

Viltė MIGONYTĖ-PETRULIENĖ

Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Arts, Vytautas Kavolis Transdisciplinary Research Institute, Kaunas, Lithuania

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VILTĖ MIGONYTĖ-PETRULIENĖ

EMBRACING TRADITION AND MODERNITY: TENDENCIES OF INTERWAR (1918–1940) WOODEN ARCHITECTURE IN LITHUANIAN RESORTS

Summary. The emergence of leisure culture in Lithuania began in the late 19th century, gradually giving rise to resort towns. Although in some cases, recreational architecture can be associated with relatively luxurious examples that follow the European resort tradition, the article argues that the dominant type of Lithuanian resort architecture manifested itself as a subtle synthesis of local traditions and external influences. The balance between architectural traditionalism and the constantly changing social demand is particularly well represented by wooden architecture. The modernising society of inter-war Lithuania brought significant changes to the development of resort architecture. Not only did new functional types, such as seaside restaurants characteristic of resorts, took shape, but private residential architecture also acquired specific features. The article presents the phenomenon of wooden resort architecture which has not been sufficiently explored and illustrates how resort architecture has influenced the most cost-effective segment of construction, which is also the segment most closely linked to tradition. The text assumes that this layer of the resort environment was as important a part of resort life as more modern and expensive brick construction.

Keywords: resorts, Lithuanian wooden architecture, interwar period, modernity, tradition, leisure culture.

INTRODUCTION

Resort architecture, as a phenomenon, is relatively recent in the urban development of Lithuania. It took the beginning in the formation of the urban and, at the same time, modern leisure culture that started at the late 19th century and was rapidly developed at the early 20th century¹. The recreational environment, as a natural asset, which prevailed in different regions of the country, shaped the diversity of resort architecture, and influenced people's behaviour at the time². An important factor that fostered territorial development was a travellers' and tourists' rituals, this included activities that aim "to rejuvenate and invigorate one's spirit, mind, and body, as well as provide religious education, opportunities for socialisation, integration into the recreational culture, and a respite from the regular daily routine."³ Specifically, the fundamental principles of a *resort* or *recreational* environment are embodied in concepts such as fresh air, wellness, and positive emotions. Therefore, resorts were deliberately defined in the first Lithuanian Law on Resorts (1932) as a location "that offer healing

springs or curative muds and well-equipped facilities for treating the illnesses, or that are convenient for relaxation and rejuvenation of one's health."⁴

The development of built and cultural environment in resort areas, along with their popularity in Lithuania after the WWI, were necessitated primarily by shifts in social life, the rise of a leisure culture, advancements in medicine, and even though the promotional tactics of the era, e.g., such as advertising resorts in newspapers⁵ and specialised publications⁶. These socio-cultural and economic factors exemplify the transformations in societal attitudes, which are also mirrored in resort architecture: from the *traditional* ones, which are more closely related to the ethnic features of construction and tendencies in various spheres of everyday life, while preserving the idea of national self-consciousness as an important tool for the creation of a national identity; to *modern* ones, which are associated to the concept of functionality and spatial hygiene, as well as to the formation of a social meaning of architecture.

Moreover, resort architecture in Lithuania was intertwined with the evolution of wooden architecture both as a building material and as a cultural tradition. Architecture of various styles infused with local (ethnographic) influences and elements of modernist aesthetics, thrived, and took centre stage. The emerging recreational environment had to satisfy rapidly increasing demands of vacationers and offer a new level of quality. Thus, *leisure culture*, and resort architecture as formal manifestation of that, should be perceived as a modern phenomenon of social life that started to flourish at the beginning of the 20th century, influencing the development of a specific built environment. *Modern resorts* ought to be understood as a unique morphological structure formed in the interwar period, combining the physical and the social environment.

The prevailing circumstances provide an opportunity to explore a fresh line of research: investigating the nexus between the wooden architectural structures prevalent in interwar resorts and the overarching modernisation endeavours. Through this approach, the article aims to expand the understanding of wooden resort architecture by exploring the interplay between elements of modernism and local building traditions. It also intends to shed light on the evolving mindset that enhances daily life with new recreational, entertainment, and health-related activities, leading to an expansion in the diversity of architectural forms and stylistic diversity.

The wooden architecture of Lithuanian resorts as a phenomenon has been discussed only in contextual studies. It is worth mentioning that Jurgis Bučas⁷ and Algimantas Miškinis⁸ have made significant contributions to the study of historical resort architecture. Their research has provided comprehensive insights into the architectural and urban planning development of resort areas such as Palanga and Birštonas. The articles written by researchers, including Nijolė Lukšionytė⁹, Maja Ptašek¹⁰, Marta Baužienė¹¹, Zita Genienė¹², Kęstutis Demereckas¹³, Marija and Martynas Purvinai¹⁴, Malgorzata Omiłanowska¹⁵, Viltė Migonytė–Petrulienė¹⁶ delve into the analysis of specific instances of wooden

architecture found in resorts. These articles provide valuable insights and examinations of individual examples, offering a deeper understanding of the subject matter. However, the above-mentioned sources present the wooden architecture of resorts in a fragmentary way. Even if giving a clearer understanding of the recreational environment, these papers do not focus specifically on wooden architecture.

The historical research in the article mostly focuses on materials sourced from the Lithuanian Central State Archives (LCVA) and Kaunas Regional State Archives (KRVA). A significant collection of documents on interwar Lithuanian construction provides detailed information on the architecture of most popular and visited resorts (Aukštoji Panemunė, Birštonas, Kačerginė, Kulautuva, Palanga, etc.). The well-preserved design data offers a comprehensive understanding of the stylistic and functional diversity of resort architecture and illustrates the prevalence of wood as the main building material. The findings of the article are based on over fifty structures typical of resort settings, including wooden residential houses such as villas and summer cottages, facilities serving recreational and therapeutic purposes like sanatoriums, along with commercial buildings like kiosks and shops.

The methodological framework of the article includes comparison with analogous studies of architecture from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, represented by a number of academic works by Brian F. Tolles¹⁷, Paul Overy¹⁸, Anya Chapman and Duncan Light¹⁹, Laurent Tissot²⁰, etc. This approach enabled us to explore the broader concept of modernity within the fascinating social, cultural, intellectual, economic, and architectural dimensions of society. Upon examining numerous significant Lithuanian periodicals from the interwar era (including “Darbas”, “Lietuvos Aidas”, “Lietuvos Žinios”, “XX amžius”, “Naujoji Romuva”, “Medicina”, etc.), the article argues that the swiftly modernising recreational landscape significantly influenced the evolution of resort architecture, leading to a notable enhancement in the overall “recreational ambiance” of the country’s resorts.

“MODERN RESORT”: SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND BUILDING TYPOLOGIES

The interwar era, characterised by noteworthy advancements in Lithuanian architectural history, primarily signalled a shift in the societal lifestyle influenced by progress in science, culture, and commerce. The concepts of modernity spread from the capital city of Kaunas to the rural provinces and resort areas across the country. “In a nation newly restored to independence and rooted in the continuity of its historical heritage, the issue of balancing tradition with change was particularly pertinent.”²¹ Although the development of the built recreational environment in Lithuania was influenced by the aforementioned processes of modernisation, the beginnings of the wooden architecture of the resorts in the early 20th century can also be associated with the traditional architecture of Lithuanian regions.

