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## Turning “Polish Boxes into German Houses”: On the Transformations of Architecture in Poland during the Second World War as Exemplified by the Changing Design of the Zajdensznir Tenement in Radom

The issue of construction projects conducted by the Germans in occupied Poland is researched with increasing frequency by both historians and historians of architecture. In the last twenty-five years, several studies on this subject, investigating this issue in reference to wartime construction in a number of Polish cities, have been published in Poland.<sup>1</sup> The topic has also been occasionally discussed, although

1 On German construction projects in the occupied Poland, see e.g. N. Gutschow, B. Klain, *Zagłada i utopia. Urbanistyka Warszawy w latach 1939–1945* [Obliteration and Utopia. Urban design in Poland in the years 1939–1945], Warsaw, 1995; H. Grzeszczuk-Brendel, “Faszystowska działalność mieszkaniowa na Dębcu” [Fascist residential construction at Dębiec], *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, 2004, no. 1; J. Purchla, “Hubert Ritter i hitlerowskie wizje Krakowa” [Hubert Ritter and the Nazi visions of Cracow], *Rocznik Krakowski*, 2005; vol. 71; H. Grzeszczuk-Brendel, “Kolonía niemieckich domków drewnianych przy ul. Szydłowskiej” [The German estate of timber detached houses at Szydłowska street], *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, 2008, no. 4; A. Nadolny, “Zamość w planach urbanistycznych w XX wieku” [Zamość in 20<sup>th</sup>-century urban planning], *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej. Architektura i Urbanistyka*, 2008, fasc. 16; H. Grzeszczuk-Brendel, “Architektoniczne dokonania III Rzeszy na terenie Poznania” [Architectural achievements of the Third Reich in Poznań], *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, 2009, no. 2; the chapter on construction projects during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in: H. Grzeszczuk-Brendel, *Miasto do mieszkania. Zagadnienia reformy mieszkaniowej na przełomie XIX i XX wieku i jej wprowadzanie w Poznaniu w pierwszej połowie XX wieku* [A city to live in. The housing reform on the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and its introduction in Poznań in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century], Poznań, 2012; T. Bolanowski, *Architektura okupowanej Łodzi. Niemieckie plany przebudowy miasta* [Architecture of the occupied Łódź. German plans for remodelling the city], Łódź, 2013; P. Setkiewicz, “Niemieckie plany przebudowy Oświęcimia” [German plans for remodelling Oświęcim], *Oświęcimensis*, 2015; A. Paradowska, “‘Wyjątkowe zadania’ na ‘nowym niemieckim Wschodzie’. Nazistowska urbanistyka i architektura w Kraju Warty jako element okupacji polskich terenów podczas drugiej wojny światowej” [“Exceptional tasks” in the “New German East”. Nazi urban planning and architecture in the Warthegau as an element of the occupa-

in a broader context, in studies published abroad.<sup>2</sup> From a scholarly perspective, these research initiatives must be assessed as useful. Architecture, regardless of its origin, provides a mute but crucial testimony of its times. It permits us not only to determine the taste of the era, but also to ascertain what transformations this taste underwent as a result of both evolutionary and revolutionary changes stimulated from above – for instance ones originating from certain administrative decisions. In some cases, these changes took a particularly dramatic course and constituted a tangible reflection of the historical moment in which they occurred. When viewed from this perspective, the case of one of Radom's tenements acquires an almost symbolic significance.

The German occupation of Radom began at the very outset of the defensive war, as the Wehrmacht entered the city on 8 September 1939. Civilian administration had been organised by late October.<sup>3</sup> In the following year, a part of Radom's city-centre was designated to become an exclusively German district.<sup>4</sup> Architectural substance in this part of the centre, mostly dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, consisted of comfortable, modern tenement houses with rented lodgings, residences occupied by Radom's most affluent citizens, and various public buildings.<sup>5</sup> The city had been developing vigorously, especially since the railway line had been constructed in 1881;<sup>6</sup> yet until the end of the First World War not all plots of land in this part of the centre had been filled. Construction activity in this area intensified again in the inter-war period, when the architectural substance in the city centre became more dense. It was in this period, particularly in the 1930s, that a group of relatively homogeneous modernist tenements was constructed along Moniuszki street. One of the more outstanding, and more interesting, of those

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tion of Polish lands during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War], in: *Fikcyjna rzeczywistość. Codziennność, światy przeżywane i pamięć niemieckiej okupacji w Polsce* [Fictitious reality. The everyday, the perceived worlds and the memory of the German occupation in Poland], ed. A. Wolff-Powęska, R. Traba, K. Woniak, Berlin, 2016; A. Paradowska, "Niedoszły Himmlerstadt". O niemieckich planach przebudowy Zamościa i Zamojszczyzny" ["The unachieved Himmlerstadt". On the German plans for remodelling Zamość and the Zamość region"], *Quart. Kwartalnik Instytutu Historii Sztuki Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego*, 2017, no. 1–2.

- 2 E.g. H. Schwendemann, W. Dietsche, B. Górczyńska-Przybyłowicz, *Hitlers Schloss. Die "Führer-residenz" in Posen*, Berlin, 2003; N. Gutschow, *Ordnungswahn. Architekten Planen im "eingedeutschen Osten" 1939–1945*, Berlin, 2001.
- 3 S. Piątkowski, *Radom w latach wojny i okupacji niemieckiej (1939–1945)* [Radom in the period of the war and the German occupation (1939–1945)], Lublin–Warsaw, 2018, pp. 115–124.
- 4 The German quarter comprised a 45-hectare section of the most central area of the city centre, inside the following streets: Żeromskiego, Focha, Kelles-Krauza, Pierackiego (currently Niedziałkowskiego), Słowackiego, 1 Maja (currently 25 Czerwca), Sienkiewicza, Mickiewicza and Traugutta; after: Jan Franecki, "Radom w okresie II wojny światowej 1939–1945" [Radom in the period of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War 1939–1945], in: *Radom. Dzieje miasta w XIX i XX wieku* [Radom. The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century history of the city], ed. S. Witkowski, Warsaw, 1985, p. 295.
- 5 *Architektura i urbanistyka Radomia* [Radom's architecture and urban planning], ed. W. Kalinowski, Lublin, 1979, pp. 168–178.
- 6 A. Dylewski, *Historia kolei w Polsce* [The history of railways in Poland], Warsaw, 2012, p. 20.

tenements was certainly the building whose proprietors were Hersz Zajdensznir,<sup>7</sup> the owner of a department store, and his wife Róża. This three-floor tenement was under construction from the summer of 1939 onward. It was located on a plot of land at the corner of Moniuszki and Sienkiewicza street,<sup>8</sup> that is, in the most prestigious, southern section of Radom's city centre. The building's high-quality design, the work of the engineer Artur Haskler,<sup>9</sup> was probably dictated by the high status of the district.

