



## Design philosophy

**Tomasz Konior\***

### *Distinctness of shaping form and the context of place – open landscape and urban structure*

#### *Introduction*

Thought, place, and matter, these are the three principal elements of shaping architecture, out of which thought, or in other words idea, is according to Vitruvius the basic material, although it is still not architecture [1, pp. 6, 7]. In contemporary times, during the era of global digitalization, the idea still shapes design situations that are created in the architect's head. Computerization, which has also included the production of building components, encroaches into all fields of civil engineering. It *allows* for the thought in the designing process, to be understood as the release of creative imagination to not lose its significance [2]. Maintaining continuity of thought generally speaks of the quality of the planned building. We may even say that the thought-idea shown in the drawing-sketch creates the designing situation of the planned structure, providing the basis to move on from dream to a new reality – the materialized architecture.

The thoughts of the architect expressed in the drawing-sketch show how a function in the planned building is solved and how the body is situated in the spatial context. This context determines the character of the process of the architect's thinking about the facility's concept. In order to bring closer the distinctness of architectural shaping, we can compare two different designing situations depending on their location in the landscape – an open landscape provides op-

portunities to use freely shaped forms, while an urban landscape is more suited to forms with right-angle geometry.

**While designing in an open landscape** the thought of the architect often moves in the direction of relating to the fluidity of form in nature and moving away from the principles of right-angle geometry, the planned structure depicts *its connection* with the surrounding landscape. It is worth adding that the importance of the development of digital technology facilitates the structural and material interpretation of such thoughts in designing. Contemporary shaping tools allow for an *unlimited* interpretation of processes occurring in nature, while the permission to use principles of mathematical logic, empirical discursive theories, or recordings of philosophy of designing pro-ecologic architecture broadens the borders of inspiration [3, p. 140].

**Designing in an urbanized area** since the most ancient concept of a city, has treated place as a value. Such an approach, somewhat forgotten in the pursuit of “modernity” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has recently been experiencing a rebirth. Well-known Danish urban planner Jan Gehl calls for “A city for people” [4]. He recalls the importance of the number and quality of places, which create opportunities to be in urban spaces. The need to meet connects culture and culture-creating ideas with the center-creating dimension of architecture, thus constructing the identity of a place [4].

The subject of the current publication is relations that occur between shaping architectural form and the spatial context of the surrounding environment. The presented reflections are a result of the experiences of the article's author – a practicing architect. The present article looks at buildings designed by the author of the text in the Konior Studio architectural office: structures situated in an open landscape

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(The Białoleka Middle School and Cultural Center in Warsaw and the head office of Press Glass in Konopiska near Częstochowa), as well as facilities located in the urban structure (the “Symfonia” Building of the Academy of Music in Katowice and the State Music School Complex in Warsaw).

### ***Context of location and context of architecture***

The reflections on the shaping of a building in relation to its surroundings should be started by recalling yet another contemporary architect Bernard Tschumi, who in his multi-volume work *Event Cities* [5] says that a building always exists in specific surroundings; in a geographic location or a historically, culturally, or economically defined context.

The architectural concept, defining the ultimate form and materiality of the designed building may have various connections with the context, while the architect does not have to take into account all the local conditions. In emphasizing the significance of the context, Tschumi introduces three relations into the discussion, ones that are possible in relations between the concept of the designed building and the context expressed historically or temporarily defined through pre-existing surroundings. He defines it in the following way:

- indifference, meaning the independence of the concept from the context,
- reciprocity, when the concept of the new facility and the spatial context supplement each other, or when the planned building is an architectural response to existing buildings,
- conflict between the existing surroundings and the newly designed structures, which generally leads to the possibility of changing the context by the structure [5].

The relations of the architectural concept to the context, in allowing for the simultaneous consideration of the locational and cultural context, make it possible for the architect to choose various approaches to the relations between the spatial and cultural context of the place. Inspirations with the culture of the city or place are visible through the use of materials related to the history and local tradition. A similar approach deals with inspirations with forms connected with culture understood in a somewhat wider although still local sense. The form in the planned design may be processed by the designer, however, its connection with tradition should be clear and understandable.

The architect, who decides to distance himself from local traditions, usually designs a facility that formally expresses negation and/or conflict with the context in place. From time to time, new, formally different architecture may become an impulse that will influence spatial changes in the surroundings – as a result altering the current, existing context [5].