It is important to note that before the adoption of the Lithuanian Law on Resorts (1932), recreational areas did not have an official status. Therefore, until the 1930s, areas referred to as resorts were not legally obligated to possess all the natural features or infrastructure necessary for recreation and rehabilitation. Meanwhile, many of the resort buildings from Tzarist period were badly damaged after the WWI, and reconstruction was slow due to a lack of funds. Consequently, there was a limited variety of recreational activities available in the resorts during the early interwar period. Visitors often rented separate rooms in the homes of local residents and spent most of their time relaxing in the fresh air.

During that period, the prevailing architectural style of the resorts primarily comprised wooden dwellings, closely resembling the local architecture with regional characteristics. In a 1917 educational booklet, Povilas Januševičius writes about the construction of such houses: “the characteristic of a good house is healthiness. Healthy houses are those which are built in accordance with all the so-called sanitary statutes, in other words, in accordance with the requirements of human health. Since man cannot be healthy without sunlight, warmth, fresh

air, water, and cleanliness, it is therefore necessary to build houses in such a way that they have sufficient sunlight and fresh air. (...) Without these mentioned advantages, houses could not be healthy. They would be harmful to human health and would give rise to all kinds of diseases such as rheumatism, arthritis, and tuberculosis (...)”²². Interestingly, this statement not only reflects the essential characteristics of modern architecture but also alludes to the origins of new types of resort architecture, which were closely intertwined with the prevailing trends in Western European countries at that time.

The health situation and changes in health care were also of particular importance for the formation of resort architecture. Between the wars, tuberculosis was one of the most pressing problems in the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Austria, and elsewhere, owing to the expansion of industrial sectors such as factories and diamond mines. The construction and planning of sanatoriums tailored for treating such particular ailments mirrored the ideological aesthetics of the era, wherein the idea of spatial hygiene was intertwined. According to the British architecture researcher P. Overy, “the emphasis on cleanliness, health, hygiene, sunlight, fresh air, and openness defined modern architecture during the interwar period.”²³ Therefore, sanatoriums, such as Bugeci in Romania, Nordrach on Dee and Nordrach on Mendip in Baden, Queen Alexandra’s Sanatorium in Davos, Zonnestraal in the Netherlands, and others, were built in remote mountainous areas or woodlands to ensure that patients spent their rehabilitation time in the most sterile environment possible.

During the interwar period, tuberculosis posed a significant challenge in Lithuania as well²⁴. Forested balneological and seaside resort areas, distinguished by their pristine air quality and abundant natural resources, were selected as sites for addressing tuberculosis and other health-related concerns.²⁵ New types of architectural structures started to emerge within the resorts, including hospitals, summer colonies and sanatoriums. Their establishment primarily involved the Lithuanian Red Cross Society, the Lithuanian District Patients’

Funds, and private initiatives spearheaded by individuals such as Professor Vanda Tumėnienė, Dr. Kazys Grinius, Dr. Jurgis Venckūnas, and the Counts of Tiškevičiai. The acceleration in the establishment of “modern”²⁶ mostly wooden sanatoriums catering to both paediatric and adult illnesses (located in Birštonas²⁷, Palanga²⁸, Likėnai²⁹,

Kačerginė³⁰, A. Panemunė³¹, etc.) commenced around the 1930s³² (Fig. 1–2). For individuals suffering from other “chronic” ailments, therapeutic methods akin to those practised in the Latvian spa town of Ķemeri (involving sulphur and mud bath treatments) were advocated. However, “many of these patients, constrained by their financial



Fig. 1. Kaunas District Patients' Fund sanatorium in Birštonas, 4th decade of the 20th century. Personal collection of Antanas Burkus

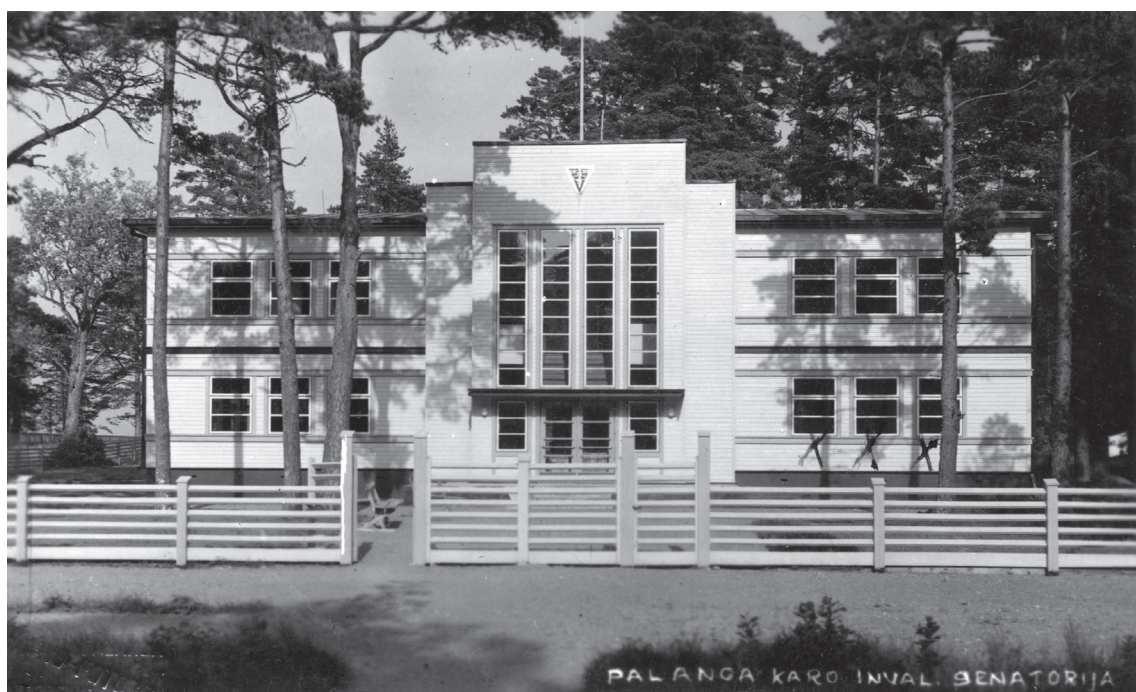


Fig. 2. Palanga sanatorium for War Invalids, 1940s. Personal collection of Antanas Burkus

circumstances, were unable to access these foreign spas, resulting in continued discomfort.”³³ Hence, the increasing annual influx of patients has spurred the rapid construction of sanatoriums within Lithuanian resorts. On one hand, buildings designed for therapeutic purposes seamlessly integrated into the morphological landscape of recreational areas during the interwar period, imbuing them with significance. On the other hand, these structures epitomised modern ideas; their development within interwar resorts catalysed the urban expansion of the regions and the diversification of activities, paving the way for commerce.

It is interesting to note a parallel trend in Europe at the time: when sanatoriums were constructed, the relatives of the patients often resided in temporary wooden dwellings adjacent to the sanatoriums. This practice led to the establishment of new settlements, accompanied by the development of infrastructure and business sectors to cater to the needs of the newcomers³⁴. In Lithuania, much like elsewhere, numerous notable medical facilities (sanatoriums) emerged as pivotal centres of architectural advancement within resort regions. This trend is substantiated by the escalating frequency of reports in the interwar press from the early 1930s onward, detailing the ongoing enhancement of medical services, the swift rise in popularity of Lithuanian resorts (including A. Panemunė, Palanga, Birštonas, Kulautuva, etc.), the surge in visitor numbers, and the construction of new wooden villas and summer houses to accommodate them³⁵.

