

The interiors of the administrative buildings of the Lenin Steelworks in Nowa Huta compared to the interiors of the interwar period



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Flanking either side of the main gate of the Lenin Metallurgical Plant (now renamed after Tadeusz Sendzimir) in Nowa Huta are two twin buildings, originally housing offices, staff facilities and break rooms of this industrial conglomerate. They were built in the years 1951–1956 following the design that had been developed in the architectural studio Miastoprojekt Nowa Huta. The authors of the concept – selected during the classified, closed competition – were Janusz Ballenstedt and Janusz and Marta Ingarden.¹ The resulting complex of buildings is highly regarded as one of the finest examples of socialist realism style throughout Poland.²

Each of the two nearly identical buildings was erected on a plan of a square, the corners accentuated with slightly protruding avant-corps, rendering the buildings' shapes similar to that of a manor house with corner extensions. Both buildings are crowned with high, two-story parapet walls. The twin façades are facing each other, and the space between them was arranged to form a courtyard in front of the main gates of the Steelworks. The objects in question were marked with the letters Z (for the northern building, intended for the factory's management) and S (for the southern, amenity building). Unofficially – among the employees of the Steelworks and the residents of Nowa Huta – the two are known as “the Vatican”, and the management building has been nicknamed “the Doge's Palace” (see: Fig. 1).

From the beginning, the facilities belonged to the Metallurgical Plant. Currently, Building Z is not used, and Building S houses the offices of the Nowe Centrum Administracyjne sp. z o.o. [New Administrative Centre Ltd.], established on the initiative of the Małopolska Voivode under the supervision of the Minister of



1. Buildings of the Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
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1 T. Gołaszewski, *Kronika Nowej Huty*, Kraków 1955, pp. 302–303.

2 K. Stefański, *Architektura polska 1949–1956*, “Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki”, 27, 1982, vol. 1–2, p. 93; M. Fabiański, J. Purchla, *Historia architektury Krakowa*, Kraków 2001, pp. 138, 386; M. Mieziań, *Nowa Huta: socjalistyczna w formie, fascynująca w treści*, Kraków 2004, pp. 70–71; W. Komorowski, *Urbanistyka i architektura Nowej Huty 1949–1959*, “Rocznik Krakowski”, 71, 2005, p. 202; M. Smaga, *Od planu po realizację – budynki „Z” i „S” Centrum Administracyjnego Huty im. Lenina*, part II: *Wnętrza*, “Światowid. Rocznik Muzeum PRL-u w Krakowie”, 2019, 5, p. 120.



2. Courtyard of the management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Tom Rollauer, courtesy of NCA sp. z o.o.

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State Treasury to manage the Kraków-Wschód [Kraków East] project. Also housed there are public agencies of the Małopolska Voivodship Office in Kraków. In 2004, the buildings together with the entire urban layout of Nowa Huta were entered into the register of historic monuments. In addition to the shape of the buildings, the entry also highlights some elements of the interiors, particularly those that used to be the seat of the Steelworks' management board.³ In 2019, the Administrative Centre was placed under comprehensive monument conservation care.⁴

I devoted a separate article to the considerations on the external form of the buildings,⁵ whereas in the present work I will report findings pertaining to their interiors.

The function and composition of the interiors of the Administrative Centre

The interiors of the buildings have been meticulously designed, including their complete furnishings. The furniture and decoration of the rooms was the responsibility of a team whose task was also to design interiors in the public facilities of the newly emerging city. In 1950, Marian Sigmund, professor of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, stood at the helm of the first Polish Interior Design Studio established specifically for the purpose, and the basic composition of the team of architects and visual artists employed at the Studio had been formed by 1953.⁶

The idea of the original design is known thanks to the surviving complete documentation of the entire complex, stored in the resources of the New Administrative Centre,⁷ along with the drawings – the so-called *perspektywki* [“perspectivettes”] – from Professor Sigmund's family archive.⁸ Currently, the interiors remain in good condition, nearly unchanged. Some elements of the furnishings have also survived.

Albeit almost identical from the outside, the buildings not only had different functions, but also their individual floors served different purposes. Both buildings were divided into segments, now marked with successive letters of the alphabet A–D, which in the description of detailed construction designs correspond to the designations I–IV.⁹ Each of the buildings in question has an internal paved courtyard, with a fountain at the centre – and all these elements of the design are made of white, black and pink granite (see: Fig. 2).¹⁰ Courtyards can be treated as interiors, specifically, as the first interior space that the visitor enters. This solution – an atrium of

3 M. Smaga, *Od planu po realizację – budynki „Z” i „S” Centrum Administracyjnego Huty im. Lenina*, part I: *Architektura*, “Światowid. Rocznik Muzeum PRL-u w Krakowie”, 4, 2017, p. 125.

4 Księga rejestru zabytków województwa małopolskiego [The register of monuments of the Małopolska Voivodship], A 152/M.

5 J. Bryg-Stanisławska, *Brama Kombinatu – zwycięskie koncepcje projektów Centrum Administracyjnego w Nowej Hucie, ewolucja i realizacja*, “Rocznik Krakowski”, 87, 2021, pp. 147–167.

6 L.J. Sibila, *Nowohucki design: wnętrza i ich twórcy w latach 1949–1959*, in: *Socrealizmy i modernizacje*, A. Sumorok, T. Załuski (eds.), Łódź 2017, pp. 147–148.

7 Archiwum Nowego Centrum Administracyjnego Spółka z o.o. – the Archive of the New Administrative Centre Ltd. (further: ANCA), Projekt wykonawczy [Working design], files internally marked: I–XLII.

8 L.J. Sibila, *Nowohucki design. Historia wnętrza i ich twórcy w latach 1949–1959*, Kraków 2007, pp. 71–79, 82–83.

9 ANCA, Projekt.

10 The fountain positioned centrally within the courtyard in front of the main entrance to the buildings was considered to be a reference to Polish residential architecture, in which the approach always ran around a flowerbed. In this way, Eugeniusz Wierzbicki ([voice in the discussion], *Dyskusja na temat architektury Gmachu KC PZPR*, “Architektura”, 1952, No. 5, p. 123) argued that the fountain should be placed at the main entrance to the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Warsaw.

a sort – is interpreted by the architects as a social space conducive to interpersonal contacts, information exchange, integration, and inclusion. This kind of space can be found in both single- and multi-purpose buildings.¹¹

The management building is a typical single-function office building – with representative rooms, offices of senior management, and a number of rooms serving individual divisions of the Steelworks' administration. In addition to offices, the second of the two buildings – the amenity building – used to house a theatre, a cultural centre with reading rooms, a health centre, a food court, and a hotel,¹² therefore it was conceived as a multifunctional facility. Therefore in this latter case, the atrium is a space that not only brings together and integrates, but also functionally organizes the entire compound, an intermediate element between the external surroundings and the interior of the building. It conjures a specific microclimate and enhances the sense of security.¹³

The concept of architecture and interior design remains consistent with the external character of the compound; therefore we can safely assume that it was created in close collaboration with the authors of the building. The whole thing together can be treated as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This uniformity required that the interiors be developed with the direct participation of the main architect, and even that the designs be drawn by that architect's hand.¹⁴ Indeed, this was one of the postulates of socialist realism: "it is about [...] the implementation of such architecture that, with the participation of the visual arts, would be able to express our great and bold social intentions."¹⁵ The manner of defining the architecture of the interior, including the complex relations between architecture and visual arts as well as architecture and movable elements of equipment, especially furniture – as Aleksandra Sumorok noted – followed, in this case, the practice of the 1930s. Expanding on Aleksander Wojciechowski's thought, Sumorok draws attention to a certain dualism in the treatment of the interior, including a workshop-based approach in the visual, decorative layer, coupled with a structural and technical approach in the sphere of architecture. According to Sumorok, this dualism was perpetuated by the post-war higher education system.¹⁶ In the implementation of the Administrative Centre, this dualism is apparent. The authors of the structure of the buildings are Janusz Ballenstedt, and Marta and Janusz Ingarden. They also designed some details, such as doors and wrought iron gratings. In the general description of the detailed working design, there are guidelines regarding the finishing of the building: "staircases, corner halls on all floors, main hall lined with marble, balustrades and fittings made of bronze, stucco coffered in: the main hall, the meeting room, and the corner

11 J. Pachowski, *Atrium. Przestrzeń społeczna w budynku wielofunkcyjnym*, Izabelin k/Warszawy 2002, p. 8.

12 The functions of particular rooms were described on the plans in the working design, developed by Tadeusz Rembiesa. ANCA, Projekt, file VII.

