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Continuation of the typology of the structures of Nadświdrzańska architecture in contemporary realizations

Introduction

Nadświdrzańska architecture, commonly known as Świdermajer, despite its popularity as a traditional Polish style, has been left without sufficient academic analysis so far. This article aims to present the basic typological relations occurring within the shaping of solids of both historical buildings and their contemporary interpretations. This topic requires study due to the progressing physical and ideological degradation of the resources of historical buildings, resulting from incompetent conservation, deliberate demolition, neglect and arson, as well as incorrect references in new construction. The uniqueness of this local architecture enables opportunities to build the so-called local identity of Nadświdrzańska architecture, which translates into the social and commercial value of cultural heritage [2]–[4].

The subject of work.
Research problem, goals of work

The subject of the research work was a comparative analysis of examples of Nadświdrzańska architecture and the newly erected buildings referring to them. For the purposes of this analysis, field research was carried out, followed by a study of buildings referring to the features of Świdermajer architecture.

The basis of the first part of the typological research was the buildings of Nadświdrzańska architecture appearing in the studies concerning the discussed area. Different factors were specified, such as the time of their creation (from 1880 to 1939), the function (summer resort, sanatorium, villa, preventorium, boarding house), the material (wooden buildings, wall construction, sheathing, decorations), the presence of characteristic features (verandas, formwork systems, ornamentation) and the area of occurrence (Fig. 1). The second part of the research consisted of the analysis of buildings selected on the basis of modern references to Świdermajer architecture (the use of wooden, openwork architectural details, the introduction of verandas, the shaping of buildings with similar proportions and features of spatial layouts), function (residential buildings, public buildings, all-year-round), material (wooden porches and formwork), time of creation (after 1989) and area of occurrence (Fig. 1).

The research question was which physical features of Nadświdrzańska architecture refer to the newly emerging architecture in this area. It was assumed that the dominant types of shaping the solids of historical buildings could be distinguished, and that the isolated, repetitive types find their continuation in contemporary implementations, emerging in the analyzed area. The aim of the work was to determine the typology of the structures of Nadświdrzańska architecture based on a quantitative analysis (over 200 examples), to isolate the most characteristic types of block shaping and to find an answer to the question whether the Nadświdrzańska style buildings created after 1989 continue the spatial arrangements of historical types. Thus, research on a new phenomenon, the so-called Neo-świdermajer architecture was needed. Buildings re-

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1 This text is a separate fragment of the author’s doctoral dissertation [1].
2 It seems that a richer body is indeed present in the older buildings of the so-called Nadświdrzański style, although no one has made a detailed comparative analysis based on the preserved buildings and existing documentation [5, p. 139].
3 The term “Neo-świdermajer” was coined by Adam Krajewski in relation to contemporary buildings referring to the historic architecture of

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to define the stylistic features of Świdermajer architecture [6]–[8], as well as linking them with the newly emerging architecture referring to the historical one. Adam Krajewski defined the area of formation of the local architecture, discussed its individual elements, dealt with its periodization and defined the style features of this construction, pointing to its Swiss-Russian origins [5]. Jerzy Szałygin [11], [12] and Agnieszka Wośko-Czeranowska [13] dealt with determining the characteristics of Świdermajer architecture. Marcin Górski and Wiktor Lach determined the features of typical buildings, combined them with the trends of Swiss and Russian architecture, and dealt with the history of the village and the cataloging of buildings [14]–[18]. Ewa Pustoła-Kozłowska described the urban changes taking place in this area [19]. Iwona Trzcinska dealt with the social impact of Świdermajers [2]. The author and Krzysztof Mycielski wrote an article on project priorities on the example of the modernization of the Abram Gurewicz Health Resort in Otwock [20].

However, it was found that there was little scientific analysis of the new architecture referring to Nadświdrzan ska architecture. Most of the works focus on enumerating the characteristics, but without indicating exceptions to the rules or specifying the most common types. Most importantly, these existing studies exclude sufficient documentation or analysis on the shapes of buildings and verandas. Cichy’s studies on the shapes and periodization of formwork were the closest to typological studies [10].