The rapid development of Lithuanian resorts and the improvement of recreational conditions have made tuberculosis and other diseases one of the main reasons for people to visit them. During the interwar period, dissemination sources played a crucial role in promoting health resorts. They advocated for a modern approach to ongoing health prevention, emphasising the benefits of recreation. In the 1933 edition of the “Lietuvos Aidas”, it states: “in our time, the workers of the mind can no longer do without a regular period of greater periodic rest. The daily work of the mind saps mental and physical strength. (...) For this reason, the need for

rest and recreation is necessary to maintain our forces in the equilibrium necessary for creative work.”³⁶ This constitutes another important reference to resort culture as a modern phenomenon of the time, elucidated through the evolving societal circumstances between the wars, and the contrast between urban and resort environments.

Since the 1930s, seasonal short-term stays (primarily in A. Panemunė, Kulautuva, Kačerginė, Likėnai, Zarasai) and long-term vacations (in Birštonas, Palanga) in Lithuanian resorts have gradually become a common ritual for many city dwellers. Consequently, alongside the construction of spa architecture, resorts have begun to show a heightened interest in enhancing their overall image and developing and improving their entertainment sector. Most importantly, it was realised at the time that the financial well-being of the resort, based on economic benefits and social contact, depended directly on the quality of the environment³⁷. Resorts began to enhance public spaces, construct marinas, build pathways, beautify parks, design wooden villas, summer houses, and pavilions, and create new buildings for public, leisure, and therapeutic purposes. These developments were gradually boosting the resort trade, including the establishment of wooden gazebos, kiosks (for smoked fish, mineral water, kefir, etc.), various shops, cafes (buffets), restaurants, casinos, kurhaus, and bathing complexes³⁸ (Fig. 3–4).

During the interwar period, significant efforts were directed towards the revitalisation of Palanga, one of the nation’s primary resorts, and its coastal amenities. A notable modern development unfolded in the administration of the resort’s shoreline. Prior to the war, communal bathing facilities were absent in Palanga³⁹. The shoreline was adorned with wooden changing cabins, often lacking doors, furnished with benches and tables inside. Nonetheless, there was no apprehension regarding immodest conduct between genders in public, as a system of signalling, with a white flag for men and a red flag for women, was in place⁴⁰. L. Tissot describes a comparable division of relaxation spaces at the “Baths of la Motta” (1924), attributing it to societal norms



Fig. 3. Alytus City Garden, 1937. Alytus Regional Museum



Fig. 4. Birštonas park, 4th decade of the 20th century. Birštonas Museum

influenced by political and religious authorities⁴¹, which underscores the enduring presence of traditional ideologies.

However, the post-war decade and early independence brought new tendencies into resort life and architecture. This change was particularly pronounced in Palanga, where a modern wooden

bathing pavilion, accompanied by a restaurant and a leisure and entertainment complex⁴² (Fig. 5), was constructed along the resort's coastline. Such infrastructure made it possible to enjoy communal beach activities under the resort's sun. This phenomenon not only reflects the evolving societal mindset but also underscores the growing importance of public architecture in interwar resorts. According to



Fig. 5. Common bathing place in Palanga, early 20th century. Personal collection of Vytautas Sinkevičius.

Heasim Sul, public spaces and buildings with new topologies, enriching the quality of leisure and diversifying the content of recreational activities, have an important recreational mission. Within the resort environment, they resonate as yet another indispensable form of therapy, known as “arenas for social gatherings”⁷⁴³. Chapman and Light designate these areas as “amusement arcades”, affirming that they constitute the “most crucial structural (architectural/urbanistic) element of English seaside resorts since the previous century, representing the recreational milieu in the collective imagination.”⁷⁴⁴

Despite the relatively slower and less progressive development of interwar resorts in Lithuania compared to other Western European countries, a broader knowledge of Lithuanian holiday destinations began to circulate abroad in the 1930s. In the 1938 edition of “Darbininkas”, it was noted that only 15 percent of visitors to Kulautuva that year were Lithuanians, with the majority coming from countries such as Poland, Germany, Italy, and others⁴⁵. This international popularity can be attributed not only to the unique blend of the built and natural environment but also to the growing self-awareness within local communities.

According to Jill Steward, resorts played a significant role in shaping bourgeois leisure traditions, particularly in the realm of recreational tourism. Permanent residents of resorts, primarily from the middle class, enhanced their engagement in the community through symbolic seasonal activities, which involved sharing certain rituals and cultural symbols⁴⁶. Community societies, like the “Kulautuvos Klimato Stoties Pagražinimo Draugija”⁷⁴⁷ operated in interwar Lithuanian resorts, not only spearheaded the establishment and promotion of new leisure activities but also coordinated construction projects through collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs⁴⁸.

In the fourth decade, despite the tens of thousands of seasonal holidaymakers drawn by abundance of engaging resort activities, the development of architecture remains rather modest. The image of Lithuanian summer resorts was shaped by low-rise and predominantly wooden buildings. In this way, the streets of Lithuania’s fast-growing resort areas have retained the characteristic features of small towns both in stylistic expression and materiality. On the other hand, certain specific features distinguish resorts from the general urban context and enables to frame them as a distinctive resort environment.

As construction intensified in Lithuanian resorts and territorial boundaries expanded, particularly at the turn of the 1930s and 1940s, the development of the small urban unit – the privately owned plot of land – underwent modifications. The typical traditional layout of farmhouse buildings has transitioned into a more “resort-like” layout, characterised by fewer outbuildings, while retaining essential extensions such as storerooms, ice-houses, and in some cases, outdoor toilets. The local inhabitants constructed several (often identical) wooden dwellings, designed as villas for holidaymakers⁴⁹, on the same plot. In some cases, wooden kiosks⁵⁰ for seasonal trade were also erected, typically positioned on the corner of the plot near the street. An example of such a structure was a wooden kiosk for selling mineral waters, constructed in 1937 on J. Basanavičiaus Street in Palanga (architect Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis)⁵¹ (Fig. 6). These types of buildings were not uncommon in the summer resorts of the interwar period, particularly near the sea or the beaches of the rivers⁵². It is interesting to note that the square-shaped, compact kiosk

features a terrace. Equipped with two rooms – one for staff and another for customers (with a longitudinal window strip) – the building was covered by a single-plane pitched roof. Like many other temporary commercial stalls, it is likely that this charming object was open for only a few years.

While agriculture remained an important source of livelihood for the resorts’ inhabitants, commercial activities became more and more popular, influencing changes in the architecture of the resorts (especially residential)⁵³. Since the late 1930s, small shops, canteens, and even mineral or mud baths have been established in or near the houses, chalets, and villas of the resorts.⁵⁴ In residential buildings, commercial functions were typically allocated to the ground floor or a portion thereof, with an entrance from the main facade⁵⁵. In many cases, a porch or extension was added for this purpose with appropriate permission⁵⁶. Additionally, standalone commercial buildings were often constructed as single-story, compact structures located on a section of the plot adjacent to the street⁵⁷.

