Origins and development of General Building Design Bureau "Miastoprojekt Szczecin"

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Abstract. The article focuses on the foundation and development of the biggest national General Building Design Bureau "Miastoprojekt Szczecin", which had been active in the Polish Western Pomerania after World War Two. The case of GBDB Miastoprojekt Szczecin and its erection requires defining the circumstances favouring the foundation of a national enterprise - the whole transformation process after the end of World War Two and the creation of Polish People's Republic. Initially the GBDB had been a department formally reported to a superior unit established in Warsaw (design bureaus were grouped in separate sections based on their field of activity and designated to certain regions). The GBDB's creative activity had been divided into several time periods for clear depiction purposes. First one (1949 - 1952) included recovering the city from war damage, performing an inventory of the urban fabric along with phrasing new direction of spatial development. First urban and design studios were founded. Subsequent years (1953 - 1960) brought new implementations, the so-called "Infill construction" in particular, along with assembling the design documentation for future investments. The third period (1960s and 1970s) would consist of development of housing using the original industry technologies. During the time, large residential complexes were established in Szczecin, mainly in the outskirts. The last period (late 1980s and early 1990s) is a time of both social and political changes in the country, resulting with a major change in the way bureaus performed. "Hijacking" orders from the national design bureaus in order to offer the customers more time- and cost-effective services by private businesses gradually made GBDBs obsolete and closed down as a result. The article's summary underlines that considering the multi-aspect subject matter of the architectural objects designed by GBDS "Miastoprojekt Szczecin", it is possible to perform a relatively objective evaluation of the output of bureau's architects and recognising their importance in shaping the modern Szczecin's spatial order.

1. Historical background

The outbreak of World War II put a rapid development of the European and American modernism influenced by Bauhaus to a sudden halt. Once the war was over, Europe remained under the influence of two superpowers. The West, supported by the USA, respected independent states and promoted their capitalist development, while the East was strongly dependent on the USSR, which imposed a centralised system of control over economy, politics and all the remaining spheres of life of the subordinate states. Meanwhile, Western Europe re instituted the ideas of modernism. The Athens Charter, published in 1933 and inspired by Le Corbusier, introduced new concepts of urban planning. The text played a major role in rebuilding ruined European cities in the post-war period, as its postulates regarding the reform of residential and public areas significantly improved standards of living. These were deplorable, especially in working-class districts densely built up by narrow tenement-blocks with
sparsely-lit basements and limited access to lavatory facilities. The new urbanistic thought hailed sun, greenery and open space. Owing to a substantial degree of material losses in urban architecture and historical monuments, enterprising experiments and innovative urban design could be accommodated at rebuilding ruined spaces. Finally, the concepts of Le Corbusier, who postulated absolute space utilisation (e.g. by surrounding centrally located high-rise buildings with green areas) found application. Urban inner spaces were characterised by unconstrained arrangement of public administration and apartment houses.

In years 1949-1956, a new style called socialist realism was introduced in the entire Eastern Europe, including Poland. The style imposed by the dictatorship of USSR that may best be characterised as “national in terms of form and ideology”, depended on historical principles for composition and decorative details. Its introduction helped to implement some advantageous aims of the modernistic thought, for instance, the improvement of poor hygienic conditions in the 19th c. tenement houses which withstood the war. After 1953 - the year of Stalin’s death - socialist realism fell out of favour due to high costs of its excessive and impractical decorativeness, and since its monumental, over scaled output lacked utilitarian aspects. As soon as Stalinism ended, political terror subsided, and after a number of reforms USSR’s control over its satellite states gradually weakened. Finally, Eastern Europe re-established previous links with the West and welcomed its cultural influences. Modernism returned, by that time still in vogue in the western countries and persistently promoting socialist ideals, albeit coupled with a contemporary form. “Everything that had a contemporary look was copied and imitated, as far as the technical and technological capacities of a local industry permitted.” Apartments granted by law, now made available by the State, promoted the ideals of classless society. Eastern Europe adopted functionalism with unreserved enthusiasm, despite the fact that in the West, it served mainly the needs of subsidised housing. Plain “box houses”, simple in form, entirely deprived of any decorative details were on the one hand cheap and swiftly erected, but on the other hand - anonymous and decontextualized. Since urban planning was given priority, “a single house acquired a meaning of architectural details, and a plan of an entire district gained the importance of an architectural composition”. Post-war transition from rural-industrial economy to an industrial-rural one, and greater employment opportunities in the cities sparked dynamic urbanisation. This, in turn, boosted the housing market and created a constant demand for city apartments. The State took control over architectural design with time- and fund-saving in mind, thus promoting such solutions as prefabrication and standardisation. Private architectural design companies were substituted with state offices, “operating on the same principle as factories, yielding records of building activities in the place of produce. The architect-artist was reduced to the role comparable to that of a factory worker - his main goal was revenue and quantity”. Such an approach limited individualism only to special cases permitted at an administrative level.