13 J. Pachowski, *Atrium*, p. 10.

14 N. Borowski, *Klika uwag o wnętrzach gmachu P.K.P.G.*, "Architektura", 1950, No. 7–8, p. 248.

15 S. Tworkowski, *Udział plastyki w dziełach architektury*, "Architektura", 1949, No. 4, p. 120.

16 The visual-arts approach to interior design was taught at visual art departments, and the structural-technical approach was taught at the polytechnic departments. See: A. Wojciechowski, *O sztuce użytkowej i użytecznej. Zbiór studiów i krytyk z zakresu współpracy plastyki polskiej z rzemiosłem, przemysłem i architekturą w latach 1944–1954*, Warszawa 1955, p. 59 quoted from: A. Sumorok, *Nie tylko socrealizm? Przypadek wnętrz państwowych*, in: *Socrealizmy i modernizacje*, A. Sumorok, T. Załuski (eds.), Łódź 2017, pp. 126–127.

halls. The floor in the offices to be made of oak tiles, and in the installation and sanitary rooms, of terrazzo.¹⁷ Thus, the building's architects' team was responsible for the structural elements listed above, but Marian Sigmund's team took care of the remaining interior design with all the details.¹⁸

The preserved complete working documentation allows for the reconstruction of the original idea. The rooms have been carefully drafted and described according to the following scheme: a floor plan, accompanied by a technical description containing details of materials and contractors, views of the ceiling and of each individual wall (in the order of a to d), arrangement of equipment and precise execution drawings for each piece. The drawings are labelled with the names of the designer and the architect developing and drawing the given project – usually one and the same person. Marian Sigmund is featured on most of those as the designer. The exceptions are the sheets that outline the decor of the second and third floors and the main waiting room of Building Z – these drawings are signed by Teresa Lisowska. According to the aforementioned documentation, the designers' team also included Krzysztof Bień, Wanda Genga, Maria Michajłow,¹⁹ Barbara Śląska, Kazimierz Syrek, and Zdzisław Szpyrkowski.

Researchers who have been addressing the subject to date tended to question whether the design of the interiors here discussed should be called socialist realism, and leaned towards the conclusion that it is an example of a continuation of trends from before the Second World War.²⁰ In the discussed complex, the decor is not homogeneous, as Magdalena Smaga pointed out, and the decidedly more austere finish of Building S was associated with the time of its completion in the post-thaw period.²¹

Management building – formal, representative interiors

In the building of the Management of the Administrative Centre we can observe a clear division into a representative, formal space and strictly functional space. This is how the interiors of state public buildings, including ministerial buildings, worked in the interwar period:²² they were also designed in a holistic manner.²³ In the discussed building in Nowa Huta, the representative part of the first floor was most carefully designed. Rather like in Italian palaces, it played the role of *piano nobile*. Marian Sigmund's drawings – his *perspektywki* – show the main rooms of the compound. The sketches are later than the working designs, which date back to 1955,²⁴ and they come from the period of the final stage of work on the interior design.²⁵



3. Entrance hall of the management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks, view towards the main gate. Photo by Tom Rollauer, courtesy of NCA sp. z o.o.

→ see p. 167

17 ANCA, Projekt, file XI, study No. 25.

18 M. Smaga, *Od planu po realizację*, part II, p. 102.

19 Leszek J. Sibila (*Nowohucki design. Historia wnętrza*, p. 137) quotes the architect's name as "Michajłow", whereas in technical drawings it features as "M. Michajłow".

20 Ibidem, p. 14; M. Smaga, *Od planu po realizację*, part II, p. 120; A. Sumorok, *Socrealizm i socrealizmy. Architektura wnętrza w Polsce 1949–1956*, Łódź 2021, p. 222.

21 A. Sumorok, *Socrealizm i socrealizmy*, p. 123.

22 A. Kostrzyńska-Miłosz, *Styl narodowy i nacjonalizm w polskich wnętrzach pierwszej połowy XX wieku*, in: *Nacjonalizm w sztuce i historii sztuki 1789–1950. Materiały z konferencji zorganizowanej przez Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk i Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki w dniach 5–7 grudnia 1995 w Warszawie*, D. Konstantynów, R. Pasieczny, P. Paszkiewicz (eds.), Warszawa 1998, p. 193.

23 A. Sumorok, *Nie tylko socrealizm?*, p. 132: "Representational zone typically comprised the entrance, the two-storey-high colonnaded hall, imposing stairwell and the key element, which was the main assembly hall".

24 L.J. Sibila, *Nowohucki design. Historia wnętrza*, fig. 109, 114–116, 118–119, 125.

25 1955 photographs are showing the stage of finishing works. See: ibidem, fig. 128–131.

The rooms were arranged in a sequence, and treated as a stylistic whole. Particular emphasis was placed on arranging successive spaces in this vein, while referring to formal residential architecture, including the interiors of the Royal Castle in Warsaw.²⁶ The first of the representative rooms that take you to the official part of the building is the entrance hall (see: Fig. 3, 4). Three pairs of arched doors lead to it, between which pilasters are placed on the inner side. The space of the hall is diversified by means of props with a square cross-section, covered with stucco lining. They support the ceiling decorated with octagonal coffers, in which the lighting is hidden. From the low landing opposite the entrance to the first floor (*piano nobile*) there are two tunnel staircases – each preceded by several steps – located symmetrically on either side.²⁷ The floors, as well as the steps and the cladding of the stair railing, are made of marble. The intention was to illuminate the stairs, which are interrupted by a landing in the middle of the flight (see: Fig. 5), using an emergency light placed in the coat-of-arms cartouche. The embedded handrail of the staircase, finished with an ogee at both ends, is recessed into the wall. The wall at the top of the staircase was to be covered with a painting decoration. From this point, one can proceed from one side to the foyer of the conference room, and from the other, to the representative office space, housing the rooms of the director general and the office of the chief engineer, respectively.

The foyer is one of the most emblematic rooms; also, among the best preserved to this day (see: Fig. 6).²⁸ It occupies a space on a rectangular plan, divided by means of six pairs of pillars into two asymmetrical parts: the communication segment, with the door leading to the main conference room, and the larger part, serving as a lobby, illuminated by five *porte-fenetre* windows overlooking the courtyard. When erecting the pillars, the forms of supports from the entrance hall were replicated. Geometric stuccos on the ceiling, similarly to the two-colour marble floor, visually differentiate individual parts of the vestibule. The wall in which the entrances to the conference room were placed is visually divided into five bays by means of pillars placed very close together. In the furthest bays, there are portals with frames made of marble, but in the entablature sections, this material has been replaced with plaster (although originally the plan was to use white “Stronie Śląskie” marble). The double-leaf door was divided into six square panels, and a rosette was initially planned within each of those. In-between the portals, in three bays, there are semi-circular niches marked with plaster cladding, and originally highlighted with a different colour. It was originally proposed that busts should be placed on high pedestals against their background (see: Fig. 7). Next to that, in the seating area, there are narrow doors leading to the bathrooms, over which rectangular boards with cut corners, resembling reduced cartouches, were initially designed. Further, there are “fireplaces” made of marble, whose frames, topped with a cornice supported by volutes, hide radiators behind a decorative grille. Fireplace covers were designed at the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław.²⁹

26 J. Wierzbicki, *Dyskusja*, p. 124.

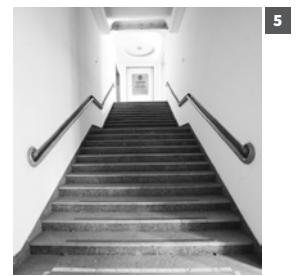
27 Drawing by Barbara Ślaska. ANCA, Projekt, file IV, study No. 4.

28 Drawing by Maria Michajłów. Ibidem, study No. 5.

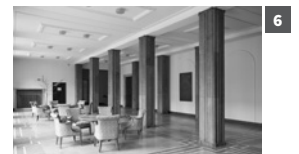
29 Detailed information about the materials, from which the interior elements were made and the locations of their production can be found in: ANCA, Projekt.



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4. Entrance hall of the management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Tom Rollauer, courtesy of NCA sp. z o.o.

