

## CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

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## A REVIEW OF SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF ARCHITECTURE IN WESTERN BELARUS, PUBLISHED IN THE PERIOD 1921–1939 IN THE SECOND POLISH REPUBLIC

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The development of the professional architectural environment in the Second Polish Republic during the 1920 s – 1930 s took place in the context of active promotion of the latest achievements of the world and, subsequently, their own experience in architectural and urban planning theory and practice. This experience has been included in dozens of different publications that have become primary sources in the study of architecture and urban development in both the Second Polish Republic and Western Belarus. The article examines periodicals, reports of state-owned organizations, archival materials containing information about the studied objects on the territory of Western Belarus in 1921–1939. The most significant publications are described – the magazine «Architecture and Construction», reports of the Ministry of Public Works and the Military Housing Fund.

The key periodicals for the study are the journals «Architektura i budownictwo» and «Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie». A special place is occupied by reports on housing construction – «Budowa domów dla urzędników państwowych w województwach wschodnich», «Budowa pomieszczeń dla korpusu ochrony pogranicza i domów dla urzędników państwowych w województwach wschodnich», «Domy mieszkalne Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego», «Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937». A significant array of primary sources on the topic of research is located in the State Archives of the Brest Region. Most of the described sources are remotely accessible (digital libraries of universities, digitized archival materials) and are accessible through online resources indicated in the text of the article.

**Keywords:** history of architecture and urban planning, Western Belarus, review of sources, «Architecture and construction».

## ОБЗОР ИСТОЧНИКОВ К ИЗУЧЕНИЮ АРХИТЕКТУРЫ ЗАПАДНОЙ БЕЛАРУСИ, ОПУБЛИКОВАННЫХ В ПЕРИОД 1921–1939 ГГ. ВО ВТОРОЙ ПОЛЬСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКЕ

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**Реферат**

Развитие профессиональной архитектурной среды во Второй Польской республике в течение 1920–1930-х годов происходило в условиях активной пропаганды новейших достижений мирового и, впоследствии, собственного опыта архитектурно-градостроительной теории и практики. Этот опыт вошел в десятки различных изданий, ставших сегодня первоисточниками в изучении архитектуры и градостроительства как Второй Польской республики, так и Западной Беларуси. В статье рассматриваются периодические издания, отчеты государственных организаций, архивные материалы, содержащие информацию об исследуемых объектах на территории Западной Беларуси 1921–1939 гг.

Ключевыми для исследования периодическими изданиями выступают журналы «Architektura i budownictwo» и «Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie». Отдельное место занимают отчеты о строительстве жилья – «Budowa domów dla urzędników państwowych w województwach wschodnich», «Budowa pomieszczeń dla korpusu ochrony pogranicza i domów dla urzędników państwowych w województwach wschodnich», «Domy mieszkalne Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego», «Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937». Значительный массив первоисточников по теме исследования находится в Государственном архиве Брестской области. Большая часть из описанных источников находится в удаленном доступе (цифровые библиотеки университетов, оцифрованные архивные материалы) и доступна через онлайн-ресурсы, указанные в тексте статьи.

**Ключевые слова:** история архитектуры и градостроительства, Западная Беларусь, обзор источников, «Архитектура и строительство».

**Introduction**

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the interest of researchers around the world in the architectural heritage of the interwar period has increased significantly. Many objects of this period are taken under state protection, becoming part of the national cultural heritage [1, p. 72]. In Belarus, the architecture and urban planning of the Second Polish Republic have been practically unstudied. Nevertheless, modern approaches to architectural and urban planning activities that developed in the European culture of those years were implemented in many buildings in Western Belarus.

Materials and sources of the period chronologically coinciding with the time boundaries of the study play a huge role in the study of architectural issues from 1921 to 1939. These are various periodicals, archival materials, catalogues, collections and reports on construction, which contain an array of graphic and textual information about the objects under study.