Not long after the war ended, a pair of British architects, Alison and Peter Smithson opposed the universal enthusiastic return to modernism, pointing out the danger of schematic, rigorous design and dehumanised architecture. They also argued that Le Corbusier’s concepts of multi-storey apartment-block districts surrounded by greenery led, in fact, to isolation, which would give rise to social pathologies, quite contrary to the ideas of modernism that hoped to promote community values. In the middle of the 60s these critical voices were strengthened by postmodernists, who found the contemporaneous urban style monotonous, unsympathetic, neglecting the needs of its inhabitants and effecting in their isolation from their cultural and social background. As a result of this criticism, modernism fell out of favour with architects and investors.

2. Introduction

World War II caused a great damage in the structure of the European cities, not excluding the Western Pomeranian region in Poland. War losses in the substance and structure of built-up areas in the Szczecin and Koszalin voivodeship came close to 45%. City centres suffered the most damage, as they frequently
fell victim to bomb raids. Other affected zones included industrial centres, shipyards, power and water plants and public transportation buildings. The first post-war years saw a gradual and cumbersome restoration of these areas. Initially, a number of preliminary works was undertaken, such as cleaning the rubble from the main roads and pavements, enabling easier transportation, clearing away remaining antitank barriers, removing rubble from moats, demolishing buildings no longer fit for habitation, and cleaning the interiors of all those still fit. Brick obtained from demolition was sent to Warsaw as part of a large rebuilding scheme, while the remnant was used in situ.

The Polish government faced a major challenge, as Polish borders shifted, and newly acquired regions had to be merged in terms of economy and social aspects with the main land. Owing to the lack of cultural ties and strong prejudices against remaining German heritage, this process proved strenuous. Additionally, the USSR army and Polish settlers from the East contributed to war damage of movable property. A great deal of valuables was confiscated and transferred to central Poland, while looted buildings were arsened in order to conceal the crime. On the one hand, restoration was hindered by such problems as the lack of educated academic staff and records (maps and plans), financial inefficiency and extensive damage, on the other hand, the same obstacles created opportunities for unrestrained organisation of urban space from scratch with no links to the cultural past of the city, back by an employment of innovative ideas, such as “Szczecin modern throughout.”

The Polish architecture of that era, not excluding West Pomerania, was developed on a basis of 5-year plans. Since heavy industry consumed most of financial and production resources, production of consumption goods took an underprivileged place in the investment hierarchy, thus hindering architectural development. Dynamic economic growth of cities and attractive job market resulted in a sudden inflow of rural population to urban areas. This, in turn, created a demand for housing infrastructure, to satisfy both public and private needs.

3. Origins of the General Building Design Bureau "Miastoprojekt Szczecin"

The first restoration works were undertaken by the Restoration national of Szczecin, established in 1945. Initially, a precarious financial situation enabled an adaptation of only the least damaged buildings. However, first records and inventories took into account a wider scope of reconstruction works. In 1946, the first general plan of urban space organisation was put forward by the Regional Headquarters of Urban Planning (from 1947 known as the Municipal Office of Urban Planning). The plan allowed the authorities to assess the overall situation and determine what works had to be undertaken in order to rebuild the city.