The house designed for Mr and Mrs Zajdensznir (Fig. 1–5) constituted an example of functionalist architecture. According to the design, it was to consist of three cubic blocks, of which the two side ones were of equal height and the central one, which served as a connecting element and was visually dominant, was slightly taller, thus highlighting the vertical composition of the building. The visually separate character of the building's three sections is additionally underscored by the fact that each of their façades was designed differently. The block located towards Sienkiewicza street (Fig. 2) was rectangular, seated on a plinth shared by all of the building's sections. From the side of the plot's edge the plinth was most probably decorated with ceramic tiling. This plinth transformed into a similarly finished, solid bar of masonry balustrades with metal railings, which protected the loggias arranged from the ground floor up to the third floor. These loggias visually separated the structural mass of the tenement from its neighbour.

The vertical composition of the building, in turn, was accentuated by a distinct overhanging eave, which protected the main entrance into the stairwell and the stretch of shop windows running over two-thirds of the ten-axis elevation. The composition of these windows, especially the fact that they were separated from one another by means of prominent pillars, was one of the solutions used in the design of the Zajdensznir tenement which ostensibly followed the principles postulated by Le Corbusier, in this case the one pertaining to visually dividing the block of the edifice from the ground by means of a pillar construction. Another example, commonly imitated in the architecture of the period, was the design of seemingly rectangular window openings; in reality, they were double openings (or, at the angles of the elevation, triple or corner ones) separated by a narrow pillar. In the design of the Zajdensznir tenement, they were additionally integrated visually by means of a narrow railing intended to protect the flower-boxes. Divisions in the geometrical pattern of plastering correspond to the rhythm of the window openings.<sup>10</sup>

The situation of the building, in a visible location at the corner of a quarter and directly opposite the imposing neo-Classical building of the County Administration

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7 The State Archive in Radom (Archiwum Państwowe w Radomiu, henceforward: APR), Radom Municipal Records (Akta miasta Radomia, henceforward: AmR), Technical Documentation file (Dokumentacja Techniczna, henceforward: DT), p. 3702 (29).

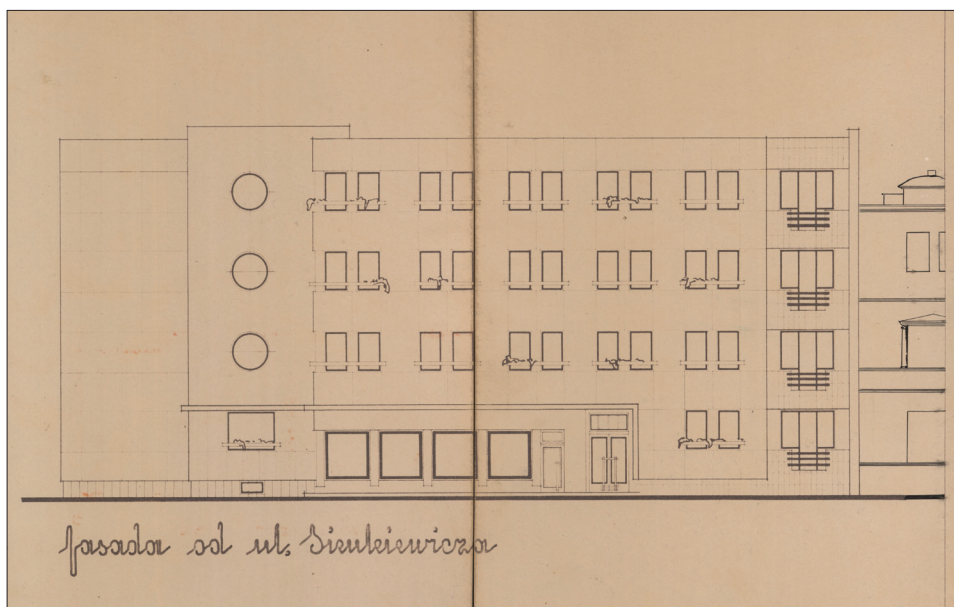
8 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (2, 9).

9 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (architectural design).

10 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (designs for the elevations, axonometry).



**Fig. 1.** Artur Haskler, Axonometry of the Zajdensznir house in Radom, 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702



**Fig. 2.** Artur Haskler, Design for the elevation of the Zajdensznir house in Radom facing Sienkiewicza street, 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702



Council<sup>11</sup> (Fig. 6) which constitutes the dominating architectural element of the entire street, made it necessary to clearly highlight the corner of the new building; this was, in fact, a requirement delivered personally by the head of the technical division of the municipal authority. To achieve this, the corner was moved back from the edge of the plot to form an offset, and the resulting connecting element was designed in an "architectural manner", as postulated by the municipal authority.<sup>12</sup> The main emphasis was put on the vertical arrangement of this part of the building, as it was designed to resemble a tower which was slightly taller than the other two blocks of the tenement. The eave, originally featured on the wing along Sienkiewicza street, was made to stretch over the two elevations of the connecting block, thus creating a plinth with an additional platform with a facing of wider tiles and two square windows with decorative railings protecting the flower-boxes, analogous to those in the wing as discussed above.

The elevations of the three top floors on the side of Sienkiewicza and Moniuszki streets differed in design. One section of the block facing Sienkiewicza street was dominated by a row of three vertically arranged round windows, additionally decorated with an iron grille, which was designed as circular with two bars crossed at the right angles. The decoration designed for the elevation facing Moniuszki street (Fig. 3) was more elaborate. It consisted mainly of the balustrades of the loggias, which were partially filled in, tiled and finished with metal railings. The most interesting element of the decoration, however, were the concrete plaques decorated with five rows of circular double openings, which may have been based on the entrance to one of the Polish pavilions at the Paris exhibition in 1937 (Fig. 7),<sup>13</sup> whose decoration was discussed in detail in specialist periodicals.<sup>14</sup> A spire that crowned the connecting block put a final emphasis on its verticality.

