

ZDZISŁAWA TOŁŁOCZKO*

AT THE CONFLUENCE OF ART NOUVEAU
AND ECCLECTIC EARLY MODERNISM IN RIGA'S
METROPOLITAN ARCHITECTURE

U ZBIEGU ART NOUVEAU I EKLEKTYCZNEGO
WCZESNEGO MODERNIZMU W ARCHITEKTURZE
METROPOLITALNEJ RYGI

Abstract

The aim of this paper was to draw attention to the coincidence of streets intersections ending, in general, in corner buildings making up typical and picturesque parts of the townscape of the 19th c. European cities, including the central quarter of Riga. This type of town-planning establishments perfectly compose with the art and aesthetics of *Art Nouveau* in Riga. An additional and very important component of the town-planning-architectonic solutions is the decorative finial of the corner houses (not only in *Jugendstil*, but also the Latvian national romanticism) creating a harmonious composition in respect of art and town-planning, ideally completing the townscape of this Baltic metropolis.

Keywords: Latvia, Riga, Cracow, New York, London, Berlin, history of architecture and city-planning, Art Nouveau, Modern Art, Jugendstil, National Romanticism

Streszczenie

Celem prezentowanego artykułu jest zwrócenie uwagi na koincydencję zbiegów ulic zakończonych na ogół wyraźnymi narożami, tworzącymi typowe, a jednocześnie malownicze, fragmenty krajobrazu dziewiętnastowiecznych miast europejskich, w tym również śródmieścia Rygi. Tego rodzaju założenia urbanistyczne doskonale komponują się ze sztuką i estetyką Art Nouveau w Rydze. Dodatkową i jednocześnie niezwykle ważną komponentą rozwiązań urbanistyczno-architektonicznych są umieszczone na narożach ozdobne zwieńczenia (nie tylko w stylu Jugendstil'u, ale także łotewskiego narodowego romantyzmu) komponujące się wspólnie i harmonijnie pod względem artystycznym i urbanistycznym, uzupełniając znakomicie pejzaż tej nadbałtyckiej metropolii.

Słowa kluczowe: Lotwa, Ryga, Kraków, Nowy Jork, Londyn, Berlin, historia architektury i urbanistyki, Art Nouveau, Modern Art, Jugendstil, Narodowy Romantyzm

DOI: 10.4467/2353737XCT.15.154.4191

* Prof. D.Sc. Ph.D. Zdzisława Tołłoczko, Institute of History of Architecture and Monument Preservation, Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology.

The title of the essay requires some explanation from the formal point of view and as to the substance. The work contains *eo ipso* double coding included in the title of the essay whose contents and structure is the architecture of Riga's *Art Nouveau*, best known in Latvia as *Jugendstil*, in Poland as *Secession*. The word secession means, as commonly known, separation, breaking away, disassociation of the new styles, i.e. *Modern Art*, which in the intention of its creators was to be a dissent from the historical or canonical rules of historical or neo-historical styles. *Art Nouveau*, however, through the nearly twelve years of its existence, despite enormous and overwhelming success of the style, was never a style consistent in its artistic and creative ideology. Its architecture, with specific metaphysics and symbolism, created an unprecedented for the turn of the century (19th and 20th) unique yet pluralistic ontology and gnosiology of art at the brink of the Great War, marking the modern epoch. In other words, breaking with the classical typology was not completely lasting and permanent. Nevertheless, *Art Nouveau* emphasised the decorative and the ornamental, and the artists and architects competed with each other in creating new forms of artistic expression the aim and ambition of which was to discard, or reduce drastically, the historicism and its tradition of many ages. And yet, the creators of *Art Nouveau*, *Jugendstil*, or the so-called Young Poland style in Poland, did not completely break up with the past. They were critical of conservatism but did not deprecate the tradition. And this is where the double coding in style lies, which we find in the art of *Jugendstil* in the architecture of Riga¹.

The present essay is an attempt at extending the knowledge of the less known aspects of Riga's *Art Nouveau* in Poland. The main aim is to unveil the interdependencies between the art of *Jugendstil* broadly speaking and town-planning design in this style *Jugendstil*². One of the first complex and pioneering-scientific works on the *Art Nouveau* architecture in the Polish architecture is the article by two authors, Renāte Čaupale and Zdzisława Tołłoczko, *Secession and modernism in Riga. Half a century of Latvian architecture – a pearl in the European cultural heritage*. Part I. *On the threshold of sovereignty (Secesja i modernizm w Rydze. Pół wieku architektury lotewskiej – perłą europejskiego dziedzictwa kulturowego. Część I. U progu suwerenności*³. The present text is an extension of this article by – how characteristic of similar ones of those in Riga to ones we find in Paris, Berlin, Budapest or Prague– corners of the apartment buildings (most often formed at right angle, they are like

¹ *Art Nouveau Architecture*, F. Russell (ed.), London 1979; R. Schmutzler, *Jugendstil – Art Nouveau*, Stuttgart 1962; J. Cassou, E. Langui, N. Pevsner, *Durchbruch zum 20. Jahrhundertwerde*, München 1962; L. Gans, *Nieuwe Kunst. DE Niderlandse Bijdrage tot de 'Art Nouveau'*, Utrecht 1960; *Art Nouveau. Art and Design at the Turn of the Century*, P. Selz, M. Constantine (eds.), New York 1959; *Jugendstil. Der Weg ins 20. Jahrhundert*, H. Seling (ed.), Heidelberg 1959; S. Tschudi-Madsen, *Sources of Art Nouveau*, New York 1956; F. Schmalenbach, *Jugendstil. Ein Beitrag zu Theorie und Geschichte der Flächenkunst*, Würzburg 1934.

² M. Wallis, *Secesja*, Warszawa 1984, p. 98-108; K.J. Sembach, *Art Nouveau. Utopia. Reconciling the Irreconcilable*, Köln 1991; G. Fahr-Becker, *Secession*, Königswinter 2004, p. 179-194; M. Costantino, *Art Nouveau*, London 1994; S. Grosa, *Art Nouveau in Riga*, Rīga 2003; J. Krastiņš, *Pa Rīgas jūgendstila pēdām / Sur les traces de l'art nouveau a Riga. Guide. Following the Traces of the Art Nouveau in Riga*, Bruxelles 2003, p. 176.