In 1948, a resolution of the Ministry of Restoration dated to September 18, 1948, issued in consensus with the Ministry of Treasury and the management of the Central Planning Office (Centralny Urząd Planowania), established a national company named the “Central Office of Architectural and Building Design” (Centralne Biuro Projektów Architektonicznych i Budowlanych), separated from the state administration. Its headquarters and main departments were located in Warsaw, while other departments and dependent architectural design institutions were scattered across Poland. In Szczecin these included the Office of Rural Construction Design (Biuro Projektów Budownictwa Wiejskiego), the Office of Communal Construction Design (Biuro Projektów Budownictwa Komunalnego), the Office of Industrial Construction Design (Biuro Projektów Budownictwa Przemysłowego) and the Office of Textile Industry Design in Szczecin (Przemysłu Włókien Sztucznych w Szczecinie). Their main aim was to prepare documentation required to restore urban space and its functionality.

The Municipal Department of the Central Office of Architectural and Construction Design (established on 1 January 1949 as Centralne Biuro Projektów Architektonicznych i Budowlanych Przedsiębiorstwo Państwowe Wyodrębnione w Szczecinie) formed the basis of the future Research-Design Bureau “Miastoprojekt” as decreed by the Ministry of Restoration. Its main tasks included preparing technical expertise for local plans of urban design, designing standard buildings, preparing technical documentation of state buildings, as well as community and social buildings (except for water...
transport buildings, post offices, public security offices, industry and military buildings) and overlooking construction of designed sites.

“Miastoprojekt Szczecin” went through reorganizations and often changed supervising units. At first, the office depended on the National Municipal Council Commission (Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Szczecinie), then changed the name to the Alliance of North-West Design Offices, Department in Szczecin (Zjednoczenie Północno-Zachodnie Biur Projektowych Oddział w Szczecinie) (1950-1951), Miastoprojekt North Design Enterprise of Municipal Architecture, Department in Szczecin (Miastoprojekt Północ Przedsiębiorstwo Projektowe Budownictwa Miejskiego Oddział Szczecin) (1951-1952), Miastoprojekt North-East Design Enterprise of Municipal Architecture, Department in Szczecin (Miastoprojekt Północ-Wschód Przedsiębiorstwo Projektowe Budownictwa Miejskiego Oddział Szczecin) (1952-1955). From 1955 on, it was dependent on the Ministry of Construction and Industry of Construction Materials (initially via the Central Board of Municipal Construction Design Offices (Centralny Zarząd Biur Projektowych Budownictwa Miejskiego) and from 1964 - via the Construction Union in Szczecin (Szczecińskie Zjednoczenie Budownictwa) as the Miastoprojekt Szczecin Enterprise of Municipal Construction Design (Miastoprojekt Szczecin Przedsiębiorstwo Projektowe Budownictwa Miejskiego) (1955-1971) and “Miastoprojekt” Szczecin Research-Design Office of General Construction ("Miastoprojekt" Biuro Projektowo-Badawcze Budownictwa Ogólnego w Szczecinie) (from 1971 through). From 1982 on, the founding body of the office was the municipal county of Szczecin. In the last period of operation, apart from name change, the scope of competence was broadened. In 1969 on the basis of the Minister of Construction and Industry of Construction Materials it was merged with Research and Experiments Institution of Construction Union (Zakład Badań i Doświadczeń Szczecińskiego Zjednoczenia Budownictwa) and Territorial Centre of Technical Information, which had hitherto operated as separate units, [1-3]. “Miastoprojekt Szczecin” became responsible for inter-branch coordination in the area of Szczecin voivodeship. In the first years, the main core of management staff derived from pre-war universities, joined later by a younger generation, which included graduates of Szczecin School of Engineering established in 1947.