### ***Architecture in the context of natural landscape***

In his book *Ecstatic Architecture* [6, p. 20 ff.], Charles Jencks points to nature as an inseparable element of the environment connected with human civilization, and further underlines its significance, claiming that it is more important than culture. Open to new interpretations, it becomes

an important condition in the design, one which may become a sort of asylum and a source of tranquility. He also recalls that inspirations with shapes, which were created by nature, are constantly present in design and architecture [6]. A confirmation of these words can be the two examples found below.

#### *The Białoleka Middle School and Culture Center in Warsaw, 2005*

Architecture: Tomasz Konior, Tomasz Danielec, Konior Studio

Function: school, a culture center with a theatre hall and a library, local sports facility

Floor space: 7713 m<sup>2</sup>

Design: 2000–2002

Completion: 2005

The Białoleka Middle School and Culture Center is a complex of buildings, which has four independent functions: a school, a library, a culture center with a theatre, and a sports facility. The design idea of the structure is most fully expressed by the term used by the author: *immersed in the landscape along the Vistula River* (Fig. 1).

The buildings which are a part of a valuable stand of historic trees make up a sort of enclave of culture and nature. The soft line of the brick wall which merges the individual bodies into one from the side of the entrance is a clear (Fig. 2). At the same time, it is an easy to remember element of architecture. The curvilinearity of the winding wall is a reference to the Vistula riverbanks, while at the same time being a distinguishing feature, which expresses the idea of the architect to incorporate a part of the landscape along the Vistula into the area of the school park (Fig. 3).

The second, internal part of the brick wall, creates a covered forum, also setting out space that combines the independently functioning facilities, i.e., a school for 800 students, a culture center with an auditorium for 400 people, and a public library.

The 70-meter long, winding wall plays the role of the element consolidating various functions. At the same time, it allows for the use of the covered, elongated space for everyday spontaneous meetings, but also official events, important for the life of the school and the local community. The feature which accentuates the space of the great hall is the oval auditorium hall which seems to be an autonomous element of the structure. It is a distinguishable form, visible in the shape of the building.

The educational part is housed in three segments placed parallel to one another. The longer walls of the building are glazed to keep a view of the patios. The end walls made out of large concrete prefabricates, have small window openings. The narrow, horizontal glazings let in the western light into distant classrooms. Concrete, glass, and brick are the dominant materials in the finishing, elevations and interior of the building.

The whole of the arrangements (layout) shows two formally distinct ways of shaping architecture. The spaces situated at the intersection with the curvilinearity of the brick wall establish a soft relationship with it and are reflected in the adjacent interiors. Buildings that are

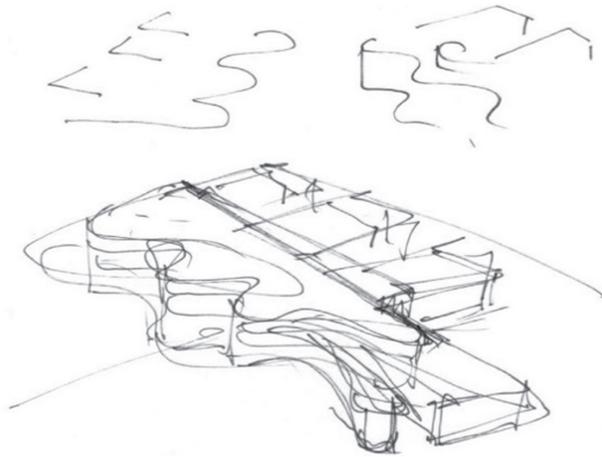


Fig. 1. The facility immersed in the landscape along the Vistula River – sketch (drawn by T. Konior)

II. 1. Obiekt zanurzony w nadwiślańskim krajobrazie – szkic (rys. T. Konior)

removed from the line of the wall are shaped based on a right-angle principle in compliance with the functionality of the school rooms.

The soft line of the brick wall is a reference to the nearby Vistula riverbank, highlighting the expressive character of architecture, especially when it is put together with the remaining part of the arrangements which is pragmatically and orthogonally shaped. The curvilinearity facilitated the shaping of space, but it also underlines the viewing axes of the school buildings. The building complex, taking advantage of the richness of the existing greenery creates a space that is both student- and resident-friendly.

