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Modern Library Structure among Old Town Buildings. Project of Jeleniogórskie Centre of Information and Regional Education of 'Książnica Karkonoska'

Introduction

The library constitutes a structure which is technically more and more advanced but still its main objective is to provide users with access to knowledge. However, a modern library is not only a place where books are stored and made available; it is also becoming a cultural centre in which multifarious functions are concentrated to a large extent. The library is getting more and more independent of things which have constituted its foundation for centuries, i.e. independent of books and printed materials. The factors, which will form the essence of a library in the future, are electronic media and access to source materials by means of them.

For the last 20 years in Europe and all over the world, enormous changes have been made in the domain of the library space and the institution itself. For example, during this period the number of public libraries in France was triplicate (in 1980 there were 930 town libraries, while in 2001–2795) [7]. Unfortunately, during the recent years the number of public libraries in Poland has been systematically becoming smaller and smaller. According to the examinations made by the Central Statistical Office, 59 branches of public libraries were closed in 2007 but at the same time the number of libraries slightly increased [5]. The same situation, the example of which is described below, took place in Jelenia Góra where the Grodzka Public Library took over collections from several liquidated branches.

Apart from changes in number, there have also been revolutionary transformations in the library internal space. What did these changes consist of First of all, dominance of the book was questioned. Libraries began to offer open access to diverse collections in various forms and on almost all available data storage devices. Computer units were situated next to books as well as near magazines and newspapers. Slowly, the rooms with old card catalogues were transformed into rooms with computer catalogues, which adopted the information function. They became the first place of the reader's contact with collections and the user was able to follow a proper direction. The reader usually used books only after he had obtained bits of information stored in the computer base. Thus, the books still performed the basic function but the information, catalogue and navigation functions were performed by electronic data storage devices [2]. However, nowadays, the electronic data base does not only carry out the information function. These data storage devices also constitute source materials and like books they more often have an equivalent value (e.g. music or film sections). Moreover, libraries – in order to make their offer more attractive – try to work for longer hours and they extend the scope of their activity by organizing lectures, exhibitions, concerts and competitions as well as by arranging meetings with authors, film projections; they also make presentations for children and they improve the service for readers. Libraries do research in order to gain more information about their readers. The results of these examinations are used to make decisions regarding the architectonic appearance, space planning and the elements of interior design. Thanks to all these efforts the number of readers is still growing. In France, 18% of the population use libraries, twice as much as 20 years ago; in Great Britain and Germany – circa 30% and in Finland – 60% [7]. In Poland, there has been an insignificant decrease in the

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Fig. 1. *Książnica Karkonoska* – View at the side of Bankowa Street (photo: from collections of A. Grudziński)

Il. 1. Książnica Karkonoska – widok od strony ul. Bankowej (foto: ze zbiorów A. Grudzińskiego)

number of registered readers in recent years. In 2007, the number of readers was 6,719.1 (in 2000 – 7,392). However, the number of people who use public libraries is not so small – still almost 20% of the population [5].

The changes, which have occurred during the last twenty five years, also refer to the name itself – 'library'. The library has become an 'educational resource centre'. This new name emphasizes all resources – both traditional and electronic ones as well as the issue of science and education [2]. Public libraries are also called 'media-portfolios' or 'multi-media libraries'.

From the architectonic point of view, the most significant aspect is, first of all, the arrangement of the library space and the problem whether it should be huge, open and with functionally changeable equipment or whether it should be divided into thematic sections and smaller rooms. It seems that the solutions which offer only open multifunctional spaces (e.g. huge halls) and which are significantly deprived of any architectonic interior design are simply becoming an 'accidental space'. Close cooperation of librarians and architects provides the opportunity to create a specific and homogeneous library space which would take into consideration some degree of elasticity in the interior arrangement as to its formal expression. During the design process, particular attention is paid to the clear arrangement of interior communication, accessibility and functional changeability of rooms, noise control, lighting, temperature and safety and to the fact that the room should be equipped with appropriate installations.

