Signs of Time – Metamorphoses of Historical Former Barrack Units

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Abstract. The article analyzes the aesthetic changes which were introduced as regards the historic barracks in Polish cities from 1918 to the present day. The purpose of the analysis was to determine certain periods in history and to assign characteristic forms of initiatives in reference to the post-military objects to the aforementioned periods. The results of the research served as foundation for establishing three periods: 1) 1918-1939, 2) 1945-1989, 3) after 1989, which were determined in reference to typical types of approach towards the modernization of barrack buildings, conditioned by Poland's political and economic situation. Consequently, the aesthetics of the modernization period characteristic for particular time frames were indicated-the "signs of time" readable in the architecture, referring to periods as follows: 1) symbols of Polishness, associated with regained independence - sculptures, statues, new buildings in contrast with the barracks remaining after the partition, 2) socialistic economy – using barrack as construction resource, utilitarian approach - adaptation to serve new civil functions, often for the needs of production technology, combination of historical and industrial forms, such initiatives on many occasions led to the moral degradation of former militarian districts 3) market economy - constructing new, positive identity and function of barracks buildings confirmed by the tactical changes in their architectural form.

1. Introduction

In 1918 Poland regained its independence after 123 years of occupation. During the partition the country was divided between three invaders, that is Russia, Austria and Prussia. The legacy of those times covers numerous historic barracks preserved till the present day.

The objective of the work is to present that in the subsequent periods of historical development of modern Poland different approaches were applied as regards the adaptation and modernization of old barracks. Those were the consequences of changes in the political and economic situation of our country. The aforementioned changes were presented by describing the aesthetic changes introduced in reference to barracks. The issue was presented based on division into 3 periods:

1) 1918-1939 – at that time barracks were adapted to fit the needs of the Polish army after Poland regained its independence. National symbols were introduced in the form of sculptures placed in visible area. New buildings were established programatically applying architectural styles associated with the tradition of Polishness, contrasted with buildings remaining on the partitioned territories.
2) 1945-1989 - the socialist period in the history of Poland. The barracks were devoted to serve various military and civilian functions and were treated as construction resources. Changes in the development were more utilitarian than aesthetic ones, they were often associated with adaptation to fit the needs of the industry. Existing buildings were enlarged due to the introduction of new objects. Secondary divisions of space as regards particular barracks were introduced.

3) after 1989 - period of market economy. Adapting former barracks to serve new functions, often confirmed by spectacular modifications concerning the historic architectural form. Assigning new identity to buildings was associated with adding the prestige to places which until recently were considered unattractive.

Analysis of the approach as regards the aesthetic modernization of military areas and selected buildings enabled defining the attitudes characteristic for particular periods of history. The knowledge concerning the types of modifications as regards former barracks makes it possible to date the changes introduced and, consequently, to assign them to a selected period in the political and economic history of Poland. Moreover, it provides the possibility of proper evaluation.

The research was conducted based on the analysis of the literature devoted to that issue, archival sources and “in situ” in Komorów, Legionowo, Ostrółęka, Suwałki and Zambrów. The aesthetic references which are to be develop in the literature of the subject derive from works representing various branches of science and art. On many occasions they are only deviations from the main themes such as historical monographs and scientific articles on selected garrisons from the partition period - Łódź, Jabłonna, Zamość, Zambrów (Russian annexation) [1, 2, 3, 4], Leszno, Olsztyn, Wrocław (Prussian) [5, 6, 7], Kraków (Austrian) [8]. Some information about the modernization of the barracks in the interwar period comes from monographs on Polish regiments stationed in the barracks of the turn of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. An important source of information on the condition of development as regards the Polish barracks in the interwar period constitutes a two-volume dissertation prepared in 1936, edited by Aleksander Król [9]. There is a clear, unflattering opinion about the negative partition legacy. A valuable source of information, used in research, covers an abundant collection of photographs and postcards available in the digitized form in National Digital Archive [10]. The subject of research is also related to literature corresponding to the history of art, including sculptures from the interwar period [11, 12]. Historical monographs on selected cities were analyzed from the perspective of the modification which occurred within the time frame from the end of the Second World War to the 1990s [13, 14]. Works on contemporary renovations of historic military buildings were analyzed as well [15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20].