**Review of sources**

Research by domestic (A. Shamruk and E. Morozov) and foreign (O. Mikhailishin, I. Vislitskaya, A. Olshevsky, P. Krakovsky, M. Pchelkovsky and others) authors on architecture and urban planning of the Second Polish Republic are based on information from primary sources, which are publications of the period 1921–1939. They reflected the latest architectural and urban planning concepts generated in the largest architectural centers of Poland – Warsaw and Lvov [2, p. 57]. The most important sources of information both in Polish professional circles and for architects of the western regions of Belarus were periodicals that reflected the entire range of architectural issues and covered the latest achievements of the industry [3, p. 48]. The range of issues raised in the pages of periodicals was closely linked to the socio-economic processes in the state and was aimed at solving pressing social problems: urban construction, development of housing stock and infrastructure facilities, and improvement of the urban environment.

The illustrated monthly «Architektura i budownictwo» (Architecture and Construction) is the most authoritative magazine of that time. The editorial board of the magazine included the best architects of the country (R. Gutt, J. Zhuravsky, T. Novakovsky, J. Lisetsky, T. Burshe, and others). The magazine was published from 1925 to 1939, the total volume is almost 7000 pages [4] (Figure 1). The authors' collective devoted monthly issues with a large number of illustrations (about 35–40 pages) to issues of architectural, urban planning and construction activities. The information posted in the magazine can be presented in the form of three blocks: 1) description of constructed objects in the country, 2) competitive projects for government orders, 3) review of foreign experience in design and construction. Some of the issues were thematic (No. 6, 1926 – Exhibition «Apartment and City»; Nos. 2–3, 1929 – On the Construction Activities of the Military Housing Fund; No. 4–5, 1930 – Construction of Bank Buildings; No. 4, 1933 – Housing Construction; No. 10–12, 1933 – Military Architecture; No. 8–10, 1936 – In Memory of Architect Czesław Przybylski, etc.). A number of articles related to the topic of the research were placed in the issues: No. 2, 1937 (military urban planning and urban planning techniques aimed at concealing objects from the enemy); No. 1, 1938 (general plans for various cities and towns), No. 6, 1939 (air and gas protection for buildings).

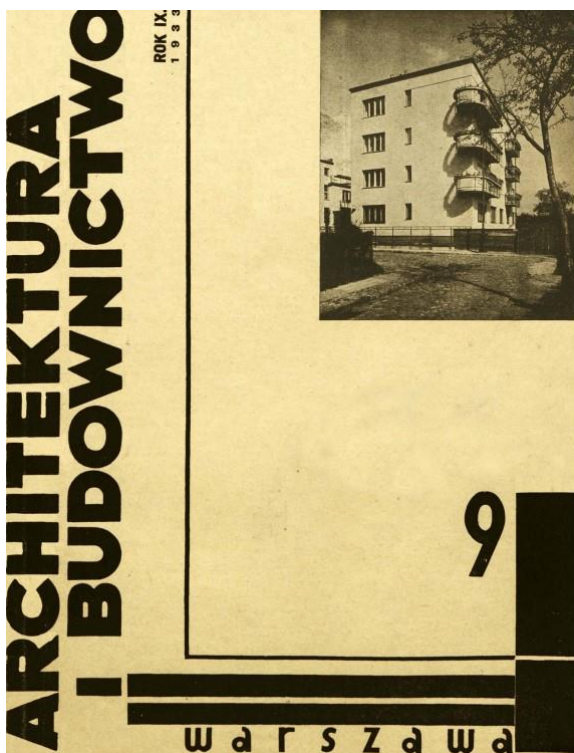


Figure 1 – Journal «Architecture and Construction»

The monthly's special feature is its materials, rich in illustrations, devoted to numerous national architectural competitions [10]. The pages of the magazine describe competition projects for the construction of large public buildings (No. 10, 1927 – Competitions for the buildings of the Ministry of Public Works and the Bank of National Economy; No. 7, 1930 – For the building of the Museum of Arts and Crafts). A special group consisted of competitions aimed at solving problems of urban planning of residential units (quarters, districts) of cities (in particular, Warsaw, Radom (No. 9, 1926), Poznan (No. 1, 1932)) and villages, which solved problems unprecedented in the urban planning practice of Poland.