In connection with continuous transformations of public libraries another question arises, i.e. how to adapt old libraries to new conditions? The project of Jeleniogórskie Centre of Information and Regional Education called *Książnica Karkonoska*, presented below, is an attempt to answer this question.

This article was written during design works referring to the development of the Grodzka Public Library in Jelenia Góra[1]. This structure, already in the investor's and designers' plans, was supposed to become a modern cultural centre. This centre was to provide readers with access to collections and the most modern computer technologies as well as to regional information based on electronic and traditional sources [6]. Thus, it was the design of the building with a multifunctional character – more of 'media-portfolio' than a traditionally understood library – and with free access to shelves with books and magazines but also with easy access to other data storage devices of different information. It was part of the contemporary trend to present readers as an attractive offer as possible and at the same time to provide readers with easy access to collections. The main goal of the project was to transform the Grodzka Public Library into a modern centre with full technical and didactic equipment. Particularly, it was supposed to provide conditions for the realization of programs within the scope of regional, reading and artistic education addressed to children, teenagers and adults, organization of exhibitions, meetings with authors and also different events connected with annual all-Polish or regional actions in favour of the development of libraries and reading [6]. This building provides such conditions[2] and offers readers such functional rooms as an information centre with computer and card catalogues, lending library of belles-lettres, popular science and scientific collections, 'talking books' with free access to collections for the reader as well as computer units with the Internet, a reading room with books, magazines and newspapers, regional reading room, library for children and teenagers, small forms gallery and conference room. *Książnica Karkonoska* also gives access to the Jelenio-górska Digital Library [6].

This public utility building of medium size[3] also constitutes an interesting example of the connection of historical and secessionist building with modern architecture (Fig. 1).

[1] The Project was produced under Andrzej Grudziński's guidance. The authors' team of the architectonic part consisted of the following architects: Paweł Amałowicz, Ewa Bryniak, Andrzej Zwierzchowski (checking). The construction project: Wojciech Marszałek MA, Eng.

[2] The building was officially opened in October 2008.

[3] The total usable area is 3638 m².

Purpose and intended use of the building

The building and executive project of Jeleniogórskie Centre of Information and Regional Education of *Książnica Karkonoska* included both an architectonic part and branch projects: construction part, water supply and sewerage, central heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, gas, electric and telecommunication engineering systems. This study discusses only the architectonic part.

Jeleniogórskie Centre of Information and Regional Education was designed as a modern library structure. This building along with the Lower Silesian Music Hall formed a cultural and educational complex. The *Książnica*

Karkonoska performs a significant utilitarian and culture-producing functions not only for the residents of Jelenia Góra, but for the people from the surrounding areas as well. Traditionally, the town also attracts foreign tourists (mainly from Germany and the Czech Republic). Owing to the development of the region and the perspectives of increasing tourist offers after Poland entered the EU, there is a natural need to promote attractive cultural offers.

Until October 2008 the Grodzka Public Library in Jelenia Góra had its seat in the 19th-century secessionist building at 27 Bankowa Street. A new modern library building was designed in the place which was associated with the library by the residents for years. Multi-functionality of the building makes it possible to organize authors' sessions, public lectures and thematic exhibitions. Its additional advantages are as follows: location in the very centre of the town at one of the main streets, the neighbourhood of the Lower Silesia Music Hall and finally, a short distance from the Town Hall and the seat of town authorities.

In the 1980s, the architects Andrzej Grudziński and Jan Tarczyński received a design task consisting in the development of the seat of the Public Symphonic Orchestra and then, the development of the Provincial Public Library in Jelenia Góra in the area which included Wolności, Bankowa, Matejki and Piłsudskiego Streets. The authors presented the project of the building which emphasised historical values of the already existing historic buildings there while the complementary architectonic structure did not form any contrastive dissonance in its scale and details. The shaping of the passageway connecting Bankowa and Piłsudskiego Streets, which made it possible to exhibit historical and new public utility areas in the best way, constituted a crucial problem in the whole functional and spatial composition [4].

The library was developed as a result of long-term works, but this new part was left in the rough till 2007 (Fig. 2).