2. 1918-1939

After regaining its independence, Poland accepted the partisanship legacy in the form of numerous barracks as a construction resource. In most cases the barracks were used for military purposes. As Aleksander King wrote, "pitiful inheritance" [9], the architecture of these objects was underestimated both as regards functional and aesthetic reasons, but the resurgent country was unable to cope economically with the challenge of rebuilding an adequate number of barracks. The necessity of adapting the barracks to the Polish regiments was burdened with the awareness of their origin - it raised ambivalent feelings. As a result, initiatives were taken which aimed at providing a new symbolism of Polishness to modernized barracks. All newly built constructions were contrasted with the existing, non-abstraction buildings [21].

In the 1920s the pattern for the buildings of the Border Protection Corps was issued [22]. Border military units were to find a location in the barracks, providing unambiguous connotations to the
tradition of the former Polish architecture. Consequently, the proposed style of the objects referred to historicist or baroque forms, corresponding to the traditions of pre-partition Poland [9].

The debris from the barracks remaining after the armies of the invaders fled were adapted to serve the needs of Polish regiments. The buildings were modernized and in relatively few cases in their neighborhood new buildings were founded. They were stylistically different from the objects left by the invaders. New buildings were usually constructed in the style of modernist functionalism. At the same time they served as a new symbol within the barracks space or in their neighborhood, the symbol of new users. The group of new buildings included: 1) soldiers' houses serving both to the military and the residents of the city, e.g Łomża, Grodno, Zambrów [23, 24], 2) sport facilities intended for veterans and soldiers, e.g the swimming pool in Komorów [9, 10], 3) buildings related to new technologies and military techniques, e.g hangars of the second Balloon Battalion in Legionowo [10].

The most frequent initiatives involved placing monuments and statues related to the Polish army inside the nineteenth-century barracks. Among the sculptures, there were three main thematic groups: 1) statues of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, 2) monuments dedicated to soldiers from a particular regiment killed in 1918-1920, 3) statues and sculpture groups dedicated to patrons of honor or characters important to Polish history [10, 25]. These sculptures were placed in exposed spots. In selected cases, they were composited with the main gates. They made the internal spatial structure of the barracks readable as well in reference to symbolic accents visible from the garrison city’s side. Sculptures as well as the gates were usually executed based on modernist aesthetics (cubism, art deco). They were in clear contrast with the post-occupation barbarian architecture. In this context, they were an easy to read symbol of the new identity assigned to the barracks, this time belonging to Poland.

The iconographic materials collected in the Digital Archive [10], confirm similar compositional solutions applied in barracks in different regions of Poland. The examples where the extended form of the main entrance gate with a symmetrical ensemble of sculptures on both sides is used deserve special attention. They constituted a viewing frame for a statue raised on a high pedestal and located in-depth, on the axis of symmetry in the building.

As far as the initiatives which have not survived until today are concerned, we can distinguish the projects from Zamosc, Suwałki or Toruń. In Zamosc, Marshal Piłsudski's statue was placed on a high 6-meter plinth. Such procedure made the silhouette of the commander readable against the sky above the barrack buildings visible in the background (Figure 1a). From the front, its expression was strengthened by the symmetrical composition of the sculptures placed on the two pillars of the gate. On both sides there were statues of knights: Polish and Lithuanian and on the pillars there were eagles with their wings spread. Jakub Juszczyk was the author of all Zamość sculptures made in the period 1933-36. Earlier in 1932 the same sculptor made sculptures for the gate complex in Suwalki barracks currently located at ul. Pilsudski [26, p. 86]. This time it was the statue of General Dwernicki - honorary patron of the regiment (Fig 1b). On the pillars of the gate, similarly to Zamosc, he placed the statues presenting eagles. The architectural form of Suwalki gate, with incorporated arched sections of the enclosure, deserves attention. It was represented a neoclassical order and a modernist form. In another barrack area located at ul. .... in Suwałki, the bust of honorary commander Colonel Hipolit Kozietulski was placed axially in the background of the two pillars as regards the gates on which the uniforms of soldiers of the 3rd regiment were placed (Figure 1c). In Torun the sculptural composition was contrasted with the background in a form of a geometric, modernist wall covering the Prussian barracks. On the axis of composition there was the bust of Marshal Piłsudski with the emblems on both sides and the symmetrical flanks closing the composition consisting of two cannons (Figure 1d).
Figure 1. Sculptures and gates to barracks: a) Zamość, Marshal Piłsudski, b) Suwałki, General Dwernicki, c) Suwałki, General Kozietulski, d) Toruń, Marshal Piłsudski [all photos: 10]