The editorial board of the journal strove to inform the Polish architectural community as widely as possible about the latest world trends in the professional field. Thus, articles by A. Loos «Architecture» (No. 3, 1931), F. L. Wright «On the New Style» (No. 7, 1932), etc. were published in translation (in full or as abstracts) [5]. A number of issues included a review of the experience of European and American countries: No. 2 and No. 11–12, 1927 – Exhibition of the German Werkbund in Stuttgart (Weissenhof settlement); No. 7, 1930 – Architecture of Holland, works of

arch. G. Rietveld; No. 1, 1931 – California School of Architecture, works of arch. R. Neutra; No. 3, 1931 – Housing construction in Germany, works by arch. O. Hessler.

The journal subscription is stored in the State Archives of the Brest Region (SABR), as well as in remote access on the website of the Digital Library of the Warsaw University of Technology and the Digital Library of the Lublin University of Technology [6, 7].

The second most important journal, «Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie», DOM (House, Estate, Apartment), was devoted to residential architecture (Figure 2). Issues No. 4–6 for 1937 contained a report on the construction of housing by the Workers' Settlement Association «Budownictwo mieszkaniowe Towarzystwa Osiedli Robotniczych» (TOR).



Figure 2 – Journal «House, Estate, Apartment»

Of no small importance for the study are some other periodicals containing information on the design and construction of the interwar period: «Album Młodej Architektury», «Architekt», «Komunikat SARP-u», etc. The peculiarities of regional development were covered by newspapers, including «Gazeta Poleska». An idea of the applied design solutions, materials and technologies for the construction of buildings is given by construction magazines «Przegląd Budowlany», «Beton», etc.

Thus, general information on the development of the industry, the latest achievements and major projects is reflected in periodicals (journals, newspapers, albums). Information on specific objects erected in the study area during the period 1921–1939, their number, authors, time of construction and other characteristics necessary for their attribution, is contained in reports and statistics of various government organizations (construction reports, collections, catalogues, anniversary editions).

Since 1921, the construction of housing projects in the western regions of Belarus has been carried out at the state level by the Ministry of Public Works. After 5 years of active work on the construction of new projects in the Eastern Voivodeships of the country, the Ministry published the collections «Budowa domów dla urzędników państwowych w województwach wschodnich», 1925 and «Budowa pomieszczeń dla korpusu ochrony pogranicza i domów dla urzędników państwowych w województwach wschodnich», 1925. They contain complete information on the projects built in the first half of the 1920s on the territory of Western Belarus (the period 1921–1925). The first collection is devoted to the con-

struction of employee colonies in the Eastern Voivodships of the country (Western Belarus, part of modern Ukraine and Lithuania). It provides data on the location of all construction projects (on cartograms), their main technical and economic indicators and estimated construction costs; indicates the firms performing construction work, the managers of the work on site; provides a list of types of houses and the authors of their projects; presents projects of individual buildings and employee colonies (in the form of master plan diagrams, visual illustrations (book graphics and photography), and building drawings). A significant part of the information in the collection is devoted to the construction of employee colonies in Brest.

The second collection (parts II and III) describes the construction of facilities for the Border Guard Corps and partially repeats the information on the construction of colonies for employees from the previous edition. The collection is also rich in various cartograms and illustrations. A significant portion of the information is devoted to the construction of a complex of Corps buildings in Kletsk and in the village of Ludvikovo in the Gantsevichi District of the Brest Region.

In the period from 1927 to 1939, the Military Quartering Fund (Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego, FKW) of the Construction Department of the Ministry of Military Affairs was responsible for the construction of housing facilities in the western regions of Belarus at the state level. The Fund periodically published reports on the construction: «Domy mieszkalne Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego. Sprawozdanie 1927–1930», 1930, «Domy mieszkalne Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego. "Sprawozdanie 1930–1933", 1934 (Figure 3), «Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937», 1938. The reports contain complete information about the objects built from 1927 to 1937 on the territory of the Second Polish Republic. The report on the construction of objects after 1937 was probably not published due to the outbreak of World War II.