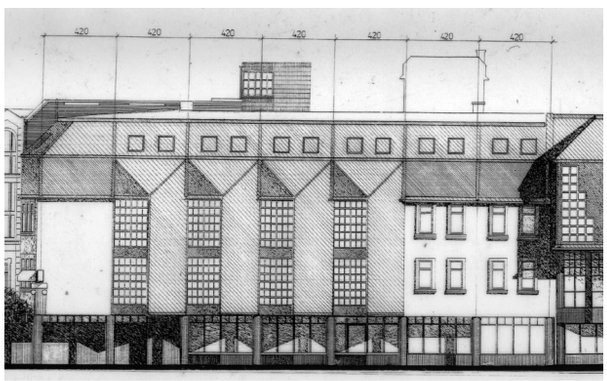

Fig. 2. *Książnica Karkonoska* – The western facade from the side of the passageway

Il. 2. Książnica Karkonoska – elewacja zachodnia od strony pasażu

Brief fore designs

The designing team of the architectonic part of *Książnica Karkonoska* made a lot of brief fore designs concerning functional and program requirements of the building. They agreed – in accordance with *inter alia* the principles elaborated by a British architect H. Faulkner-Brown [3] – that the complex of buildings must take into account the changes of organization and function of the interior space. The building should be massive with convenient halls and corridors which would make it possible for the readers and employees to move from one place to another (including disabled people) as well as to facilitate the transport of books. Moreover, the building must be diverse as regards the conditions of work (traditional reading rooms, individual and group work rooms) and arranged so that it would be easy for the readers to recognize the areas assigned for them; these areas should also be indicated with visual information. The building should also be esthetical and 'quiet' thanks to the application of subdued colours which are conducive to the atmosphere of silence and concentration and the usage of noise suppressing materials. First of all, however, it must be safe for the readers, employees and collections. In the fore designs, the architects took into account the necessity to provide stable environmental and microclimatic conditions which are indispensable for the protection of the library collections.

The authors' team, under Andrzej Grudziński's guidance, in consultation with the investor, decided that *Książnica Karkonoska* ought to be a place where collections are made accessible by traditional lending along with the information resources. Consequently, collections and information resources were supposed to be fully computerised. The authors of the project planned to create clearly separated functional areas in the building which would facilitate access to required information. The building was supposed to make it possible to take advantage of new information technologies, first of all, the Internet and to provide a place where exhibitions, expositions, various kinds of thematic meetings, competitions, library lessons and lectures would be organized. There were suggestions of introducing different forms of services directed at children, teenagers, disabled readers, elderly people, ethnic minorities, etc. It was agreed that the Jeleniogórskie Centre of Information and Regional Education was going to be a significant centre for the local cultural initiatives and undertakings organized along with the local authorities as well as with various social and cultural organizations. *Książnica Karkonosk*a should serve as the organizational and subjective help; furthermore, it should promote the region along with its accomplishments and residents' achievements.

Versatile program assumptions were accepted. The collections included 240 000 volumes (including compact storage of 135 000 volumes, traditional storage of 35 000 volumes; free access to 70 000 volumes for readers), 20 000 volumes of bound magazines and 280 titles of cur-

rent magazines. There are 150 seats and 45 computer units for readers. It was anticipated that about 50 employees would serve as the staff of the library Książnica. For the above assumptions the following area ratios were accepted:

500 volumes / 1 m² – for the books stored in the compact system;

160 volumes / 1 m² – for the books with free access to shelves;

100 volumes / 1 m² – for the books in the library for children and teenagers;

150 volumes / 1 m² – for bound magazines;

30 titles / 1 m² – for current magazines;

2 m² / 1 reading seat.

The architectonic form and function of the building

The design was divided into three parts which differed from one another as regards architectonic and functional aspects. The first part constituted the adapted historical tenement house (the previous seat of Grodzka Public Library); the second part constituted the developed part which was in a shell condition and finally, the third part – a new building which was situated between the tenement house and the developed part. All those parts were the subject of a detailed functional and space analysis of the created project: the concept, construction and execution design.

