

LE:NOTRE *Landscape Forum Bucharest 2015*

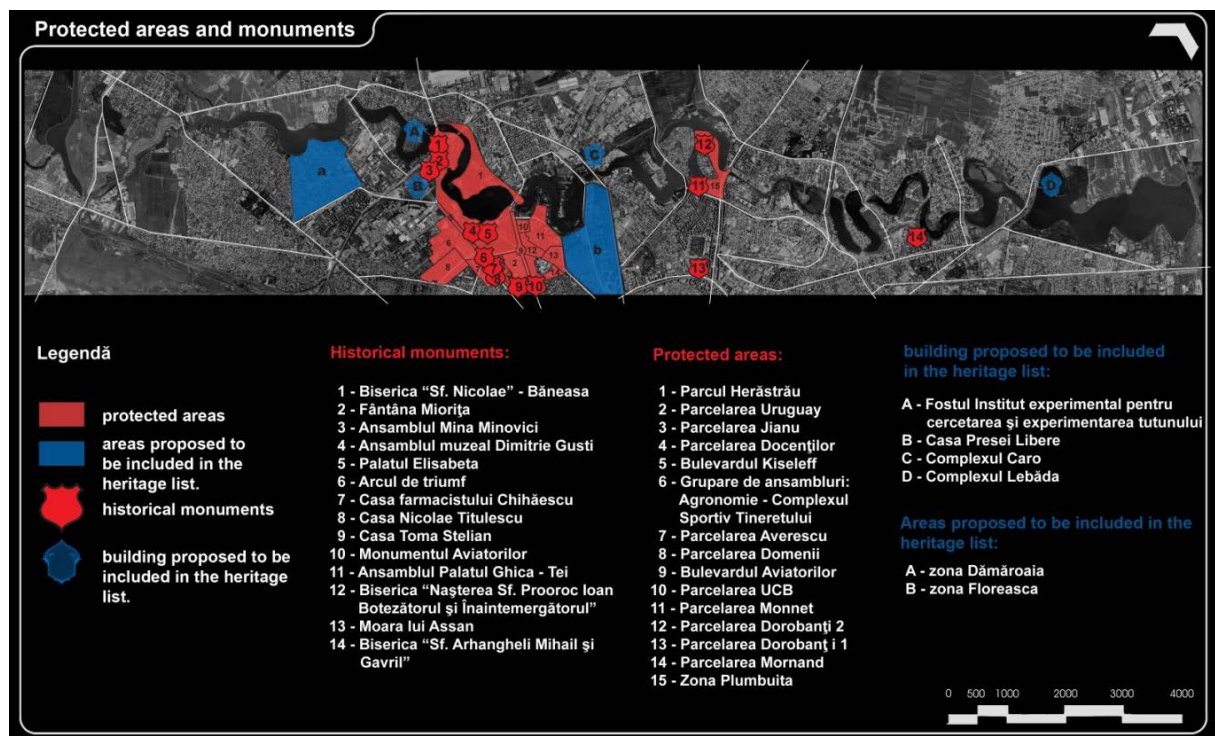
Working Group Heritage and Identity

The multiple heritage

This workshop will focus on the western and central part of the lakes chain – around Grivița, Băneasa, Herăstrău and Floreasca Lakes and will aim to investigate not only on the existing heritage (as classified by the Ministry of Culture) but also on the communist heritage that is totally ignored today.

Form the heritage point of view we are dealing with two large categories:

- Historical monuments – architecture objects with historical or architectural value. Among this we can mention old churches like Sf. Nicolae near Băneasa lake; houses with architectural value like the Mina Minovici museum, the Elisabeta palace, the Chihăescu and Titulescu houses; and monuments as the Miorița fountain and the Airmen monument.
- Urban areas that are protected for their historical value or for their planning and design qualities like the Jianu, UCB, Docenților, Averescu, Uruguay, Domenii, Monnet, Dorobanți and Morand allotments; historical urban axes like Kiseleff and Aviatorilor, the Herăstrău Park and the Agronomical Sciences University assembly.



Mapping of existing monuments and protected areas (in red) and of emblematic buildings or urban assemblies not yet protected (in blue). Source: diploma project R. Dinca, E. Macaveiu, I. Streza, C. Voinescu, USAMV 2012

Beside the existing protected buildings and areas the workshop will interrogate the value of some communist constructions that are representative for a period not yet acknowledged as heritage although part of Bucharest's identity. Some studies¹ concerning the communist architecture and urbanism are already published or under print but no coherent conservation or protection are yet foresee for the most representative accomplishments.

Why is these cases interesting?

As a response to the communist oppression the Romanian society tends to dismiss all accomplishments and realisation of this period. Most importantly, from an architectural and urban planning point of view, the public discourse is oriented towards destruction and demolition. Aside the mentioned studies, no precise analysis is conducted in order to understand the real value of architectural and urban practice of the communist time. Bucharest is regarded as having been mutilated by the communist architecture while the entire batch of blocks of flats is considered just a series of rats' cages. Despite the smallness of communist apartments in the 1950s and 1960s they represented a huge progress in relation to the urban comfort after the Second World War (running water, central heating, strong building). But those times are long gone and nobody re-evaluates the context. The drama of the 1980s with irrational demolition and low quality buildings overspreads the entire period of 50 years.