Figure 3 – FKW Report 1930-1933 (Volume II)

The first two reports (volumes) for a three-year period. The reports contain a «balance» by calendar periods (estimated cost), a list of real estate in the FKW account with its cost, the basics of FKW real estate management; a list of objects (in the form of a cartogram and tables), drawings of houses (fragments of plans and cross-sections) with a brief description and main technical and economic indicators; photographic documentation of completed buildings and their interiors. The reports reflect information on the construction of residential buildings for the garrison in Molodechno, and individual buildings in other cities of Belarus.

The report on the activities of the Fund for the next three years (1934–1937) is presented in the general report on the construction of houses, «Sprawozdanie Funduszu Kwaterunku Wojskowego 1927–1937», 1938. This report for a ten-year period also contains information from the previous reports in a more condensed form and is the main report on the activities of FKW for the entire period of its existence. The report includes: the rules and principles that the Fund follows in the design and construction of its projects; a «balance» by calendar periods (estimated cost); a list of real estate in the FKW account with their value; a complete list of all designers (engineers, architects) and student interns of the Fund; a list of construction and engineering firms implementing the projects; a cartogram of the location of objects throughout the country; an alphabetical list of all the Fund's houses in the form of a table; a graphic section in the form of photographs or perspective images of buildings, general plans, fragments of floor plans (apartment plans) and their brief descriptions; a detailed description of the main departmental facilities of the country, built by the Foundation.

The report presents information on the construction of the former settlement of Trauguttovo in Brest, a residential complex in Postavy, buildings of the Gelenovo garrison in Molodechno, a group of residential buildings in Slonim and individual buildings in other cities of Belarus.

Information on the activities of the Construction Department of the Ministry of Military Affairs for almost the entire interwar period is presented in the two-volume publication «Budownictwo wojskowe 1918–1935», 1936. The first volume is devoted to the history of construction and modern construction in individual areas of the national economy: barracks buildings, public buildings, health care, religious buildings, urban planning, housing construction. The second volume covers construction production technologies, features and rules for engineering equipment of buildings.

A separate place is occupied by catalogues with building projects recommended for repeated use and standard construction. The newly created Polish state faced problems in implementing the educational program in the first decade. One of them was the shortage of school buildings and the impossibility of adapting existing facilities to the needs of schools. In 1925, the Ministry of Religion and Education (Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego) published a catalogue of public school projects for repeated use (includes 48 projects) [8]. The catalogue presents schools of various capacities, for various construction areas, and also provides the minimum and optimal composition of school building premises, and provides the main regulatory requirements for the building and its site.

Since 1933, a significant portion of individual houses in the country, including in Western Belarus, were built according to projects developed by architects for the Bank of National Economy (Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego, BGK); these projects were placed in the catalogue «Katalog typowych domów dla drobnego budownictwa mieszkalnego. Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego», 1934. The catalogue contains 83 projects of individual residential buildings (one-, two-apartment and block), developed by architects on a competitive basis. In the catalogue, the projects are presented only in the form of sketches, allowing one to make a choice [9].

Following the Warsaw Housing Exhibition of 1935, the BGK published a catalogue of houses, the «Katalog Wystawy Budowlano-Mieszkaniowej Banku Gospodarstwa Krajowego w Warszawie na Kole 1935 maj–sierpień» and offered preferential loans for housing construction based on its own designs (Figure 4). Interested customers purchased initial designs from the Bank and erected houses on designated plots, often through the Workers' Settlement Association. Local authorities merely approved the placement of the building on the designated plot.

Thus, information on specific objects erected in the study area in the period 1921–1939, their quantity, authors, construction time and other characteristics is provided in the reports and statistics of state organizations (collections, catalogues, construction reports).