³ R. Čaupale, Z. Tołłoczko, *Secesja i modernizm w Rydze. Pół wieku architektury lotewskiej – perłą europejskiego dziedzictwa kulturowego. Część I. U progu uzyskania suwerenności*, Czasopismo Techniczne, z. 13-A/2005, p. 3-25; *Pamiętniki iskkustwa Sowietkowo Sojuza. Bielorusia. Litwa. Łatwija. Estonia*, Moskwa 1986; *Riga und seine Bauten*, Riga 1903; L. Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture*, vol.1, London 1960; H. Saalman, *Haussmann: Paris Transformed*, New York 1971.

wedges cutting into the development of part of the old city and modern city centre) that create a singular intersection of streets often, though not always, making up star-shaped squares from which run streets, boulevards, avenues etc., etc. in radial pattern. Place de L'Étoile in Paris (Georges Haussmann, 1852–1870) is an obvious example or 'Les Grands magasins du Printemps' in Paris (Paul Sédille, 1882–1889). There is no such beautiful town planning solution in Riga but it should be remembered that the efforts to create a town planning ideal were always accompanied by construction impetus independent of its art merit and aesthetics. This was well understood by the father of modern town planning Ildefonso Cerdà Suñer and his followers, G. Haussmann in particular. One of the first examples of a modern ideal city – a completely new city planning design – is Washington D.C. designed by Pierre Charles l'Enfant. However, towards the end of the 19th century this capital was overgrown with dense development. On the one hand, the second half of the 19th c and the 20th c itself professed the technical, constructional and social progress, on the other hand this period valued the tradition, old habits and customs. And as ages ago, it adapted itself to the needs of the inhabitants, to the economic conditions and territorial structure. In other words, being has always determined consciousness not only economic but also aesthetic. In our context, the form of architecture and construction is determined by functions which in turn are determined by ownership relations. In other words, what frequently decides of a project is a plan which is adapted to the cadastral survey or a building lot, which is accompanied by the intrinsic financial value. On the other hand, various theories and avant-garde ideas are derivative in nature, sometimes added *ex post*. Therefore the present remarks refer to historical cities in which innumerable examples of this double coding are implanted. Riga is exactly such a case. This medieval city founded in 1201 outstandingly illustrates the accumulation of layers and growth of the urban tissue, which like tree rings unveils the development of successive stages of the expansion of the city and its building culture. And, as in the case of similar old cities, their location was determined by economic, geopolitical, geophysical and natural conditions as well as conditions not necessarily rational, rather spontaneous. Architecture is determined not only by cold technical calculation but also feelings *Kalós Kagathós*, aesthetic intuition, interpreted by "style is the man", and architecture an eternal, invariable mirror of each time.

The historical centre of Riga was entered in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage list in 1997. The entered objects include both the oldest ones, dating back to the 13th to 14th centuries found in the old town, but also those from the 19th c., Hanseatic, in Riga's suburbs, representing the styles from the classicism to *Secession*⁴. Of such magnificent certificate cannot boast, for instance, New York, founded as New Amsterdam. Obviously, the potential and area of both metropolises are incomparable, but there is a considerable *iunctim* of the centres of the two cities. In the centre itself the corners of great apartment buildings were designed and planned more or less consciously, located at the intersection of principal streets and avenues. Let us mention, then, two examples of this kind of characteristic and extremely picturesque townscape accents of architecture and construction. They date back to two closely related albeit different epochs, but they are united by a special identity and similarity despite the geographic remoteness. To put things figuratively, what is meant here are the sections of such great importance for the image of the city centre, whose arrangement uncannily resembles the "Pischinger cake", made up of buildings designed on the plan of triangle, the buildings giving the impression of being an ornamental piece of this cake.

⁴ *Miasta marzeń: Ryga*, Warszawa 2009, p. 15.



Fig. 1. Flatiron, Fuller Building. New York

One of these examples is the Flatiron Building, erected in 1902, based on the design of Daniel Hudson Burnham in the *Beaux-Arts* style. This multifunctional skyscraper was located at the intersection of Broadway and 23rd Street in Lower Manhattan. It is a typical example of an extremely attractive architecture of the period (early modernist). From the point of view of the object of the present essay, however, primarily it is an outstanding example of adaptation and accommodation of architecture in which the idea and form of the building is determined by the building lot. And it is this principle, and practice, actually, that was followed at the turn of the 20th c., continuing in this way centuries-long practice of utilising the invaluable building grounds of large cities. The other example is Northern Gate Building in Riga, best illustrating this construction custom and tradition, respecting the historical context of the old city. This multifunctional edifice was designed by Andris Purviņš and Andrejs Graumanis and executed in the years 1998–2004. It, too, was planned on a triangle and located at the intersection, or more precisely, at the corner of Brīvības Street and Cēsu Street. This project, in the spirit of the late post-modernism, is to a certain extent a continuation of such city planning and architectonic ideas of the olden days⁵ (Fig. 1, 2).

Obviously, the proportions between the two cities could be compared to the relation between David and Goliath. All the same, without risking much, analogies in style, city planning and aesthetics, socio-cultural aspects even, between the two metropolises can be easily pointed out. In the same way as New York was at the turn of the century the largest business centre in the USA, Riga was the largest centre of industry and commerce as well as the largest port of the Russian Empire. In the second half of the 19th c. the social structure of Riga changed from predominantly German into gradually native Latvian population. The boom of the reign of Alexander II lasting till the fall of tsar Nicolas II fuelled the rapid

⁵ H.J. Cowan et al., *Najwspanialsze budowle świata. Arcydzieła architektury i sztuki budowlanej*, T. Howells (red.), Warszawa 2003, p. 104-105; A.S. Alexiou, *The Flatiron. The New York Landmark and the Incomparable City that Arose with it*, New York 2010; P Gössel, G. Leuthäuser, *Architecture in the Twentieth Century*, Köln 1991, p. 11-79; J. Krastiņš, I. Strautmanis, *Riga. The Complete Guide to Architecture*, Rīga 2004, p. 220.