The first manager of the office was Roman Fafius – a construction engineer, graduate of Gdansk High School of Technology. He came to Szczecin in 1948, after the Ministry of Construction appointed him as the manager of the design office of general construction he had to create from scratch. At first, the headquarters were located in the building of the Regional Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party residing in Żołnierza Square (currently the premises of the District Court Szczecin-Prawobrzeże i Zachód, Żołnierza Polskiego Square 16, Szczecin), then they were relocated to Korzeniowskiego Street (then the headquarters of the Directory of Berlin-Szczecin Railway (Dyrektorium Kolei Berlińsko-Szczecińskiej), currently PKP premises, the Polish Railways SA (Polskie Linie Kolejowe SA)). Dynamic development in the initial phase enabled an investment into new headquarters -- the Preussenhof hotel at Staromłyńska 10, burnt down during the war, was renovated and served as the new headquarters of the Research-Design Bureau “Miastoprojekt” Szczecin from 1952 until 2006. Currently, it houses Voivodeship Administrative Court, [4-6].

Simultaneously established specialist design units, which were already mentioned, did not pose a real threat to the market position of GBDS Miastoprojekt. Until the 1960s, when the Institution of Design and Investment Services “Inwestprojekt” (Zakład Projektowania i Usług Inwestycyjnych „Inwestprojekt”) was established, the office did not face any market competition. However, national design offices, strongly tied to the political system did not thrive after its fall. The turn of 80s and 90s saw a reorganisation in the work of state architects. The expansion of private offices, which offered the same services at a lower price and shorter notice, caused a decline and elimination of multi-branch state and cooperative offices of design. An attempt at adaptation to the new economic conditions failed and in 2006 the Research-Design Bureau “Miastoprojekt” Szczecin was dissolved, [7].
4. Main projects in the years of activity

At first a small institution employing no more than three dozens of people, the office soon expanded into a large company consisting of a few specialist departments of design: housing, healthcare, education, general plans, cost estimation and installation. It specialised in multi-branch urban design and housing architecture, schools, hospitals and other facilities of public utility. For instance, 200 school designs of various kind were prepared, including individual or standard designs or reconstructions and adaptations of already existing damaged buildings. The output of healthcare department was equally impressive; it contributed designs of modernisation and extension of healthcare facilities, for instance, the complex of clinics PAM on Lubelska Street and Powstańców Wielkopolskich Avenue, the Hospital of Infectious Diseases, the Medical Academy and the so-called hotels of nurses on Broniewski and Zawadzki Street. Nevertheless, the majority of projects was devoted to the main specialisation of the office - housing design. This included a great number of infill buildings, whole complexes supplemented the existing buildings and also entirely new districts in the outskirts and adjoining areas. Five departments aided by the Laboratory of Construction Materials (Laboratorium Materialów Budowlanych) conducted research, analyses, forecasts and technical expertise of buildings and construction materials. The office was active in Szczecin and Koszalin voivodeship (within borders from before 1975), including many urban spaces, such as Stargard, Świnoujście, Wolin, Koszalin, Kołobrzeg, Kamień Pomorski, Nowogard, Goleniów, Pyrzyce, Gryfino, Chojna, Słupsk.

In order to speed up construction works prefabricated components were employed as a system solution, which they were supposed to provide a request for housing and public utility facilities. On the 2 July 1959 the Council of Ministers passed a resolution which authorised the usage of standard components in construction. The adopted priorities included: constant technical progress based on the most effective and economical solutions diminishing material usage, the effort required for the entire process, transport and investment costs; standardisation of programming; high standard of design, etc. Unified principles of dimension coordinates, standard dimensions of components and set utility types of construction were the basis of standardisation. Standardisation concerned construction components, installation, fittings and inventory, as well as their sections, fragments, methods of fabrication, equipment and tools.