The simplicity of this architecture and integrating the structure into the natural landscape were recognized by

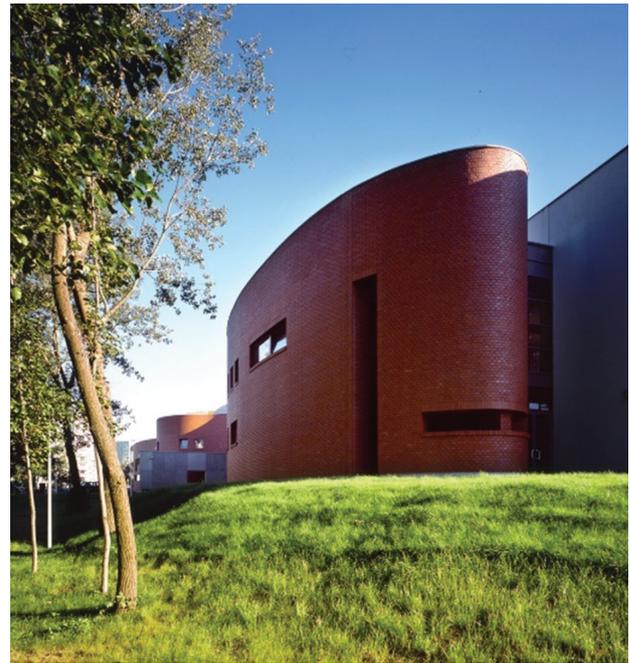


Fig. 2. The Białoleka Middle School and Cultural Center in Warsaw – the brick ribbon of the front elevation (photo by D. Rumiancew, source: Konior Studio)

II. 2. Gimnazjum i Ośrodek Kultury w warszawskiej Białolece – ceglana wstęga elewacji frontowej (fot. D. Rumiancew, źródło: archiwum Konior Studio)

the architect community. The structure was granted the following awards: “The SARP Architecture of the Year Award in 2006 – the best structure made using public funds”, “Polski Cement w Architekturze 2006” – main prize, “20 best buildings completed after 1989 – Icons of Architecture 2005”, award in the international “Leonardo” competition in the category of public utility building 2007.



Fig. 3. The Białoleka Middle School and Cultural Center in Warsaw – concrete elevations seen from the Vistula (photo by D. Rumiancew, source: Konior Studio)

II. 3. Gimnazjum i Ośrodek Kultury w warszawskiej Białolece – betonowe elewacje od strony Wisły (fot. D. Rumiancew, źródło: archiwum Konior Studio)

*The Head Office of Press Glass S.A. in Konopiska  
near Częstochowa, 2020*

Architecture: Tomasz Konior, Konior Studio

Function: office, representative

Floor space: 5398.2 m<sup>2</sup>

Surface area: 29 189 m<sup>2</sup>

Built-up area: 2943 m<sup>2</sup>

Design: 2017–2019

Completion: 2020

The head offices of Press Glass were created in a location that is quite unusual for office buildings. They are located on the edge of the Polish Jurassic Highland, in a landscape that has been shaped in harmony with nature (Fig. 4). In the area of unused agricultural fields and groves, a broad golf field was created with numerous watercourses, and small water reservoirs, with a few trees here and there. The landscape was supplemented by a building selected in a closed, investor architectural competition.

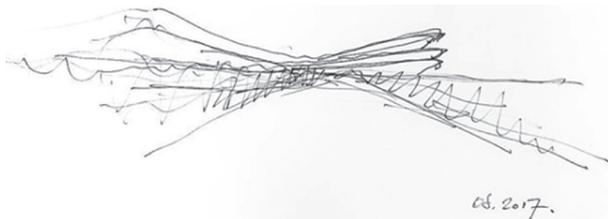


Fig. 4. Single form inspired by the softness of nature – sketch (drawn by T. Konior)

Il. 4. Samotna forma inspirowana miękkością natury – szkic (rys. T. Konior)

It was the investor's ambition to create a modern office on the green plateau, one that would express the dynamic character of the company, while ensuring its employees of contact with live nature. Soft shapes and colors which are naturally observed in nature played a decisive role in the architectural character, making it consistent with the green, hilly landscape. The arrangements were based on the idea of cohesiveness of nature and technology (Fig. 5).

Seeking a form which would supplement the narrow land plot intersected by a watercourse, open to the space of the golf course, it was decided to prepare a plan drawing in the form of a triangle. Subsequent stories of the building vary due to the size of the outline, which decreases towards the top. Such a *procedure* influences the reduction of scale, thus increasing the sensation of fluidity at the intersection of architecture and landscape.

The focal point of the arrangements is an open, internal courtyard made in the image of an exotic garden, which contrasting with the landscape of the golf courses creates an extraordinary place (Fig. 6).

Concrete, which is generally a construction material, is also used in the finishing of the structure. The elevation of the technology building and the columns of the main entrance are made out of exposed concrete with an imprinted formwork or coarse texture obtained via the *grain-*

*ing* method. Pre-tensioned prestressed concrete allowed for the use of non-standard spans. The ready-made, large construction modules, and building components delivered to the construction site which were used for the elevation, roof, and the edges of terraces and balustrades, account for the character of the building exterior.