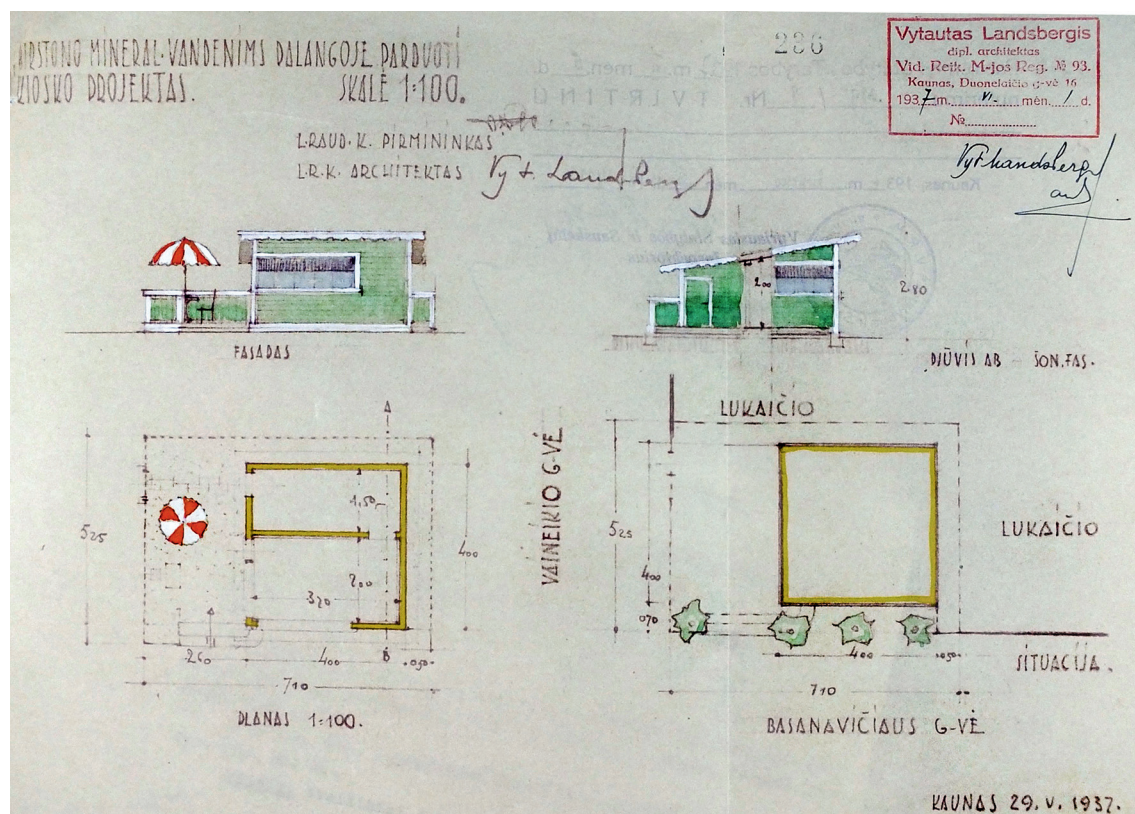


Fig. 6. Project of the mineral water sales kiosk in Palanga resort, 1937. Arch. Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis. LCVA, f. 1622, ap. 4, b. 710

STYLISTIC FEATURES OF WOODEN RESORT ARCHITECTURE

After the end of WWI, the vast majority of houses in both cities and province were made of wood, and active reconstruction work was undertaken in the early interwar period. Importantly, professional architects began to design in the smaller towns of Lithuania, offering a wider range of building design options. In 1928, Stanislovas Miliauskas presented designs for one and two-story (with attics) wooden residential houses of more complex shapes and

intricate volumes in the Album of Houses⁵⁸ (Fig. 7). In line with trends seen in foreign resorts (e.g. Germany, Switzerland, etc.⁵⁹), new wooden buildings were constructed and older ones were renovated in Lithuanian resort areas.

Although the traditional architectural elements were preserved, the wooden architecture of the resorts became more diverse in 1920's and 1930's. In addition to the traditional one-storey wooden dwellings, one-storey and two-storey villas with attics were commonly built, with some featuring

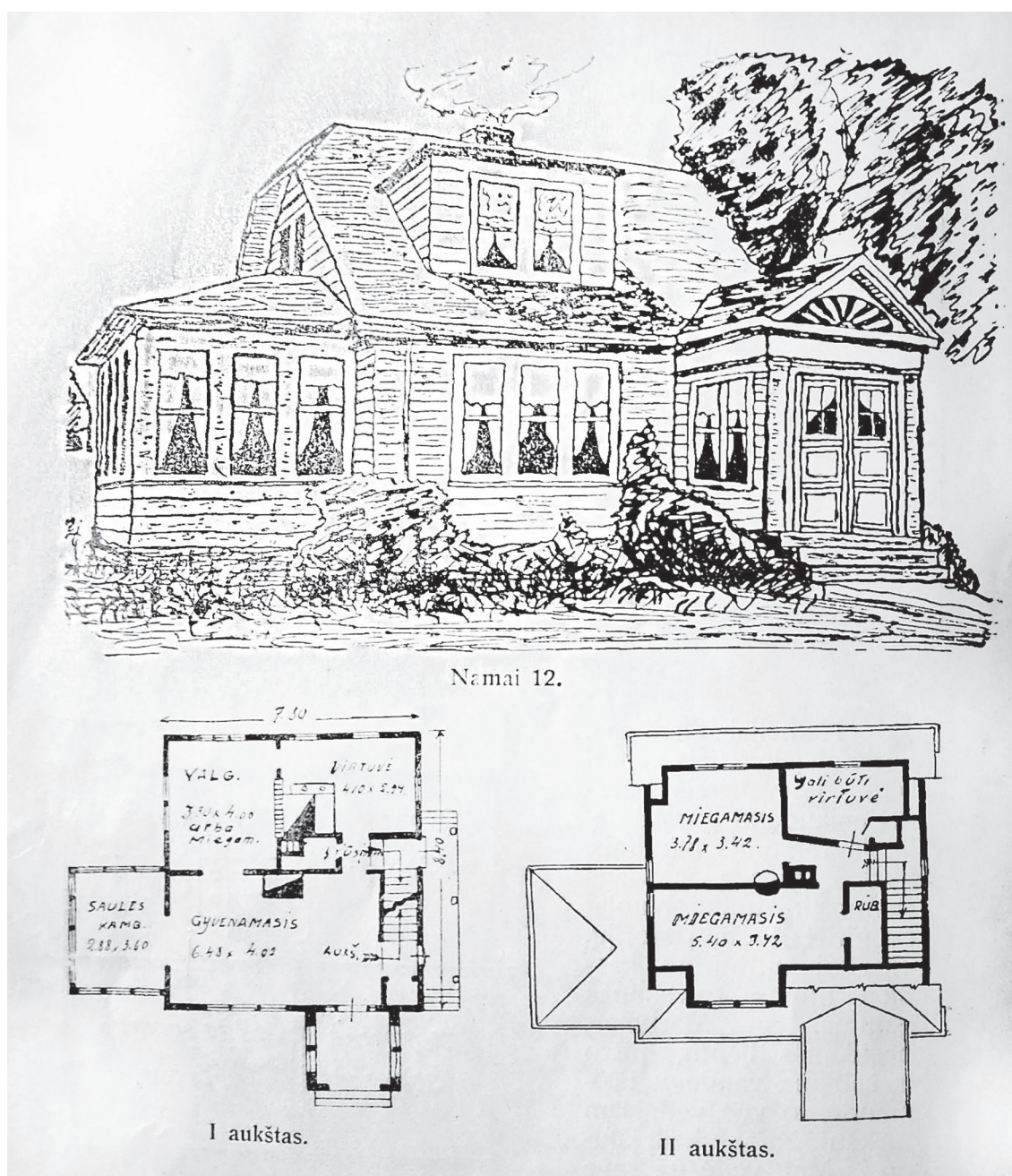


Fig. 7. Example of house No 12. Stanislovas Miliauskas. "Gana lūšnose gyventi arba kaip išmokti gražius ir pigius namus statyti". Kaunas: Šviesa, 1928

three storeys less frequently. Many of these structures differed not only in their visual appearance – displaying more intricate volumes and decorative elements – but also in their internal layout. Additionally, more buildings, especially those intended for therapeutic purposes or larger villas, were designed with a corridor system⁶⁰. Unlike traditional residential houses, where the entrance typically leads directly into the kitchen or the “living” room, the entrance to buildings such as villas and chalets was usually designed to open into an entrance hall, vestibule, or corridor. In the case of a two-storey building, a staircase was often installed in this area⁶¹ (Fig. 8).