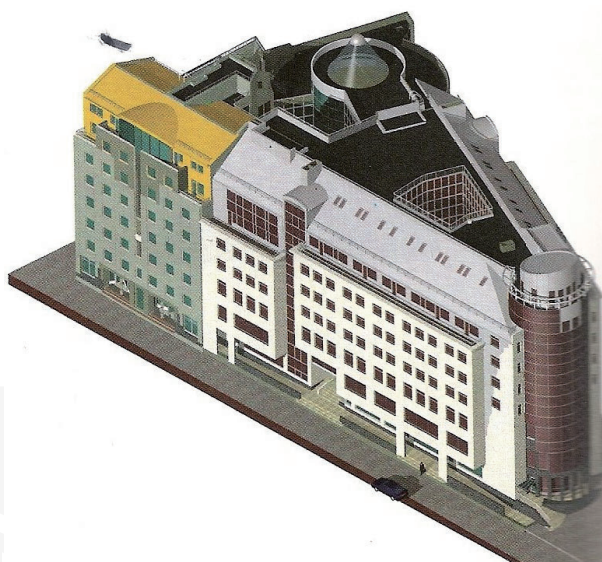


Fig. 2. Northern Gate Building. Riga

growth of wealth of the city and its building expansion. Suffice it to say that in the years between 1885 till the end of the tsars Russia in 1917 the population of Riga grew from ca. 175 thousand to half a million. What was of great importance for the city's urban development in 1860s and 1870s was the demolition of the medieval fortifications and walls, which were replaced by boulevards and avenues built up with splendid edifices in the Neo-Gothic and Neo-Renaissance styles, followed by the spirit of *Jugendstil* and *Secession*. The creator of the modern Riga Johann Daniel Felsko (1813–1902), an architect and city planner, gained unforgettable glory. His pioneering and modern urban planning projects greatly contributed to the creation and full bloom of *Art Nouveau* in Riga's architecture⁶.

Jugendstil and its architecture creates in the city centre a huge complex of over eight hundred buildings in this style, or its stylistic filiations. As Renāte Čaupale and Zdzisława Tołłoczko point out elsewhere, Riga's *Art Nouveau* differs from western European models in, for instance, Belgium or France. The most numerous references to *Secession* can be found in the works of Michail Eisenstein, although this architecture was permeated with the late historicism with elements of eclecticism extremely freely interpreted. Generally speaking, it is an architecture of traditional solids, with the traditional arrangement of windows and ornamentation. The fact that these ornaments are secession ornaments can be recognised only from very close, from a distance they are uncannily similar to decorations resembling historicism, for which broadly understood expressionism was not completely alien.

⁶ Z. i T. Tołłoczko, *Johann Daniel Felsko (1813–1902). Architekt i urbanista – twórca nowoczesnej Rygi*, [in:] idem, *Architectura sine historiae nihil est. Z dziejów architektury i urbanistyki ziem Łotwy*, Kraków 2013, p. 173-183; D. Lāce, *Johana Daniela Felsko jeguldījums dzīvojamo ēku celtniecībā 19. gadsimtā*, [in:] *Archiektura un maska Rīga. Idejas un objekti*, Rīga 2004, p. 82; D. Bruģis, *Historisma laikmets*, [in:] *Latvijas mākslas vēsture*, Rīga 2005, p. 206-207.



Fig. 3. The Dwelling House on the corner of Alexander and Miera Street.
Riga. G. von Tizenhauzens, 1913 (destroyed)

The atmosphere of this architecture is invariably related with the Baltic-Nordic culture, represented by, to mention but a few, Edvard Grieg, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Johan Julius Sibelius, August Strindberg and Henrik Ibsen. The tone of cosmopolitan *entourage* was given to the city by the original native art of painting, full of nostalgia and pensiveness, which does not mean that the Riga of the time seemed a temple of sadness and melancholy. The city reverberated with life, and welfare and affluence did not mitigate enthusiasm and admiration for art⁷. The lively interest in culture is proved by the existence of several theatres: German, Russian and Latvian later on. Riga's inhabitants did not despise other forms of entertainment, including liking of good wine and varied cuisine, which were proof of stable favourable financial-economic circumstances and satisfying existence. It is in this period of time that a few hundred of dwelling houses were built, which are a concrete proof of the culture of *fin de siècle* and extraordinary prosperity, of which we are reminded by some photographs⁸ (Fig. 3, 4, 5).

The economic expansion of the Baltic countries went together with growing interest in revitalising the national consciousness and ethnic culture of Latvians. This is why the *Jugendstil* trend, international to some extent, in its Latvian version originated the native architecture based almost entirely on the national and folk tradition, which this filiation of style was called in Latvia *National Romanticism*. This trend is characterised by elements

⁷ M. Culot, *Belgium. Red steel and blue aesthetic*, [in:] *Art Nouveau Architecture*, *op.cit.*, p. 79-102; *Miasta marzeń: Ryga...*, *op.cit.*, p. 149-165; F. Loyer, *France. Viollet-le-Duc to Tony Garnier: the passion for rationalism*, [in:] *Art Nouveau Architecture*, *op.cit.*, p. 103-136; Z. and T. Tołłoczko, *Architektura i film czyli o mniej znanym ojcu słynnego reżysera i teoretyka kina (Architekt Michail Eisenstein, 1867–1920)*, [in:] *idem, Architektura sine historiae...*, *op.cit.*, p. 251-261; I. Latham, *Germany. Jugendstil: the early morning of the Modern Movement*, [in:] *Art Nouveau Architecture...*, *op.cit.*, p. 171-196; R. Čaupale, Z. Tołłoczko, *op.cit.*, p. 3-25; S. Raša, *Mihails Eizenšteins. Tēmas un simboli Rīgas Jūgendstila arhitektūra 1901–1906* / S. Rush, *Mikhail Eisenstein. Theme and Symbols in Art Nouveau Architecture of Riga 1901–1906*, Rīga 2003.

⁸ J. Lejnīeks, *Rīgas Arhitektūra / Architektura Rigi / Riga's Architecture*, Rīga 1989, p. 31 i n., 68 i n., 106 i n., 109 i n.



Fig. 4. Otto Scharz's Café, the interior of wine and oyster room. Riga. XIX/XX c. (postcard)

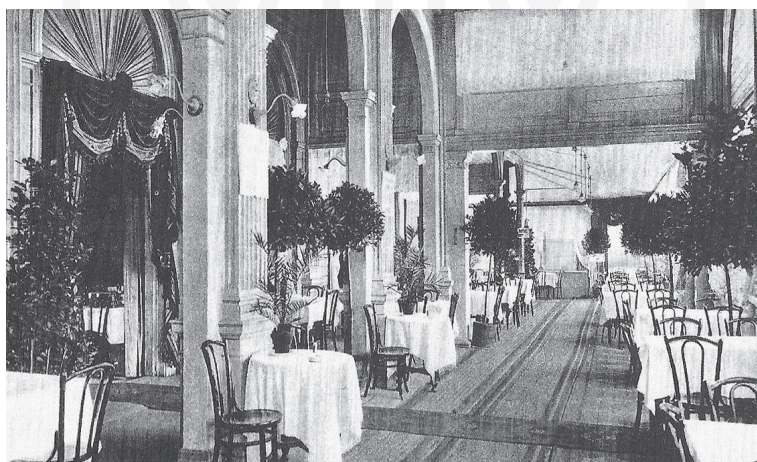


Fig. 5. A winter restaurant in Wohrmann's Garden. Riga. 19th c. (destroyed)

of applied decorative art which drew its inspiration from the folk art of building. In this style we find the tendency of the consistent use of natural construction materials, including popular ornamentation as an active motif of shaping the façade. Some buildings of the period in Riga do not have the ornaments typical of Europe but is associated with the Latvian spiritual values⁹. Nevertheless, regardless of the patriotic and national ambitions, the Latvian

⁹ Z. and T. Tołoczko, *Z zagadnień narodowego romantyzmu w architekturze Helsinek i Rygi na przełomie XIX i XX wieku. Przyczynek do dziejów historyzmu i eklektycznej secesji w sztuce około 1900*, [in:] idem, *Architectura sine historiae...*, op.cit., p. 263-300.

architecture, especially that of Riga, continued to draw from the experience and impulses flowing from Berlin¹⁰.