In the barracks in Komorow near Ostrów Mazowiecki, numerous sculptures of Polish warlords, kings and heroes of the insurrection as well as of Stanisław Moniuszko managed to survive till present day. The author of the entire collection was professor Wojciech Durek. Individual sculptures were arranged in the barrack area between buildings, the selected group was set to form an avenue, separate composition was created by a horse statue of Marshal Piłsudski together with the mausoleum (Figure 2). Durek in his sculptural work was close to symbolism and neo-romanticism, which was noticeable in the dynamic forms given to individual sculptures. The statues were positioned so that they would be readable displayed against the buildings or greenery. The artist applied a reinforcement technique involved covering the sculptures with plastic concrete.

3. 1945-1989

Barracks areas were re-used as a construction resource after the Second World War. The buildings which survived the war were adapted to various civil and military functions. Extensive teams of large cubature buildings favored localization of industrial plants. Zambrowskie Zakłady Przemysłu Bawełniany (Zambrowskie Cotton Industry Enterprise), Teletransmisje (Teletransmission) or Przetwórnia Owocowo-Warzywna (Fruit and Vegetable Processing Plant) were established in Zambrów [13] and in Ostrołęka – Ostrołęcka Fabryka Celulozy i Papieru (Ostrołęka Factory of Pulp and Paper) (1965) [14].
During the construction of the factories, the existing barracks were treated as construction material, source for walls and roofs, closed cubicles which were removed if they interfered with the location of new industrial halls or were rebuilt to suit the needs of the new production function. The historical value of the buildings or the urban complexes of the entire development was not taken into consideration. Commonly, former barracks were associated with the tradition of Polish garrisons from the interwar period. This was not underlined for political reasons. The knowledge of the earlier origin of the developments was often obliterated. Consequently, selected former barracks were significantly transformed. These activities significantly modified the readability of the historical form of buildings and barracks, e.g. in Ostrołęka.

In the vicinity of new factories established in the former barracks, housing estates for workers were built as well. Some flats were located in preserved post-military buildings, while the others took the form of new multi-family blocks of flats. Flats built in the post-barrack buildings were in most cases build based on communal funds. The residents of the city perceived them as a low-standard accommodation. Over the years, they often gained an unflattering label of a dangerous area. The flats in the barracks were perceived negatively (pejoratively). Moral degradation of multifamily blocks if flats in former barracks (Zambrów, Suwałki, Augustów, Ostrołęka) was observed. Barracks estates were often associated with pathology, obtaining the label of the worst district in the city.

4. After 1989

Economic and political changes which took place in Poland after 1989 influenced the condition of development as regards historic former barracks as well. These changes were of a different nature: social, economic, ownership and functional. In the process of revitalization concerning facilities and former barracks one started to pay attention to cultural and historical value of those places. It usually referred to the military tradition of the place from the interwar period.

Initiatives aimed at combating the moral degradation of the district were launched in Zambrów. Between 2008-2009 there was a social program titled "I live in a unique block of flats" to make people aware of the historic value and individuality of the place of their residence located in the former barracks. The initiative involved including youth and local communities in the process of gathering information and researching the history of the Zambrów barracks, conducting informational meetings with the residents, placing information boards on the history of objects on the historic buildings, issuing a folder on the history of the entire barrack area and involving the residence in the assembly process as regards
the information boards. It was to result in altering their attitude towards historic buildings and improving the opinion of the city residents as regards the entire housing estate [20].