**Research methods. Drawing and typology**

The tangible and intangible values of cultural heritage are important factors of Nadświdrzan ska architecture [21]. Intangible components provoked the author to use non-obvious, immeasurable ways of registering and experiencing them. That is why the author established the need to reach for drawing, graphics and painting (Fig. 2).

Due to the complexity of Nadświdrzan ska architecture, the author decided to use the drawing in two ways. The first of them concerns the initial recognition of the issue. Through sketches, drawings and graphics, the author tried to intuitively familiarize himself with the buildings in the initial phase of his work\(^4\). The first lines drawn in sketchbooks and later graphics created in the studio were attempts to decipher the features of the nadświdrzan ska architecture, its relationship to the landscape, colors and character of the space. After the initial phase, the author also returned to drawing as a method to synthesize the developed knowledge. Drawing typological charts show similarities between individual buildings in a more clear way than their descriptions [22].

The concepts of type and typology have changed their meaning over the centuries, from a permanent pattern, which is an idea that emanates in built architecture, to

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\(^4\) This tradition has a long and rich history at the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology, of which the author is a graduate. The author is also a graduate of the Faculty of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, which makes communication by image the core of his daily work.
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A form distinguished in research, described by a set of properties. An architectural work achieves greater recognition by belonging to a group, trend or family. Only an ordered and coherent context allows for the emergence of characteristic, but also unique or individual features [23]. In this paper the purpose of the developed typology was not only to classify buildings, but to use typological knowledge as a tool for assessing, grouping, creating and designing new buildings. But what happens when a type changes; typological analysis needs to be open to describing the emergence of new characteristics as well as the persistence of old. Historically, in defining the typology, the aspect of recognizability of the phenomenon in society was also emphasized [23]. Against this background, it can certainly be said that Świdrmajer architecture is an explicit phenomenon that extends beyond its current architectural discourse. There is a need for a type of research involving the simultaneous analysis of both historical and contemporary buildings. Even though Nadświdrzańska architecture was a historical phenomenon, new projects referring to it excite this previously closed process to stir once more.

The concepts of type and typology can be tools used in designing a new architecture. Searching for types and defining the typology in relation to Nadświdrzańska architecture is justified due to the need to define a set of features to which one can consciously refer. The author decided to study historical and contemporary buildings at the same time in order to check whether the components such as proportions, type of added solids or the number of verandas have their continuation in new implementations.

**Nadświdrzańska architecture – genesis, definition**

The years 1880 and 1939 are the borderline dates for creation of Nadświdrzańska architecture. Its appearance in this area is related to the expansion of railway connections from Warsaw to the south-east. Land parceling by landowners made it possible to settle the land. The local
climate of pine forests, drawing the attention of doctors to their positive effect in the treatment of lung diseases, as well as the direct activity of Józef Geisler gave pretexts for shaping the holiday character of the region. The town and utilitarian character.

Nadświdrzańska architecture served recreation and health, it was intended for renters. The basic residential module consisted of one or two rooms with access to a veranda. Earlier researchers defined the features of Nadświdrzańska architecture. The main body of the building was covered with a gable roof with an inclination of about 30°. Verandas were added to the block from no more than three sides. The attics were usable, hidden behind a knee wall. Dormers appeared in the roof slopes. Roofs sometimes took mansard forms. The eaves extended beyond the gable wall, here too there were abstract decorations with plant features. A common procedure was to create a central avant-corps, covered with a gable roof, often ending with an additional veranda. The whole block, usually set in the depth of the plot, gave the impression of fragmentation, and the appearing avant-corps, verandas and porches – additiveness. The most popular materials at that time were used: brick (plinth), pine wood (walls, porches and roof), oak wood (base plates), roofing felt, eternit (roof), zinc sheet (gutters, roof sheathing, flashing). The construction of the walls was mainly made of post and plank, frame, sometimes also brick. The roof structure consisted of simple purlin and purlin-collar systems. Thermal insulation was made of a mixture of needles, clay, straw and shavings. The interiors were finished with plaster on a reed mat.