The architecture of New York, Berlin, or Riga – despite ambitious and broadly reaching plans of introducing order to city planning of these cities – continued to be characterised by dense development, which the early modernists protested against attempting a less compact city planning, new settlements in particular. But it is this dense, even tight development that constituted the compact tissue of the historical cities at the threshold of modernism. This old substance of urban developed, which used to meet with criticism especially in the first half of the 20th century, due to the elimination of coal-fired heating, now has electrical or gas, or some even more ecological heating systems. In this way something like revalorization or revitalisation of the development of the old Riga took place and the city recovered its old grandeur and splendour¹¹. *Jugendstil* and its mutations added to Riga's architecture a new vigour and a new dimension of style¹².

However, the aim of the present essay is not another description of *Art Nouveau* typology in Riga, but the intention is to show some singular examples, less commonly known solutions in which architecture and city planning combine with tradition and progress into one. In other words, it is an embodiment of the idea of double coding, a harmonious composition of modernity – *Modern Art* and the conservative. Riga's *Art Nouveau* reflects (as in a lens) this coincidence which can be observed in the architecture and planning of the network of streets, and whose unquestionable decoration are the corner houses, frequently finished with an acute or truncated angle. Such 'corners' of buildings are particularly picturesque and they emphatically correspond with the whole townscape of the city centre, while being used for commercial purposes, mainly those of presentable and luxurious shops, or smart restaurants etc., etc. And here are some examples of such buildings (usually multifunctional) erected



Fig. 6. Apartment building, plan. Riga.
A Pflug, 1877

on a triangular plan, which not infrequently have a mixed style manner, i.e. *Jugendstil* and *Eclecticism*: apartment building, Raiņa Street 1, Robert August Pflug, 1877; Bank, Krišjāņa Barona Street 3 and Elizabetes Street, Jānis Alksnis, 1911; Bank, Krišjāņa Barona Street 14 and Elizabetes Street 14/1, Ernests Pole, 1909–1910; multifunctional building, Marijas Street 11, Konstantīn Pēkšēns, 1897; multifunctional building, Krišjāņa Barona Street 13/15, Jānis Alksnis, 1904; multifunctional building, Tērbatas Street 7, Konstantīn Pēkšēns, 1899; multifunctional building, Eduarda Smiļģa Street 5/1, Jānis Alksnis, 1903¹³. This dense and compact

¹⁰ Z. Tołoczko, *Architektura i społeczeństwo. Przegląd zagadnień budownictwa i urbanistyki w Niemczech odnokoło roku 1850 do około roku 2000. Od późnoromantycznego historyzmu do późnego socmodernizmu*, Kraków 2005.

¹¹ S. Cantacuzino, *Re/Architecture. Old Building / New Uses*, New York 1989.

¹² J. Glancem, N. Foster (Słowo wstępne), *Historia architektury*, Warszawa 2002, p. 166, 164-167.

¹³ J. Krastiņš, I. Strautmanis, *Riga. Complete Guide...*, op.cit., p. 94, 108, 113, 148-150, 263; J. Krastiņš, *Secesyjna metropolia. Ryga w międzynarodowym kontekście*, [in:] *Sztuka około 1900*

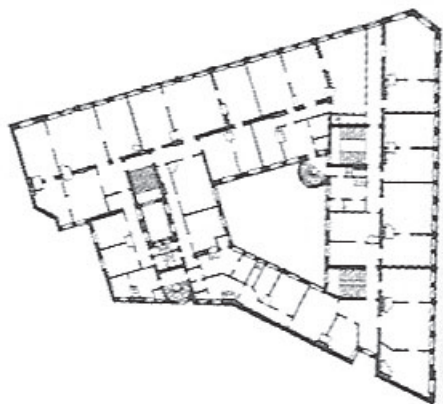


Fig. 7. Multifunctional building, plan. Riga.
K. Pēkšēns, 1897

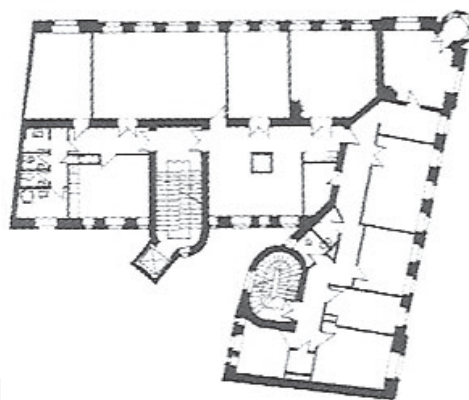


Fig. 8. Multifunctional building, plan. Riga.
J. Alksnis, 1903

street network in which such corners are revealed is shown in the projections (mainly of basement). Let us select some examples of such plans illustrating this city-planning-aesthetic mosaic of the development of the centre. On the one hand, the renewed houses are pleasing to the eye, on the other hand a kind of nostalgia is evoked for the atmosphere of historical cities gone forever. And to make a random selection of the projections of objects such as: apartment building A. Pfluga, 1877; multifunctional building K. Pēkšēns, 1897; multifunctional building J. Alksnis, 1904 and multifunctional building J. Alksnis, 1903 (Fig. 6, 7, 8, 9).