The design of the elevation of the wing facing Moniuszki street differs from that of the block situated along Sienkiewicza street. For instance, its plinth is finished in two different ways. From the door of the stairwell to the connecting block, including the latter, it was uniform, whereas from the door to the edge of the plot (and with the section of the ground-floor wall to the height of the ground-floor ceiling), it was most probably intended to have a ceramic facing, transforming higher up into tiered rows of loggias. This is analogous to the design of the furthestmost section of the wing facing Sienkiewicza street, but here the ground-floor loggia was replaced with a gateway and the niches were additionally decorated with five rows of quadruple cement grilles, almost identical to the ones seen in the connecting block. The remaining surface of the ten-axis elevation of the ground floor and the upper floors was planned as uniform, repeating the design of the elevation facing Sienkiewicza

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11 M. Pszczółkowski, *Architektura użyteczności publicznej II Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939. Forma i styl* [Public architecture in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic of Poland 1918–1939. The form and the style], Łódź, 2014, pp. 148–149.

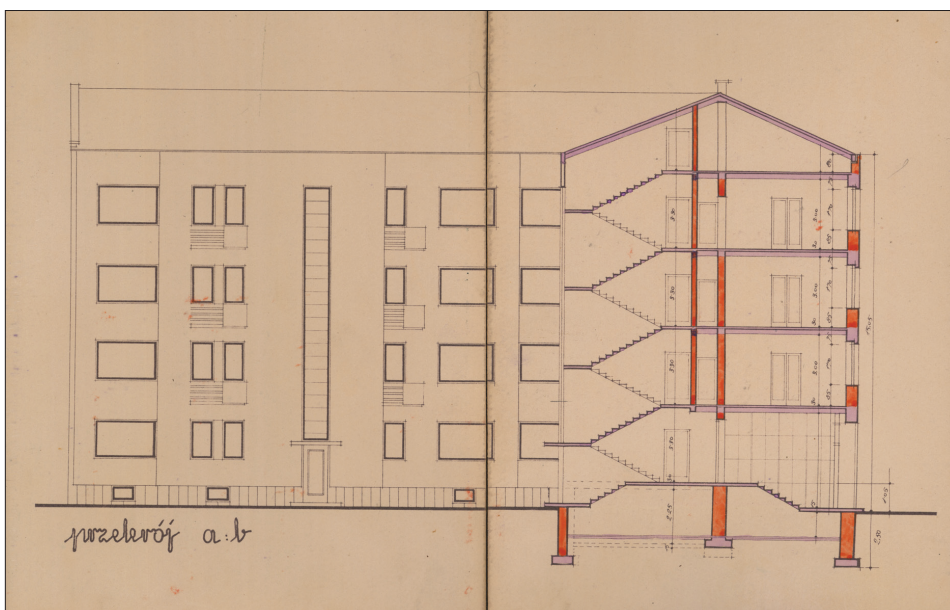
12 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (17).

13 I.e. the Service Pavilion designed by Bohdan Lachert and Józef Szanajca.

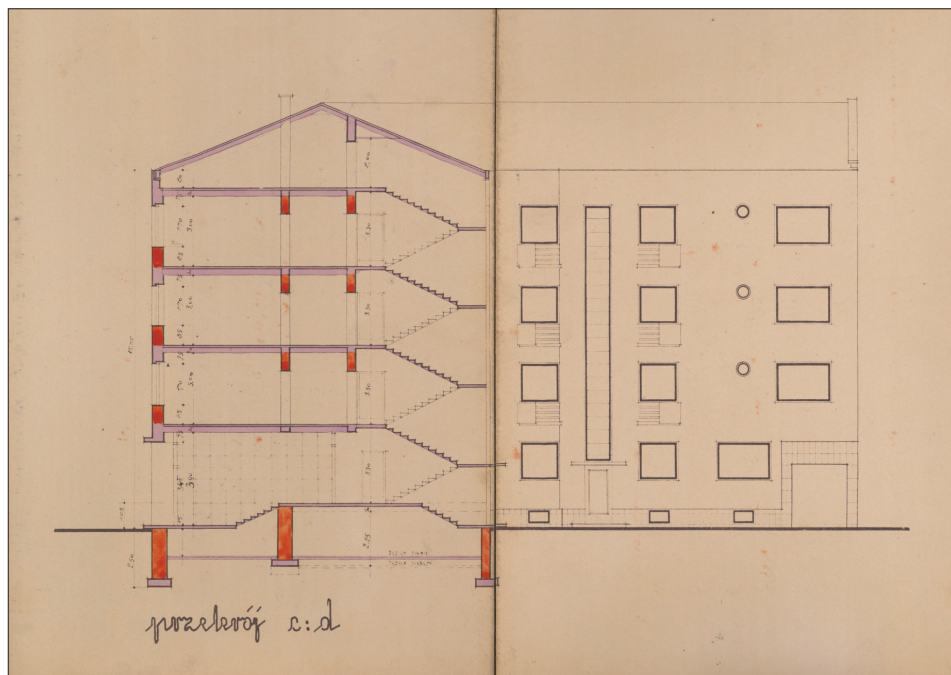
14 *Architektura i Budownictwo*, 1937, 12, no. 6, pp. 211–229.



**Fig. 3.** Artur Haskler, Design for the elevation of the Zajdensznir house in Radom facing Moniuszki street, 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702



**Fig. 4.** Artur Haskler, Design for the courtyard elevation of the Zajdensznir house in Radom (the wing on the Sienkiewicza street side), 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702



**Fig. 5.** Artur Haskler, Design for the courtyard elevation of the Zajdensznir house in Radom (the wing on the Moniuszki street side), 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702

street. The only difference in the design of the two front elevations is constituted by the balconies placed on the second and fourth axis of the elevation facing Moniuszki street, whose balustrades repeat the design of the loggia balustrades.

The courtyard elevations were far more modest (Fig. 4–5). The plastering was to be smooth and, in contrast to the frontage, it was not intended to have divisions that repeated the rhythm of the window openings. The windows themselves were larger, nearly square in shape. In addition, the angles were rounded off; this, coupled with the glazing of the stairwell, which ran vertically over a few floors, made the courtyard elevations quite different in their style from the street façades. It seems that the only elements shared by both the front and the back side of the building were the balconies, designed in an identical manner to those facing Moniuszki street, and the round windows, although at the back they were smaller and did not have grilles.<sup>15</sup>

The Zajdensznir tenement, as originally designed, would have belonged to a distinct trend within Functionalist architecture, as its designer Artur Haskler was directly connected with his native city, Lvov, where he had worked as a construction

<sup>15</sup> APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (designs for the elevations).