Glass in the Press Glass building is an important material, however not a dominant one. Put together with the massive materiality, it influences the feeling of modernity and *lightness* of the building. The flat glass surfaces, as well as the bulky, rounded glass in the corners of the external elevation and the courtyard, are one of the most important elements which constitute the character of the transparent “architecture without borders” (Fig. 6).

Refined details of assembly out of polished, stainless steel create an elegance of the solution, while the use of reflexive glass blurs the boundaries between interior and exterior – the size of the building seems to be indefinable.

The material which supplements the character of the building is wood, used on the cladding of the installation shafts, external walls, and fragments of the floors. The external soffits which transition into the interior were made out of wooden plywood. The wood creates a specific softness, difficult to achieve, but one that is especially important when it comes to official and representative places. Wood is also the material used in the finishing of the terraces, railings of the balustrades, doors, and furniture. The roofs of the buildings are filled with photovoltaic cells and play the role of green terraces. They are covered with plants that are easy to maintain: sedums and vines. Natural greenness used in large spaces becomes a building material that is present here on equal terms with traditional building materials.

### *Architecture in the context of urban structure*

According to the thought of Aldo Rossi, an architect should arrange the geometrical elements of the design, referring to the memories and history of a place. Such architecture can fit in with the city, can continue its traditions, act as an invitation to passers-by. Rossi, himself created buildings with *raw bodies* which he directed towards their surroundings and a bond with history. He followed the lessons of classical architecture without copying it – his buildings bring forth echoes from the past, using forms of universal, gripping quality. His work is both bold and ordinary, although not novel, but exhilaratingly simple in appearance and unusually complex as regards content and significance. In times of various trends and influences, Aldo Rossi avoided fashionable and popular styles to create his own architecture [7]. The examples presented below hold similar values dear.

#### *“The Symfonia” Science and Musical Education Center in Katowice, 2007*

Architecture: Tomasz Konior, Krzysztof Barysz, Konior Studio

Function: public, educational with a concert hall

Floor space: 7330 m<sup>2</sup>, together with the historical building: 14 119 m<sup>2</sup>

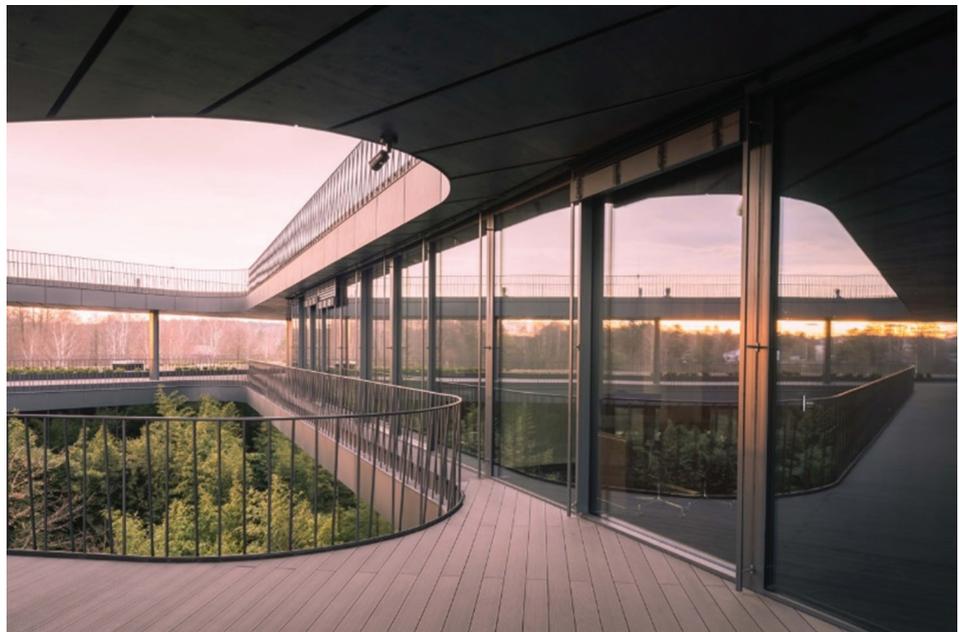
Fig. 5. Press Glass Office Building in Konopiska  
– front elevation  
(photo by N. Cook,  
source: Konior Studio)

II. 5. Biurowiec firmy Press Glass w Konopiskach  
– elewacja frontowa  
(fot. N. Cook,  
źródło: archiwum Konior Studio)



Fig. 6. Press Glass Office Building in Konopiska  
– second-floor terrace with a view of the green courtyard  
(photo by N. Cook,  
source: Konior Studio)