Decorations and formwork (their dimensions, profiles and layouts) are among the most characteristic and recognizable features of Nadświdrzańska architecture (Fig. 3). The sculpted character of the Świdermajer solids was emphasized by the horizontal stripes of the friezes. In Monestiroli’s understanding, decoration is a detail relating to the idea of a given building, which distinguishes it from ornamentation, which is only an added feature that can be taken away [24]. In this approach, the decoration is the openwork boards cut out on the verandas, because they shape the semi-permeable border of the veranda, i.e. the space between the building and its surroundings. These openwork decorations together with verandas served as key and defining aspects of this architecture (Fig. 4a).

Following Krajewski, it can be said that Świdermajer architecture is a local variant of Tyrolean-Swiss architecture in its second, Neo-vernacular version [5]. Świdermajers were not created with the ambition to create a national style, nor did they refer directly to the local buildings. Uniqueness and picturesqueness were to accompany its use; it was rather a fairy-tale and romantic scenography for relaxation, rather than architecture with a year-round character.

**Neo-świdermajer architecture**

The Neo-świdermajer architecture concept appeared in Krajewski’s work in relation to new buildings referring to the local historical architecture [5]. These projects are created in private architectural studios, mainly for individual investors, which is why the year 1989 was adopted as the turning point for Neo-świdermajers. The newly created facilities are examples of specific critical regionalism, seeking
couplings of historical forms with contemporary requirements for year-round residential buildings. References to Nadświdrzańska architecture in new buildings appear through the use of wood, the use of openwork details, the presence of verandas, giving the buildings proportions and solid features similar to Świdermajer architecture (Fig. 2b). The buildings analyzed by the author come from the same area as the historical examples, i.e. the southern part of the Wawer district, the town of Józefów and Otwock (Fig. 1).

The analyzed buildings have a year-round residential function. The region has lost its resort status and character, and investors are often people working in Warsaw, looking for comfortable, relatively large houses built in the vicinity of the capital, located near the railway line and surrounded by forest. Health reasons are no longer the main motivation behind settling in the vicinity of the historic Otwock line. In conversations with the authors of the Neo-świdermajer projects, it was revealed that it was the investors themselves who were interested in architecture referring to the historical buildings in the surroundings, and in this way they wanted to maintain the local identity of the place. On the plan of a single-family residential building located at 10A Skargi Street in Józefów, there is a visible desire to match the functional layout of a modern house (e.g. garage, separation of the day and night parts, functional relationship between the living room and kitchen – Fig. 4d) to a solid with the features of historical Nadświdrzańska architecture (addition, offset – Figs. 4a–c). The kitchen, dining room and living room are located to the south. An office was placed on the north side. Timber was used as the construction of the porch and the formwork on the elevations on the 1st floor (Fig. 2b).

In shaping the functional layouts of Neo-Świdermajers, some similarities can be noticed, consisting in the use of a typical layout of contemporary residential houses for a family, often with a combined kitchen and living room (sometimes two-story). The verandas were an extension of the living room as a terrace or a closed conservatory. Garages in the form imitating an additional veranda or risalit have been integrated into the projections of the ground floors. Study, bathrooms and sleeping rooms are located on the 1st floor. Verandas on the upper storey served as additional balconies for bedrooms or communication halls.

In relation to the plans and shape of the solid, architects and the press used the term “cross plan” referring to the historic architecture of the region [26]. The authors meant intersecting the main body and two avant-corps, usually extended with a porch. The inclination angles of the roofs in the buildings of Neo-Świdermajer architecture were similar to the historical examples of Nadświdrzańska architecture. Studies on the shapes of solids and their comparison with historical architecture have not been the subject of research so far.