**Fig. 6.** Alfons Pinno, Building of the County Government Association in Radom, constructed 1925–1927, condition in 2018, photo by Jakub Frejtag



**Fig. 7.** Bohdan Lachert, Józef Szanajca, Service section of the Polish pavilion at the International Exposition of Art and Technology held in Paris in 1937, *Katalog Oficjalny Działu Polskiego na Międzynarodowej Wystawie Sztuka i Technika 1937 w Paryżu*, Warsaw 1937

engineer.<sup>16</sup> The absence of relevant sources makes it impossible to unequivocally determine Haskler's connection with the Construction Department of the local Polytechnic,<sup>17</sup> but, being a professionally active engineer, he must have been influenced by the Lvov architectural milieu. This is confirmed by the very fact that his design for the Radom tenement is stylistically linked with the residential blocks constructed in Lvov in the same period. This permits us to include the Zajdensznir tenement into the Lvov strand of Functionalism.

An analysis of examples of residential structures built in Lvov in the 1930s, collected and described in several works on interwar architecture in that city,<sup>18</sup> indicates that the Zajdensznir house featured at least one motif characteristic for these designs, namely, the perpendicular line of round windows placed on one of the connecting façades to emphasise the verticality of the design. Moreover, it appears that the unusually shaped metal grille decorating the round window in Haskler's design could have been directly inspired by the Lvov villa of Bruno Szymański, a design by Stefan Porębowicz built in 1936–1939 (Fig. 8).<sup>19</sup> Although nominally arriving in Radom to construct the telecommunications network,<sup>20</sup> Haskler did not limit his activities in the city to fulfilling that contract. Concurrently with his work on the Zajdensznir residence, he designed at least one more house (currently at Niedziałkowskiego street no. 24; Fig. 9).<sup>21</sup> The anonymous author of the design of the Starec-Wassner house at Traugutta street no. 32 (Fig. 10) was also most probably Haskler. This attribution is based on a number of similarities the structure shares with Zajdensznir house in terms of façade design. The most striking of those include the division of the frontage, the square windows on the ground floor,

16 *Księga adresowa Małopolski. Lwów, Stanisławów, Tarnopol. Z informatorem m. stoł. Warszawy, województwa krakowskiego, łódzkiego, pomorskiego, poznańskiego i śląskiego* [Lesser Poland address book. Lvov, Stanisławów, Tarnopol. With information on the capital city of Warsaw, and the voivodeships of: Cracow, Łódź, Pomerania, Poznań and Silesia], year 1935/1936, Cracow–Lvov, 1936, p. 150.

17 Haskler was mentioned only in the list of members of the Academic Reading Room, the Polish students scientific society in Lvov (then Lemberg) for the academic year 1903/1904. See *Sprawozdanie Czytelni Akademickiej we Lwowie za rok akademicki 1903/4* [Report of the Academic Reading Room in Lvov for the academic year 1903/4], Lvov, 1904, p. 17.

18 See R. Cielątkowska, *Architektura i urbanistyka Lwowa II Rzeczypospolitej* [Architecture and urban planning in Lvov in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic], Zblewo, 1998; J. Lewicki, "Architektura mieszkaniowa" [Residential architecture], in: *Lwów. Miasto, architektura, modernizm* [Lviv. City, architecture, modernism], ed. B. Cherkes, A. Szczerski, Wrocław, 2016; J. Bohdanova, "Osiedla, kamienice i mieszkania nowoczesnego Lwowa" [Housing estates, terraced houses and apartments in modern Lviv], in: *ibidem*.

19 Bohdanova, *op. cit.*

20 J. Rytłowa, "Rodzina Topińskich" [The Topiński family], in: *Polin. Polscy Sprawiedliwi* [Polin. The Polish Righteous], Jan. 2010, <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/historie-pomocy/historia-pomocy-rodzina-topińskich>, [accessed 16 November 2018].

21 A. Żuchowska, "Modernistyczny budynek w Radomiu zabytkiem" [A modernist edifice in Radom is a historical monument], in: *Mazowiecki Wojewódzki Konserwator Zabytków. Delegatura w Radomiu*, <https://www.mwzk.pl/archiwum-aktualnosci-lista/1134-modernistyczny-budynek-w-radomiu-zabytkiem>, [accessed 16 November 2018].

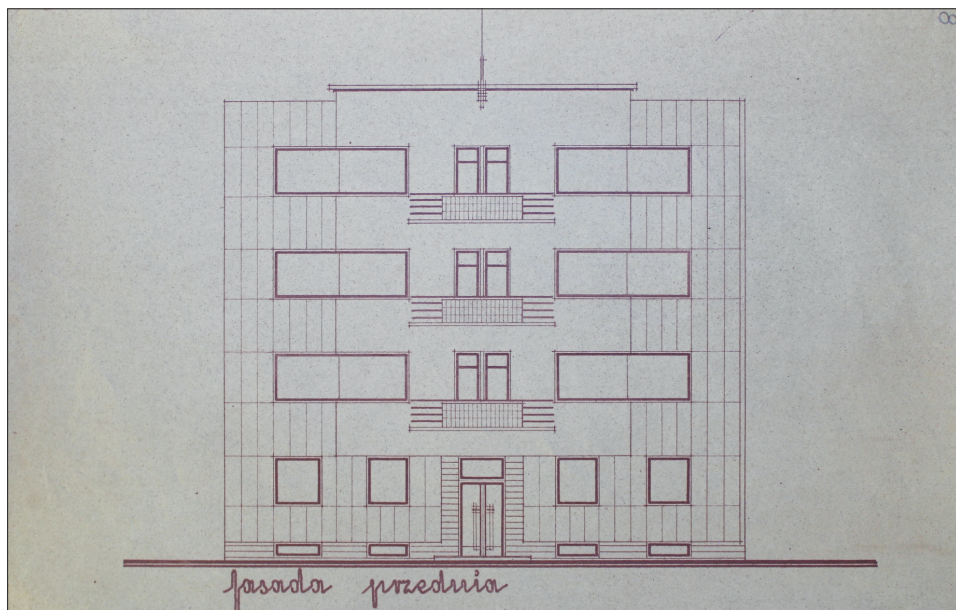




**Fig. 8.** Stefan Porębowicz, Bruno Szymański's villa in Lvov, constructed in 1936–1939, condition in 2010, Wikimedia Commons, photo by Haidamac



**Fig. 9.** Artur Haskler, House at no. 24 Niedziałkowskiego street in Radom, constructed in 1939, condition in 2018, photo by Jakub Frejtag