II. 6. Biurowiec firmy Press Glass w Konopiskach  
– taras drugiego piętra z widokiem na zielony dziedziniec  
(fot. N. Cook,  
źródło: archiwum Konior Studio)



Design: 2003–2005

Completion: 2007

“The Symfonia” Building is part of the Academy of Music in Katowice. It is situated downtown, in the neighborhood of office buildings, a historical cemetery, surrounded by nineteenth-century buildings, and despite its contemporary form, it seems to blend in with the pre-existing neighborhood (Fig. 7). The expansion of the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice, which was preceded by a competition is one of the first important investments in the city after the year 2000. In 2007 Tomasz Malkowski wrote that the “Symfonia” building [...] *seems to be a turning point in the architecture of Katowice. Because finally after years of meaninglessness here is a building that is an event* [8, p. 64]. The new structure emerges directly next to the historical building from 1898. The large, rectangular body with few windows is separated by a glazed atrium from its richly decorated neighbor. Both buildings are made of brick, however, their shape and decoration distinctively show that they come from



Fig. 7. Distinctiveness and architectural cohesiveness  
– sketch  
(drawn by T. Konior)

II. 7. Odmienność i architektoniczna spójność  
– szkic  
(rys. T. Konior)

two different periods (Fig. 8). The new form evokes positive associations with the modernism of the interwar period. It is adorned with delicate protrusions of bricks from the elevation face and its highlighted window form, which is expressed in the brick façade with vertical cracks of the removed elevation bricks. The form shows the principal thought as well as the design idea – architectural cohesiveness with its surroundings with simultaneous formal distinctiveness.

The glazed atrium connecting both buildings is a public space with a café, shop, and a small amphitheater. It is also

a meeting and resting place for students and the inhabitants of Katowice. The neo-Gothic richly decorated façade creates a character of space where old and new architecture meet. From the atrium, we can enter the old building, while the various levels are accessed by steel platforms. The atrium has become a foyer space for the new concert hall with an auditorium for nearly 600 spectators (Fig. 9).

The building has become part of the musical history of the city and the consciousness of residents, who willingly come here for concerts and take advantage of the year-round public space.



Fig. 8. "Symfonia" Building in Katowice – front elevation (photo by D. Rumiancew, source: Konior Studio)

Il. 8. Budynek „Symfonii” w Katowicach – elewacja frontowa (fot. D. Rumiancew, źródło: archiwum Konior Studio)

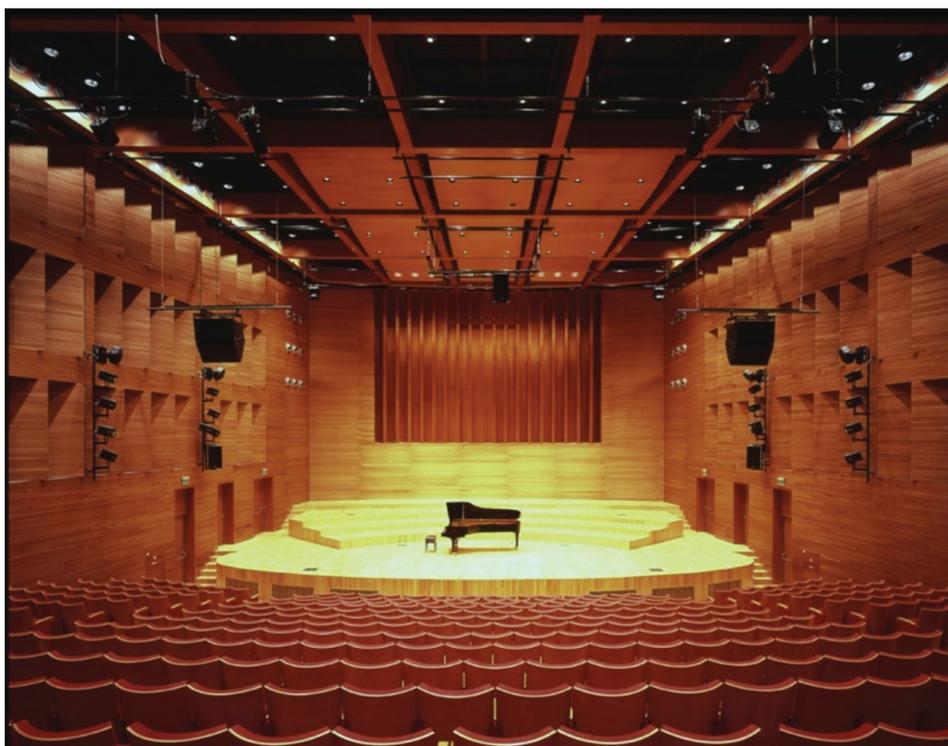
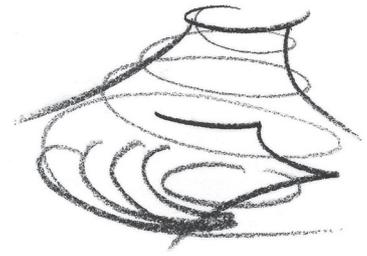
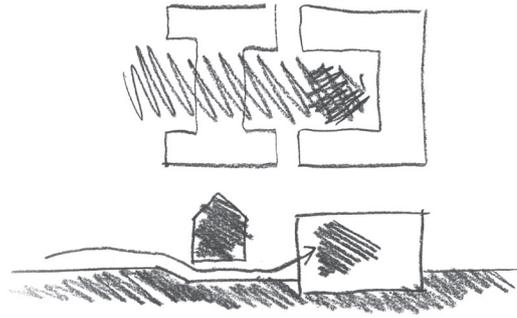