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5 Critical regionalism was an attempt to reconcile opposing forces – dynamic, changing universalism and conservative regionalism [9], [25].
Curvilinear vegetal decorations which were located in the historical architecture under the protruding eaves of the roofs, in Neo-świdermajer architecture are used much more freely, e.g. in the balustrades of verandas in the building located in Józefów at 51 Matejki Street. This type of decoration was detached from its usual place [5]. Patterns used in new architecture also come from processing examples of decorations appearing in Liebold’s pattern book. The example from 33b Długa Street in Otwock testifies to the vital influence of Swiss architecture on contemporary buildings erected in the vicinity of the historic Otwock line. The color scheme of the façade is dominated by a combination of white plaster with a warm brown color of wood with the grain pattern highlighted with varnish. As such, the interior design is independent of the architecture of the buildings. The interiors of Neo-świdermajers are very diverse, reflecting the needs of their owners. There are exotic stones and types of wood, as well as rustic motifs.

Buildings of Neoswidermajer architecture are made of standard, modern building materials. Concrete blocks, ceramic hollow bricks, ceramic bricks and reinforced concrete appear in the wall structures. Wood is used as formwork and in the skeletal construction of verandas. The façades are mostly covered with plaster either entirely or up to the ground floor.

**Typology of Nadświdrzańska architecture**

The author prepared charts presenting the axonometry of building groups. The groups have been selected in such a way as to highlight the similarities in shaping the solids of Nadświdrzańska and Neo-świdermajer architecture. Each solid is accompanied by a number referring to a specific building. Parts of the buildings have been drawn with a black outline, and particularly important elements have been highlighted with a black fill with white outlines such as porches and avant-corps, or selected fragments of buildings that prove their belonging to a group. In the course of broader research, three main types of shaping solids were distinguished, they were distinguished on the basis of the number of avant-corps adjacent to the longer side of the basic building solid and depending whether the side wings of the building appear. There are also groups of buildings separated due to the nature of the composition (complex, compact, asymmetric systems, etc.) [1]. Only the basic type will be presented in the article, as the most characteristic.

**Type I – basic**

In the groups presented within type I, there are examples of the most characteristic shaping of the form of buildings of Nadświdrzańska architecture. In the basic type, the main body is adjoined by 3- or 4-axis avant-corps, usually finished with verandas. The typological board (Fig. 6) was created with the emphasis on the relationship between the central avant-corps in relation to the eaves and the ridge. The rarest examples were the buildings at 24 Trawiasta Street in Warsaw-Anin (Fig. 5.32), 46 Mickiewicza Street (Fig. 5.33) in Otwock, where the central avant-corps appears on both sides and creates a body higher than the basic one. In a brick building located in Otwock, at 13A Konopnickiej Street (Fig. 5.34) one central avant-corps is larger than the other. The author decided to include selected buildings (Fig. 5.6, 5.8, 5.22) on this board, despite the presence of elements slightly disturbing the symmetry of the solid.

Type I may also include buildings whose solid features indicated similarity to the basic type, also through deformations (change in the proportions of avant-corps, the presence of more richly shaped elements or the extension of the body in the basic type with additional elements). In this approach, 85% of the 228 buildings of Nadświdrzańska architecture examined by the author were classified as type I or its deformation.

**Research on Neo-świdermajer architecture**

The axonometry of contemporary buildings was also prepared in a similar way, and then the Neo-świdermajer architectural buildings were juxtaposed with selected examples of historical Świdermajers (Fig. 6). Selected buildings are representative of particular types defined for historical solids. There is a clear tendency to shape the bodies of new buildings in such a way that their form resembles historical buildings. This process is not based on scientific research, but using the experience, knowledge and intuition of designers.