**Fig. 10.** Attributed to Artur Haskler, Design for the front elevation of the Starec-Wassner house at no. 32 Traugutta street in Radom, ca. 1939–1940, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 4041

the design of the balconies, the ferroconcrete slabs with round openings dividing the front balconies, and the spire at the top of the avant-corps. Another important detail is the similarity in the design drawings for both these structures, featuring almost identical writing and stylistic details in drawing specific elements, e.g. the windows.<sup>22</sup>

The situation of the architect and his employers changed radically with the outbreak of the Second World War. They were all Jews – a fact that sealed their fate. What happened to the Zajdensznir couple remains unknown. The last official document referring to Hersz Zajdensznir in the context of the house that he and his spouse had built is a summons to the technical division of the municipal council, issued in early October 1939.<sup>23</sup> The exact date of the confiscation of Zajdensznirs' property by the German occupying authorities cannot be ascertained on the basis of surviving archival material. The latest document pertaining to the construction of the house is an application to the Building Control Office submitted in November 1946 by Jakub Zajdensznir, most likely a relative of the owners,<sup>24</sup> who asks for an

<sup>22</sup> APR, AmR, DT, p. 4041 (1–10).

<sup>23</sup> APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (2).

<sup>24</sup> Regrettably, the available sources do not permit us to establish the exact relationship between Mr and Mrs Zajdensznir and Jakub Zajdensznir.

official certificate of the state of works as of September 1939,<sup>25</sup> i.e. on the eve of the confiscation. Information on the later whereabouts of Artur Haskler is much more ample.<sup>26</sup> When the German occupation of Radom began, he was still involved in the construction of the municipal telecommunications network. Naturally, the Germans saw it as an investment of strategic importance, and thus Haskler, as the main contractor, was allowed to work outside of the ghetto, in the 'Aryan' part of the city, until the project's completion. When the eastern voivodships of pre-war Poland were seized by German forces, the architect managed to bring some of his family from Lvov to Warsaw, where they were sheltered by Zofia and Jan Topiński. As the investment in Radom was nearing completion, Haskler himself also fled to the capital, where he died in September 1944.<sup>27</sup>

The most interesting aspect of recommencing the works on the Zajdensznir tenement during the war is the issue of Haskler's involvement in the changes to the design, since by September 1939 construction works had been relatively far advanced.<sup>28</sup> The most probable option is that, as with the telecommunications network, the occupying authorities commissioned him to revise the design and continue to supervise the construction of the building in its new form. The only surviving sources are the updated version of the design bearing a seal with the architect's name, found in the building documentation, and a brief note by the director of the Radom district of German Postal Service East, dated October 1942, in which he informs the Stadthauptmann of Radom that Haskler had submitted the drawings enclosed with the message.<sup>29</sup> The latter document indicates that the construction was interrupted for at least two years and likely recommenced in spring 1942, i.e. after the architect had made his escape from Radom. The surviving designs made

25 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (2).

26 Exceptionally useful in this respect are the eyewitness testimonies collected by the Yad Vashem and the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews as part of the *Polish Righteous – Recalling Forgotten History* project, and by the Oral History Archive of the Warsaw Rising Museum, as well as the latter's databases of the civilian victims of the Warsaw Uprising.

27 Topiński Family, in: *Yad Vashem. The World Holocaust Remembrance Center. The Righteous Among The Nations*, <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=5659930> [accessed 16 November 2018]; J. Rytłowa, *Rodzina Topińskich*, op. cit. ; M. Kudła, *Edmund Sułkowski „Dąb”* [Edmund "Dąb" Sułkowski], in: *Archiwum Historii Mówionej Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego* [Oral History Archive of the Warsaw Rising Museum], <https://www.1944.pl/archiwum-historii-mowionej/edmund-sulkowski,2220.html> [accessed 16 November 2018]; *Lista Ofiar Cywilnych* [The record of civilian victims], in: *Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego*, <https://www.1944.pl/ofiary-cywilne,ord,imie,0,strona,168.html> [accessed 16 November 2018].

28 The report submitted by the construction company in answer to Jakub Zajdensznir's request confirms that until Sept. 1939 all the cellars had been completed, ground-floor walls facing Moniuszki street were covered with a ceiling, ground-floor walls facing Sienkiewicza street were constructed to the height of the ceiling on the stretch between Moniuszki street to the stairwell, and to the height of the windowsills on the stretch between stairwell to the edge of the plot of land. In addition, a large amount of construction materials was kept onsite. After: APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (3–4).

29 APR, AmR, DT, p. 1026 (no pagination).



by Haskler, as well as the edifice itself, which has remained almost unchanged (Fig. 11–12), constitute good examples of the tendencies noticeable in German architecture from the year 1933 onwards. After the Nazis had seized power, there emerged a trend to remove traces of the avant-garde style through making modernist edifices, representing certain types of architecture, more conservative in form, more compliant with traditional models promoted by the *Heimatschutzarchitektur*.<sup>30</sup>

After 1939, such initiatives also began to be undertaken in occupied territories, and the General Government was no exception. As regards Poland, the most famous examples of changing the architectural form of an edifice to be more traditional include the wartime refurbishment of the Feniks insurance company office in Cracow.<sup>31</sup> The façade of the building was decorated in a reduced neo-Classical style, while the geometric attic was replaced with a mansard roof. The topic was also discussed in German-language press published in occupied Poland, which followed German articles<sup>32</sup> in voicing calls to turn "Polish boxes into German houses".<sup>33</sup>

*Heimatschutzarchitektur*-compliant conversion of residential buildings was also undertaken in territories that had been directly annexed to the Reich.<sup>34</sup> New buildings were also erected in that style. In Poznań, for instance, it was applied to several residential edifices constructed for the personnel of the postal and railway services.<sup>35</sup> In terms of architectural style, these buildings were almost identical to the ones built in Radom at the time, including the residential block for the staff of the German postal services, designed by Haskler.<sup>36</sup> The example is all the more interesting given the fact that it was one of the few instances of hiring the original designer to supervise the remodelling. As with the Feniks edifice in Cracow, such works were usually conducted by German architects.<sup>37</sup> The rather short list of exceptions also

30 It must be noted that not every type of architecture underwent similar remodelling, e.g. the functionality of modern architectural solutions in industrial architecture was appreciated and accepted (cf. e.g. A. Blümm, „Entartete Baukunst?“ *Zum Umgang mit dem Neuen Bauen 1933–1945*, Munich 2013).