The interior layout of the houses typically varied based on whether they were intended for seasonal holidaymakers or also occupied by villa owners

who rented out only part of the building. Summer houses for visitors were often composed of two-flat or four-flat dwellings with separate entrances and kitchens. More luxurious options might include dining rooms and lounges, although heating was often absent⁶². In contrast, shared houses, in addition to standard facilities such as kitchens, dining rooms, bedrooms, and children’s rooms, might feature separate guest rooms or, for longer-term rentals, a section of the house with its own kitchen and bathroom⁶³ (Fig. 9).

Hence, it can be inferred that the increasing range of activities has not only diversified the types of wooden resort architecture, but also influenced their structure. This resulted in the emergence of complete residential, recreational, commercial, and entertainment districts, where buildings of various



Fig. 8. Project of Jadvyga Jucaitienė's summer house in Kulautuva resort, 1934. Techn. Jonas Varneckis. KRVA, f. 17, ap. 1, b. 75, l. 43

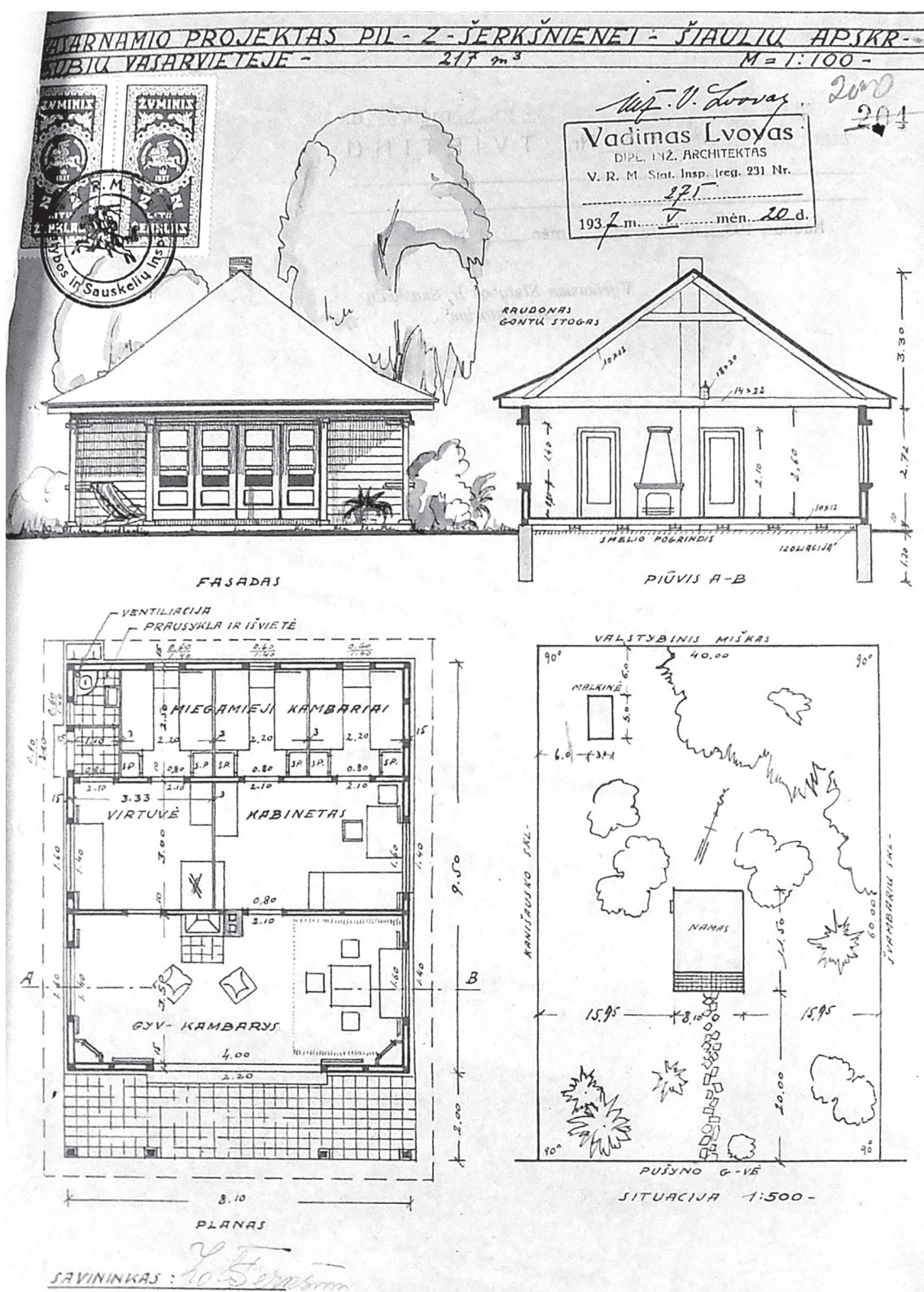


Fig. 9. Z. Šerškūnienės summer house project in Bubiai resort, 1937. Arch. Vadimas Lvoas. LCVA, f. 1622, ap. 4, b. 710, l. 200

functions intertwined within the resort's morphological fabric. Furthermore, this diversity was enhanced by a range of architectural styles.

The quest for a more creatively expressive visual style in many traditional wooden dwellings in Lithuania's smaller towns before the WWI was confined to a "purely Lithuanian style", which "has

been applied in bands, diverse patterns, crosses, cottages, and their roofs.”⁶⁴ In the interwar period, the individuality of designers trained in schools in different countries was reflected in both urban and ethnic architecture. Depending on the holiday region, Lithuanian resort architecture began to be influenced by foreign retrospectivism⁶⁵, the manifestations of which are characteristic not only of newly constructed wooden dwellings, but also of public and therapeutic buildings. This is also evident from P. Januševičius’ comment, noting that in our region, under the influence of Russians and Poles, houses have begun to be built in the Zakopane (Stanisław Witkiewicz Style)⁶⁶ style, which he deemed lacking in both beauty and practicality. Januševičius advocated for the construction of good, healthy, and comfortable houses not in a foreign, but in the spirit of Lithuania⁶⁷.