In the years 1990–1993 an extensive redecoration was carried out in the 19th century secessionist tenement house. The building entrances were situated at Bankowa Street. In front of the building at Bankowa Street, the major passageways for pedestrians were situated: a pavement, stairs and ramp (connecting the level the library entrance with the level at Bankowa Street) and still not completed stairs at the Music Hall passageway side. The area at the economic background facility (block interior) of the library was left disorderly and there was no boulder pavement at that place.

The part of the building which was developed in the 1990s (including Lower Silesian Music Hall) was partially in a complete shell condition. With its architecture it corresponded to the size and character of the historical part of the old town, which resulted from the direct relation of the created complex at that time with reference to the historical development [4]. This building was supposed to form – including the Music Hall structures – one common public utility complex with mutually intermingling parts of the representative rooms.

The new part of the building at the background facility (block interior) constituted the space closed with three facades: the secessionist tenement house, the building from the 1990s and the suggested modern glass cover (Fig. 3). The designed floors formed a terrace arrangement of interior galleries opening to the external courtyard (Fig. 4). Thus, the compactness of the whole structure resulted from the new part and at the same time this new part made it easier for the readers and staff to move and provided easier access to books. Thereby, the usable area of the whole structure was increased by more than 670 m², including the storage area by about 150 m² and bound magazines storage area by 130 m². This kind of solution made it possible to increase the number of book collections along with free access to shelves. Additionally, the area for indispensable technical rooms was achieved; these rooms ensured a correct functioning of ventilation and air conditioning as well as they ensured stable environmental conditions and appropriate microclimate; in these rooms there are also devices used for the purpose of safety and security of readers, staff and book collections.

The designed structure consisted of four ground floors (plus the terrace and engine rooms) and one underground floor. Each of these floors has their basic functions. The

Fig. 3. View of *Książnica Karkonoska* at the side of block interior. A new glassed-in part connects other structures: secessionist tenement house (on the right) and the building from the 1990s (on the left) (photo: P. Amałowicz).

Il. 3. Widok Książnicy Karkonoskiej od strony wnętrza blokowego. Nowa, przeszklona część łączy pozostałe obiekty: kamienicę secesyjną (po prawej) oraz budynek z lat dziewięćdziesiątych XX w. (po lewej) (foto. P. Amałowicz)

Fig. 4. The glassed-in new part of the structur. There is a noticeable terraced arrangement of interior galleries (photo: P. Amałowicz).

Il. 4. Przekrycie szklane nowej części obiektu. Widoczny tarasowy układ galerii wewnętrznych (foto. P. Amałowicz)

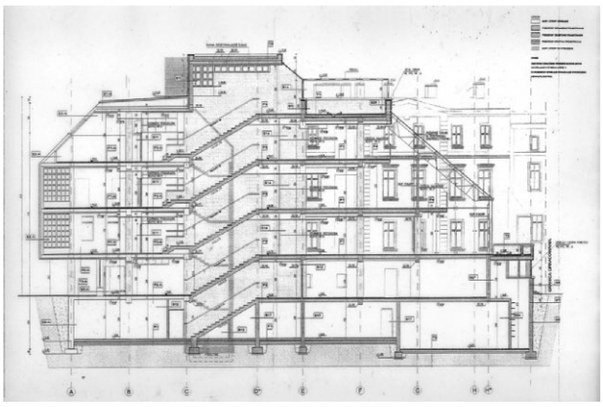

Fig. 5. Longitudinal section with a noticeable glassed-in part based on the spatial steel construction

Il. 5. Przekrój podłużny z widocznym szklanym przekryciem opartym na przestrzennej konstrukcji stalowej

Fig. 6. View of the interior of the second floor of the central part of *Książnica Karkonoska* (photo: P. Amałowicz)

Il. 6. Widok wnętrza II piętra centralnej części Książnicy Karkonoskiej (foto. P. Amałowicz)

underground floor performs the storage function along with the technical rooms; the ground floor fulfils the function of entrance zone with a general cloakroom; the first floor – the function of information centre with catalogues and a lending library; the second floor – reading rooms: general, magazines, the Internet and regional reading rooms; the third floor – a library for children and teenagers as well as a conference hall with a foyer.