The plan projections of these buildings were and still remain extremely characteristic, giving the cities additional townscape values. But there is in Riga's townscape an outstanding object, the multifunctional building in Smiļģa Street 5/1, J. Alksnis, already mentioned, with its special location on the plan resembling a wedge or a clothes iron. Similar reminiscences in style and aesthetics and city planning analogies are observed owing to Jānis Krastiņš and Ivars Strautmanis, whose building in Riga, erected in 1903 is compared, *toutes proportions gardées*, with Daniel H. Burnham's Flatiron Building in New York from 1902¹⁴. Therefore, a comparative analysis should

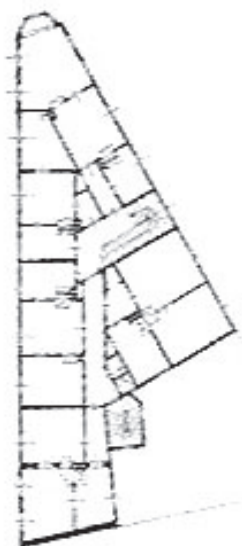


Fig. 9. Multifunctional building, plan. Riga.
J. Alksnis, 1903

w Europie Środkowej. Centra i prowincje artystyczne, Materiały międzynarodowej konferencji zorganizowanej w dniach 20–24 października 1994, P. Krakowski, J. Purchla (red.), Kraków 1997, p. 167-169.

¹⁴ J. Krastiņš, I. Strautmanis, *Rīga. Complete Guide...*, op.cit., p. 263; J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Arhitektūras Meistari 1850–1940 / The Masters of Architecture of Riga 1850–1940*, Rīga 2002, p. 222-235; G. Fahr-Becker, *Secesja*, op.cit., p. 213-312; J. Krastiņš, *Vācu Arhitekti Latvijā 19. gs. un 20. gs. sākumā / Deutsche Architekten in Lettland im 19. und anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, [in:] *Vācu*

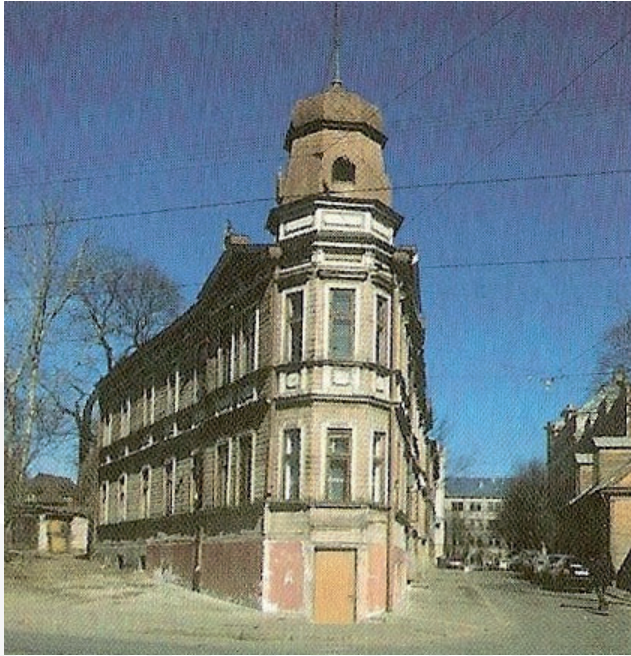


Fig. 10. Multifunctional building. Riga. J. Alksins, 1903



Fig. 11. Multifunctional building. Riga.
H. Scheel, F. Scheffel, 1902



Fig. 12. Multifunctional building. Riga.
K. Felsko, 1902



Fig. 13. Multifunctional building. Riga. A. Witte, 1904

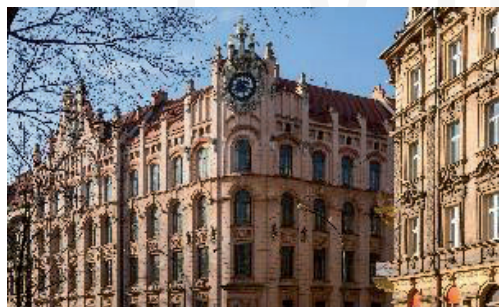


Fig. 14. Trade and Economic High School. Cracow.
J. Zawiejski, 1904–1906



Fig. 15. Ohrenstein's building. Cracow.
J. Zawiejski, 1911–1913

be made within the East-Central Europe, considering the same style of the art and epoch, studying some objects in Riga and Cracow in Poland. What is meant here are Riga's buildings such as: multifunctional building, corner of Smilšu Street 8, Heinrich Scheel and Friedrich Scheffel, erected in 1902; multifunctional building, corner Baumaņa Street 20 and Krišjāņa Barona Street, Karl Felsko from 1903; multifunctional building, corner, Brīvības Street 105,

Arhitekti Latvijā / Deutsche Architekten in Lettland, Rīga 2013, p. 92-97; idem, *Heinrihs Šēls (17. 05. 1829, Hamburgā – 13. 04 1909, Rīga) un Fridrihs Šefels (1865, gadā Liepājā – 1913, gadā) / Heinrich Scheel (17, Mai 1829, Hamburg – 13, April 1909, Riga) und Friedrich Scheffel (1865, Liepāja – 1913)*, [in:] *Vācu Arhitekti... / Deutsche Architekten...*, op.cit., p. 126-133.

August Witte, from 1904, compared with the parallel building of this type in Cracow, e.g.: the Trade and Economic High School at the corner of Kapucyńska street 2 and Podwale, built in the years 1904–1906; Ohrenstein building at the corner of Dietla Street 42 and Stradomska Street 27 from the years 1911–1913 – both objects designed by Jan Zawiejski¹⁵ (Fig. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15).

To remain with the common features of *Jugendstil* in Riga and Cracow, the convergence of artistic means applied in the architecture of both cities should be mentioned. This means



Fig. 16. Multifunctional building, elevation fronting. Riga. H. Scheel, F. Scheffel, 1903

and artistic factor of a symbolic value are manifested by the globe at the top of two houses – the metaphor of commerce, industry and the shipping trade. These are found at the corner of Teātra Street 9 and Vaļņu Street in Riga (architects Heinrich Scheel, Friedrich Scheffel, 1903–1904; sculpture – August Volz) and “The House under the Globe” (“Dom Pod Globusem”) at the intersection of Długa Street 1 and Basztowa Street in Cracow (architects Tadeusz Stryjeński, Franciszek Mączyński, 1904–1906; sculpture – Konstany Laszczka). The building in Teātra Street 9 is obviously and eclectic compromise of style, where proportionally selected elements of Neo-Renaissance, Neo-Baroque and *Art Nouveau* function together. In other words, the work of H. Scheel and F. Scheffel is a contemporary echo of Neo-historicism and modern architecture. On the other hand, “Dom Pod Globusem” designed by T. Stryjeński and F. Mączyński, is one of the most interesting examples of the early

Modernism, and at the same time, an exemplification of the *Vienna Second Secession*, or an absorption of the Berlin school of architecture of the turn of the 19th c. The monumental decorative element in the shape of the globe in both examples indicates that we have to do with an aesthetic-artistic convergence and double coding of meaning¹⁶ (Fig. 16, 17).