The wooden architecture of the resorts showcases various styles, including the Swiss style with its complex roof forms, numerous architectural elements, voluminous rooflights, and turrets. Additionally, Russian influences are evident in the rich decorations, such as the use of barrel-vaulted roofs, multilayered layers, scaled columns, and broken-line sandriks above the windows. German *fachwerk* buildings also contribute to the architectural diversity, along with villas reminiscent of the Zakopane style, characterised by historicist forms and distinctive regional elements such as high roofs, arcades, and large verandas⁶⁸. These forms were intertwined with echoes of modernism, particularly Art Nouveau, in wooden architecture that emerged before the WWI. They strongly assimilated with the local architectural tradition, often referred to as the national style, and the aesthetics of modernism that became prevalent during the interwar period.

Considering the stylistic expression of wooden resort architecture in the context of both traditional architectural elements and modernist aesthetics, it is possible to identify several predominant stylistic tendencies. The first among these is dominant modernism. The architectural structures are characterised by typical elements of modernist aesthetics,

including angular ribbon and circular windows, vertical division of doors and facades, semi-circular terraces, continuous glazed stairwells, and oval verandas with curved balcony extensions in subsequent sections. Additionally, complex volumetric configurations are prevalent, typically maintaining a moderate composition of two to three volumes⁶⁹.

The gradual transition towards rational and restrained forms is exemplified by the summer houses in Kačerginė and Kulautuva. An illustration of this shift is evident in the wooden summer house of Mr. Kalinauskas in Kačerginė, constructed in 1934 from the design of architect Boris Helcerman, showcasing a distinctly modernist style⁷⁰ (Fig. 10). The two-storey structure is situated within a generous rectangular plot, set back from the street. The construction of the house exhibits a playful approach, highlighting the volumes of the semicircular terrace, the rectangular glazed veranda, and the second-floor balcony. Horizontal division of the facades is accentuated by strip windows, featuring elongated bands of surrounds on the southern side and a section of the western facade. The villa’s modernity is underscored by its flat roof and interior spatial arrangement. Access to the building is provided through a veranda situated on the western facade, leading to a spacious entrance hall serving also as a living area. This central space interconnects two separate bedrooms, the veranda, and the kitchen/dining area. The arrangement of rooms on the second floor, comprising a kitchen, bedroom, living room, and terrace, suggests that the owner likely rented out this portion to holidaymakers during the season.

In another project by the same architect involving the renovation of a summer residence in 1934⁷¹, one can observe the modernisation of local wooden architecture (Fig. 11). Located in Kulautuva Aleksas Sasnauskas’s summer abode is conceived by amalgamating two square-plan wooden structures existing on the site. These edifices are encircled by columns and a terrace, segmented by horizontal divisions. The architectural intervention extends to the corridor system and interior layout, resulting in the creation of four distinct apartments,

each comprising two rooms with kitchens, catering to holidaymakers. Comparable modifications, as exemplified in the aforementioned instances, involving modifications to interior spaces and

the addition of verandas or extensions to exterior facades to accommodate additional rooms, while adhering to modernist aesthetics, are prevalent within Lithuanian interwar resorts. Such

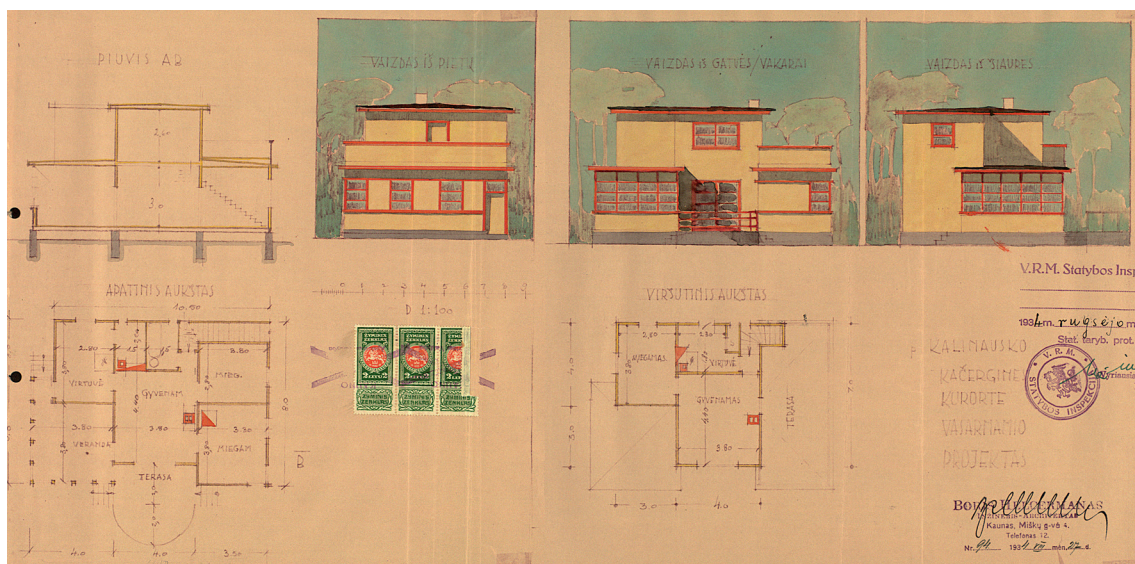


Fig. 10. P. Kalinauskas summer house project in Kačerginė resort, 1934. Arch. Borisas Helcermanas. LCVA, f. 1622, ap. 4, b. 446, l. 16

