

“MIHAIL STURDZA” PALACE BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT

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Summary

The synthesis work of the Russian architect M. Singurov,[1] built up within the norms of the neo-classic style as a royal palace for Mihail Sturdza, between the years 1841-1842, was bought by Moldavia and Suceava Metropolitan Seat in 1891 to become the residence of Veniamin Costache Seminary, the restorations having been led by the architect Gh.Mandrea. The maintenance and restoration works took place between 1893 and 1910 under the guidance of the architect I. Vignali, as well as minor works performed after the earthquake of 1940 and the bombardment of 1941.[2]

A series of provisory consolidation works were made up after the earthquake of 1977 and studies signing the deteriorations evolution and their cause, restoration and consolidation works were performed as well.

Under the circumstances of reacquiring the status of location for theological training and education with new functional requirements, a new strategy and approach for consolidation, restoration and functional rehabilitation works is imperiously imposed.

Keywords: palace, neo-classic, Moldavia and Bucovina Metropolitan Seat, deterioration, consolidation, restoration, rehabilitation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The former palace of Mihail Sturdza is an edifice, characterizing a certain period of developing the historic centre of Iași, representative for the Moldavian royal families, used as royal residence for Mihail Sturdza within 1842-1849 as well. This building has also remained in the history of the city as the main centre of orthodox theological training and education, Veniamin Costache Seminary having been functioning since 1894 up to 1948.

After about 40 years, while the building has been used by other units of superior training, the palace has suffered severe damages due to wars and earthquakes, and after several partial repairing works, null and void most of the time, the edifice has come back to Moldavia and Bucovina Metropolitan Cathedral



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as residence of D. Staniloaie Theology Faculty of “Al. I. Cuza “University from Iași.

2. “MIHAIL STURDZA” PALACE - BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT

Mihail Sturdza Palace, situated between St.Gheorghe Lozonschi Church and Moldavia and Bucovina Metropolitan Cathedral, a remarkable presence in the architecture of the last two centuries from Iași, makes the object of consolidation, restoration and functional re-establishing studies and projects, according to its new status as residence of Theology Faculty got at the end of the XIX th century.[1]

The monumental building in neo-classic style was finished between 1841-1842 under the guidance of the Russian architect M. Singurov and was designated as royal palace of Mihail Sturdza and as private residence in the city as well.

Bought by the Moldavia and Suceava Metropolitan Seat and Veniamin Costache Seminary from Socola in 1891, extensive restoration works led by the architect Gh.Mandrea were performed from 1891 up to 1983. Between the two world wars, It has temporary sheltered a campaign hospital and military unit as well. After the Second World War, the seminary having been cancelled, the Palace has become the residence of certain locations designated to Superior Institutes from Iași.[2]

One of the most important civil buildings, built up between 1800 and 1850, due to its spread ness and architectural composition worth the title of palace.

Taking over a certain type of palace, developed especially in baroque and neo-classic architecture, the architect Singurov has proposed the extension of the old central segment with two lateral wings. The two wings, with long sides surrounding a large court of honor, arranged as park, the access from St. Gheorghe Lozonschi Church having been made through, configure an H shape The central body of the building provided with an outer part in the median area that is enabling the access in the edifice and the stair of honor getting to the first floor is corresponding to, has a secondary access to the yard delimited by short wings toward the Metropolitan assembly.

The aspect of the palace is impressing as a whole; its composition in classic style is generous, in perfect harmony with the function of the royal palace. The main entrance is marked by a higher volume, decorated wile pilasters, columns with composite column heads with a developed entablement, richly decorated friezes and cornices. For the last cornice, the crowning entrance is marked by a stir of balusters and two classic acroterium.

The main entrance is assured by three double oak massive doors with sculptured ornaments and decorated fences. The great hall and the stair of honor



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are built in an architectural plastic art specific to the nobles' houses from that period. The walls are marked by pilasters with Corinthian column heads built up from masonry and the ceiling is taking over the enclosure of the stair house found in Roznovanu's Palace. On the left and the right side and on the lateral wings as well, in a symmetrical composition a suit of windows at the ground floor and the first floor are marking the spreadness of the main rooms, embodying the perimeter of the court of honor. The ground floor is represented by a strongly proliferated bossage separated by the floor marked by the suit of framed windows through a classical decorated frieze. A strong cornice is emphasizing the crowning and above each window from the first floor, framed in classic profiles, there is Sturdza's family blazon. The endings of the two lateral wings are the most strongly expressed volumes. Their decoration is the same with that of the central area. A suit of blind windows corresponding to an attic with a considerable height is situated over the first floor. Although its proportions and the essential elements of the facades facing to the yard have been preserved, the posterior facade hasn't the same rich ornamentation.

