

The specifics of formation of the late modern architectural style in Odessa (with reference to architect I.M. Chernigov's work)

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Summary: The paper set out to analyze the architecture of three Revenue Houses built in Odessa in the early 20th century, in the Late Modern period by L.M. Chernigov, the architect, on request of A.P. Russov. The analysis' results show the process of forming of the late Modern style based on the single rational planning by means of an eclectic façade designing technique, decorating the buildings in the early decorative Modern style up till the late Rational Modern, when the rational planning type corresponded to the rational façade design.

Key words: architecture, style Modern, decorative Modern, rational Modern, early 20th century, Odessa.

Problem definition

The process of formation and development of the Modern architecture was happening at a quick enough pace for 10 years. During that time the appearance of the constructions built in this style was changing as well. It is important to research the ways the Late Modern style was being established in the early 20th century.

The objective and methods

The objective of the paper (assigning the objective) – to follow the establishing process of the late rational Modern in Odessa architecture. In Odessa's architecture, the Modern style appeared at the same time as it did in Europe (the first building dates back to 1892) and by 1914 it had gone through all the stages – from the early decorative one to the late rational Modern.

Let's consider the formation of the rational Modern by looking at the examples of A.P. Russov's Revenue Houses. A.P. Russov acquired 3 patches of land to build revenue houses on in 1907: two in Koblevska St., 38, and one in Sophijivska St., 16. [Pilavskiy V.A. 2010, p. 35; Pilavskiy V. 2010. *Odessa's architects*, p. 10].

One of the biggest known issues of Odessa construction development of the city center was the high cost of construction sites [Timofeenko V.I. 1984, p. 40]. Hence, if the façade line of the site was not wide, the main part of the building was located inside the yard, oftentimes an enclosed one, which, of course, couldn't make for comfortable enough conditions meant for ventilation and insolation. Thus, the three buildings under consideration had an identical development plan – one with an elongated enclosed yard (Fig. 1, 2). Unfortunately, it did not appear possible to forego the irrationally enclosed yard, so the architect opted for an elongated construction footprint, in order to at least put some distance between the sections and, consequently, the windows of the neighboring flats.

Materials of research

The three buildings, with slight alterations, were built according to the same building scheme. One can speak of applying the typical planning scheme for buildings being projected. To refer to the example of the plan in Koblevska, 38-b St., we can consider the degree of the rationality of the planning. The plan is symmetrical and sufficiently rational, consisting of 6 sections [Lisovskiy V.G., 1976, p. 7]. It is worth mentioning here that the Revenue Houses in question were built in secondary streets and were meant for renters who weren't as well-off as the contingent in the city center. This caveat explains why the living rooms were of a smaller size. Despite that, the houses were configured with a front staircase for entering the residential zone and back, or service, stairs, leading to the kitchen and attached rooms. The staircases were based symmetrically and were logically connected with the section planning. (Fig. 3, 4).

As far the date of construction goes, the three houses belong to the Late Modern style and correspond to the Rational Modern's planning. At the same time, the facades of the buildings are modeled ever so slightly differently, which precludes one from referring to the trio as to truly rational Modern pieces. Thus, it is known that the building in Sophijivska St., 16 was refurbished from of an already existing two-storey building of an earlier structure. L.M. Chernigov adds on the third floor, making it taller, and introduces the design elements in the "Modern" style. Generally, the building looks eclectic: Modern elements (female mascarons, stylized flowers, second-floor cornices) neighbor with the classical details. (Fig. 9) The architect went on to add some very expressive elements in the Modern style to frame the balcony from both sides of the building and tower over the roof-top in a sculptural arched gable line. It must be said that the reconstruction of the buildings from the earlier built units was usual practice for the architects of the day. A large number of buildings with background development have the typical eclectic interaction.

The façade in Koblevska St., 38a belongs to the Modern style, as displayed in the configuration and décor of the bay windows, pediments and window-sill plates. Notably, the so-called "faux" bay windows have been used in this building – a framing technique applied to vertical row of windows. The pattern of the bottom part of the corbels, the shape of the gable in the upper part of the façade and the decor pattern testify to the fact that the building's decoration in general possesses the traits of early decorative Modern (Fig. 6).