→ see p. 167

5. The main staircase of the Management Building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski

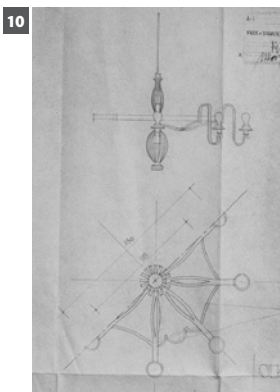
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6. Foyer in front of the main conference room in the management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski

→ see p. 168

7. Foyer in front of the main conference hall in the management building, detailed design, drawing by Maria Michajłów, ANCA. Photo by Igor Stanisławski

→ see p. 169



8. Main conference room, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 169

9. Office of the director general, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 170

10. Chandelier for the chief engineer's office, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks, detailed design, drawing by Zdzisław Szpyrkowski, ANCA. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 170

Marian Sigmund's conceptual drawing also shows those details that are present in the project but ultimately have not been implemented: the rosettes within the door panels, the cartouche plaques above the bathroom facilities, and the pedestals with busts on top. Round tables with armchairs have been designed for the lounge area in the hallway.

Adjacent to the foyer is the most important space, i.e. the main conference room (see: Fig. 8), founded on a rectangular plan and, like the hallway, illuminated by five huge *porte-fenetre* windows surrounded by marble frames. Above the hall, along the shorter sides, there are galleries. The ceiling is decorated with a moulding with octagonal coffers, each of which has a rosette placed within. In the middle hangs a huge chandelier based on a corpus structure, with symmetrically arranged arms extending from the central shaft. The floor is covered with a wooden mosaic tiles laid out in a geometric pattern. Under the galleries, three "fireplaces" are located – or rather marble recesses for the radiator – repeating the form of analogous elements of the decor in the hallway. Tables, armchairs and sofas have also been designed for the conference room. Among those elements of the equipment that were ultimately never implemented, Sigmund's conceptual drawing included a giant tapestry that was meant to be hung on the wall opposite the windows, as well as cartouches above the portals and a row of portraits on the wall below the gallery.

The other, smaller conference rooms (numbered I and II), also preceded by a foyer, were arranged and furnished in a somewhat modest manner, though in analogy to the main conference hall,³⁰ the same interior design elements were applied in their design: the mock-"fireplaces", marble window frames, and coffered ceilings.

In the representative part, the design of the suite of offices is also noteworthy – a group of rooms for the director general, and more modestly furnished interiors (and in a markedly more modern style) for the chief engineer. Four rooms were designated for the needs of the director general of the steelworks: the secretary's office, the waiting room, the director's office and a break room connected thereto.³¹ The criteria for the competition included the requirement to locate the director's office in such a way that the windows of that room would directly overlook the steelworks.³² Initially, the plan was to fit the director's office in a corner room, but eventually the concept changed, and the latter interior was repurposed for a waiting room; nevertheless, the above-mentioned requirement was met. The director general's office is ultimately much larger than it was originally intended, and is currently the best-preserved interior of the entire suite of rooms (see: Fig. 9). This particular room has a rectangular plan. Four window openings illuminate the interior; and the room is serviced by two entrances – one directly from the corridor, and the other from the side of the secretary's office. Behind the formal office there is a break room connected thereto by two pairs of symmetrically arranged doors. All the doors were made by the Centralny Zarząd Przemysłu Meblarskiego w Poznaniu [Central Board of the Furniture Industry in Poznań], as was the walnut veneered wall panelling. Supraportes (overdoors) have been designed above the entrances, prepared to hold stretcher bars. The initial plan was for the ceiling to be

³⁰ The drawings were made by Krzysztof Bień and Kazimierz Syrek. Ibidem, file v, studies No. 7, 8.

³¹ The drawings were made by Zdzisław Szpyrkowski. Ibidem, file v1, study No. 12.

³² T. Gołaszewski, *Kronika*, p. 302.

decorated with plaster stucco in the shape of a rosette. There was a design intention for a tapestry to be hung on the wall between the door to the break room, and for another tapestry opposite the windows. According to the design, the following elements were actually implemented: a built-in wardrobe, a desk with a director's chair, and two additional chairs for applicants, as well as a conference table with seats (currently there is another set of furniture in the office, brought herein from a smaller conference room).

The detailed design – and above all the conceptual drawing – shows that the intention was to arrange and furnish the waiting room with equal degree of care. The chandelier-candlestick made of bronze and brass in Państwowa Pracownia Plastyczna [State Art Studio] (see: Fig. 10) was designed as the dominant element in this interior.

The last of the suite of formal representative rooms is the office of the chief engineer, located in the corner room on the other side of the main conference room.³³ It has been well appointed with all the basic equipment and furniture that has been specially designed for this interior. The elements of furniture here are much lighter and more slender than those intended for other representative rooms.

The other office spaces were considerably more uniform stylistically. Sets of the same stylized furniture have been designed for the offices on the ground floor and the second floor. The rooms on the third floor were treated differently. Their quite detailed description, prepared by the author of the project, Teresa Lisowska, has been preserved to this day. The choice of the colour for the walls depended on the location of the office. According to the design, those whose windows face the south-west³⁴ and south-east were to be painted with white paint with a shade of pearl grey. In rooms lit from the north-west and north-east, it was decided that the white colour should have a light cream shade. All ceilings were designed as painted in white, using paint with the addition of alum. Dark oak planks were planned for the floor. Both the doors and the furniture were to be covered with a dark oak veneer, with the upholstery of the latter made of a densely woven grey-blue material. It was planned that the blinds would be a shade lighter than the furniture, and at the same time they were to be made of homespun cotton fabric, semi-transparent, sliding over the entire length or only part of the length of window openings, which was supposed to facilitate regulating the sunlight exposure (see: Fig. 11).³⁵ As for the other rooms, the buffet area with all the furnishings and equipment has been designed and drafted in considerable detail.

One of the two waiting rooms linked with the entrance pass-issuing office was designed in a non-standard way (see: Fig. 12, 13).³⁶ It is representative and formal in character – a quality that is emphasized by solid furniture, stylized to resemble folk crafts.³⁷ The floor was made of two types of marble arranged in a checkerboard pattern, the stairs were decorated with a wrought iron balustrade, its central part made of brass, and the handrail made of oak. The portal, crowned with a cornice, also includes a transom above the door, and the latter is equipped with a decorative bronze knob. This waiting room was an intermediate space, connecting the exterior and the representative zones. The second waiting room – its design created also

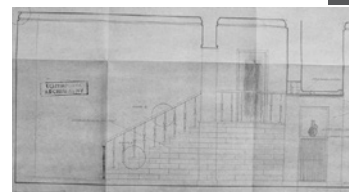
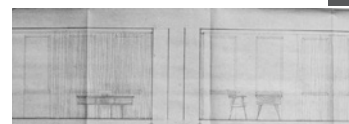
33 The drawing was made by Wanda Genga. ANCA, file VI, study No. 12.

34 In the description, in all likelihood mistakenly, the north-west orientation is given. Ibidem.

35 Ibidem, study No. 14.

36 The drawing was prepared by Teresa Lisowska. Ibidem, file XII, study No. 29.

37 M. Smaga, *Od planu po realizację*, part II, p. 119.



11. Typical third-floor office, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks, detailed design, drawing by Teresa Lisowska, ANCA. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 171

12. Waiting room and pass-issuing office, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks, detailed design, drawing by Teresa Lisowska, ANCA. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 171

13. Waiting room and pass-issuing office, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks, detailed design, drawing by Teresa Lisowska, ANCA. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 171

with similar rooms in buildings Z and S in mind – looks much more modest despite the repetition of certain elements.

The interiors of the management building have been finished very carefully, with great attention to quality and the application of expensive, durable materials. Particular attention was paid to the details, as evidenced by both the careful execution of the design, and the notes on the project sheets.