The historic value of modernized post-military facilities was finally recognized as a value which could translate into economic value and investment success. In the era of "fashion" for post-industrial buildings, old former military structures of similar nature found its niche and were adapted to serve analogous functions. Hotel "Loft 1898" in Suwałki is an example of the modernization of the roofed building, which managed to maintain the character of historic buildings in the form of interior design, whereas the new function was underlined by modern details integrated with the historical form of the building (Figure 3a). They underlined the important areas of the hotel, that is the main entrance, the restaurant, ... in the form of geogrinded sheet-covered solids penetrating the yellow, brick, barrack wall. Then point was to maintain the readability of the scale, to form and detail of the old barracks together with the readability of modern interventions resulting from the introduction of new functions. The project was developed at a design office Atelier ZETTA under the direction of an architect Zenon Zabaglo [19].

![Figure 3. Contemporary revitalizations of barracks: a) Suwałki, Hotel “Loft 1898”(photo A. Stankiewicz, 2015), b) Poznań, City Park (photo D. Gawryluk 2016)](image)

Activities referring to the origins of historic development, while providing them with new life accentuated by contemporary architectural forms combined with the tradition of the object were executed in relation to Black Dragon barracks in Wrzeszcz (district of Gdansk). The project was developed by office Hossa under the direction of an architect Marcin Woyciechowski. The unique developmental approach was based on the application of historical values and positive tradition of the place and, opposite to most cases, as intensive development of the site as possible. The buildings belonging to revitalized barracks have been preserved incorporating readable modern accents [17].

The part of the new housing estate hosting the public utility buildings was called the Garrison of Culture. The building of a former medical clinic serves now as a dance school. The building was rebuilt several times by the Polish army stationing here after the Second World War. As a result, it lost its historical properties. It was rebuilt in the form of a modern solid, apart from the bricks on the elevations referring to the garrison's surrounding buildings. Old horse riding hall is an object representing great significance as regards the tradition of the place. The modern revalorization of this building turning it into "Old Horse Riding Hall" has been expanded due to the addition of glazed part covered with corten roof. As regards its scale and form, it follows the shape of the historic building. In the modernized building there is a club and restaurant. Their interior design refers to the character of military buildings. The structure of brick walls is exposed, readability of the building has been maintained due to size of the interior. As a result, the readable historical character of the place is
exhibited in a modern setting. Esprit House is the third one in the group of historic buildings restored in an interesting way. Its key part is a glass cubicle on the ground floor and in reference to upper floors covered with cortenium, which was inscribed between the wings of the historic building. The rusty metal sheet of the modern part harmonizes with the historic brick façade. The cubicle is home to: cafe club "Art of Choice" (“Sztuka Wyboru”), a small restaurant and several offices. Exhibitions, shows and openings are organized there [17].

City Park in Poznan was designed by Sławomir Rosolski and constitutes an example of the revival as regards the entire post-barrack area where new monuments were introduced in a harmonious form, inspired by the tradition of military buildings and placed between historic buildings (Fif. 3b) [16]. In general, we can notice that we are dealing with homogeneous development of a building development. After analyzing the details we observe that new objects were placed between the historic objects with a great style. They harmonize as regards the scale and form, location in the urban context of the development. The modern details which have been applied can be divided into two main groups: 1) inspired by historical patterns constituting "variations" of those from the past, and 2) the glazed superstructure of the pool or the crossing connecting two buildings situated over the passage, those are modern glass accents and steel constrictions juxtaposed with red brick architecture.

5. Conclusions
Changes in the approach as regards the adaptation and modernization of former barracks from the turn of the 19th and 20th century resulted from Poland's political and economic situation in subsequent periods of its history. During the interwar period (1918-1939), the most common effect was the

![Figure 4. Cracow University of Technology: a) main building of University, b) bust of Tadeusz Kosciuszko (photo D. Gawryluk, 2015)](image)
adaptation of the barracks in the existing architectural form and placing the national identity symbols in the form of sculptures and statues. The period of Socialist Poland (1945-1989) was the time involving utilitarian use of barrack resources, which often led to the moral degradation of neighbourhoods in urban spaces. The period of market economy (after 1989) is characterized by projects undertaken by developers who have perceived the historical value of objects as an asset of their investments. Based on the selected examples, the new feature and identity of the buildings is created based on the place's tradition. The form of buildings is supplemented by new, often spectacular details which coexist in harmony with historical values.

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