The interior is much poorer in architectural designs, even austere, the proper attitude for the usual use is that of training and educational location.

The main body of the building is a corridor leading to the posterior façade, toward the southern area, designated as monumental stair with accessing platforms that are forked at the attic level and all the rooms are faced toward the court of honor. The two lateral wings have a corridor leading to the park-yard and the rooms are facing toward the lateral facades.

The chapel located within the central body of the palace has been integrated in the new assembly with the occasion of the restoration performed in 1891 that might be seen at an attentive analysis of the correspondence between the equal size of the windows and the chapel lightening requirements, has imposed the closing of a number of windows.

The building has the resistance structure made up of brick masonry, diversified ceiling (masonry vaults with metallic profiles, armed concrete, wood), and masonry foundations without hydro-isolation made up of natural rock, pedestals of large blocks of rock, wooden framework and coverings made up of iron plates. The fill in, partition walls of brick masonry were built in different stages and don't have a perfect connection with the rest of the structure.

A network of masonry caves, presently inaccessible, is placed under and outside the building. The caves don't have an airing system, and the natural ventilation system that usually exists to all old buildings, has been destroyed in time, these ones having been considered the main cause of moistening of the ground floor together with the rising of the yard level, the generalization of the



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asphalt coating, the uncontrollable losses of water and sewage system and the consequence of the rising of the underground waters level as well.

The central passing by corridor which is the oldest one is developed on the ground floor, semi basement, the first floor and the high attic while the wings have ground floor, first floor and a high attic only.

There might be deep caves, presently inaccessible, under the building. Such an entrance starts from the south-east part of the annex of the south side that doesn't belong to the original assembly of the building and that is spreading in parallel with Crișan Street. The lateral caves from the inner yard of the building have been partially destroyed at the consolidation works performed in 1985 and 1990.

The earthquakes from the XX century and the wars as well, have affected the resistance structure of the building, so that the most easily noticed deteriorations from nowadays are those of the abundant dampness from place to place with damaging effects on finishing area and also on the brick masonry durability and deep fissures from certain areas of the masonry.[3] A series of partial consolidation works and those of removing the dampness and of the interruption of the disruption processes of the foundation ground by waters infiltration under the building were performed after the earthquake from 1977.[3]

As a result of the documentation studies that have been performed, of those of researching the archive and of the land inspection, due to the technical expertise and to the analysis of the physical state of the building and to the thematically program, viewing the functioning re-establishing in accordance with the statute of Theology Faculty, a concept of implementing restoration, delivery, preservation and reintegration works shaped in a direct correlation with the functional arrangement wished by the patron will lead to the revitalizing of the hereby historic and architectural monument. 4-6 rooms for groups of students including about 100 students, seminary rooms for groups made up of 15-30 students, laboratories for the restoration objects belonging to the cultural patrimony (icons, books, textile material, metal works) and for the didactic stuff, counseling rooms and administrative places, library with storing locations and reading rooms will be created in order to achieve a performed development of the didactic process.

Answering to the needs referring to receptions, meetings, ample public manifestations, in order to strengthen the relationship with the Metropolitan Cathedral, the central part of the building has performed amplification in this respect with a student angora at the ground floor, an academic forum at the first floor and a polyvalent space, location for certain ecumenical manifestations at the attic.



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On the location of the presently festivity hall, there is also the possibility of arranging an amphitheatre with a capacity of 150 seats in the south-east small wing. By the clearance works that will be performed in the southern wing, the filling at the level of the ground that is situated under the level of the ground floor will be removed, giving the possibility of creating useful locations designated to restoration and micro- production activities. The useful locations will be spread away, developing a room for seminars, individual study, for students and doctor degree candidates and accommodation as well within the existent attic. As the attic is very high, the investigations are not going to affect the volumetry of the assembly or the original plastic art at all.

The demolition of the two annexes with an advanced degree of deterioration, presently used as storing shelters that have been added lately in the south-east side of the building, is imperiously required. In the further stage of construction, a new building with the required volumetry and a proper architectural plastic art that which should include the building of the Theology Faculty in the metropolitan seat.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The consolidation, restoration and functional rehabilitation works going to be performed will contribute to the compliance of the historical and architectural monument of Iași with the present circumstances, nevertheless participating to the spiritual wealth of the people living on these places.

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