¹⁵ J. Krastiņš, I. Strautmanis, *Riga. Complete Guide...*, *op.cit.*, p. 54; J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Jūgendstila Ēkas / Art Nouveau Buildings in Riga / Ceļvedis pa Jūgendstila Metropoles Arhitektūru / A Guide Architecture of Art Nouveau Metropolis*, Rīga 2007, p. 20-23, 58-59, 304-305, 362-363; J. Purchla, *Jan Zawiejski architekt przelomu XIX i XX wieku*, Warszawa 1986.

¹⁶ J. Krastiņš, I. Strautmanis, *Riga. Complete Guide...*, *op.cit.*, p. 32; Z. Tołłoczko, *Główne nurty historyzmu i eklektyzmu w sztuce XIX wieku*, Tom I, *Architektura*. Podręcznik dla studentów wyższych szkół technicznych. Wydanie drugie uzupełnione i poprawione, Kraków 2011, p. 180, 385; J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Jūgendstila Ēkas...*, *op.cit.*, p. 34-35; R. Čaupale, Z. Tołłoczko, *op.cit.*, p. 6-7; Z. Beiersdorf, J. Purchla, „Dom Pod Globusem”, Kraków 1997; Z. Tołłoczko, *Architektura i społeczeństwo...*, *op.cit.*, p. 32-63; J. Purchla, *Jak powstał nowoczesny Kraków. Studia nad rozwojem budowlanym miasta w okresie autonomii galicyjskiej*, Kraków 1979.



Fig. 17. „Dom Pod Globusem”. Cracow. T. Stryjeński, F. Mączyński, 1904–1906

The turn of the 19th c was characterised not only by the trend towards progress and innovation but also appreciation for plastic values of the decorative and traditional-historical detail. And thus in Riga, and in other great centres of architecture, developers, designers and city-planners assigned themselves something like a *pluralistic rendez vous* at the inevitable approach of modernism and the first forerunners of the radical avant-garde and the start of the international style. This kind of compromising eclecticism can be illustrated by Neo-Gothic (something like medieval revivalism) references and their artistic filiations in two objects. One is Bank Rossija located at the corner of Smilšu Street 1/3 and Šķūņu Street, designed by Nikolajs Proskurņins in 1906 and the other one a multifunctional building in Brīvības Street 85, by Eižens Laube in 1912. This building, a continuation of the tradition of Riga’s Gothic, may be rightly regarded, following Jānis Krastiņš’s opinion, as one of the best examples of *Perpendicular Art Nouveau* combined with the German expressionism, represented by the continuity of multi-century relations with the Hansa and the complex culture of Northern Europe and the natural influences of the Orient in the great sea ports. E. Laube’s masterpiece in question may be a significant example, a forerunner of those expressionist inclinations that preceded the achievements of Fritz Höger an architect from Hamburg, such as: the building of “Hamburger Fremdenblatt”, erected in the years 1925–1926 (Hotel Ramada Renaissance now) in Hamburg. This type of Hanseatic-Nordic associations can be detected many times in other examples in Riga¹⁷ (Fig. 18, 19).

¹⁷ J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Jūgenstila Ēkas...*, *op.cit.*, p. 52, 212-213; J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Arhitektūras Meistari...*, *op.cit.*, p. 194-209; Z. and T. Tołoczko, *In horto latericio. Rozprawy z dziejów architekturo-*



Fig. 18. Bank Rossija. Rīga.
N. Proskurnins, 1906



Fig. 19. Multifunctional
building. Rīga.
E. Laube, 1912

nicznych szkół amsterdamskiej i hamburskiej, Prace Komisji Urbanistyki i Architektury 4, O/PAN w Krakowie, Kraków 2000, p. 35-72; P. Bacciarelli, Fritz Höger. Hanseatischer Baumeister 1877–1949, Berlin–Kreuzberg 1992, p. 109-111; J. Krastiņš, Vilhelms Bokslafs (12. 10. 1858, Rīga – 09. 03. 1945, Poznań) / Wilhelm Bockslaff (12 Oktober 1858, Rīga – 09 Marz 1945, Posen), [in:] Vācu Arhitekti.../ Deutsche Architekten..., op.cit., p. 162-171.

A different *modus operandi*, unlike *Perpendicular Art Nouveau*, was followed by Arthur Moedlinger, Friedrich Wilhelm Seubertlich and Theodor von der Osten-Sacken in the bank of Riga (now “Parex”) located at the byword corner of Smilšu Street 3 and Mazā Smilšu Street. As in many cases of similar city-planning establishments, also here the high truncated corner makes up the main façade of the building. It may be as well to remember that this structure was completed in 1910, which means it started the twilight of *Jugendstil* and another renaissance of classicism. In fact, it is this building of the bank that serves as an example of the eclectic retrospective with substantial elements of Neo-classicism, in which it does indeed resemble the well known building “Goldman & Salatsch” in Vienna, by Adolf Loos from the years 1909–1911¹⁸ (Fig. 20, 21).

In the kaleidoscope of abundance and variety of Riga’s *Jugendstil* architecture we must not omit one of the major representatives, so characteristic of the Latvian architectonic culture, that is *National Romanticism*, which although an extremely original trend itself, was not, however, devoid of the influences of *Art Nouveau*. The interest in national romanticism was manifested in various ways, including urban planning, which is proved by the shape of buildings’ corners in exactly this style. On the one hand, structures with features of both *Modern Art* and Neo-classicism were built in the city, on the other hand, construction *à rebours* was practised, *melange* of *National Romanticism* and *Jugendstil*. As a significant example of such architecture and city planning let us refer to the multifunctional building in Alūksnes Street 5 and Krišjāņa Valdemāra Street 18, completed in 1910 based on the design by Augusts Malvess¹⁹ (Fig. 22).