In years 1968-1969, the General Design-Research Bureau of General Construction Miastoprojekt Szczecin developed its own system of large-panel construction, called “Szczecin System”, which was introduced in years 1971-1972. It was developed by a team of architects, including Furmańczyk, Jarzynka, Nardy, Przybysz, Skwarek. They imitated and adopted many solutions known in USSR, such as production line and tooling employed in the manufacture of prefabricated components. This system was mainly targeted at multi-family housing. For its needs, the office prepared a catalogue of 140 ready-made components consisting of 49 sections and segments suitable for 5 and 11 storey apartment buildings of corridor, staircase and point system. In comparison to other prefabricated systems, it granted quite an unrestrained modelling of building silhouette and variegated façades, which it owed to external texture of washed gravel and terrazzo. In 1975, GBDS received a 3rd degree award from the Ministry of Construction and Construction Materials for its work on the Szczecin system. The system was designated for larger cities and manufactured in six factories located all over Poland. Two of them were situated in Szczecin, the SPBO 2 “Gryfbet”, producing the original LECA (lightweight expanded clay aggregate) version of the system and SPBO 3, producing a three-layer version of curtain walls. Due to the scarcity of LECA in Western Pomerania, a three-layer curtain wall made of gravel concrete with polystyrene insulation was developed. In addition to the catalogue, the office published an album of inbuilt services SZ90, prepared by a team led by Zbigniew Przybysz, Maria Derejczyk and Stanisław Derejczyk. It proposed construction solutions for the ground level in 5-storey prefabricated apartment houses and specified the functional requirements for services therein located. Other variants of the Szczecin system included MS – system solutions for schools, post-plate system for industrialized
general construction dedicated to offices, service facilities, healthcare facilities and schools. Further remaining variants included the Szczecin system S (dedicated to an enlarged apartment standard), the Barlin system BS (dedicated to small town architecture with SB-77 and SB-80 variants, which introduced changes in external walls and roofs) and the SBM-77 variant (monolithic system). “The Szczecin system” had more than 70% share in the construction of post-war urban architecture in Szczecin. Diverse variants of the system were aimed at improving its architectural aspects, improving its utilitarian and urbanistic functions and modernisation of construction, material and technological solutions.

5. Selected investments
In its active years, the office successfully completed a significant number of investments. Only its main projects are listed and described below.

5.1 Years 1949-52
The active years of the office can be divided into periods, which correspond to the stages of the development of architecture in Western Pomerania. The first period – dated to years 1949-1952 – was at the time a pioneering stage for inhabitants, marked by removing war damage. The historic Old Town and the surrounding 19th-century buildings that had been the heart of city-life in the pre-war years, were now completely ruined and required being returned to fully functionality before all other districts. First, straightforward records and documentation of the buildings designated to adaptation and reconstruction had to be taken down. Unfortunately, few of these records have been preserved to our times. Among the most important projects at that time was the first detailed plan of Szczecin, contributed by the urban construction department (active from 1950 until 1955) and credited to P. Zaremba, S. Kirkin, B. Sekula, W. Furmaticzyk, W. Michałowski, J. Wanag, H. Okrój, W. Jarzynka, M. Prauziński, Z. Wichrzycki, M. Kwiatkowski, P. Czartołomny, A. Aniszakowicz. Despite the fact that the first plan of spatial development and architectural design was not approved, it formed the basis of a later plan, which was approved by a government resolution in 1956. It accounted for the challenges of urban spaces and appointed the directions for future development. In order to protect urban areas, a number of restrictions were introduced, which limited construction in the Old Town, so that historic sites could be excavated and the Old Town panorama restored, [6]. Also, in the area of Niecka Niebuszewska stretches of green landscape, unifying all city parks were planted.

In that period, other important projects of the office included: a project of reconstruction of office building „Miasstoprojekt-Szczecin” on Staromłyńska Street and a project of rebuilding the former headquarters of NSDAP on Żoliborza Square (by K. Trzaskowski), adaptation of a complex of buildings on Wojska Polskiego Avenue for the use of the Palace of Youth (by K. Trzaskowski, J. Prandecki), rebuilding of the Shopping Centre (later Centrum) in the vicinity of Brama Portowa (by F. Kocimski, M. Janowski), rebuilding the premises of PŻM on Małopolskiej Street (by K. Fabiś, J. Prandecki), holiday house for the president B. Bierut in Grodno near Wiselka (by K. Trzaskowski. At the request of the National Security Office the project was held in absolute secret (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa), the adaptation of water mill on Słowackiego Street to a restaurant and cafe (by K. Trzaskowski, J. Prandecki - the building no longer exists), reconstruction of the Mill Gate (Brama Młyńska) in Słupsk (by J. Prandecki) and reconstruction and modernisation of hospitals, for example the hospital on Arkoriska, Pomorzy and Unii Lubelskiej Street.