Finally, the building in Koblevska St. 38b lives up to the title of the rational Modern style: raggedly-shaped shallow bay windows reaching the second floor culminate in balconies, an imposing curved attic, decorative façade elements, belonging to the late Modern period judging by the pattern's nature. An unexpected decision of the author was to introduce Egyptian theme which is known to have been used in decoration of the early decorative Modern buildings. But in the case of the present building, the Egyptian theme acquired a new ring to it. Here, the attic is flanked by sphinx sculptures, while the bass-reliefs shaped as female mascarons are decorated with stylized Egyptian ornament. The defining characteristic of the building's décor, proving its "rationality", is the sculptural panel, located in the bay windows picturing stylized Egyptian warriors figures intertwined in an impulse of fate. Sculptural bass-reliefs of such kind would often be present in facades of buildings in the late Modern style. The theme of the battle of the masses – the social-democrat trends within the society, which found its supporters among the nobility strata – is reflected in this bass-relief.

Conclusion

Therefore, the three buildings architected solely by L.M. Chernigov, built for one customer – A.P Russov in 1907, executed according to one plan, allow us to trace the formation process of the rational Late Modernism in Odessa architecture: from eclectic, where Modern only just cautiously makes its first appearance, combining with classical elements through development of the early decorative Modern, up till the rather rational, grounded, logical, practical image that arose in the late Modern.



Fig. 1. Russov's Revenue Houses, architect L.M. Chernigov, early 20th century. Construction footprint.



Fig. 2. Russov's Revenue Houses, architect: L.M. Chernigov, early 20th century, the facades

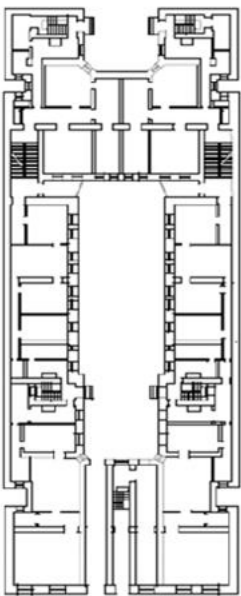


Fig. 3. Russov's Revenue House ground floor plan.

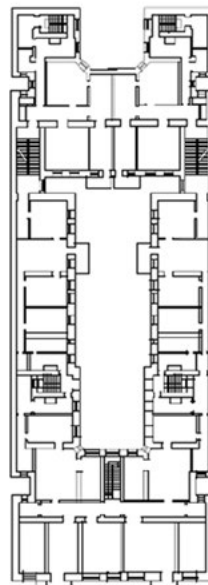


Fig. 4. Russov's Revenue House 1st floor



Fig. 5. Russov's Revenue House in Sophijivska St., 16.



Fig. 6. Russov's Revenue House in Koblevska St., 38a.



Fig. 7. Russov's Revenue House in Koblevska St., 38b.

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Specyfika rozwoju architektury stylu późnego modernu w Odessie (analiza prac architekta I.M. Chernigova)

Streszczenie: Artykuł ma na celu analizę architektury trzech domów czynszowych zbudowanych w Odessie na początku XX wieku, w okresie stylowym Modernu (Secesji). Projektantem obiektów występuje – L.M. Czernigow, architekt, pracujący na prośbę inwestora A.P. Russova. Analizowane przykłady prezentują proces powstania i kształtowania się stylu Modernu w Odessie. Dla okresu są charakterystyczne – podobne do siebie rozwiązania planistyczne, racjonalny schemat funkcjonalny, eklektyczna metoda projektowania fasad. Wystrój artystyczny fasad rozwijał się od wczesnego dekoracyjnego kierunku do późnego racjonalnego nurtu (Rational Modern). Ta ostatnia faza rozwoju stylu charakteryzowała się relacją, kiedy racjonalnemu schematowi planistycznemu domu odpowiada skromny racjonalny projekt fasady.

Słowa kluczowe: architektura, styl Modern, dekoracyjny Modern, racjonalny Modern, początek XX wieku, Odessa.