31 R. Ochęduszek, „Hitlerowska przebudowa gmachu Towarzystwa Ubezpieczeniowego „Feniks” w Krakowie” [The Nazi remodelling of the Feniks Insurance Association edifice in Cracow], in: *Mecenat artystyczny a oblicze miasta. Materiały LVI Ogólnopolskiej Sesji Naukowej Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki Kraków 8–10 XI 2007* [Artistic patronage and the appearance of the city. Materials from the 56<sup>th</sup> National Scholarly Session of the Association of Art Historians, Cracow 8–10 Sept. 2007], ed. D. Nowacki, Cracow, 2008, pp. 303–316; J.-L. Cohen, *Architecture in Uniform: Designing and Building for the Second World War*, Montréal–Paris, 2011, p. 354.

32 See e.g. *Altonaer Nachrichten* (3 Feb. 1933). Quoted after: Blümm, op. cit., p. 191.

33 „Polnische ‚Kiste’ wird deutsches Heim”, *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, 4 Dec. 1941. Quoted after: T. Bolanowski, *Architektura okupowanej Łodzi*, op. cit., p. 46.

34 Paradowska, „Wyjątkowe zadania” na ‘nowym niemieckim Wschodzie”, op. cit.

35 Grzeszczuk-Brendel, *Miasto do mieszkania*, op. cit., pp. 390–392.

36 In the period of the German occupation several multi-family residential buildings were constructed in Radom, e.g. at Mickiewicza street nos. 1a, 3 and 3a, Traugutta street no. 32a, or Moniuszki street no. 7a, which share many characteristic features not only with the tenement under discussion here, but also with ones located in Poznań, at Kossaka street nos. 4, 6, 8 and 10, Ułańska street nos. 4 and 6, or Siemiradzkiego street no. 9.

37 Cohen, op. cit., p. 354.



**Fig. 11.** Artur Haskler, Residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom, constructed in 1942–1944, condition in 1942–1944, private archive

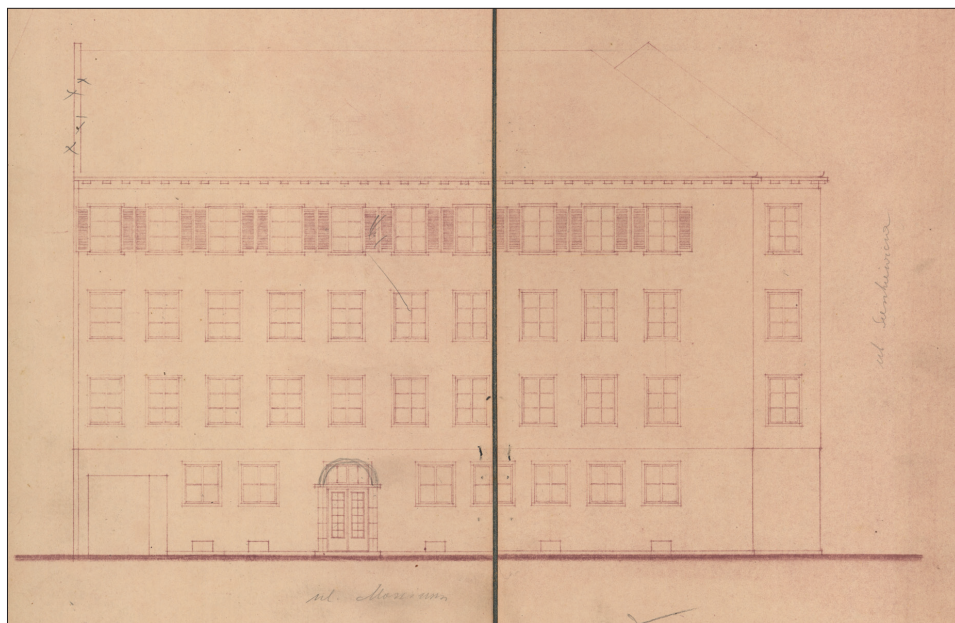


**Fig. 12.** Artur Haskler, Residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom, constructed in 1942–1944, condition in 2017, photo by Jakub Frejtag



includes Zamość, where Germans consulted Polish architects who had worked on the development plans of this city before 1939.<sup>38</sup> In both cases the motivation of the German employers was probably similar – to benefit from the experience of professionals who had been working with a given project before the war, and thus had the necessary background and could ensure the swift completion of the investment.

Haskler’s designs for continuing the construction of Zajdensznir house as a residence for the staff of the German postal services included an almost complete overhaul of the exterior (Fig. 13–15).<sup>39</sup> The wing facing Moniuszki street was extended to meet the line of the connecting element facing Sienkiewicza street, making the form of the building more monolithic. Only the dip in the central façade facing the edifice of the County Administration Council was carried over from the original design. The frontage of the reviewed design was very modest. Haskler prepared two slightly different variants. In both of them the ground floor of the entire structure rested on a low plinth and was visually separated from the higher floors by a simple continuous cornice spanning the entire width of the building. The structure was covered with a tall, polygonal roof with ceramic tiles. The more decorative variant (Fig. 13) included narrow window surrounds and shutters on the windows of the last floor. Stairwell entrances featured an elaborate portal crowned with a rectangular transom.

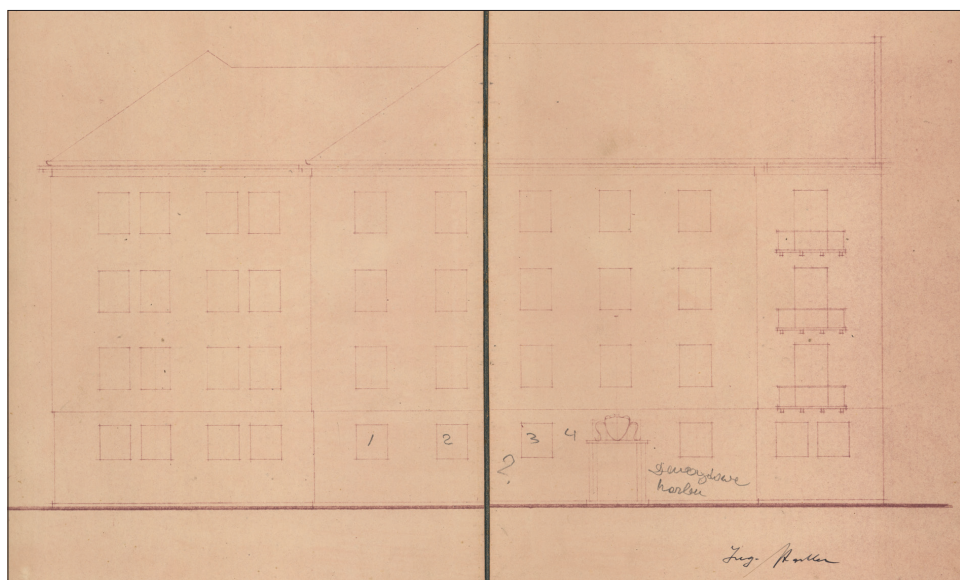


**Fig. 13.** Artur Haskler, Design for the elevation of the residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom facing Moniuszki street, 1941, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 1026