5.2. Years 1953-1960
The following years welcomed new projects, mainly in fill-in construction and in preparing documentation for further investments. Once all rubble was removed from the city, a cityscape of dense rows of 19th century houses breached by bombing was revealed. In some place only single houses were missing, while in others – entire quarters. It was thus necessary to put the existing buildings back to order and fill in the gaps. Since the funds were limited and the leading architects were sceptical with
regard to the socialistic style, the first projects were way inferior to the model Polish designs of that time. The first project was the plan of the Old Town. This area had to be not so much reconstructed as rebuilt, as nearly 80% of it was completely destroyed. There were two distinct conceptions of the reconstruction: one was modelled on the reconstruction of the Old Town in Warsaw and the Historic Centre of Gdansk - the other one advocated an entirely new design for this area, the so-called “reconstruction through rebuilding” with only partially preservation pre-war street plan and main historic monuments. Both concepts were developed by design teams from Gdańsk, Szczecin and Warsaw. Their work was assessed by local authorities and the Central Urbanistic and Architectural Commission (Główna Komisja Urbanistyczno-Architektoniczna) of the Urbanistic and Architectural Committee (Komitet Urbanistyki i Architektury). Finally, the project of the Szczecin team of architects prevailed (by L. Kotowski, W. Furmańczyk, W. Jarzynka, J. Karwowski, R. Fyda-Karwowska, H. Okrój, W. Michałowski, R. Wróblewski). It proposed to unite the historic layout of the city with contemporary urbanistic and architectural trends. Despite its manifold virtues, the project had also downsides. Many years later, the decision to move the city away from the river (by building nearly 70m wide, multi-lane road) and to place the highest buildings in the lowest part of the city along the main entry road (Wielka Street, currently Wyszyńskiego Street) was considered disadvantageous.

At the same time, works proceeded on a conception of rebuilding the Śródmieście district, located between M. Buczka Street, Jedności Narodowej Avenue, Żołnierza Square and Hołdu Pruskiego Square. The conception referred to the preserved 19th century buildings and the existing street plan. Most of this project was implemented already in the 1960s with the employment of technical and technological solutions characteristic of that period, that is, heavy machinery, standardisation and prefabrication. Apart from two major projects in the city centre, other projects concerned smaller complexes of apartment housing, usually adapting the existing 19th architecture. The examples of such projects include: the infill building of “Cepelia” on Zwycięstwa Square (by H. Nardy), the infill building on the corner of Jagiellońska and Śląska Street (by B. Wachowiak, J. Bogdański), the infill building on the corner of Jagiellońska and Strzelecka Street (by S. Derejczyk, M. Romaniuk), the infill building on Żółkiewskiego Street (by J. Mrowiński), bank premises on Orla Białego Square (by S. Kondarewicz).

5.3. Years 1961-1970
The third period - years 1960 - 1970 - saw development in construction with the help of the first solutions based on industrial technologies. A resolution no. 285 passed by the Council of Ministers on 2 July 1959
regarding standardisation in construction, imposed strict rules of design, introduced standard design and mass methods of production. A great need of fund cuts and terrain limitations significantly influenced the architecture of that period. New districts put together from standard components and sections were entirely deprived of individualism. Frequently changing directions concerning the standards, necessitated introducing many changes to the original designs. Work on new districts settlements was either completed or began: Osiedle Grunwaldzkie - the first district designed in the technology of large plate, a district between Zwycięstwa Square and Partyzantów Street (by a team led by H. Nardy), a district between Willowa and Lubeckiego Street (by J. Biderman), the district „Na Skarpie” in the area of Odzieżowa, Czesława, Ofiar Oświęcimia and Lubomirskiego Street (by W. Zaborowski, L. Kędzierski, J. Biderman), the district “Komuny Paryskiej” in the area of Komuny Paryskiej and Rugiańskiej Street, a district on Budziszyna Street and a district “Wzgórze Hetmańskie” (by T. Ostrowski). In order to speed up the design process, a set of repeating projects was developed in 1966-1970 for Szczecin and the entire voivodeship. It contained 19 standard designs composed by the architects of offices “Miastoprojekt”, “Inwestprojekt” and a department supervised by the Directorate of Worker’ District Construction (“Dyrekcja Budowy Osiedli Robotniczych”).