Paraphrase of the interiors of the Wawel Royal Castle and the reception of Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz's art

The formal representative rooms intended for the management of the Steelworks evoked associations with the chambers of the Wawel Royal Castle. The similarity was chiefly manifested in the use of coffered ceilings, but it was not the only reference to the castle interiors.³⁸ Both in the architectural part, designed by the trio of architects – Janusz Ballenstedt, Maria Ingarden, and Janusz Ingarden – and in the concept of interior design, created under the direction of Marian Sigmund, there are unmistakable inspirations drawn from the solutions used in the residence of kings. The representative tunnel staircases are almost directly copied from the very steep Envoy's Stairs, therefore, a landing was added in the middle of their course. Also, the moulded handrail embedded in the wall is almost identical to the solution applied at the Wawel castle, differing only in the volute endings. The top of the stairs also resembles that of the first floor of the castle. The conference room refers to the castle's Senators' Hall both in its general atmosphere and numerous decorative motifs, which is especially visible in Marian Sigmund's conceptual drawings. Above all, however, the similarity can be seen in the aforementioned use of the coffered ceilings; in the setting of radiator-fireplace recesses, in which the decorative motifs from the Baroque Wawel portals were repeated; in the heavy-set furniture; and in the planned introduction of large tapestries, referring to the *arras* wall hangings. Numerous details in the foyer are also Wawel-like in character: portals; door panels with rosettes; cartouches with coats of arms, referring to those from the beginning of the seventeenth century – serving, for example, as an emergency light fitting on the stairs; information boards above the sanitary facilities; as well as the planned insertion of sculptures on high pedestals. The decor of the office of the director general strongly resembles the arrangement of the Wawel castle's Bird Room. The placement of doors leading to the break room is similar to the castle solution, including the fact that there are two pairs of those – from a purely functional point of view, one of them is redundant. This duplicates the solution found in the Wawel original, where there are two entrances to the Chapel of king Sigismund III and to the Dutch Cabinet. The place where the fireplace would have been is occupied here by a built-in wardrobe. Above the latter, as well as above the door next to it, there is a *supraporte*. The general atmosphere of the office is conjured by the dark panelling, evoking associations with dark *cordovan* leather wallpaper in the Wawel Envoys' Hall.

The waiting room and the office where the passes are issued also seem to suggest references to the rooms of the Wawel Castle, although their reference point rests not so much in the representative State Rooms, but the rooms for the governor located on the ground floor. This is illustrated by a conceptual drawing, whose author was

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 123.

most likely Teresa Lisowska.³⁹ A checkerboard-pattern marble floor in two colours was introduced here, as well as stairs leading to the upper storey next to the wall, located analogously to the Wawel staircase; two high-placed windows; a portal capturing the transom over the passage, inspired by the Wawel castle solution; and even a knob in the door almost identical to the one in the castle. By contrast, the set of furniture echoes the Zakopane style from the beginning of the twentieth century, serving to emphasize the character of the room, which is a link between the folk domain and the world of power.

The designers of the interiors of the Nowa Huta administrative compound consistently referred to the external form of architecture, fulfilling the postulate of socialist realism style “that there should be a clear relationship between the ideological, programmatic, functional, technical, artistic solution of the interior and the form of its architecture.”⁴⁰ Nevertheless the inspirations with the solutions featured in the Wawel castle, which are clearly present in their concepts, in fact referred not to the art of the “Polish Renaissance”, but to the conservation work by Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz.

Poland regained independence in 1918, Wawel castle became a key symbol of the newly reborn state, and was established as one of the official presidential residences. It housed both museum spaces and representative chambers – a place of official meetings with the leaders of other countries. Szyszko-Bohusz very consciously created the space of the castle chambers, reinterpreting it, and assigning it with new contexts.⁴¹ He faced the task of “saving the Wawel hill from ruin and striving to restore its former glory”,⁴² as well as constructing myths of a modern state and aesthetic codes that would shape common, national identity.⁴³ This was not a new concept: already Stanisław Wyspiański, when creating the idea of national art and designing the Wawel Castle redevelopment (1904–1907), was the first to notice the need to design interiors and furniture of a separate character, matching the style of the castle, which he treated as “the most elegant creation of [the nation] in terms of stately and intellectual culture”.⁴⁴ Szyszko-Bohusz seemed to continue this vision, treating the Wawel hill as a national pantheon. He introduced new ideas to the castle’s interiors, such as the purchase of cordovans (leather wallpaper) or the introducing early modern tiled stoves from the castle in Wiśniowiec. He also initiated the use of contemporary accents – namely, he placed painting compositions fitted in plafonds, which were not intended to imitate historical representations.⁴⁵ He was severely criticized for such an “invention” of Wawel interiors; he had been accused of destroying the historical character of the royal chambers.⁴⁶

39 L.J. Sibila, *Nowohucki design. Historia wnętrza*, p.72, fig. 113. The drawing had been attributed to Marian Sigmund, however, a comparative analysis against known signed designs by Teresa Lisowska indicates to the authorship of the latter.

40 *Przed otwarciem Pałacu Kultury i Nauki*, “Architektura”, 1955, No. 7, p. 190, quoted from: A. Su-morok, *Nie tylko socrealizm?*, p. 123.

41 M. Wiśniewski, *Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz*, Kraków 2013, p. 21.

42 F. Fuchs, *Z historii odnowienia wawelskiego zamku 1905–1939*, Kraków 1962, p. 11, quoted from: M. Pilikowski, *Architekt Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz w krakowskiej Akademii Sztuk Pięknych*, Kraków 2020, p. 310.

43 M. Wiśniewski, *Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz*, p. 8.

44 Quoted from: A. Kostrzyńska-Miłosz, *Styl narodowy i nacjonalizm*, s. 192.

45 M. Wiśniewski, *Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz*, p. 21.

46 One of the chief opponents of Szyszko-Bohusz was Karol Estreicher, who accused the architect of “clearing the royal castle off its patina’ [...] Castle interiors used to be warm, filled with wooden panelling, stoves, benches, leather upholstery, carpets and tapestries, furs and velvets,

When creating the representative part of the buildings, the designers of the Administrative Centre probably deliberately used the means that were analogous to those which determined the character of royal interiors. As a result, they received the mark of imposing, monumental spaces, of a regal and palatial impression, imitating historical interiors. The plan was to introduce artworks therein. However, contrary to the socialist realist postulate of involving visual artists in activities at all stages of the design process, in the case of the complex in Nowa Huta, those artists did not take part in the conceptual works.⁴⁷ Professor Sigmund repeated the procedure that Szyszko-Bohusz used in the Wawel castle chambers, and he designated places where works of contemporary art were meant to be located. In the administrative centre of Nowa Huta, rather like in the royal chambers in the 1920s – the art, most likely in the style of socialist realism – was intended as an accent in the representative space of the office building. This function was to be performed by frescoes on the walls, for example at the top of the representative stairs, by paintings in the supraportes in the office of the director general, as well as by tapestries, sculptural busts, etc.

In addition to the artworks, which were meant to fill the interiors, visible light sources were treated as an important decorative element, significantly influencing the glow and the visibility of colours in the rooms.⁴⁸ Therefore, decorative wrought iron chandeliers were used in the Administrative Centre, both in the most visible spaces of the conference rooms and in less important locations, such as the waiting room in the director general's office complex.

The reference to the works of Szyszko-Bohusz during the period when the doctrine of socialist realism was in force should also come as no surprise. Szyszko-Bohusz has been recognized as an architect of the realistic trend associated with the national tradition.⁴⁹ It was believed that his “innovations” brought new creative values and modernized the Wawel castle interiors – because “fetishism and mummification of monuments are contrary to the laws of progress, and at the same time they are signs of inferiority complexes towards the artistic legacy of past eras and a sign of timidity and disbelief in one's own era.”⁵⁰ It was noted that his conservation works had the power to enliven historic spaces with contemporary architectural visuals, and he himself had a great wealth of associations and artistic visions at his fingertips, which undoubtedly became a treasury of inspiration for designers.⁵¹

This kind of thinking about shaping a representative interior was one of the main trends in interwar architecture, and grew out of the tradition of the “Kraków school”. An example of a multifunctional “palatial” building is the Silesian Sejm (Parliament) in Katowice, whose interior was designed by the Kraków-based architect Ludwik Wojtyczko.⁵² The interiors of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry

smoking fireplaces, oak- and ash-timber tile floors, painted furniture, chests, sculpted birds... [...] resembling royal residences in Austria and Bohemia – and not the interiors of Pitti and Uffizzi palaces known from Florence” (M. Pilikowski, *Architekt Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz*, pp. 315–316).

47 S. Tworowski, *Udział plastyki*, pp. 120–121.

48 N. Borowski, *Kilka uwag*, p. 120.

49 B. Szmidt, *O twórczości Adolfa Szyszko-Bohusza*, “Architektura”, 1954, No. 11, p. 265.

50 *Ibidem*, p. 266.

51 *Ibidem*, p. 267.