In this context the Heritage and Identity workshop group is invited to analyse the architectural, urban and social value of the communist heritage. Thus, along Colentina river two important and emblematic assemblies of the 1950s are present:

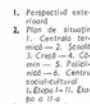
- Infrățirea între popoare (Brotherhood of peoples), near Grivița Lake built by arch. Alexandru Iotzu and Victor Aslan in 1954-1955 around the homonymous cinema, already built by arch. Nicolae Porumbescu in 1953 for the Mondial Festival of Youth and Students.
- Floreasca neighbourhood near the homonymous lake built by arch. Corneliu Rădulescu in two phases 1956-1958 (72 blocks with 2100 apartments) and 1958-1959 (57 blocks with 1342 apartments). The project was also approached from the landscape point of view by arch. Dan Bacalu, Silvia Granet, Elena Andone and Irene Gewöld who proposed a project searching for a local identity in a unitary architectural area. Thus each street is dominated by trees alignments of different species (*Tilia*, *Aesculus*, *Ulmus*...)

¹ Sandqvist, T.; Zahariade, A-M., 2003, *Dacia 1300 my generation*, ed. Simetria, Bucharest; Zahariade, A-M., 2011, *Architecture in the Communist Project. Romania 1944-1989*, ed. Simetria, Bucharest; Panaitescu, A., 2012, *De la Casa Scântei la Casa Poporului. Patru decenii de arhitectură în București 1945-1989*, ed. Simetria, Bucharest; Tulbure, I. *Arhitectură și urbanism în România anilor 1944-1960. Constrângere și experiment*, 2011, PhD thesis, Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism; Băncescu, I., 2012 *Problematika frontului la apă. Aspecte ale evoluției litoralului românesc în perioada comunistă*, PhD thesis, Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism; Stroe, M-P., 2013, *Aspecte comparate ale arhitecturii locuirii în fostele țări comuniste*, PhD thesis, Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism; Popescu, C. 2013, *Urban Nature Transition*, *Arhitectura Review* no 5. (647)/2013, pp. 39-43

Both neighbourhoods were realised under the Stalinist period (the Realist Socialist period), influenced by the soviet model of *cvartal* – an urban unit of dwellings organised around community spaces, with low-rise buildings and a very strong presence of community facilities (schools, kindergartens, cinemas).



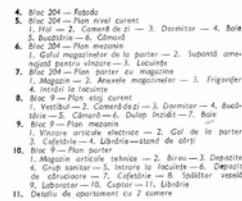
Infrățirea între popoare – Bucureștii Noi Assembly, Image Archive of Arhitectura Review, UAR, Source: Tulbure, I. Arhitectură și urbanism în România anilor 1944-1960. Constrângere și experiment, 2011, PhD thesis, Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism, p.171



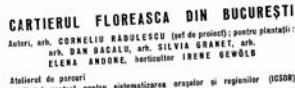
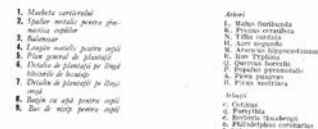
printr-o serie de sporturi: tenis, fotbal, baschet, handbal, etc. În timpul antrenamentelor, echipajul s-a construit s-a ameliorat, obținându-se coeficientul mediu $K_p = 0,6$ pe nivel curent de 0,5 și $K_p = 0,7$ pe nivel de antrenament. În timpul antrenamentelor s-a reușit la cursa de 1600 lei. Costul unității de antrenament de 2 camere s-a redus la cca. 50.000 lei.