One of the most interesting projects of that time was a complex of four 11-storey apartment blocks with service outlets on Wojska Polskiego Street (near Zgody Square), which filled in breaches in pre-war built-up area (W. Furmańczyk, W. Jarzynka). This project received an award in a national competition of the Polish Association of Architects. Apart from reconstructing the area mentioned above, the project undertook to design a new “mini-centre” along Wojska Polskiego Avenue in the 1960s a campaign of a national range, aimed at mass construction of schools, was launched. It was called “1000 schools for the millennium of the Polish State.” The most interesting schools in Szczecin built during the campaign were located in the Głębokie district (by M. Janowski, L. Kotowski), on Mickiewicza Street, Witkiewicza Street and Okrzei Street (by J. Pokrzywnicki), Jasna Street and Polickiej Street, in Międzyzdroje and Dziwnów. The greatest project of these years was a design of Śródmiejska Dzielnica Mieszkaniowa by Z. Grudziński, B. Sekuła and H. Nardy with cooperation of T. Ostrowski. The project was developed around 1958 and modified twice subsequently. The project intended to contrast new architecture with the historical structure of the city, referred to as an “experimental clash of modernism with the 19th century eclecticism.” The project involved a couple of independent building complexes, i.a. a building at the corner of Wyzwolenia and Świerczewskiego Avenue, the district “Grunwaldzkie” on Malczewskiego Street, a complex on Unisławy Street, high-rise

Figure 3. Residential and commercial building on sq. Grunwaldzki in Szczecin, arch. T. Ostrowski, project 1962, realization 1963-64 [8]

Figure 4. Residential and commercial building on av. Wojska Polskiego 26-30 in Szczecin, arch. W. Furmańczyk, W. Jażynka, project 1964-65, realization 1966-70 [8]
buildings on Matejki Street (imitated in an industrialized version in Koszalin, Gryfin, Świnoujście, Stargard), a district on Skarpa, west frontage on Wyzwolenia Avenue – between Buczka and Świerczewskiego Street, point buildings on Buczka Street, imitated in districts of Komuny Paryskiej. Apart from the area of śródmieście, a few complexes of lower architecture were erected on Potulicka Street (by H. Nardy and E. Ryżewski), on Kilińskiego Square (by H. Nardy, J. Karowowski, T. Ostrowski, B. Platkowska), Herbowa Street (by K. Stachowiak), Willowa Street (by H. Nardy, Z. Kasprzak).

5.4. Years 1971-89
At the beginning of 1970s regional offices of design were tasked with designing large-area housing estates located on undeveloped and only partly connected lots. Such projects were continued until the middle of 1980s. One of these projects is the Zawadzkiego-Klonowica estate constructed in the 1970s (according to a design by a team led by H. Nardy) located between Głębokie-Pilchowo, Osów, Arkońskie, Pogodno, Krzekowo-Bezrzecze estate. Most of the area is built up with low-rise 5-storey buildings with transitions, and along Zawadzkiego Street — detached buildings in the G-15 system. Most of the apartments in this area was allotted to military servicemen. Kaliny Estate (by Z. Grudziński) was built in the area of former villages Turzyn and Świerczewo. It consisted of two parts – an older one dating back to 1950s-1960s, built up with villas, and a newer one from 1970s-1980s. Apart from large-plate apartment blocks, the district houses prefabricated buildings, shipped from the USSR, called “Leningrads” and public utility facilities. The district was mainly inhabited by workers of the Shipyard Szczecin. In the same period, a number of other districts and estates were developed. These included, Kaliny estate (by Z. Grudziński), Arkońskie-Stoki, Piastowskie, Nad Stawem, Zamoyskiego, and on the right-bank part of Szczecina – Majowe estate (by W. Jarzynka) and Zdroje. The universal introduction of standardisation and prefabrication had a largely negative influence on the aesthetic and utilitarian aspect of architecture of that period. It rendered the newly developed sites monotonous and bereft of any connection with their context.