The basic type is represented in the following examples: N4, N8, N12. The first deformation of the basic type, consisting in re-scaling the avant-corps, is found in the examples: N8, N11. Building N7 can be interpreted as a basic type with richly shaped elements. The most popular deformation involving the expansion of type I with additional solids manifests itself in the following forms: N4, N7, N9, N13, N14, N19, N20. The basic type without a central avant-corps is manifested in the shape of the following buildings: N3, N6, N15. The deformation of the basic type associated with the lack of a side avant-corps is represented by N16 and N20 Neo-świdermajers. The basic type without side avant-corps is reflected in N2, N5, N10, N19. Complex systems include N17; asymmetric systems – N9 and N16; compact systems – N1 and N13; atypical systems – N18. There is one building with a tower – N186.

Among the examined contemporary buildings, there are clear references to Nadświdrzańska architecture by shaping the solids. The distinguished types find their continuation in the spatial compositions of contemporary buildings. The new buildings can be assigned to particular types distinguished for the architecture of the region.

**Discussion**

The method of research consisting in a comparative analysis of solids presented in axonometry could be criticized as incompatible with the openwork and landscape character of Nadświdrzańska architecture, perceived

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6 These groups are discussed in more detail in the author’s research work [1].
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Fig. 5. Type I – basic type: 1) Otwock, 42 Mickiewicza Street, 2) Otwock, 3 Mała Street, 3) Radość, 18 Jagody Street, 4) Otwock, 1 Koszykowa Street, 5) Otwock, 22 Konopnickiej Street, 6) Otwock, 5/7 Piaskowa Street, 7) Otwock, 104 Górna Street, 8) Falenica, 2 Początkowa Street, 9) Falenica, 14 Początkowa Street, 10) Otwock, 2 Pusta Street, 11) Otwock, 31 Mickiewicza Street, 12) Otwock, 27 Bagatela Street, 13) Falenica, 2 Początkowa Street, 14) Józefów, 102 3 Maja Street, 15) Otwock, 1 Smolna Street, 16) Otwock, 58 Szkolna Street, 17) Józefów, 2 Wyszyńskiego Street, 18) Józefów, 28 Wyszyńskiego Street, 19) Otwock, 23 Mickiewicza Street, 20) Otwock, 8 Kościelna Street, 21) Otwock, 2 Krótka Street, 22) Otwock, 11 Konopnickiej Street, 23) Otwock, 10 Krótka Street, 24) Otwock, 18 Turystyczna Street, 25) Otwock, 51 Narutowicza Street, 26) Otwock, 11 and 13 Jana Pawła II Street, 27) Józefów, 68 Wyszyńskiego Street, 28) Józefów, 100 3 Maja Street, 29) Anin, 4 Trawiasta Street, 30) Otwock, 33 Mickiewicza Street, 31) Otwock, 6 Czarneckiego Street, 32) Anin, 24 Trawiasta Street, 33) Otwock, 13 Piwna Street, 34) Otwock, 13A Konopnickiej Street (drawing by T.J. Trzupek)
through the prism of its decorations. Looking at the developed buildings as a set of simplified solids, however, allows us to look for common features of the architecture in an objective way and isolate those that differ from the others. The most popular Świdersmajers tend to be richly decorated, but there are also buildings with similar solid features with clearly reduced details. Over the course of a hundred years, some of the buildings underwent significant reconstruction or partial demolition, so that individual buildings could originally belong to different types.

The selection of new examples limited to 20 specific examples can also be questioned. The choice was made in...
terms of a conscious reference to Świdermajer architecture, which is the result of the activity of architects-graduates of the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology, in their declarations referring to the concept of genius loci and identity continuity of the area of the historical Otтокв line.

Conclusions

The article confirms the thesis on the variety of ways of shaping solids in Nadświdrzańska architecture. The possibility of separating the basic types of solids has been proven. New buildings can be assigned to the typology created for historical buildings. The analysis of 228 examples of Świdermajers showed the richness and diversity in the ways of shaping buildings. The basic type and its deformations account for about 85% of the tested resource. Architecture created after 1989, referring to local historical architecture (e.g. through the use of architectural details, using a similar scale and solid features) continue the spatial arrangements of the historical architecture types. The new buildings can be assigned to particular types distinguished for the architecture of the discussed region. The examination of contemporary buildings showed the architects’ aspirations to refer to the historical architecture with the shape of their own buildings.