The building was equipped with three transportation lines – two passenger lifts and one goods lift (serving as a means of transport for books). In the underground part, there was supposed to be a store-room for books with 270 two-sided compact bookshelves. On the levels +2,85 (of the 1st floor) and +13,00 additional terraces were designed. The first terrace is based on an air fan; the other is situated over a glass cover which was built on the spatial steel construction. The glassed-in new part of the building and particularly, a terraced arrangement of the gallery were supposed to emphasize the fact that it was going to be the designed information centre of *Książnica Karkonoska* (Fig. 5).

The functional and spatial arrangement of the designed structure is clear-cut with the main entrance at the passageway's side on the level 0,00, which is also available for disabled persons and the entrance zone which is connected with the information centre on the level +2,85 (the central point of the structure with librarians' units, exhibitions of new releases and catalogues) by means of the main transportation line (including the staircase and passenger lift).

From the information centre, which was designed in the new part of the building, different transportation lines lead to all functional rooms of the Information and Regional Education Centre. On the same level, where the information centre was situated, there was supposed to be a lending room with bookshelves and with free access to shelves (94 two-sided bookshelves and 21 single-sided bookshelves) as well as catalogues with six computer units and 10 catalogue boxes.

On the next floor, the following reading rooms were designed: general with 24 single-sided bookshelves and eight shelves for CDs; magazines' reading room with eight two-sided shelves for current magazines; the Internet reading room with 18 computer units and rooms for individual and group work (Fig. 6).

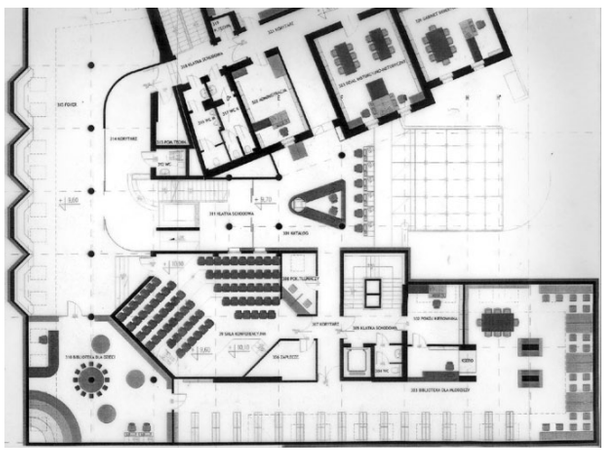

Fig. 7. Projection of level +9,60/+9,70/+9,95 along with suggestions as to equipment and interior arrangement

Il. 7. Rzut poziomu +9,60/+9,70/+9,95 z propozycją wyposażenia i aranżacji wnętrza

Fig. 8. Children and Teenagers Library, the room of fairytales (photo: P. Amałowicz)

Il. 8. Biblioteka Dziecięco-Młodzieżowa, sala bajek (foto. P. Amałowicz)

The building with a multifunctional character such as *Książnica Karkonoska* was not only supposed to perform library functions but also to make it possible to organize authors' sessions, public lectures, meetings, conferences, symposiums and thematic exhibitions. First of all, the auditorium designed as a conference and lecture room as well as the large foyer with the area of 141 m² (on the level +9,60/+9,70) situated in front of the auditorium, were to serve those aims. The building, where a conference room was designed, was in the complete shell condition, therefore, the arrangement of the room and its cubature determined spatial solutions to some extent. The auditorium was supposed to be situated on the highest usable floor of the building. It was to be used through the neighbouring foyer and the transportation line along with a passenger lift situated nearby (Fig. 7).

The children and teenager department was also situated on the third floor (Fig. 8).

Technical and building assumptions of the design

Auditorium room

The elaborated building and execution design of the auditorium interior included architecture with acoustic structures' elements, construction, ventilation and electric installations. It ensured functional and spatial solutions which met contemporary requirements in the range of ergonomics, safety and comfort of users.

The auditorium with the usable area of 71,3 m² was to serve 84 people, including one disabled person and one lecturer (82 conference armchairs were planned). Thus, it means that the unit area for the user (including the lecturer's zone) is circa 0,85 m² per person, which shows the maximum usage of the area.