Fig. 9. "Symfonia" Building in Katowice – view of the stage (photo by D. Rumiancew, source: Konior Studio)

Il. 9. Budynek „Symfonii” w Katowicach, sala koncertowa – widok w kierunku estrady (fot. D. Rumiancew, źródło: archiwum Konior Studio)

Fig. 10. Establishing dialogue with the urban tissue, a spatial idea – sketch (drawn by T. Konior)

Il. 10. W dialogu z tkanką miejską, zamysł przestrzenny – szkic (rys. T. Konior)



The way in which the designers paid respects to the old building of the Academy, accepting new values in the architecture of the building housing the concert hall, was universally recognized. Among the awards which the structure received are Grand Prix “Architecture of the Year of the Silesian Voivodeship 2008”, The Annual SARP Award for the best structure completed in 2007, Friendly and Inclusive Space Award at the XXIII UIA Congress in Torino, nomination for the Mies van der Rohe Award.

#### *State Music School complex in Warsaw, 2020*

Architecture: Tomasz Konior, Konior Studio  
Function: artistic school, concert hall  
Floor space: 10 138 m<sup>2</sup>  
Total area: 12 942.2 m<sup>2</sup>  
Design: 2015–2017  
Completion: 2020

Some situations are unexpected. This was exactly the case when the State Music School Complex at Miodowa Street received news that it must abandon its current facilities. A situation that was difficult to accept, for designers became an opportunity to bring to life a vision of a modern school, which would fulfill all the needs of talented youths, teachers, and exceptional artists. The new location was a plot of land in a downtown built-up area, with a historical, Neo-gothic building of the former Orphanage for Girls at Rakowiecka Street<sup>1</sup>. In December 2015, the winners of an international architectural competition for the concept of the new school building were announced. It was won by Konior Studio<sup>2</sup>. Today it can be said that the idea

of the building of the music school in Rakowiecka Street which began with the competition – *of creating a place which is filled with music, distinguishable by the functionality of architecture, harmoniously incorporated into the pre-existing context* – was completed (Fig. 10).

The idea for shaping the planned structure came from the building of the old orphanage, which became part of the new arrangements. It created a dialogue between old and new architecture expressed in the structure of the historical buildings, repeated in the scale and rhythms of the new part. This dialogue became the basis for the idea shaping the structure.

The historical building designated for general education is connected with the newly designed building for musical education by a spacious atrium. The main entrance leads to a small square, which is slightly lower than its surroundings. The central part of the arrangements is a concert hall designed as a free-standing room in an open space of the building interior, surrounded by passageways. This part houses the library which is separated from the hall by an internal garden (Fig. 11).

Elevations of the new building are a contemporary interpretation of the historical part. The continuation is expressed in the accentuation of the cornices, and the proportions and rhythm of the windows (Fig. 12).

The main concert hall, with an amphitheatrically shaped audience, boasts 320 seats and a stage for 75 musicians. It is used, among others, for the work of the school’s symphonic orchestra, the school’s students, as well as invited artists who give concerts there. The geometrical concept of the concert hall by Konior Studio is based on a circular outline of external walls with convex internal sails. The uniqueness of the concept is expressed with the softness of form as well as the use of high-quality natural materials, which ensure acoustic and visual value of the interior (Fig. 13). For the sound perception and quality, the distance between the stage and the farthest seat in the audience which is only 8 m, is also important. The concert hall with a distinguishable form is visible from almost any place in the new building. Centrally situated as an independent structure in the entire arrangements it ensures the highest standards of acoustic insulation and causes the hall to become the true heart of the new complex.