52 H. Surowiak-Kusidłowa, *Wnętrza reprezentacyjne gmachu Urzędu Wojewódzkiego i Sejmu Śląskiego w Katowicach. Wybrane zagadnienia*, in: *Sztuka Górnego Śląska na przecięciu dróg europejskich i regionalnych*, E. Chojecka (ed.), Katowice 1999, p. 228.

of Religious Affairs and Public Enlightenment in Warsaw are also of a similar nature.⁵³ The solutions used in the building of the Silesian Parliament, which has become a monument to the “imperial power of the state”, housing parliamentary spaces, offices of the regional (voivodeship) office, as well as private apartments of the regional governors: the marshal and the voivode,⁵⁴ also seem to serve as inspiration for the Nowa Huta managerial headquarters in the Administrative Centre. Both complexes perform similar functions, combining official rooms with space for administration. The representative part of the Silesian Sejm is distinguished by the richness of its interior. It consists of: vestibular entrance, “palatial” staircase leading to the first floor – the *piano nobile*, formal representative rooms and adjacent residential apartments, those intended for the marshal on one side, and those intended for the voivode, on the other. Other than that, there are strings of modest office spaces. On the axis of the first floor there is a reception room, is flanked by salon-like rooms where social events used to be celebrated. The western wall of the main hall was pierced with *porte-fenetre* windows, and the floor was finished with wooden tiles, with a decorative rosette in the middle. Orchestra balconies, mirrors, and crystal chandeliers were added. What determined the character of the interior are the details as well as economy and purity of form.⁵⁵ The design of the Lenin Steelworks’ management building repeats this scheme, but there are differences: instead of the typical “palatial” stairs, a solution referring to the Envoy’s Stairs was applied in this case; the representative rooms are echoed by conference rooms and the foyer preceding them; and the symmetrically arranged rooms of the marshal and the voivode have been replaced here with the offices of the director general and the chief engineer.⁵⁶ The interiors typically associated in socialist realism with national art and Polishness became the inspiration for the interior design.

It is surprising that the use of solutions developed in the interwar period was continued in the buildings erected at Wawel hill during the German occupation, especially in the administration building (*Verwaltungsgebäude*), rebuilt from the former royal kitchens. Work on its adaptation lasted from 1940⁵⁷ to 1944. An important task, apart from the design of the façade, was to arrange the interiors adequately to their purpose.⁵⁸ The project was entrusted to the design office of Franz Koettgen and Edgar Horstmann. Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz was hired by their company, formally as a draftsman, but in fact he was the author of all the concepts. In the initial phase of the project, Szyszko-Bohusz’s sketches would be corrected by a German employee, usually Walther Kaulfus.⁵⁹

The most important rooms of the administration building were located on the first floor, connected to the ground floor by means of a representative staircase. It housed a series of rooms, such as a large meeting and function hall, preceded by an oval vestibule, a small meeting hall, the office of the governor general overlooking

53 M. Wiśniewski, *Szkola krakowska i styl narodowy w polskiej architekturze międzywojennej*, in: *Florencja i Kraków wobec dziedzictwa*, Kraków 2008, pp. 154, 164–165.

54 H. Surowiak-Kusidłowa, *Wnętrza reprezentacyjne*, p. 227.

55 *Ibidem*, p. 237.

56 It is particularly apparent in the original design for the functional layout of respective rooms.

57 The first conceptual drawings date to 1940. See: J. Gwizdałówna, *Architektura Wawelu w czasie okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945*, Kraków 2019, p. 76.

58 *Ibidem*, p. 232.

59 *Ibidem*, pp. 45–47.

the arcaded courtyard of the castle, and the rooms where Hans Frank's office was located. The second floor was intended for office spaces.⁶⁰ The building, which was supposed to be both representative and functional, was finished with great care – with reliable, luxurious materials used for the purpose.⁶¹ It is apparent that great care and attention was devoted to the details in the door and window frames, in the staircases, in the floors and in window grilles. Elements used in the interior design include wooden coffered ceilings, wood-panelled walls, fireplaces, alcoves with radiators enclosed within gratings, stucco decorations, and lighting strips.⁶² The floors on the first floor, where the most important rooms are located, were finished with stone, while in the other rooms wood was used as the finishing material. Nearly all of these elements were also included in the design of the chambers of the Royal Castle – no wonder, because these interiors were arranged according to the designs of the same architect, and only corrected, as the author himself pointed out, “in the direction of their orthodoxy in terms of German taste and style”.⁶³ However, the way of thinking about the representative interiors, embodied therein, remained unchanged.

The rooms for the management board in the Administrative Centre seem to maintain the same convention; they epitomise the same monumental and imposing quality, and both the representative and usable parts have been arranged in a similar way. Furthermore, the executive documentation of the works carried out at Wawel hill during the occupation and the Administrative Centre was developed according to the same scheme, with great emphasis on fine-tuning the details.

Shortly after the war, in some of the rooms of the *Verwaltungsgebäude*, the Faculty of Architecture was opened, affiliated with the Polytechnic departments of the AGH University of Science and Technology. This was owing to Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, who became the dean of this unit, as well as the head of the Department of Composition of Monumental Architecture.⁶⁴ Classes were held in the main assembly room.⁶⁵ The majority of the designers working on the Lenin Steelworks administrative buildings were the professor's students. They were very likely familiar with the concept of creating the interiors for the royal residence, the implementation of that concept, as well as the decor of the post-German *Verwaltungsgebäude*. It is possible that they even got acquainted with the construction documentation of the administrative building. One of the lecturers employed at the Department of Freehand Drawing was Julian Pietrzyk,⁶⁶ who also participated in the creation of projects from the time of the German occupation at Wawel.⁶⁷ The method of teaching drawing at the Faculty of Architecture in Kraków at that time showed similarities to the one promoted at the Faculty of Architecture of the Technical University of Berlin.⁶⁸

The examples listed above show that the design of the interior architecture of the Administrative Centre building is part of the logical history in the development of the formal representative interiors. Modifications under the influence of

60 Ibidem, p. 93.

61 Ibidem, p. 94.

62 Ibidem, pp. 114, 232.

63 Ibidem, p. 310.

64 Ibidem, p. 426.

65 Ibidem, p. 313.

66 A. Białkiewicz, *Katedra Rysunku, Malarstwa i Rzeźby, Wydział Architektury Politechniki Krakowskiej – Historia*, <<http://www.a7.arch.pk.edu.pl/historia.htm>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

67 J. Gwizdałówna, *Architektura Wawelu*, p. 300.

68 A. Białkiewicz, *Katedra Rysunku*.

socialist realism in this case seem to be negligible. Their appearance seems to be equally influenced by the pre-war interiors, as by the architecture of the period of the German occupation in Kraków.

The amenity building and the tradition of designing interiors of public nature

In the twin S Building there is a second, very different set of official interiors. Just like the office building for the management, the S Building consists of the main hall, the staircase, a foyer in front of the main hall – in this case, the hall is referred to as a theatre – as well as common room (located above it, in the third floor), a dining room, and an adjoining hallway. The character of these rooms, despite the fact that many elements of the decor also present in the management building are repeated here, is nevertheless different. These are “open interiors”, as Aleksandra Sumorok calls such spaces;⁶⁹ the interiors, which served as a “societal [public, or communal] home”. In the post-war period, buildings of this nature were commonly designed both for residential districts – then they became available to the public – and for industry organizations or production companies. They were created both in larger cities and smaller towns. To name but a few examples from the capital: Dom Społeczny [literally: Social House] in Żoliborz, Dom Dziennikarza [House of the Journalist], or Dom Społeczny Architektów [Architects’ Social House] fall into that vein. The central part of these buildings consisted of a representative hallway, an auditorium with adjoining rooms, reading rooms, and a dining room. They had variously developed functional programs. Those that additionally housed a health centre and a hair salon were considered to have full-range public or social (community-serving) facilities.⁷⁰

On the “perspectivette” drawing by Marian Sigmund, we can see that the interiors of Building S are kept in a slightly less formal style than those in the management building, there is no excessive grandeur there, despite the historicizing character. The whole space exudes the impression of lightness, with delicate double columns, spaciousness, and subtle stuccoes. This design remains in line with the belief that “community-serving buildings should not have an overly monumental, rigid expression.”⁷¹

The main hall on the ground floor seemingly repeated the same elements that the ones used in the representative (formal) building, but the amenity (social) building served a different, more egalitarian function, and therefore its decor was “updated”. Similar materials were used here, keeping everything in shades of grey (marble, support cladding, wall colour), a ceiling with rounded coffers was used with lighting system installed within it, and lighting strips were added. The entrance to the hall leads through three pairs of rectangular doors, separated from each other by pilasters. Bathrooms and cloakrooms have been placed to either side, and stairs leading to the first floor have been located opposite the entrance.⁷² Marian

69 She uses the term to describe all publicly used spaces with an upgraded standard of the furnishing and decoration of open zones, typically also with varying accessibility. See: A. Sumorok, *Socrealizm i socrealizmy*, p. 47.

