, creating an amazing mosaic shining in the sun (figure 21). It is the work of Joanna Rajkowska, who thus illustrated the path that her daughter followed on the way to regain her eyesight. That is why this yard was named: "Rose Passage". And although the entrance in this tenement house is not impressive, it is an opening to something completely new, something beautiful. Another gate with an inscription: "time-lapse" is located in a three-story tenement house built in 1891 according to the design of Landau-Guteneter at 120 Piotrkowska Street [7]. The inscription that appears here, which is the only decoration of the crossing here, hides the history of the property (figure 22). It was here that the first cinema was established at the end of the 19th century. Therefore, the space has a symbolic value, in which the "Old Cinema" hotel with a cinema hall has been operating since 2013. The hotel apartments hide the secrets of famous Polish and Hollywood productions. On one of the walls of the outbuilding we can find a movie mural with Charlie Chaplin (figure 23).
4. Conclusions

Many Lodz tenement houses changed their facades after World War II, losing their original detail. In most of the buildings, the facades of the ground floors have been changed, mainly in order to enlarge the shop windows. Differentiating the form, scale or material of several entrances to the ground floor of a residential tenement house usually indicates the existence of other functions, most often commercial. Elements of a formal, semantic and emotional nature are the source of information about the object and its function. The scale of gates and portals in the residential buildings in downtown Lodz is mostly adapted to the human scale. Gates and portals with rich artistic settings usually provide information about an elite building. Color, material and architectural detail distinguish the entrances and indicate their importance. Additional boundaries of the gate and portal territory can be emphasized by such elements as: the pattern of the floor and its material, appropriate lighting, text inscriptions and small architecture in the form of a wall, roof or buffer. When it comes to visual information, it is usually limited to the house number and possibly the street name.

Sets of posters, advertisements, graphic and light signs, paintings and drawings on the walls as well as street names and numbers displayed in the city, according to the definition of A. Wallis, the information form of the city [10]. This garment creates a certain, closed whole in the scenery of the city, especially its ground floors, where there are gates and portals. Usually it arises as a result of spontaneous and random processes. The message codes are universal, subject to the possibility of reception for every passer-by. The excess of information, colors and the inertia of their composition can lead to visual chaos and disrupt the visual perception of the entire entrance. In summary, the gate and portal are one of the most expressive architectural elements of the building. This is especially true of the richly decorated ones. Their smaller sizes and frugal decorations can prove the secondary function of the entrances. As for the functions, they ensure the transition from the outside to the inside of the building. But they also allow you to go to its back space, that is, to its yard. They are both openings and closures. They often hide mementos of the past behind their metal or wooden doors or reveal something completely new and not found anywhere else. Emotional feelings are also extremely important, which are positive if liquid forms and warm colors are used in portals and gates. The use of appropriate proportions and the use of natural materials also contributes to a positive reception. The way the entrance is shaped most often depends on the prioritisation of the user of the facility, e.g. whether the entrance should be inviting, open to everyone, or maybe more intimate, less accessible. Therefore, the way of emphasizing the gate or portal depends mainly on the function of the building and what is in its immediate vicinity. If we assume that some gateways and portals communicate something and not only function, then they can be treated as a system of signs. This is especially true for gates and portals that have richer decorations. An important element of the gate and portal are their doors, which are most often wooden or pierced iron. The material from which the door is made is of functional and aesthetic importance. The functional meaning is understandable, as the door is a closure element, so it
must be made of durable and strong materials. The aesthetic significance is also important, as carefully made and decorative entrances add charm and specific character to the building in which it is located. The rich setting of the portal or gate, or the lack of it, is a signal to the recipient, informing him about the prestige of the object, its rank and availability.

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