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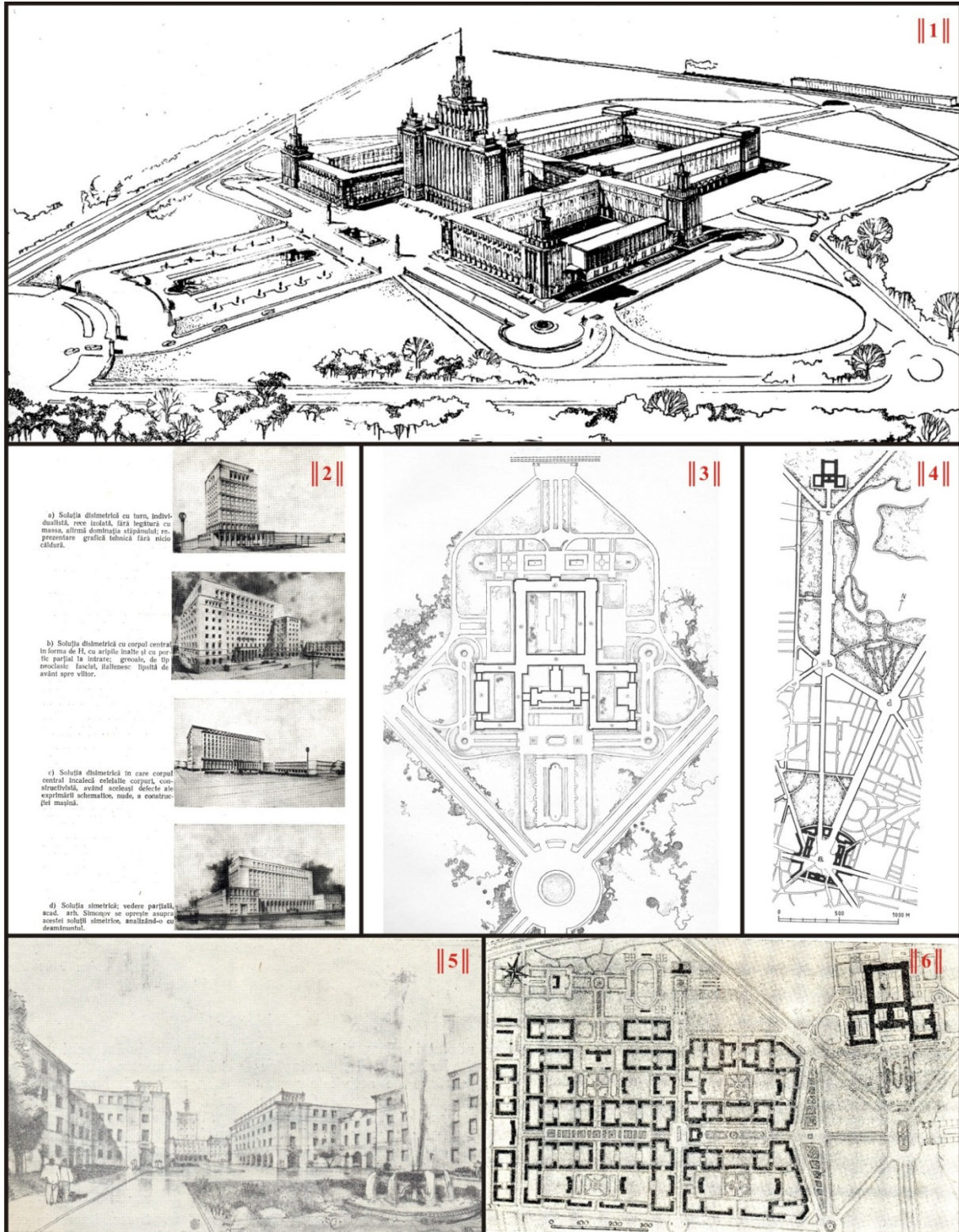


Floreasca Neighbourhood, second phase: general layout and architecture details, Source: Arhitectura no. 8/1955

[illegible]

Floreasca Neighbourhood, second phase: planting and landscape design studies, Source: Arhitectura no. 7/1957

Among the architectural objects we will mention the ancient Casa Scânteii – present Casa Presei Libere (the House of the Free Press instead of House of Spark – main communist journal). This building is a copy in small of soviet skyscraper of Lomonosov University, the most emblematic feature of the soviet architecture.



Casa Scânteii: 1. General view; 2. Rejected projects, 3. General plan (Arhitectura n0.1/1951, pp. 3-13), 4. Urban axis composition from Victoriei Place to Casa Scânteii (AMAN, p.136), 5-6. Perspective and plan of Pressmen neighbourhood – never realised (Arhitectură și urbanism No.12/1952, pp. 24-25. Source: Tubure I. ibidem, p. 164

In all the presented projects we can observe an urban landscape and identity concern. Thus, Casa Scânteii building is conceived as head light for the traditional north-south axis leading from city centre towards the north of the city (the ancient Podul Mogoșoaiei) while the two neighbourhoods are integrated in the existing frame of the city.

Aspects and questions this workshop is going to address:

- How could we re-assess the value of the architectural communist heritage in order to overpass the present stereotypes concerning the mentioned period and bring an objective regard on the proposed study-areas? Are these areas to be protected or not?
- How these areas are integrated today in the city structure and in the city life? How their inhabitants perceive it? How the other Bucharest people perceive these areas?
- What it is to be protected in these areas and what not? How they can be adapted to the contemporary city life and comfort demands?
- Which would be the role of landscape design in the future of these areas?
- Which should be the protection type to be foreseen (if it is the case?)

Working methods: literature review, field trips, stakeholder interviews, workshops during the landscape forum, moderated online meetings

Output: Joint report with reflections and best-practices from research, education and professional practice relating the recent heritage problems.

Stakeholders to be involved:

Local administrations – sector 1 of Bucharest

Ministry of Culture – Heritage Department

Local inhabitants

Architecture, urban planning and landscape architecture professionals

NGOs promoting heritage protection in Bucharest

References:

Arhitectura RPR archives

Tulbure, I. Arhitectură și urbanism în România anilor 1944-1960. Constrângere și experiment, 2011, PhD thesis, Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism

Popescu, C. 2013, Urban Nature Transition, Arhitectura Review no 5. (647)/2013, pp. 39-43