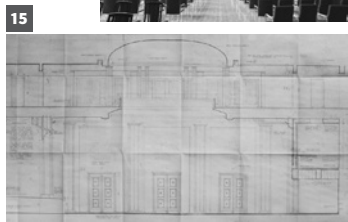
70 A. Nitsch [voice in the discussion], *Domy społeczne w Warszawie*, “Architektura”, 1952, No. 6, p. 151.

71 S. Brukalski [voice in the discussion], *Domy społeczne*, p. 153.

72 The technical design was drawn by Teresa Lisowska, Janusz Ingarden, was the author of the main hall, and Marian Sigmund was responsible for the design of the staircase – drawn by Maria Michajłow. ANCA, Projekt, file x, study No. 20.



Sigmund decided to use a different solution here than the one applied in the Z Building. A separate staircase with a railing decorated with balusters leads to a bright, spacious foyer of the theatre hall, illuminated by six tall windows, evenly grouped. On the opposite side, the doubled, slender columns are preceded by three pairs of double doors leading to a rectangular, bright theatre hall (see: Fig. 14). Inside it, the wall opposite the entrance was pierced with huge windows of the *porte-fenetre* type, analogous to those in the hall. The stage has been positioned on right-hand side. The proscenium and the frame of the stage opening were made of wood, and the original plan was to hang a cartouche on the axis of the latter. The dominant accent of the entire assembly hall is a huge plafond placed in the middle of the ceiling, illuminated along the whole perimeter with round lamps, opening onto the upper storeys (currently, the levels are separated by a membrane stretched over the opening). Above the door, the plan envisaged the introduction of murals painted in tempera technique.



In the executive drawings prepared in March 1954 by Zdzisław Szpyrkowski, the theatre hall and the common room on the third floor located above it were treated as a whole (see: Fig. 15). In the middle of the common room, exactly above the plafond, there is a round opening surrounded by a low wall and secured with a balustrade (see: Fig. 16). Around it double, slender columns were placed, supporting a flattened dome; in the design, they are covered with fluting, which also extends to the capital. According to the description, a fresco or mosaic was planned – the designers intended to place in the dome's interior. This decoration was to be admired from the auditorium, while a view down to the hall would open from the room above it. From the main common room, you could enter smaller rectangular rooms, one of which was probably “the loud games’ room” mentioned in the project. Some of those rooms were designated for storage. This is the concept that we find represented in the detailed working design. However, it was not included in the oldest plans, dating from 1951, which described the purpose of individual floors and rooms.⁷³ Its pictorial visualization was added later, by drawing a pencil sketch on an older projection, complete with dimensions. The complete, comprehensive design, authored by Marta and Janusz Ingarden, dates from October 1954.⁷⁴ The interior design was developed by Marian Sigmund and drawn by Zbigniew Szpyrkowski.

The main hall, despite its name, is more of a redoubt room than a theatre. It certainly resembles redoubt rooms both in terms of functions and architectural solutions. These kinds of rooms were very popular in the second half of the nineteenth century. They were designed as spaces where masked balls were to take place, during which theatrical performances were usually organized, hence the presence of a stage. In Vienna, a special kind of auditorium has developed, designed for this type of entertainment. It was a hall on the plan of an elongated rectangle, with a narrow balcony running around it, while the rooms next to it housed buffets and wardrobes.⁷⁵ In Kraków, such halls appeared in the nineteenth century, the most famous being the one at the back of Hotel Saski.⁷⁶ Redoubt rooms were not forgotten

73 Ibidem, file VII, study No. 15.

74 Ibidem, file X, study No. 22.

75 K. Nowacki, *Architektura krakowskich teatrów*, Kraków 1982, p. 41.

76 Redoubt rooms also appeared next to other hotels throughout Kraków. See: *ibidem*, pp. 43–47.



14. Theatre hall, social building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 178

15. Theatre hall with a common room above it, social building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks, detailed design, drawing by Zdzisław Szpyrkowski, ANCA. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 178

16. A common room above the theatre hall, social building, the Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 179

in the post-war period – in 1950 the renovated redoubt hall in the Grand Theatre in Warsaw was put into use.⁷⁷

The theatre hall in the S Building has all the features of a redoubt room: the floor, unlike in the theatre, is flat, and it also features a stage, as well as balconies located above the plafond. It was also supposed to be a representative space: for example, it could serve as a banquet hall. This did not prevent it from being used for purposes other than entertainment – depending on requirements at the time, it became a conference room or a place where lectures were held. Just like other redoubt rooms in Kraków, it was located in a building that also housed a buffet and a hotel.

The very idea of opening the hall through a round aperture to the storey above seems to be a modernist trait. This solution was used in the interwar period, for example in the Dom Wycieczkowy im. Piłsudskiego [The Piłsudski Excursionist Home] at Oleandy street in Kraków, where the reception room opens onto the illuminated plafond of the hall on the first floor.

For the S Building, a dining room was carefully drawn, with reading rooms planned next to it, arranged very much like elegant living rooms – equipped with sofas, armchairs, tables and shelves for domestic and foreign press.⁷⁸ The layout and the standard equipment for the rooms and common areas of the hotel on the third floor were also presented. Another style of interior design, devoid of pathos, and found in the management headquarters, corresponds to the different function of the rooms in the S Building. The decorum principle was applied here in a particular, idiosyncratic way. According to that principle, a building housing important offices and institutions should receive sublime features, whereas more “lyrical” forms should be reserved for buildings of a less ideological nature, related to the sphere of culture.⁷⁹ The detailed working design of the amenity building provided for much more details than were actually, ultimately executed. As reported in 1956 by the local press, the works were in danger of being stopped due to lack of funds and the cancellation of loans, therefore “pursuant to a decree of the Presidium of the Government, unnecessary and expensive decorations, such as marble columns and stuccoes, were removed from the design.”⁸⁰ This was not unrelated to the political changes taking place at that time, which led to the ultimate departure from socialist realism style.⁸¹

The idea of locating the health centre in the S Building was also not included in the original concept. Ground floor plans from 1953⁸² illustrate the introduced modifications, taking into account sanitary needs and adapting the layout of rooms to accommodate them. The authors of the changes were Artur Chwalibogowski⁸³

77 K. Piwocki, *Sale redutowe*, “Architektura”, 1950, No. 5–6, pp. 142–143.

78 ANCA, Projekt, file XI, study No. 25.

79 W. Baraniewski, *Klasycyzm a nowy monumentalizm*, in: *Materiały z Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki*, Warszawa, listopad 1991, Warszawa 1994, pp. 245–246.

80 *Na budowie Centrum Administracyjnego*, “Budujemy socjalizm”, 1956, No. 3, p. 2.

81 *Ogólnopolska Narada Architektów. Architekci wobec nowych zadań w budownictwie*. Warszawa, 26–28 marca 1956, in: M. Ziętara, *Sztuka krakowska 1945–2000*, vol. 1: *Socrealizm i czas „odwilży” (1945–1959/1960)*, Kraków 2020, p. 245.

82 ANCA, Projekt, file IX, study No. 20.

83 The architect’s bio in the website *In memoriam. Pamięci Architektów Polskich* reports that he had been employed by the Ministry of Health, <http://www.inmemoriam.architektsarp.pl/pokaz/artur_chwalibogowski,8827> (accessed on 12.12.2022).



17. One of the corner staircases in the social building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 180

18. Dome above one of the corner staircases in the management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 181

19. Corridor in the management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 181

20. Furniture for the foyer of the main conference room, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 182

and K. Terlecki.⁸⁴ This part of the building was given an entirely modernist character, devoid of any historical costume.

What is common and universal for the entire complex is the placement of spiral staircases in the corners of the buildings; their construction is also of modernist origin – modelled on Perret (see: Fig. 17). However, the effect becomes blurred by the costume imposed upon the structure, especially in the Z Building, where the complete interior design program had been implemented. The elements of this costume include fluted columns set in the corners of a polygon on each floor, a iron-forged railing consisting of balusters in historicizing form, and a stucco-decorated dome crowning each staircase, supported by an octagonal drum and illuminated by a transom (see: Fig. 18). Staircases of this type are present in many post-war projects implemented in the 1940s and 1950s, most often in the so-called universal office buildings in Warsaw. A similar solution was also applied in the “Nafta” office building in Kraków at Lubicz Street.⁸⁵ Rows of corridors with doors to offices on either side constitute a typical solution for buildings with an administrative function. In this particular implementation, they were diversified, using articulation by means of rhythmically spaced square pillars and illuminated round and rectangular plafonds (see: Fig. 19). There is a noticeable difference in the finish of the staircases: in the management building they were made of more glamorous materials – marble was used, and the walls were articulated with massive, heavy fluted columns. In the amenity building, the rich detail is absent, and the expensive stone has been replaced with terrazzo.