Prospects for continuing research

From the perspective of the described research, it seems reasonable to conduct comparative studies of the obtained results and forms of summer resort architecture in selected parts of Poland. Particularly interesting results could be obtained by a typological juxtaposition of verandas, which, in addition to the decoration and shape of the solids, are a key identity component of Nadświdrzańska architecture. A separate issue could be the development of a catalog of existing shutter board endings and open-work porch decorations, so as to be able to determine their specificity against the background of other examples of wooden and holiday architecture in Poland. In order to determine the stylistic features, thorough research on the location of buildings and their relationship to the cardinal directions (especially verandas) would be needed.

Another, perhaps the most interesting perspective for the continuation of the research would be to compare the typologies of holiday architecture solids found in various regions of Poland, as well as in Europe. This would make it possible to verify the views on the complete autonomy or secondary nature of the phenomenon of Świdermajer architecture in relation to forms erected at a similar time with a similar function, but in other regions. The performed research can be used to analyze changes in the ways of shaping solids in chronological terms.

The presented research results can be further developed by generating model and variant geometries of forms using computer or manual techniques to examine the limits of the idea of Świdermajer and to determine possible shapes that would be referring to local heritage.

References


Translated by Tomasz J. Trzupek
Abstract

The subject of the article is Nadświdrzańska architecture, commonly known as Świdermajer, and the architecture referred to as Neo-świdermajer, i.e. new buildings appearing in the discussed region and referring to historical architecture. The aim was to present the most characteristic type of shaping historical forms and to prove that contemporary buildings continue these systems. A typological comparative analysis of solid systems was used for this purpose. The text presents the genesis of the phenomenon, the state of research, typology and drawings showing the most characteristic elements of the discussed architecture (verandas and decorative formwork profiles), lists of projections of historical and contemporary buildings and boards juxtaposing the solids of Nadświdrzańska architecture and Neo-świdermajer.

On the basis of the presented material, it can be concluded that the theses regarding the variety of ways of shaping solids in the historical architecture and the assumption of the possibility of distinguishing dominant types of shaping solids have been confirmed. New architecture can be assigned to specific typologies of historical buildings. Thus, this work begins a scientific reflection on a new phenomenon, which is Neo-świdermajer.

Key words: Nadświdrzańska architecture, Świdermajer, Neo-świdermajer, typology

Streszczenie

Kontynuacja typologii brył architektury nadświdrzańskiej we współczesnych realizacjach

Tematem artykułu jest architektura nadświdrzańska, zwana potocznie świdermajerem, oraz architektura określana jako neo-świdermajer, czyli nowe obiekty pojawiające się w omawianym regionie i nawiązujące do obiektów historycznych. Celem autora było przedstawienie najbardziej charakterystycznego typu kształtowania brył obiektów historycznych i udowodnienie, że współczesne obiekty kontynuują te układy. Wykorzystano do tego typologiczną analizę porównawczą układów brył. W tekście przedstawiono genezę zjawiska, stan badań, typologię oraz zaprezentowano rysunki przedstawiające najbardziej charakterystyczne elementy omawianej architektury (werandy i ozdobne profile szalunków), zestawienia rzutów obiektów historycznych i współczesnych, plansze zestawiające ze sobą bryły architektury nadświdrzańskiej i Neo-świdermajer.

Na podstawie przedstawionego materiału można stwierdzić, że wysunięte tezy dotyczące różnorodności sposobów kształtowania brył w architekturze nadświdrzańskiej i założenie możliwości wyodrębnienia dominujących typów kształtowania brył zostały potwierdzone. Nowe obiekty można przyporządkować określonym typologiom budynków historycznych. Tym samym niniejsza praca rozpoczyna naukową reakcję na nowym zjawiskiem, jakim jest neo-świdermajer.

Słowa kluczowe: architektura nadświdrzańska, świdermajer, neo-świdermajer, typologia