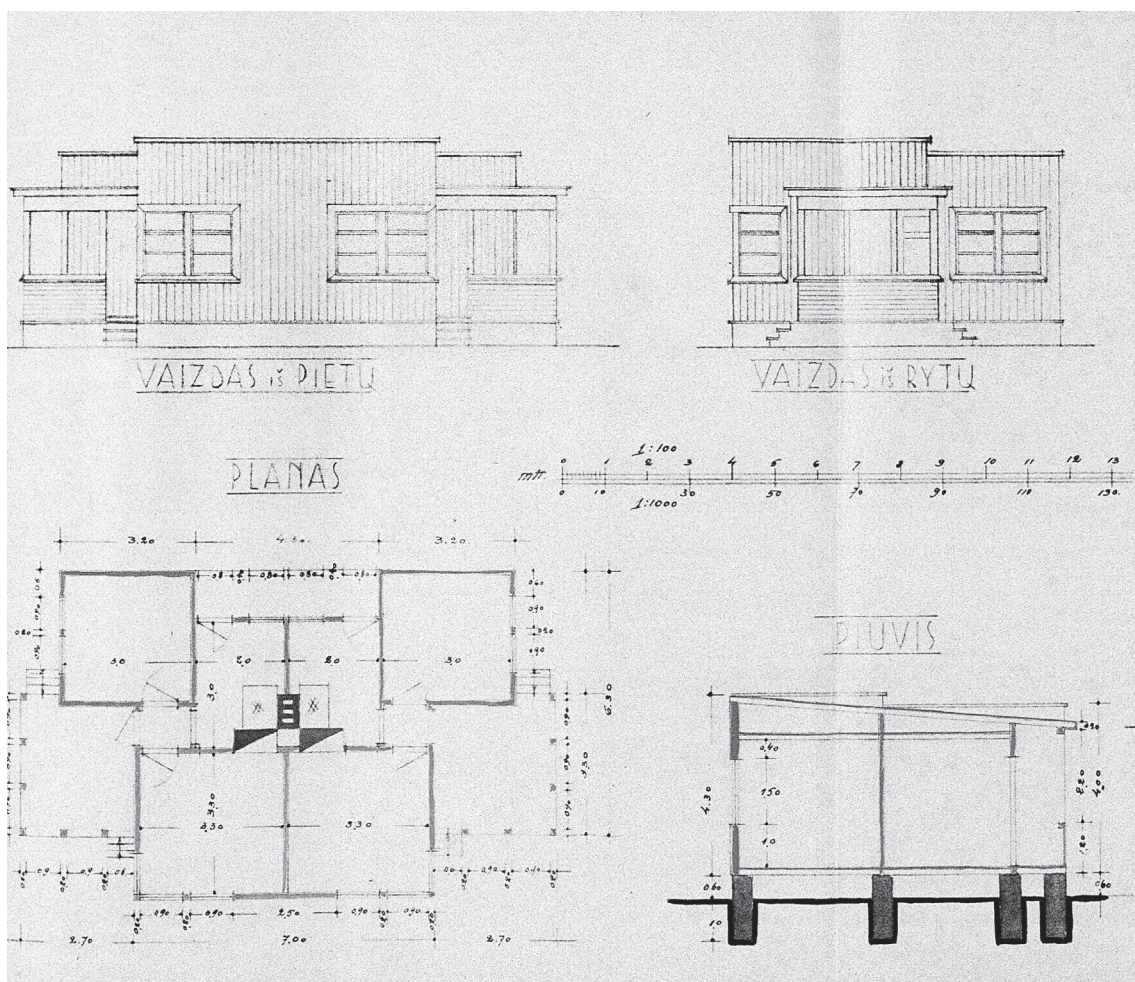


Fig. 11. Jonas Sasnauskas' summer house project in Kulautuva resort, 1934. Arch. Borisas Helcermanas. LCVA, f. 1622, ap. 4, b. 448, l. 46

interventions notably typify the wooden architecture of holiday retreats⁷².

The second predominant stylistic inclination entails the amalgamation of modernist principles with elements characteristic of the “national style”. In a particular instance, the wooden modernist structure of the resort edifice is embellished with national motifs⁷³, exemplified by the A. Panemunė Kurhaus, conceived in 1935 by architect Stasys Kudokas⁷⁴ (Fig. 12). The elaborate feature is represented by the “national style” sandrik, positioned above the two expansive doors connecting the summerhouse to the outdoor terrace. The dual volumes comprising the structure (the summer hall, four heated rooms, a buffet, and a generous 261 square meter veranda)⁷⁵ were remarkably luminous, enveloped by galleries of tall or short windows, segmented into rectangular panels. This architectural configuration harmonised seamlessly with the overall composition of the edifice, imparting a sense of rhythmic lightness. Additional wooden resort structures, characterised by volumes more aligned with traditional architecture (typically featuring a rectangular plan and one-volume or two-volume configurations), exhibit

elements of modernism such as strip windows and horizontal facade divisions. These elements are frequently embellished with folk ornamentation positioned between windows or adorned with folk motifs, such as ornamental roof details finishing the pediment cornice⁷⁶.

In summarising the aforementioned observations, it can be asserted that, on one hand, the retention of elements characterising the national style within the wooden architecture of holiday resorts appears to reflect the romantic idealism of the interwar period resorts. This intention signifies the collective directedness of the nation, both materially and emotionally, and underscores the resilience of its spirit. On the other hand, the swift integration of modernist principles into the architectural landscape of the resorts, encompassing architecture, site planning, and interior design, can be interpreted as a progressive outcome of the modernising tendencies within interwar society. This integration not only prioritised functionality, openness, and cleanliness in architectural design but also championed the important notion of social cohesion and cultural advancement.



Fig. 12. Aukštoji Panemunė kurhaus, 4th decade of the 20th century. Arch. Stasys Kudokas. Kaunas City Museum

CONCLUSIONS

When evaluating the evolution of Lithuanian resort architecture, it's crucial to acknowledge its inseparability from broader societal and architectural modernisation trends, encompassing both social and stylistic aspects. Foundational principles of modernist ideology, like prioritising hygiene and maximising natural light and fresh air, concurrently emerged as indispensable features of contemporary resort architecture. The increasing demand for spa visits during the interwar period reflects Lithuania's expanding recreational services industry, signifying a modernised societal stance that catalysed a qualitative advancement in recreational culture.

The modernisation of resort development is closely intertwined with the establishment of its infrastructure. This transformation isn't limited to individual, small-scale endeavours – typically encompassing houses, villas, or vacation residences constructed by private individuals to offer accommodation services – but also entails deliberate expansion of extensive resort infrastructure, including sanatoriums, spas, vacation residences, and children's summer colonies. Although there are private initiatives (e.g. Prof. Vanda Tumėnienė, Dr. Jurgis Venckūnas, the Counts of Tiškevičiai), official institutions such as the Red Cross or the State Patients' Funds play a very important role in this process. The purposeful installation and management of small-scale infrastructure (bathing facilities, pavilions, kiosks, etc.) is no less important for the modernisation of the spa areas.

Although the emergence of spa towns is closely associated with modernity, the architectural aesthetics defining the unique character of these locales are intertwined with various forms of traditional architectural expression. The incorporation of historical styles into wooden architectural solutions, which offered an exotic vibrancy to the recreational environment, played a crucial role in shaping the distinctive identity of interwar period resorts. Styles such as Swiss, German, Zakopane, and national, alongside elements of modern

architecture, became ingrained in the tradition of wooden construction.

Thus, the wooden architecture of resorts in interwar Lithuania stands out as a remarkable phenomenon that significantly contributed to the diversity of the built environment during that era. While inherently modern and connected to urban centres and their inhabitants through social initiatives and the promotion of wood as a significant medium and symbol, reflecting the societal maturity and self-awareness of the time, these resorts evolved architecturally as a fusion of multicultural traditionalism and modernity.

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² Laurent Tissot, "Civil Engineering and the Development of Sport and Leisure in Swiss Cities (1900–1950)," *International Journal of The History of Sport* 29 (2012), 2096.

³ Bryan F. Tolles Jr., *Summer by the Seaside. The Architecture of New England Coastal Resort Hotels, 1820–1950* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2008), 1.

⁴ "Kurortų įstatymas," *Vyriausybės Žinios* (22 December 1932), 1.

⁵ "Žalingas kurortams reiškiny," *Lietuvos Aidas* (5 June 1935), 3.

⁶ J. Čižas, *Lietuvos kurortai* (Kaunas: Minties Ratas, 1938), 21.

⁷ "Senoji Lietuvos kurortų architektūra," *Urbanistika ir rajoninis planavimas. Lietuvos aukštųjų mokyklų mokslo darbai. 1990* (Vilnius: Mokslo, 1999); "Tarpukario Druskininkų architektūros paveldas istorijos kontekste" (paper presented at the conference *Druskininkai tarp Pasaulinių karų. Tarpukario Druskininkai liudininkų ir tyrinėtojų akimis*, Druskininkai, 30 September, 2005), etc.

⁸ "Birštono istorinis-urbanistinis vystymasis," in *Lietuvos TSR Architektūros klausimai* 4 (Vilnius: Mintis, 1974); *Lietuvos urbanistikos paveldas ir jo vertybės: Užnemunės Lietuvos miestai ir miesteliai*, 1 (Vilnius: Savastis, 1999); *Lietuvos urbanistikos paveldas ir jo vertybės: Vakarių Lietuvos miestai ir miesteliai*, 3 (Vilnius: Savastis, 2004), etc.