38 Paradowska, “*Niedoszły Himmlerstadt*”, op. cit., no. 1–2.

39 APR, AmR, DT, p. 1026 (architectural design).

The most decorative element of this version of the façade was the intricate top cornice, which matched the shutters and the tall roof to give the structure a conservative air, compliant with the rules of *Heimatschutzarchitektur*. The presence of the highly classical modillions beneath the cornice may, however, seem surprising, given the fact that in the architecture of Nazi Germany classicist models were usually reserved for official structures, with more domestic motifs (such as shutters, also included in this design) being used in residential buildings.<sup>40</sup> In this case, however, the use of the classicist form had more than one justification. Firstly, it visually complemented the immediate surroundings of the building, i.e. the style of the County Administration Council building. Secondly, it drew from the local architectural tradition. It should be noted that, for the most part, the architectural character of Radom's centre was shaped in the period of Congress Poland. A number of neo-Classical edifices was erected at the time, the most prominent of them being Sandomierski Palace. Designed by Antonio Corazzi and built in 1825–1827, the palace was intended to house the Sandomierz Voivodship Office. The building was indubitably considered an important point of reference by the occupying German authorities, who restored and enlarged it in 1940. By making it into the focal point of the planned administrative district, the occupiers acknowledged the architectural value of the palace.<sup>41</sup>

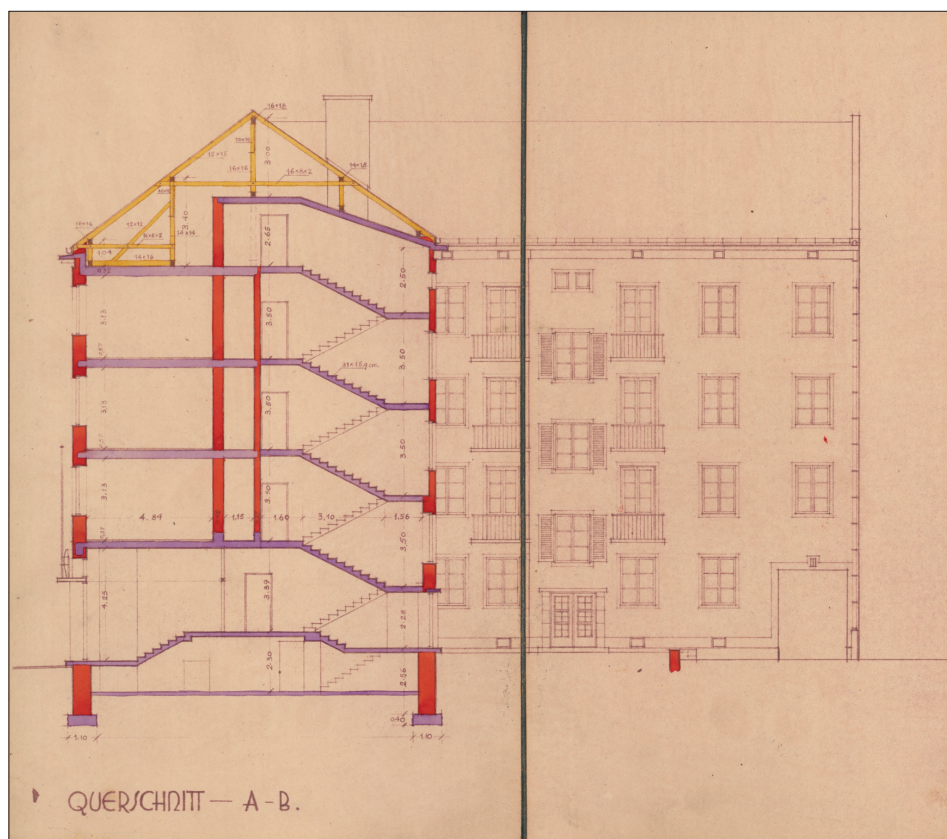


**Fig. 14.** Artur Haskler, Design for the elevation of the residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom facing Sienkiewicza street, 1941, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 1026

40 Grzeszczuk-Brendel, *Miasto do mieszkania*, op. cit., p. 348.

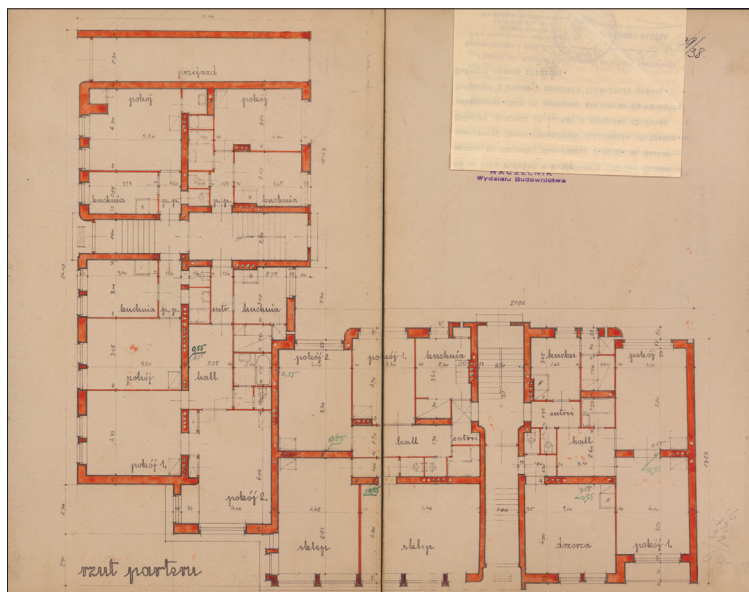
41 APR, Maps and Plans Collection (Zbiór map i planów), p. 133.