5.5 After 1989
In the 1980s, deteriorating political system gave rise to social dissatisfaction, which in turn led to unrests. As mentioned earlier, the turn of 80. and 90. saw a reorganisation in the work of state architects. The expansion of private offices, which offered the same services at a lower price and shorter notice, caused a decline and elimination of multi-branch state and cooperative offices of design. Year 1989 brought about the end of the communist regime, and the state was substituted with private companies in its role of the chief investor. In conclusions, a research on the activity of the General Research-Design Bureau Miastoprojekt Szczecin allows to put forward a preliminary research hypothesis that multifaceted activity of this architectural environment has played an important in the development of architecture in Western Pomerania.

6. Conclusions
The article presents a concise history of the General Research-Design Bureau Miastoprojekt Szczecin and its significant impact on the development of post-war architecture of Szczecin - the capital of Western Pomernia.

In the post-war period, due to the great extent of the war damage in the cities, urbanistic planning prevailed over architectural design. This was also a period of dependence on the USSR. Despite the fact that the socialist style was imposed by the authorities, Polish architects, including the employees of the office Miastoprojekt Szczecin were ostensibly fascinated by western architecture and urban planning, i.a. modernism, social architecture of Bauhaus or the designs of Le Corbusier in the 1920s. Neither their own works, nor that of any Polish architect of the post-war period have ever been an inspiration to the rest of Europe or World, for that matter. However, they eagerly imitated the world avant-garde, adapting some of these solutions to the local technical and technological capacities.
The end of World War II necessitated reconstruction of ruined cities. In order to control all changes in the country, central coordinating units were appointed. Large, specialised, multi-branch offices, for instance Miastoprojekt, were divided into departments, serving in different parts of the country (e.g. Miastoprojekt-Kraków, Wrocław, Gdańsk, Poznań). Their headquarter was established in Warsaw. The office, Miastoprojekt Szczecin, responsible for the multi-branch coordination and design activities in the region of Western Pomerania, was established in 1949. The tasks of the offices of architectural design, regardless of their location, included developing of local plans, developing designs of standardised buildings, preparing technical documentation of state and local-government buildings, and public utility facilities. Design activity, influenced by socio-political and economic reality, underwent multiple formal and technological changes. Urbanists and architects were faced with an elementary task in the post-war years, namely, filling in a housing deficit by improving housing conditions, and later, by building new housing facilities.

Post-war history of architecture in Szczecin can be divided in 5 basic periods. The first one, starting in 1952, was marked with cleaning up war rubble and reconstruction, a development of first urbanistic and spatial conceptions, appointing directions for future development, developing the first city plans. In the second period, encompassing years 1953-1960, apartment housing was built and war breaches filled in (infill construction). In the third period (years 1961-1970) housing estates with the application of industrial technologies were built. Apartment architecture and public utility facilities (mainly schools and healthcare facilities) were constructed by a means of standardised designs, characteristic of its plain, repetitive form and a neglect of architectural context. In the fourth period – years 1971-1989 – large housing estates in undeveloped areas were built. In this period the quality of construction materials deteriorated, technology was standardised, which led to the downfall of the idea of mass social building. The last period, years following 1989, coincided with the end of the communism in Poland. The investments hitherto funded by the state were taken over by private companies, which resulted in a demise of multi-branch design office and construction enterprises. Despite an attempt at adaptation to the new economic conditions, the General Research-Design Bureau “Miastoprojekt” Szczecin was dissolved in 2006. The output of the architects employed at the GBDS Miastoprojekt Szczecin corresponded, by and large, with the main European trends of their time. Despite the lack of original solutions on a global scale, the oeuvre of the GBDS, mainly owing to its number, had a significant influence on the architecture of Western Pomerania at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st.

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