⁹ Nijolė Lukšionytė, "Miestų medinės architektūros išsaugojimo galimybės," *Urbanistika ir architektūra* 35 (2011), 129–140.

¹⁰ Maja Ptašek, "Liūdnas esė apie Palangą," *Archiforma* 51 (2012), 72–82.

¹¹ Morta Baužienė, "Rekreacinio miesto savitumas (Birštono medinės architektūros pavyzdžiu)," *Archiforma* 50 (2012), 34–41.

¹² Zita Genienė, "Palangos miesto ir kurorto raida XIX–XX amžiais," in *Palangos istorija* (Klaipėda: Libra Memelensis, 1999), 286–288.

¹³ Kęstutis Domereckas, "Kuršių nerija tradicinės ir kurortinės architektūros santūroje XIX a. pab. – XX a. pr.," *Archiforma* 51 (2012), 83–88.

¹⁴ "Wooden Heritage in Lithuania," (2011), https://www.kpd.lt/uploads/Tai%20įdomu/wooden_architecture.pdf

¹⁵ Malgorzata Omilanowska, *Pabaltijo Zakopané. Palanga Tyszkiewiczų laikais* (Vilnius: Standartų spaustuvė, 2014).

¹⁶ "Pramogavimo ir sveikatinimo aspektai Lietuvos moderniojo kurorto genezėje: Palangos ir Birštono atvejai," *Meno istorija ir kritika* (2015), 75–87; "Modernizmas Lietuvos tarpukario (1918–1940) kurortuose kaip socialinis projektas: sanatorių ir gydyklų architektūra," in *Architektūriniai pasivaikščiojimai ir paveldo saugos aktualijos* (Kaunas: Vitae Litera, 2017), 134–157; "Atostogos mieste ir miesto kurortai," in *Optimizmo architektūra: Kauno fenomenas, 1918–1940* (Vilnius: Lapas, 2017), 246–255; Viltė Migonytė-Petrulienė et al., *Neringa: Architektūros gidas* (Vilnius: Lapas, 2020);

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²¹ Lijana Štavičiūtė, "Modernaus būsto idėja tarpukario Lietuvoje: tarp funkcionalizmo ir tautinio romantizmo," *Menotyra* (2011), 276.

²² Povilas Jaunševičius, *Namai. Juų svarba, vieta, padėjimas, stilius, medžiaga, statymas, papuošimas, išvaizdos ir planai* (Kaunas: Saliamono Banaičio spaustuvė, 1917), 3, 12.

²³ Overy, 9.

²⁴ "Sanatorijose gynam ore, saule, dijeta, masažais, voniomis, dušais yra gydomi mažakraujingi, rachitiniai, nervingi, blogai valgantieji, neurastikai," *Medicina* 9 (1933), 571.

²⁵ P. K-nas, "Šis tas apie Lietuvos vasarvietes," *XX amžius* 112 (1938), 2.

²⁶ A special interwar publication devoted to the prevention of tuberculosis (*Kova su džiova* (August 1934), 16) describes the sanatorium of the Society for the Fight against Tuberculosis of Dr. K. Grinius in A. Panemunė: "the sanatorium is modernly equipped, with central heating, sewerage, electricity, light, and an alarm system, (...) it has a bookstore, and a staff of 17 paid employees, who serve both children and adults. (...) Patients are treated *conservatively* and *actively*. The conservative treatment is carried out according to Brehmer Dettweiler's hygiene-dietetic system, providing the sick body with quiet, good, adequate food, fresh air and light. Active treatment is used where conservative treatment is not sufficient." These facts indicate both the advanced medical system and the rapidly developing infrastructure of the time, and the ambitions of tuberculosis treatment in a modernising local resort, in line with Western trends in the architecture and planning of this type of sanatorium.

²⁷ "Kauno ligonių kasos sanatorija Birštone," 1937, LCVA, f. 1622, ap. 4, b. 710.

²⁸ "Policijos sanatorija Palangoje," *Dienos naujienos* (May 1933), 3.

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⁷³ In this case, the notion of national elements combines both the decorative accents characteristic of Lithuanian regional architecture and the neo-baroque details of one of the retrospectivism tendencies prevalent in Lithuanian architecture in the 1930s, which was associated with the search for national style.

⁷⁴ "A. Panemunės kurhauzas," 1935, LCVA, f. 1622, ap. 4, b. 502.

⁷⁵ "A. Panemunės pušyne pradedama didelio kurhauzo statyba," *Lietuvos Aidas* (23 May 1935), 7.

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Viltė MIGONYTĖ-PETRULIENĖ

Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, Menų fakultetas, Vytauto Kavolio transdisciplininių tyrimų institutas, Kaunas, Lietuva

TARPUKARIO (1918–1940) MEDINĖS ARCHITEKTŪROS TENDENCIJOS LIETUVOS KURORTUOSE: TARP TRADICIJOS IR MODERNUMO

Santrauka

Kurortinių miestų fenomenas Lietuvos teritorijoje ryškesnį šiuolaikinį pavidalą įgavo 19 a. pabaigoje. Nors atskirais atvejais rekreacinė architektūra gali būti siejama su sąlyginai prabangiais Europos kurortinę tradiciją sekančiais pavyzdžiais, straipsnyje argumentuojama, kad dominuojantis lietuviškosios kurortinės architektūros tipas reiškėsi kaip subtili vietinės tradicijos ir išorinių įtakų sintezė. Balansą tarp architektūrinio tradiciškumo ir nuolatos kintančio socialinio užsakymo itin ryškiai reprezentuoja medinė architektūra. Modernėjanti tarpukario Lietuvos visuomenė į kurortų architektūros raidą įnešė gana daug pokyčių. Formavosi ne tik kurortams būdingi nauji funkciniai tipai, kaip, pavyzdžiui, pajūrio restoranai, bet ir specifinių bruožų įgavo privati gyvenamoji architektūra. Straipsnyje pristatomas iki šiol menkai tyrinėtas medinės kurortinės architektūros fenomenas, atskleidžiama, kaip kurortiškas paveikė ekonomiškiausia, kartu su tradicija glaudžiausiai susijusį statybos segmentą. Tekste daroma prielaida, kad šis kurortinės aplinkos sluoksnis buvo tokia pat svarbi kurortinio gyvenimo dalis, kaip ir ištaigingesnė bei modernesnė mūrinė statyba.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: kurortai, Lietuvos medinė architektūra, tarpukaris, modernumas, tradiciškumas, poilsio kultūra.

Gauta 2024-02-28

Parengta spaudai 2024-05-20

Viltė MIGONYTĖ-PETRULIENĖ

Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Arts,

Vytautas Kavolis Transdisciplinary Research Institute, Kaunas

She is PhD, architectural historian, head of international interdisciplinary art projects (Interreg, Creative Europe) and curator, lecturer at Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Arts. Co-founder and curator of the Architecture and Heritage Programme *Modernism for the Future* (2017–2023) of Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022. She is the author of the monograph *Weekend Cities and Suburbs. How modern resorts were created in interwar (1918–1940) Lithuania* (2021), also has published scientific articles on 20th century architecture and heritage of Lithuanian resorts, digitisation of cultural heritage. Additionally, she is organizer and co-organizer of international conferences and seminars on the topics of 20th century architecture and heritage, their animation and interpretation, and the development of sustainable tourism, a member of ETOM – European Triennial of Modernism, New European Bauhaus International Lab.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-4302-943X>E-mail: vilte.migonyte-petruliene@vdu.lt