

Abstract

The diploma thesis deals with the current topic of Czech architecture from the socialist period and its perception in public discourse after 1989. The issue is set in the context of architectural development after 1945 and presented in case studies of three Prague buildings – Máj department store, Prague hotel, and Transgas buildings. In addition to using the case study method, the qualitative analysis of public discourse concerning individual cases is used in work. The perception of architecture in public discourse is processed in memory studies, including places of memory, emphasis on narrative, and generational perspective. The work tries to connect two themes of architecture from the period of socialism and dealing with the socialist past. Their relationship has not yet been given more attention in the literature. The diploma thesis focuses on verifying three research questions – Does the extinction of socialist architecture reflect the current relationship of the Czech public to its socialist past? Is socialist architecture perceived as a negative symbol of the past regime and thus shall be removed? Isn't the frequent designation of socialist/communist architecture merely an excuse to demolish or rebuild and thus conceal real pragmatic/economic reasons? – In answer to the first question, the issue of generational conflict arises, where the older generation usually perceives buildings from the socialist period as a material representation of the negative and often painful past. In comparison, the younger generation tends to focus on the architectural values of individual buildings. The answer to the second question relates to criticism of civic buildings from the socialist period, which are associated with the negative aspects of the previous regime. These buildings are seen as too propagandistic, thus paralleling the monuments from the same time that must be removed. The answer to the third question points to the problem where the developer or owner wants to weaken the place of the building in public discourse by designating the building as communist or normalizing. In conclusion, the diploma thesis offers the possibility of further research, such as the possibility of quantitative analysis or the creation of a typology.

Keywords

Architecture, socialism, Maj department store, hotel Praha, Transgas buildings, memory studies, dealing with the past, discourse analysis, public space, generational conflict