The whole room was shaped in an form of amphitheater (each row was placed higher by 17 cm with reference to the previous one) and this arrangement ensured very good conditions of visibility of the lecturer's desk along with the set of blackboards and screens. Only the first two rows were designed on the level of the entrance to the auditorium, which resulted from a limited height of the room but in fact, it did not worsen the users' visibility of the lecturer's place because the lecturer's desk zone was made higher by 25 cm.

In the horizontal arrangement, a transportation passage was situated in the central part of the auditorium because of the irregular plan of the room and the investor's suggestion that as many seats as possible should be available for the users. However, during the realization of the project which was carried out without the author's supervision, the idea of placing the first row was rejected and the armchairs were made wider, which limited the total number of seats in the room (Fig. 9).

In the design, a diagonal arrangement, broken under the angle of 45°, was accepted as the optimal disposition of seats for the audience. The flow capacity of the transportation passage was achieved by means of the accepted and calculated width of the passage – min. 120 cm. The rows were placed at 90 cm intervals in accordance with ergonomic conditions and requirements regarding evacuation. The architects designed individual seats combined in modules and persistently fixed to the floor.

Optimal acoustic conditions were supposed to be achieved by an appropriate arrangement of structures with particular features: absorbing and reflecting ones situated on the ceiling as well as on the walls.

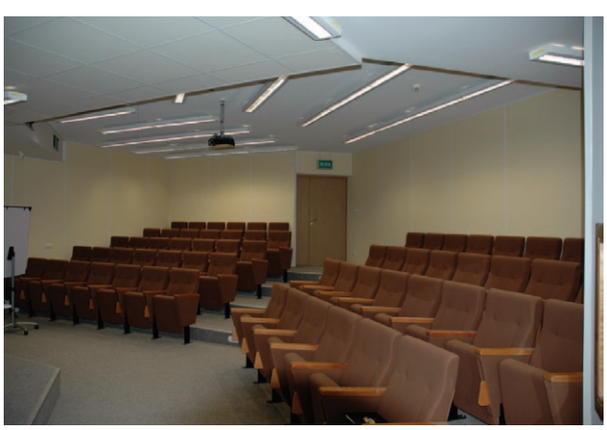

Fig.9. Conference room (photo: P. Amałowicz)

Il. 9. Sala konferencyjna (foto. P. Amałowicz)

Fig. 10. Terrace on the highest floor of the building, +13,00 (photo: P. Amałowicz)

Il. 10. Taras na najwyższym poziomie budynku, +13,00 (foto. P. Amałowicz)

Indispensable mechanical ventilation and artificial lighting (it was impossible to use only natural lighting there), meeting the requirements of the obligatory standards, were fixed in the auditorium. The room was to be equipped with audio-visual devices (two multimedia projectors and a screen). The back-up facilities of the auditorium consist of a translators' room with two booths for simultaneous interpreting and a storage room [1].

The elaboration of the conference room presented above – apart from increasing the attractiveness of the building – significantly extended its functional program.

The whole building was equipped with all the necessary facilities for the disabled. The entrance area on the passageway side is accessible from the terrain level. All parts of the complex were designed in a way that enables free movement of the disabled on wheelchairs (appropriate width of passages, getting rid of differences of levels or connections by means of ramps at the appropriate angle, introducing passenger lifts). The rooms were arranged with respect to ergonomic conditions understood as adaptation of the internal space, equipment and devices towards the scale of a human being in the aspect of his physical and perception possibilities (Fig. 10).

In accordance with the current regulations contained in Diary Acts No 75 [8] and 109 [9], an appropriate number of toilets for permanent and temporary users of the building was planned. For the purpose of calculations, circa 150 readers and 50 permanent employees were taken into consideration. In the approximate assumption of even division of sexes, it turned out that there should be eight toilets for women and four toilets for men along with eight urinals. On each floor an additional toilet for disabled persons and one toilet for the permanent staff of the building were planned.