Different furniture sets for buildings Z and S

The equipment intended for the interiors of each of the two building deserves separate attention. The executive documentation contains detailed designs of carpentry furniture. Marian Sigmund is listed as the designer in the technical drawings, but in fact they it was Kazimierz Syrek, Zdzisław Szpyrkowski, Maria Michajłów, and Teresa Lisowska who drew them. Magdalena Smaga suggests that many of these projects were made with the significant participation of the professor’s students,⁸⁶ and she classifies the furniture featured in these designs into “representative” and “unrepresentative”.

The first group includes the furniture intended for the *piano nobile* of the management building. They were conceived as “suites” or “sets”, whereas the components of those sets were adapted to the needs of the given room.

The foyer in front of the conference rooms is equipped with upholstered club armchairs and round, heavy tables (see: Fig. 20). A similar suite of furniture, slightly smaller in size, was also designed for the foyer in front of the second conference room (see: Fig. 21). This second suite seems to be a bit lighter, less historicizing in style, but it upholds the same convention. The seats of both suites resemble simplified forms of a *bergere*, and the furnishing of the lobbies brings to mind the decor of an elegant club. Despite this, one can sense the gradation of the representativeness of the space – heavier furniture with decorative details is placed in front of the larger (more important) room. The lobbies of smaller rooms were equipped with lighter furniture, devoid of decorations.⁸⁷

84 I was not able to establish what the first name of the designer was.

85 A. Sumorok, *Nie tylko socrealizm?*, p. 135.

86 M. Smaga, *Od planu po realizację*, part II, p. 103, footnote 4.

87 Drawings for the furniture were authored by Marię Michajłów (first suite) and Wandę Gengę (second suite).

The main conference room was equipped with tables, chairs (see: Fig. 22) and sofas placed against the wall. The tables are rectangular, not too long, making it easy to rearrange and combine them into various configurations. According to the design, the plan was to place the presidium table against the wall, opposite the huge windows. The whole suite of furniture is characterized by great restraint in terms of decoration. Apart from the cover of the presidium table and the high backrest of the chairman's seat, there is no ornamentation. The equipment and furniture of the main conference room have been preserved almost in their entirety.⁸⁸

Smaller conference rooms (in the archival materials they are listed as I and II) have been equipped with similar furnishings. Each of them has one conference table, much larger than those designed for the main hall, and 28 chairs (see: Fig. 23). The furniture is much lighter than in the main hall, and because of that, the character of the rooms is less official character. The fact that a stand for presentation materials has been added to the furnishings may indicate that the interior is also intended for working meetings.

Movable elements of the director general's office include a desk, an armchair, a table, and conference chairs (see: Fig. 24).⁸⁹ The chairs repeat the structure of the seats from the main conference room, but their details seem to be more refined. The furniture from the office of the chief engineer is completely different: lighter, slimmer, and more modern (see: Fig. 25, 26). The designs clearly indicate that in this case, the veneer is meant as the only decorative motif.

The other offices were furnished in a standard, uniform manner. Those in the ground floor and in the second floor received bright, stylized furniture with bent palmette legs. Each set consists of a desk, armchairs, a round table, and cabinets (see: Fig. 27, 28). By contrast, desks and cabinets on the third floor have been deprived of details, but their structure has been revealed, making them much lighter and more modern. Against the background of other furniture, the equipment from the pass-issuing office and from the waiting room stands out, having a decidedly folk character. These include: a desk, a coffee table, stools, and a round table. The design of their form was supervised by Teresa Lisowska.⁹⁰

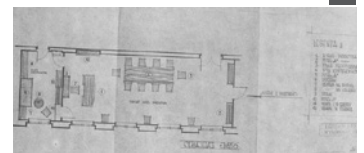
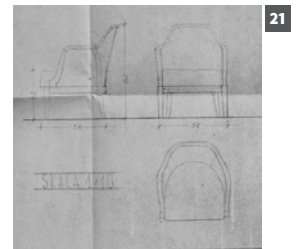
Furniture was designed for office rooms, a buffet, a hotel, and a health centre, all located in the social building. The original idea perhaps might have assumed a more comprehensive furnishing design, however ultimately the decor was finally around 1956. One of the most representative spaces is the dining room with the hallway located right next to it (see: Fig. 29); and the plan was to equip it with tables, armchairs, as well as library cabinets or tables for newspapers and magazines. It follows that the idea had been to furnish that space to serve as a common room. When designing the tables, the pattern of those from the office of the chief engineer was repeated.

Fully-fledged equipment was made for the hotel in the third floor. This consists of carpenter-made furniture, but designed in such a way that it can be quickly produced in a few – or a dozen or so copies. The lobby of the hotel has been furnished in an expressive, elegant style. However, the furnishings from the social building have not survived to this day.

88 The design was drawn by Kazimierz Syrek. ANCA, Projekt, file v, study No. 7.

89 The layout with placement of individual pieces of furniture was drawn by Zdzisław Szpyrkowski, whereas Kazimierz Syrek developed the furniture design. Ibidem, file VI, study No. 12.

90 Kazimierz Syrek has drawn the design. Ibidem.

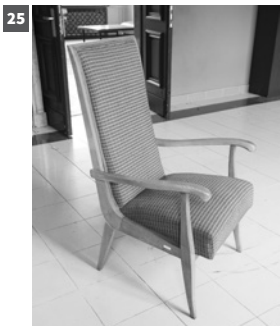


21. Armchair in the foyer of the smaller conference room, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks, drawing by Wanda Genga, ANCA. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 182

22. Furniture in the main conference room, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 183

23. Armchair for the smaller conference room, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 183

24. Layout of furniture in the office of the director general, drawing by Zdzisław Szpyrkowski, ANCA. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 184



25. Chief engineer's chair, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 184

26. Table from the chief engineer's office, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 184

27. A chair for one of the offices in the ground floor or second floor, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 184

The furniture was designed for interiors in socialist realism style. According to the assumption of the doctrine, the furniture should also be subordinated thereto. Nevertheless, until 1952, the question of what this type of design craft should look like had not been discussed. It was not until the exhibition of Interior Design and Decorative Art when critics were forced to take a closer look at this field of art. The focus was primarily on the rejection of formalistic tendencies, as well as abandoning the “eclectic and ornamental traditions” and Art Nouveau. What was required was clarity, purposefulness in design and structure, the correct choice and combination of materials, and the right choice of technique.⁹¹ In his review of the exhibition, Aleksander Wojciechowski emphasizes the need to refer to “the beautiful traditions of Polish furniture in the field of old craftsmanship and folk art”.⁹² He considers the main issue to be the proper balance of individual elements “so that the matter of usability and modesty of form does not turn into an overly concise and thus pretentiously simple shapes.”⁹³ The achievements of the visual arts of the interwar period were not completely rejected, and they were even continued – on a programmatic basis – seeing no need to look for other solutions. Both “Warsztaty Krakowskie” [“Kraków Workshops” movement] and the work of “Ład” [“Order” cooperative] were highly appreciated, as were the achievements of Studium Wnętrz i Sprzętu [Studio of Interiors and Furnishings] at the Warsaw Polytechnic, and they were commended for trying to give the furniture a distinct national character.⁹⁴ For that reason, it was possible to continue the pre-war architectural trends.

In the furniture for the Administrative Centre, references to the local tradition of the “Kraków Workshops” can be noticed; above all, one can see inspirations with the furniture designed by Józef Czajkowski, which filled the interiors of the Museum of Technology and Industry. The foyer furniture refers to the set from the director's office with a characteristic table on one massive foot and armchairs with armrests reminiscent of those in Czajkowski's sofa design. The armchairs from the office seem to be an inspiration for similar furniture in the lobby spaces. The structure of the tables for representative interiors repeats, in a simplified version, the structure of the table from the dining room at the Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Paris in 1925, designed by Wojciech Jastrzębowski. Such tendencies can be seen in Marian Sigmund's interwar works, for example in the living room furniture for the 1936 *Sztuka wnętrza* (Art of the Interior) exhibition. It seems that the author followed the same path in his designs for Nowa Huta. He applied his earlier solutions, while slightly modifying them – he did not so much modernize them as took a step back, adding some decorative detail to the structure.