The shape and structure of the external surfaces are used for the fluidity of reflections and the dispersion of sounds as well as the prevention of unbeneficial phenomena such as the concentration of sound or the so-called flutter echo.

<sup>1</sup> The neo-Gothic building and plot of land were purchased using National Treasury funds in 2014. The historical, four-storey building made of red brick, the former Orphanage for Girls, build for the Warsaw Charitable Society between the years 1899–1901, was designed by Władysław Adolf Kozłowski. After World War II it housed the Warsaw Family Support Center.

<sup>2</sup> Konior Studio had previously been responsible for the design of the offices of the National Symphonic Orchestra of the Polish Radio in Katowice. In the heart of the NSOPR building, there is Great Concert Hall, whose acoustics were overseen by Yasuhisa Toyota, the president of the world-famous Nagata Acoustics company from Los Angeles and Tokyo. Y. Toyota is the creator of the acoustics in Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Suntory Hall in Tokyo, and many others. The NSOPR Great Concert Hall is part of the prestigious ECHO, an organization that brings together the best concert halls in all of Europe.



Fig. 11. State Music School Complex in Warsaw – a bird's eye view from the front (photo by B. Barczyk, source: Konior Studio)

Il. 11. Zespół Państwowych Szkół Muzycznych Nr 1 w Warszawie – widok z lotu ptaka od strony frontowej (fot. B. Barczyk, źródło: archiwum Konior Studio)



Fig. 12. State Music School Complex in Warsaw – view of the new wing (photo by P. Krajewski, source: Konior Studio)

Il. 12. Zespół Państwowych Szkół Muzycznych Nr 1 w Warszawie – widok nowego skrzydła (fot. P. Krajewski, źródło: archiwum Konior Studio)

Acoustic and geometrical analyses along with three-dimensional computer simulations conducted at all stages of the design process, especially during initial rehearsals in the finished interior confirmed the high quality of the solutions used in the concert hall. Great care towards acoustics was also displayed in the remaining musical spaces. Two chamber halls with 86 and 52 seats respectively, and the organ hall with seating for 74 persons create outstanding conditions for the education of future artists. The facility boasts a total of 132 classrooms and a recording studio. The newly completed building can be summed up in the following way: the famous “Miodowa” moved to a “New Miodowa” in Rakowiecka, but history and tradition which started with Elsner, Moniuszko and Szymanowski, were preserved in the body of the historical orphanage and the architecture of the new facility.

### *Summary and conclusions*

In summary, based on the information presented in the text, as well as the characterization of specific examples of architectural completions and their author's – designer's reflections connected with them, we may formulate conclusions on the subject of the distinctiveness of form shaping depending on the context of place and regarding the significance of the continuity of thought in the design process.

1. Buildings located in an **open landscape**, both the Press Glass office building as well as the school in Białołęka confirm *old knowledge* that curvilinearity in architecture requiring greater perspective is easier to accept in a landscape context. Curvilinearity in architecture, which

Fig. 13. State Music School Complex in Warsaw – view of the stage (photo by B. Barczyk, source: Konior Studio)

Il. 13. Sala koncertowa Zespołu Państwowych Szkół Muzycznych Nr 1 w Warszawie, widok w kierunku estrady (fot. B. Barczyk, źródło: archiwum Konior Studio)



comes from the natural world is contemporarily aided by the achievements of science and technology. Thanks to the knowledge and multiple interpretations such a creation of form and proportion is currently willingly used in designing. “Soft” shaping of buildings takes advantage of new technologies. At the present, the only thing limiting such works are higher costs and the architect’s imagination.

In both the presented cases, curvilinearity is distinctively shaped. In the building of the Białoleka Middle School the soft line of the brick wall is a barrier but at the same time a link to the principal form of the structure shaped on the basis of right-angle geometry. Curvilinearity as part of the formal whole enriches the architecture, harmoniously blending in with the natural environment. The Press Glass office building indicates that the building which is distinguished by architectural values, as well as high-quality technical solutions and advanced technology, confirms the company’s prestige. Placing the structure in a rather unknown location, with a culturally well-cared-for landscape, additionally enriches the marketing character of architecture. In order to reduce the rather large size of the building and integrate it with the open landscape, a layout in the shape of a triangle with a softly shaped form was used.