A significant array of primary sources on the topic of the study is presented in domestic and foreign archives and libraries. In the territory of the Republic of Belarus, this is, first of all, the State Archives of the Brest Region (SABR). Fund 1 of the SABR «Polesie Voivodship Administration» contains information on the construction of housing in the territory of the Polesie Voivodship [10, 11]; Fund 2 «Brest District Starostwo» – on construction in the territory of the Brest District and the city of Brest [12]; Fund 5 «Brest City Administration» – on the construction of both public

and private housing in the city, in particular – on the construction of buildings in the colonies of employees in Brest [13]; Fund 67 «Command of the Corps of District No. 9 in the City of Brest» stores information on departmental construction in the district [14, 15].

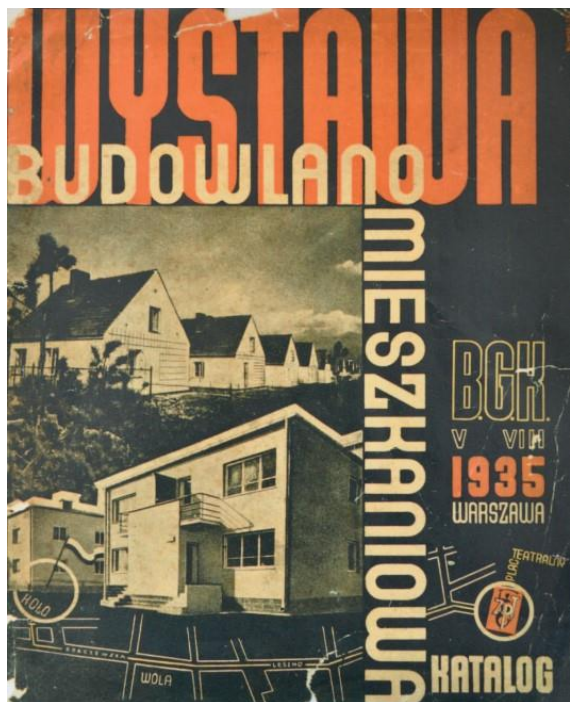


Figure 4 – BGK catalogue of the 1935 exhibition in Warsaw

A special place among the sources for studying the architecture and urban planning of the interwar period is occupied by remote access materials (digital libraries of universities, digitized archival materials), available through the following online resources:

1) National Digital Archives (NAC) [16]. The archive contains digitized graphic materials, primarily historical photographs of objects in Western Belarus from 1921 to 1939 (Brest, Baranovich, Molodechno and other cities).

2) Digital Library of the Warsaw University of Technology [6]. The library stores digitized journals of the interwar period, including «Architektura i budownictwo», «Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie», «Album Młodej Architektury», «Architekt», «Przegląd Budowlany», «Komunikat SARP-u»; collections of the Ministry of Public Works from 1925 on the construction of housing for civil servants and the Border Guard Corps in the Eastern Voivodeships.

3) The Digital Library of the Lublin University of Technology [7] also contains journals from the interwar period, including «Architektura i budownictwo».

4) Archives of the Central Military Library named after Marshal Józef Piłsudski [17]. The library contains reports of the Military Housing Fund for 1927–1930, 1930–1933, 1927–1937.

5) Pomeranian Digital Library [18]. The library's website contains a two-volume report of the Construction Department of the Ministry of Military Affairs for 1918–1935.

6) Silesian Digital Library [19]. The library contains a digitized catalogue of the 1935 exhibition of the Bank of National Economy.

7) Lower Silesian Digital Library [20]. The library contains the publication «Słownik architektów i budowniczych Polaków oraz cudzoziemców w Polsce pracujących».

8) Electronic catalog of the US National Archives [21]. The National Archives at College Park, Maryland contains digitized cartographic materials (aerial photography) of the territories of modern Belarus, Poland, and Ukraine.

## Conclusion

The above-described publications, such as «Architektura i budownictwo», «Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie», provide an opportunity to consider the architecture and urban planning of Western Belarus in the context of the development of the industry in the Second Polish Republic and Western Europe as a whole, to identify the main directions and trends in housing construction and urban planning practice.

The information collected in one-off publications (reports, collections, catalogues) allows us to evaluate the urban planning, architectural planning, construction, compositional, stylistic and other characteristic features of the studied objects of the period 1921–1939 on the territory of Western Belarus.

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