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Conceptual principles of the planning of modern libraries

Abstract

Today the character of activities and architectural solutions of traditional libraries do not answer the needs of modern information society and particularly its needs on information provision. According to the “Library renovation and modernization plan for 2003 – 2013” there are plans to build 4 new and reconstruct several public library buildings in Lithuania.

In order to solve better problems mentioned above a group of architects and librarians has been organized; it is led by professor of architecture K.Jakovlevas–Mateckis at the Kaunas University of Technology. The sociological research on the main factors influencing library architecture solutions has already been made by this group. Analysing the boundaries of integration of architecture and library science the integrated library factors (library functions, technologies and forms of media) and integrated architectural factors have been determined – the planned spatial solutions of libraries. According to the results of the analysis of these factors the architectural solutions of today’s libraries very often do not fit library functions, technologies and forms of media.

Lithuanian libraries lag behind the world’s level not only in usage of modern technology but in development of the general concept of modern library. There is a great lack of joint architectural and library research in Lithuania.

The results of the analysis, of integrated factors as well as of best examples of library architecture worldwide, suggest to extend the library functions including educational, recreational, cultural and other additional functions. The type of flexible model of a multifunctional public library proposed comprises the two functional segments: traditional informational service and socio-cultural service. It is advised that one third of library premises be assigned for this auxiliary socio-cultural activity. Non-library services have to become an object of attraction that could influence the number of users of traditional library services as well. The modern public library would become a social centre of culture, home for society. It could be multifunctional and vital centre organising and joining society. Library with such social and cultural activity would be more attractive for investments.

The modern public library has to be comfortable with flexible planning. The “virtual”, “dematerialised” forms of clear, laconic, simple and visible bulks could characterize its architecture.

For improving the possibility to combine the natural and urban environmental factors and for realising conceptual principles of planning of modern libraries, the experiment has been made and a new public library in the Pilaite residential area of Vilnius city has been planned.

CV

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Doc.habil. K.Jakovlevas-Mateckis is a professor of architecture at the VGTU. He also worked as a visiting professor at a number of universities in Europe, among them in 1991 at the Rome University “La Sapienza”. He is a laureate of the Lithuanian State Prize in architecture, wrote 25 monographs and books (some of them with co-authors) on urban and architectural issues. Research interests: architecture, formation of urban and industrial landscape and environmental design.

Now with a group of architects and librarians he is working on a concept of optimal and functional library for regional towns of Lithuania.

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