The whole building wad designed as a multi-storey structure – of medium height. According to the classification presented in Diary Acts No 75 [8] (with amendment I Diary Acts No 109 dated 7.04.2004 [9]), a danger zone for people ZL III 'B' was determined. All the component elements of the construction meet the required regulations. In the project, the architects designed evacuation passages of an appropriate width and access passages of an appropriate length. The arrangement of staircases guarantees safety and secure evacuation from the buildings to the outside. Non-flammable and almost non-flammable materials were used as well as other elements of fire protection.

The whole structure is situated in one fire zone – up to 5000 m².

Summary

The example of *Książnica Karkonoska* shows a gradual process of adaptation of the public library to contemporary requirements and the library's transformation into a modern Centre of Information and Regional Education. *Książnica Karkonoska* along with the Lower Silesian Music Hall may create an important centre with great culture-producing values not only for Jelenia Góra, but also for the whole region.

In autumn 2006, the realization of the design started; however, it was carried out without the author's supervision. It was completed in October 2008 accompanied by a formal opening ceremony.

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[9] *Rozporządzenie Ministra Infrastruktury z dnia 7 kwietnia 2004 r. zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie warunków technicznych, jakim powinny odpowiadać budynki i ich usytuowanie*, DzU no. 109, position 1156.

Nowoczesny obiekt biblioteczny w staromiejskiej zabudowie. Projekt Jeleniogórskiego Centrum Informacji i Edukacji Regionalnej Książnica Karkonoska

W ciągu ostatnich 20 lat w Europie i na świecie dokonały się ogromne zmiany w przestrzeni bibliotecznej i w samej instytucji biblioteki. Biblioteki zaczęły oferować otwarty dostęp do różnorodnych zbiorów, w urozmaiconych formach, na niemal wszystkich dostępnych nośnikach.

Niniejszy artykuł powstał w czasie prac projektowych nad rozbudową Grodzkiej Biblioteki Publicznej w Jeleniej Górze. Już w zamierzeniach inwestora i projektantów (zespół autorski części architektonicznej tworzyli: arch. arch. Andrzej Grudziński, Paweł Amałowicz, Ewa Bryniak, Andrzej Zwierzchowski) obiekt miał być nowoczesnym ośrodkiem kultury, z pełnym wyposażeniem technicznym i dydaktycznym. Był to projekt budynku o charakterze wielofunkcyjnym, bardziej „mediateki" niż tradycyjnie rozumianej biblioteki.

Projekt dzielił się na trzy części różniące się pod względem architektoniczno-funkcjonalnym. Jedną część stanowiła adaptowana historyczna kamienica (wcześniejsza siedziba Grodzkiej Biblioteki Publicznej), drugą – część rozbudowana, znajdująca się w stanie surowym i wreszcie trzecią – nowy budynek umieszczony pomiędzy kamienicą i częścią rozbudowaną. Wszystkie części były przedmiotem szczegółowej analizy funkcjonalno-przestrzennej opracowanego projektu. Nowa część, projektowana od strony zaplecza (wnętrza blokowego), miała zapewnić zwartość całego obiektu, a tym samym łatwość komunikacyjną w poruszaniu się czytelników i personelu oraz książek. Przeszklenie nowej części obiektu, zaplanowanej jako centrum informacyjne Książnicy Karkonoskiej, oparte zostało na przestrzennej konstrukcji stalowej. W tej części wprowadzono także tarasowy układ poszczególnych kondygnacji.

Przykład Książnicy Karkonoskiej pokazuje stopniowy proces dostosowywania się biblioteki publicznej do współczesnych wymogów i przekształcania jej w nowoczesne centrum informacji i edukacji. Książnica Karkonoska z przylegającą do niej Filharmonią Dolnośląską mogą stworzyć ważny ośrodek, o dużych walorach kulturotwórczych nie tylko dla Jeleniej Góry, ale dla całego regionu.

Jesienią 2006 r. rozpoczęto realizację projektu, prowadzoną jednak bez nadzoru autorskiego. Została ona zakończona uroczystym otwarciem w październiku 2008 r.

Key words: architecture of public buildings, library, design

Słowa kluczowe: architektura usługowa, biblioteka, projektowanie