Fig. 20. Bank “Parex”. Riga. A. Moedlinger, H. Seuberlich, T. von der Osten-Sacken, 1910

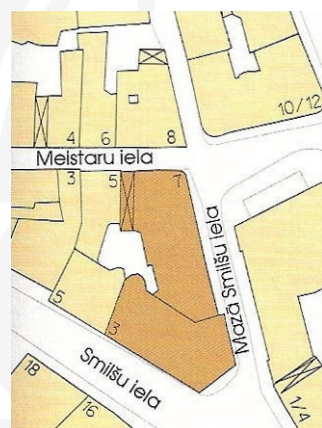


Fig. 21. Bank “Parex”. Riga. A. Moedlinger, H. Seuberlich, T. von der Osten-Sacken, 1910

¹⁸ J. Krastiņš, I. Strautmanis, *Riga. Complete Guide...*, *op.cit.*, p. 65; J. Lejnicks, *Rīgas Arhitektūra...*, *op.cit.*, p. 52-53; J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Jūgenstila Ēkas...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 66-67; G. Fahr-Becker, *Wiener Werksaette 1903–1932*, Köln 1995, p. 68-90; P. Gössel, G. Leuthäuser, *Architecture in the Twentieth Century*, Köln 1991, p. 88-89,64; Z. Tołłoczko, *Glównie nurty...*, *op.cit.*, p. 271-275,380; L. Münz, G. Künstler, *Adolf Loos: Pioneer of Modern Architecture*, London–New York 1966; Z. Tołłoczko, *Wybrane problemy współczesnej estetyki architektonicznej*, Kraków 1995, p. 152; B. Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos – Teoria e opera*, Milano 1981.

¹⁹ J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Arhitektūras Meistari...*, *op.cit.*, p. 250-257; Z. and T. Tołłoczko, *Z zagadnień narodowego romantyzmu w architekturze Helsinek i Rygi na przełomie XIX I XX wieku. Przyczynek*



Fig. 22. Multifunctional building. Riga. A. Malvess, 1910

The multitude, diversity and great variety of architectonic-planning solutions of corners and accompanying intersections of streets, boulevards and avenues (squares less frequently) in the townscape of Riga gives the impression, we might say, of *déjà vu* derived from Berlin rather than Paris. And in this way we come to the beginning of the end of the present story at whose very essence is encapsulated in the unique charm of the traditional-conservative network of streets constituting the social and cultural heart of the city centre. It is the less known architecture of the great Riga that is a memorial to this bourgeois, in fact, aesthetics. It is seemly therefore to at least have a brief glance on some examples of this construction style which has survived till now, and whose lion's share did not survive to the mid 20th c. in Berlin. In Berlin or Hamburg this *esprit* of the bourgeois architecture disappeared completely, in the fires of the II World War and only old photographs remind us of, for instance, no longer extant development of Leipziger Platz, Potsdamer Platz, or Kurfürstendamm. *Belle Époque* actually was gone irrevocably, however, those who are searching for the rudiments of the old – Mediterranean in this case – style, reminiscences of the atmosphere and aesthetic feel can easily find such architecture in the centre of Riga which evaded the horrors and ravages of the war. In almost unchanged shape and decorations have the monuments of the great bourgeois architecture, the powerful trade and industry in Riga survived, whose aesthetic expression was the convergence of historizing eclecticism and *Jugendstil*. And if we continue to consider the

do dziejów historyzmu i ektyczelnej secesji w sztuce około 1900, [in:] idem, *Architectura sine historiae...*, op.cit., p. 288-289.



Fig. 23. Apartment building. Riga. R.H. Zirkwitz, 1899

Berlin parallels, the first to come to mind is the residential building in Vīlandes Street 11 and 13 and Vidus Street, designed by Rudolph Heinrich Zirkwitz in 1899. In this object there are pronounced influences of *Art Nouveau* and, in parallel, predominant accents of “Wilhelmian Neo-Baroque” represented by Paul Wallot, Ludwig Hoffmann, Peter Dybwad, Friedrich von Thiersch, Richard Lucae, Friedrich Hitzig and Julius Karl Raschdorff²⁰ (Fig. 23).

The maxims of the “Wilhelmian Neo-Baroque” are found owing to the cultural relationship of the German Baltic tribe as well as native architecture of Riga, whose historizing-modernist filiations manifested by absolutely magnificent, extremely elegant edifices – symbols of the grand financial circles and industry. At the turn of the century they were distinguished by the pluralism both social and aesthetic, a community of ethical and economic attitudes and, at the same time, an international, cosmopolitan bond between art and architecture. An illustration of art thus understood, in which eclecticism played a major role, was the architecture in this style for which the terminal end was brought about by the turning point of this century – the year 1914. The model of the cosmopolitan in Riga’s architecture is the corner apartment building, also multifunctional, at the intersection of Vīlandes Street 16 and Vidus Street 11, designed by Konstantīš Pēkšēns, erected in 1910. It is an unusual and imaginative compilation of various styles, from *Jugendstil*, elements of the perpendicular mannerism to clear accents

²⁰ J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Jugendstila Ēkas...*, *op.cit.*, p. 80-81; P. Dolgner, *Historismus. Deutsche Baukunst 1815–1900*, Leipzig 1993, p. 115-120; C. Mignot, *Architektur des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Köln 1994, p. 162-163; J. Krastiņš, I. Strautmanis, *Riga. Complete Guide...*, *op.cit.*, p. 201.



Fig. 24. Multifunctional building. Riga. K. Pēkšēns, 1910

of early-modernist, especially in the dome at the top of the building. The object deserves special attention owing to its specific note and aesthetic tone of the orientalizing architecture. Such atmosphere announced in architecture the arrival of *Art Déco* with its interiors (Fig. 24).

In Riga, in turn, we meet another example of an architecture extremely monumental, of huge dimensions but multifunctional, in the spirit not so much of the Wilhelminian mannerism as the French *Second Empire*. This impressive building is a certain novelty and a variation of Michail Eisenstein's work, an object probably least reminiscent of the typical characteristic features of the *Art Nouveau* movement in this architect's achievements. However, due to its location in Alberta Street 13 and Strēlnieku Street 4a, it is appropriate to include this exceptional case in Eisenstein's creative work. After all, it basically did not differ from a modernised version of neo-historicism. Eisenstein completed this work in 1905. Unfortunately, as a result of numerous alterations, the building lost much of its original interior, although the solid itself of the building, decorations and detail were carefully restored and partly reconstructed in the years 1999–2002.

Another example of an architecture in which eclectic aggregates are mixed together, which could be defined as distinct illustrations of both the 'style of the Second Empire' and of the 'Second Reich of Germany', that is the Wilhelminian mannerism, equally well, is the building at the corner of Brīvības Street 61 and Gertrūdes Street, designed by Aleksandrs Vanags, and completed in 1912. In this structure the Neo-renaissance influences together with *Art Nouveau* ones can clearly be seen, but what is an important decorative element and sculptural composition is reference to Neo-classicism which in those years once again regained its popularity of everlasting classicism. The building, originally multifunctional, for forty years served the Soviet administration of the military, and next was headquarters of the infamous KGB²¹.