2. Buildings created **in the urban structure**, especially in densely built-up areas, are generally part of a greater whole. Architecture that is more fitting to urban surroundings is one that favors the principle of a right angle. This is visible in the “Symfonia” Building in Katowice, which was part of the expansion of the existing building of the Academy of Music. At the same time, delicate formal procedures expressed in the elevation structure allow for the simultaneous obtaining of the sensation of architectural cohesiveness, but also the distinctiveness of periods which are a testimony to the time of completion of both structures. On the other hand, in the State Music School Com-

plex in Warsaw, the concert hall has become an independent, curvilinear element situated within the structure of a larger facility. The curvilinearity of architecture strongly defines the character of the building, however, the whole of the arrangements remains in harmony with the orthogonal context of its surroundings.

3. In the process of creating architecture, the *concept*, as well as the *content*, meaning the functional requirements create a basis for selecting building materiality. Another important element of architecture – *place* – in defining the spatial context of the surroundings, determines the designer’s thought. Along with the initial decisions about the planned building, its location and functional requirements lead the designer in the direction of the idea of the structure, which may be replicated in the drawing-sketch. Thus the value of *continuity of thought in the designing process from an idea – a dream all the way to the completion of the planned structure*, is confirmed. The most important task of the architect also becomes visible – the authorship of the IDEA [9], the principal thought, which accompanies the creation of the work from initial notion to completion. Starting with the idea depicted in the drawing-sketch, through the creation of the concept, then the design, the thought is visible in the completed building. This continuity grants cohesiveness to the solution and distinguishes the facility, creating its individual property. The building becomes recognizable, which differentiates architecture from ordinary civil engineering. Peter Zumthor, an outstanding architect, expressed this thought in a very simple way, claiming [...] *that every design has its own characteristic feature. It must be formulated in a very distinct way in order for the whole building to be explained with the use of this basic feature* [10].

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## Abstract

### *Distinctness of shaping form and the context of place – open landscape and urban structure*

The subject of this publication represents thoughts and reflections of an architect-practitioner, concerning the differences in shaping architecture depending on the context of the location. The subject of our considerations are buildings designed under the supervision of the author of this text, in Konior Studio. Two examples of buildings in an open landscape are presented: Gymnasium and Cultural Center in Warsaw Białoleka, located outside the urban area, on the edge of the Vistula River, and an office building that is the head office of Press Glass in Konopiska, located in a transformed, green area of a former agricultural wasteland. The next two examples concern buildings located in the urban structure: the Symphony building, which is an extension of the Academy of Music in Katowice, and the building of the State Music School Complex in Warsaw.

The author analyzes distinctiveness in the designer's way of thinking as well as distinctiveness in the solutions shaping architecture depending on the context of place. He also underlines the importance of continuity of thought from the sketch-dream which contains the main idea of the structure, until its implementation. The text is based on relevant literature, supported by in situ research done on characteristic buildings, as well as the architect's own experiences from the designing process and building development, which served as an illustration of the theses put forth.

**Key words:** contemporary architecture, architectural design, site context, open landscape, urban structure

## Streszczenie

### *Odmienność kształtowania formy a kontekst miejsca – krajobraz otwarty i tkanka miejska*

Tematem artykułu są przemyślenia i refleksje architekta-praktyka dotyczące relacji, jakie zachodzą pomiędzy kształtowaniem architektonicznej formy a kontekstem przestrzennym otaczającego środowiska. Przedmiotem rozważań są budynki zaprojektowane pod kierunkiem autora niniejszego tekstu w autorskiej pracowni Konior Studio. Obiekty w krajobrazie otwartym zaprezentowano na przykładzie Gimnazjum i Centrum Kultury zlokalizowanym poza terenem zurbanizowanym, na brzegu Wisły w Warszawie-Białoleka oraz biurowca będącego siedzibą główną firmy Press Glass, usytuowanego na przekształconym, zielonym obszarze dawnych nieużytków rolnych. Kolejne dwa przykłady – ulokowane w tkance miejskiej – to budynek „Symfonii”, będący rozbudową Akademii Muzycznej w Katowicach oraz siedziba Zespołu Państwowych Szkół Muzycznych w Warszawie.

Autor analizuje odmienność sposobu myślenia projektanta oraz odmienność rozwiązań kształtujących architekturę w zależności od kontekstu miejsca. Wskazuje także na wagę ciągłości myśli: od szkicu-marzenia, który zawiera główną ideę planowanego obiektu, aż po realizację. Podstawą jest literatura przedmiotu poparta badaniami in situ charakterystycznych obiektów oraz doświadczenia własne architekta wyniesione z procesu projektowania i realizacji budynków, które posłużyły za ilustrację prowadzonych rozważań.

**Słowa kluczowe:** architektura współczesna, projektowanie architektoniczne, kontekst miejsca, krajobraz otwarty, tkanka miejska