The furniture, like the architecture of the building, is eclectic and, like the architecture, it refers to local traditions – and thanks to this, the design is coherent and consistently adheres to the pre-war philosophy, according to which “[the] principle of the interior lies in its artistic uniformity, that is, not only in the shape, space and colour, but in the total coherence and harmony of all elements, down

91 J. Bogucki, *Sprawa realizmu w plastyce kształtującej*, “Przegląd artystyczny”, 1952, No. 3, p. 42.

92 A. Wojciechowski, *Problemy Wystawy Architektury Wnętrza i Sztuki Dekoracyjnej*, “Przegląd Artystyczny”, 1952, No. 3, p. 17.

93 Ibidem, p. 16.

94 A. Wojciechowski, *Wzornictwo meblarskie*, Warszawa 1954, p. 4.

to the smallest utilitarian objects.”⁹⁵ Slight changes that have been introduced to the details of furniture for individual offices to some extent personalize them, but they also emphasize the organizational hierarchy of the Steelworks’ management. The most dignified is the furniture designed for the director general, for the main conference room, and for the lobbies. Elements taken from folk art are featured in smaller conference rooms. The furniture for the office of the chief engineer seems to be decidedly more modern, and in this case, the structure is emphasized. In contrast, suites of furniture for offices in the ground floor and in the second floor are more conservative; they have stylised features. The armchairs in the management building seem to fulfil their traditional function: emphasizing the social position of the user through the structure, the detail, but also the height of the backrest.

An interesting element is the introduction of motifs from “Zakopane style” folk art, but only in those more “egalitarian” areas, such as the small conference rooms, and above all in the waiting room and the pass-issuing office. Apart from these rooms, folk aesthetics does not appear in the interiors of a palatial character; nor are references to it found anywhere in the social building.

The furniture for the second building is almost devoid of historicizing elements, with the exception of some structures, for instance a table or a console from the hotel’s lounge. Józef Czajkowski used similar structural solutions in furniture that he had designed for the living room. In the representative parts, such as the hall, the dining room or the lobby, the furniture is the closest to the designing style of the “Ład” cooperative. Solutions for the S Building tend towards projects designated for mass production, ultimately positioning themselves between mass-produced furniture and handcrafted carpentry-furniture. This is very much in line with the idea of “everyday beauty for everyone”, as promoted by the Institute of Industrial Design. The furnishings from the amenity building are most reminiscent of the furniture designed for the common room, and these, as Aleksander Wojciechowski writes in his review, have a unique character, because they are not elitist – “just like a statue in a public square in not an elitist creation, although it does not have a private buyer [...] instead, it will be acquired by reading libraries, community centres, and kindergartens.”⁹⁶ The guidelines for socialist realist interior design were clear: if the conditions allow it, the furniture should be handcrafted.⁹⁷ In 1950, even before the Nowa Huta project was conceived, Marian Sigmund was invited to participate in a closed competition for leading furniture makers from the “Ład” cooperative for furniture intended for common rooms and community centres. The organizers of the competition adopted the assumptions of a small series made using handcrafted methods. Sigmund’s design was singled out as one of five selected submissions. Compared to other entries, his works were characterized by a decorative form and dark colours – “a mood not recommended for common room interiors”, as excessively serious.⁹⁸ Certain elements present in the submission project also resurface in the solutions for the Steelworks’ Administrative Centre.

95 M. Sigmund, *Sztuka wnętrza*, “Plastyka”, 1936, No. 2 (10–11), p. 201, quoted from: A. Kostrzyńska-Miłoś, *Sztuka wnętrza ładowskiego w okresie międzywojennym*, in: *Spółdzielnia Ład 1926–1996*, A. Frąckiewicz (ed.), Warszawa 1998, pp. 61–62.

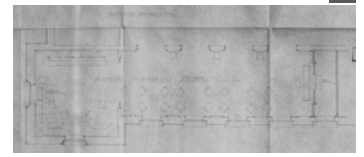
96 A. Wojciechowski, *Problemy Wystawy Architektury Wnętrza*, p. 21.

97 M. Żwinis, *Meble dla świetlic*, Warszawa 1955, p. 5.

98 *Ibidem*, pp. 6–7.



28. A desk for one of the offices in the ground floor or second floor, management building, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 184



29. Dining room and hall, equipment layout, Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks, social building, drawing by Zdzisław Szpyrkowski, ANCA. Photo by Igor Stanisławski
→ see p. 185

The technical drawings were made by the professor's associates. To what extent were these associates also the designers? The consistency of the furniture designs proves that it was the team leader who was the author of the concept. Probably the architects were given a free hand as to the way of shaping the profiles – because the latter, despite sharing the same structure, are diverse. The interiors for which Teresa Lisowska was responsible may be an exception. She signed her name on the drawings – not as a draftsman, but as a designer; however, her works were also created under the supervision of the main author.

* * *

The designs of the interiors and the furnishings that filled them were created as part of a comprehensive concept. A far-reaching consistency is visible in the way of moulding the body and space around the building, in thinking about the interior and its purpose, as well as adequate furnishings. However, this is in no way an innovative project; on the contrary, it is a continuation of pre-war trends – especially those characteristic of the so-called “Kraków school” [Szkoła krakowska] – with the intentional limitation of modernist influences, but not completely ignoring those influences, despite the fact that it was required by the assumptions of the officially binding doctrine of socialist realism. The Administrative Centre complex was undoubtedly the most important investment project that was executed in Kraków at that time. It was supposed to be a showcase of the Lenin Steelworks, the seat of the authorities of the powerful Metallurgical Combine, as well as the most representative locations within the whole enterprise. Despite the fact, as Rafał Matyja writes, that this was a period of “great social reconstruction, whose ideals were not only egalitarian, but also [...] anti-establishment, questioning the former social hierarchy”,⁹⁹ the designers of both the body and the interiors decided to give the office building an archaic structure of a palace. Paradoxically, this was perfectly in line with the postulates of socialist realism theoreticians in Poland – namely, to express new socialist content using the familiar old forms. However, in order for the content to reach the “consciousness of the masses [...] it had to speak in the language of simple, understandable forms close and legible to the people.”¹⁰⁰ Historicizing motifs “reflecting unsung longings and desires” were recognized as such.¹⁰¹ Efforts were made to use familiar patterns to illustrate new progressive content, and “[palaces] ceased to be a place for the chosen few.”¹⁰²

Abstract

The interiors of the administrative buildings of the Lenin Steelworks in Nowa Huta compared to the interiors of the interwar period

The article is devoted to the interior design, furnishings, and functions of socialist realism-style buildings of the Administrative Centre of the Lenin Metallurgical Plant in Nowa Huta. It is a complex consisting of two buildings, of which

99 R. Matyja, *Miejski grunt*, Kraków 2021, pp. 315–317.

100 E. Goldzamt, *Zagadnienie realizmu socjalistycznego w architekturze*, in: *O polską architekturę socjalistyczną*, J. Minorski (ed.), Warszawa 1950, p. 34.

101 J. Guzicka, *Autorzy w obronie projektu Młynowa*, “Stolica”, 1953, No. 50, p. 7.

102 *Głosuję za renesansowym Młynowem*, “Stolica”, 1954, No. 1, p. 6.

the Z Building – the northern one – was intended for the factory’s management, and the S Building – the southern one – was intended for “social” amenities. Each of the two buildings, despite their external appearance of nearly identical twins, received a different interior design, consistent with its intended use. Deciphering the original arrangement of individual rooms was possible thanks to the survival of some of the interiors in a relatively good condition, as well as the analysis of the meticulous executive documentation of the entire complex preserved to this day, and the so-called *perspektywki* [“perspectivettes”] – published drawings by the head of the interior design team, professor Marian Sigmund, depicting the appearance of selected spaces. The Z Building served official functions, therefore the most important representative rooms were placed in its first floor: conference rooms, official halls, offices for the Metallurgical Combine’s managerial staff, as well as a number of office facilities. The whole was designed as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The interior design refers to the tradition initiated by Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz at the Wawel Royal Castle, continued in pre-war representative and office interiors, and even in those designed for the chancellery of the governor general in the 1940s. Building S was meant to serve another purpose, as it was conceived as a “social house”, and therefore its interiors were designed accordingly. The central room within the walls of the S Building is the theatre hall with a common room above it. In addition, the building contained: a dining room, a hotel, reading rooms, and a health centre. The interiors were arranged in a way that was devoid of pathos; they were given some features of modernist solutions, albeit dressed in a historical costume. The furniture was also created to match the interior design of individual spaces. ●

KEYWORDS:
interior design,
twentieth century,
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Marian Sigmund

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