²¹ J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Jūgendstila Ēkas...*, *op.cit.*, p. 104-105; idem, *Rīgas Arhitektūra Meistari...*, *op.cit.*, p. 210-221; J. Krastiņš, I. Strautmanis, *Riga. Complete Guide...*, *op.cit.*, p. 173.



Fig. 25. Riga Pārdaugava Mutual Credit Society Bank. Riga. J. Alksnis, 1913

It can be thought a malicious snigger twist of history that the monumental building of Riga Pārdaugava Mutual Credit Society Bank situated at the right angle at the intersection of Kaļķu Street 15 and Vaļņu Street can be considered a symbol of other times and political systems. This, so to say, metaphor of the capitalist free market is a work of Jānis Alksnis, built in 1913. It is one of the first frame structures of reinforced concrete to be built in Riga, but it is not the pioneering technological solution that matters here, it is the form and compromise between the influences of the early modernism and historicising compilation composed of the Neo-Baroque, Neo-classicism and *Perpendicular Art Nouveau*. It need not be emphasised that this and other intersections of streets ending with corner houses impose a very specific but popular in the 1850s *modus operandi* that is the crowns of these buildings ornamented with tambours of various height, which support the domes or cupolas. To a great extent this type of architectonic '*emploi*' in Riga resembles the late Wilhelminian style, and as far as the style and ornamentation as well as the form of domes and cupolas, and also town-planning solutions go, one is reminded of the building (and its dome in particular) of Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (now Bode Museum) located '*in situ*' *am Ecke Museumsinsel*²² (Fig. 25).

What is, to some extent, an integral part of these town-planning solutions, whose essence is planning corner houses (often at the acute angle) at the intersection of streets in the central quarter of Riga are extremely decorative crowns. It is these finials that constitute the characteristic contents and artistic expression of the buildings' entire solid. And again, the repertoire of forms, *decorum* and ornamentation make up an extremely rich and varied palette of artistic propositions. As a matter of fact, and strictly speaking, the essence of this architecture in Riga lies in the compilations composed between *Art Nouveau* and the early modernism. This is why the repetitions of style have a historicising character and seem to be

²² Z. Tołoczko, *Architektura i społeczeństwo...*, *op.cit.*, p. 32-33; J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Jügendstila Ēkas...*, *op.cit.*, p. 40-41; J. Krastiņš, I. Strautmanis, *Riga. Complete Guide...*, *op.cit.*, p. 40; J. Lejnicks, *Rīgas Architektura...*, *op.cit.*, p. 54-55.

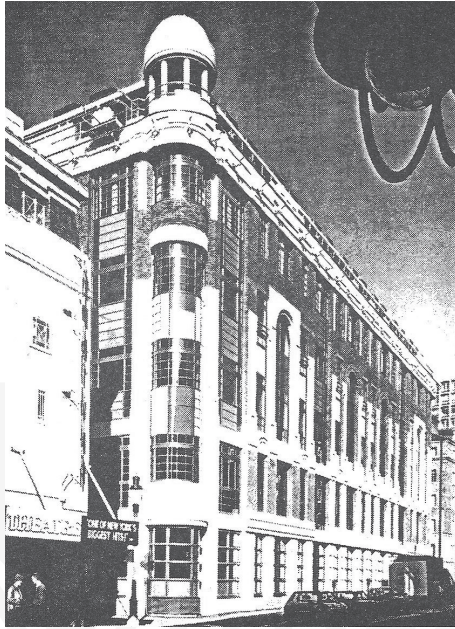


Fig. 26. Drury House. London. F. Robinson, 1988–1989



Fig. 27. Multifunctional building. Riga. A. Vanags, 1911

“a performance in a new opening and arrangement”. This new revivalism in style in the post-modernist version this time together with nostalgia for the architecture of the late 19th c. can be illustrated by, inter alia, Drury House in London, designed by F. Robinson in the years 1988–1989. The similarity with the building in Riga designed by Aleksandrs Vanags in 1911 is striking²³ (Fig. 26, 27).

The presented considerations are outside the main trend of Riga’s *Art Nouveau*, in other words, they are a kind of *pendant* to the number of over several hundred of objects. On the other hand, the idea of this study was to distinguish cases of a common configuration and morphology of these corner intersections of streets, with the predominant impressive crowns, which effected in the impression of harmony together with an inclination towards and being accustomed to *decorum*. Let us mention, then, a few examples of this particular *genre* and its filiations: multifunctional building, Avotu Street 2 and Aleksandra Čaka Street, Friedrich Scheffel, 1911–1912; multifunctional building, Lāčpiēša Street 21 and Akas Street, Rudolf Philipp Dohnberg, 1910; multifunctional building, Brīvības Street 88 and Šarlotes Street, Konstantīns Pēkšēns, Ernests Pole, Jānis Alksnis, 1910 (Fig. 28, 29).



Fig. 28. Multifunctional building. Riga. K. Pēkšēns, E. Laube, 1910

²³ J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Jūgendstila Ēkas...*, *op.cit.*, p. 294-295; Z. Tołoczko, *Wybrane problemy...*, *op.cit.*, p. 128; Ch. Jencks, *Architektura postmodernistyczna*, Warszawa 1987.



Fig. 29. Multifunctional building. Riga. R.P. Dohnberg 1910

And to conclude, it is only proper to highlight the invaluable contribution of architects, and especially the nestor of the scientific research literature on the subject – professor Jānis Krastiņš from the Faculty of Architecture and City-planning of the Latvian University of Technology, as well as the merits of the staff of the Museum of Architecture of Latvia in Mazā Pils and the newly created (2009) Museum of Secession as part of Réseau Art Nouveau Network to the preservation of the *Jugendstil* architecture monuments. Although the Riga institution cannot boast of such abundant collection as, for instance, the museum in Płock, nevertheless, this small museum was located in Alberta Street 12, which has not only a symbolic significance because much of the original interior decoration has been preserved in this apartment building, but also because this building was designed by a co-creator of Riga's *Art Nouveau* – Konstantīns Pēkšēns and his close associate Elžens Laube. This structure, which housed the studio of both architects, artists, the 'founding fathers' of the *National Romanticism Style*, was built in 1903. This place has an almost magic significance, particularly because the huge complex of Riga's architecture in *Art Nouveau* style is commonly known in the Baltic countries as the 'great outdoor *Jugendstil* museum'²⁴.

²⁴ J. Krastiņš, *Rīgas Jugendstila Ēkas...*, *op.cit.*, p. 108-109; A. Balcerē, *Old Riga Illustrated Guide*, Riga 2009.