The second variant of Haskler's façade design (Fig. 14) was much more modest, devoid of any decoration. The top cornice was simple in cross-section, as was the continuous cornice dividing the ground floor and the higher storeys. This version featured neither the shutters, nor the window surrounds included in the first variant. The entrance portal, however, was more decorative. Similarly to the above-mentioned houses in Poznań, it was additionally adorned with a cartouche, most likely intended to feature a house mark. The only element protruding from the façade were the balconies of the outermost axis on the gable wall at Moniuszki street. The courtyard façades (Fig. 15) copied the design of the front one, the only difference being shutters on the stairwell windows. The façade that was ultimately built was based mostly on the first variant. It did not, however, feature shutters on the third-floor windows, while the form of the portal was changed, with the transom becoming semi-circular in shape.

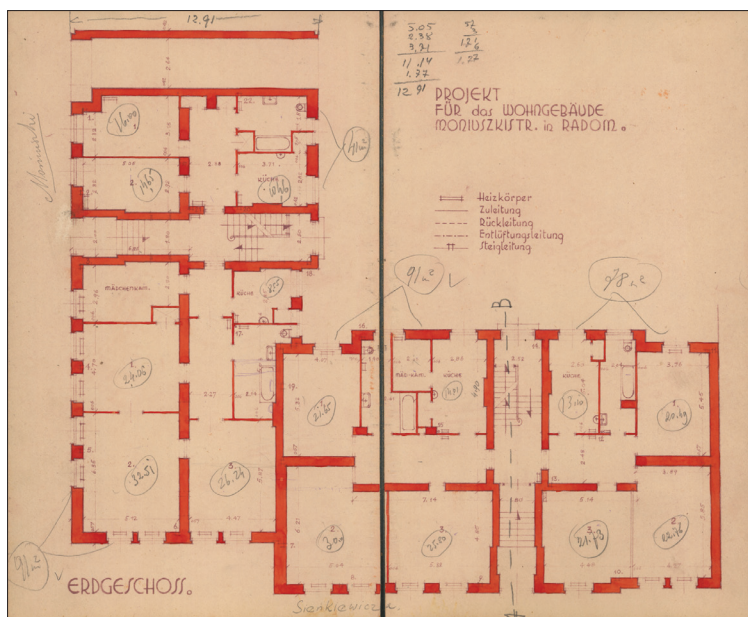


**Fig. 15.** Artur Haskler, Design for the courtyard elevation of the residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom, 1941, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 1026





**Fig. 16.** Artur Haskler, Ground floor projection of the Zajdensznir house in Radom, 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702



**Fig. 17.** Artur Haskler, Ground floor projection of the residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom, 1941, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 1026

Some alterations were also introduced to the layout of the interior.<sup>42</sup> The fewest changes were made in the floor plan of the cellars, which had already been completed when the occupation started.<sup>43</sup> Circulation paths remained unchanged, as did all the supporting walls, but new ones were added in the extended wing facing Moniuszki street. The majority of partition walls present in the original design were, however, removed; the arrangement of some of them was modified. In accordance with pre-war building regulations,<sup>44</sup> an air raid shelter, covered with a ceiling with an appropriate bearing capacity, was constructed in the central part of the building<sup>45</sup>.

More substantial modifications were introduced to the upper floors. The number of flats on the ground floor was reduced. The original project included three one- and two-room flats, as well as a small studio for the caretaker and two shops with small back rooms in the wing facing Sienkiewicza street. Each flat had a kitchen with a window, a bathroom and a separate toilet. The smaller apartments had a hallway, the larger, a hallway and a wider vestibule, as well as servants' rooms adjacent to the kitchen. In the revised design, the six flats of differing size, the caretaker's studio and the shops were replaced with four larger apartments. Two of them consisted of two rooms, the remaining ones having three. The larger flats also included extended to servants' rooms, yet the toilet and the bathroom were merged into a single space. In the original design, the upper floors (Fig. 18–19) were to be divided into six flats – two four-room ones in the Moniuszki street wing, and three two-room ones and one studio in the Sienkiewicza street wing. As on the ground floor, each apartment included the already mentioned additional spaces, with the exception of the studio, whose bathroom was too small to be furnished with a bathtub.

The layout of the upper stories was also adapted; the number of flats per floor was reduced to four – two with four rooms and two with three. This decision seems directly connected with the directives regarding residential standards to be implemented in planned post-war German housing, announced in the late 1940. The regulations made sure that living spaces were suitable for large families. It may be surmised that, since he was designing apartments for the Germans, Haskler had familiarised himself with relevant regulations and official directives regarding residential architecture in that country.<sup>46</sup> Changes in the size of apartments also affected their layout. The alterations in the Moniuszki street wing were small, whereas the floor plan of the other wing was changed radically, with each story divided into

42 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (architectural design) ; APR, AmR, DT, p. 1026 (architectural design).

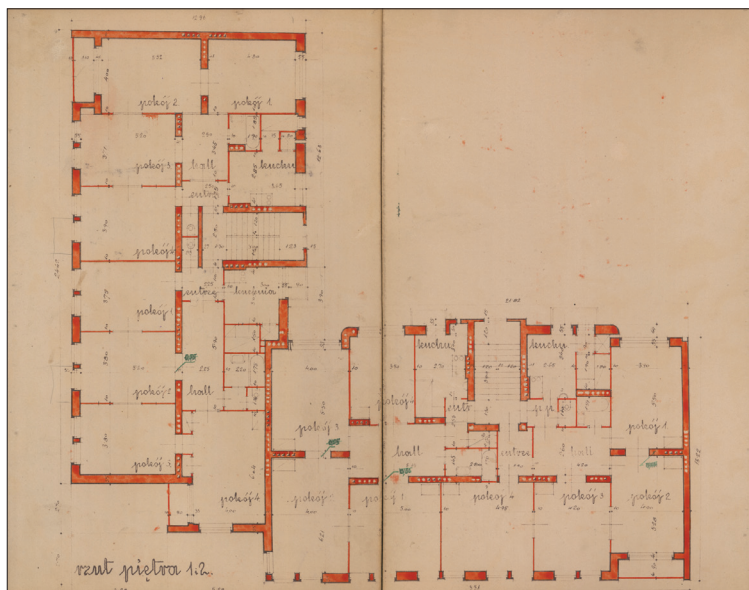
43 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (3–4).

44 *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], no. 32, item 278, § 39–44 (*Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 29 kwietnia 1938 r. o przygotowaniu w czasie pokoju obrony przeciwlotniczej i przeciwgazowej w dziedzinach regulacji i zabudowania osiedli oraz budownictwa publicznego i prywatnego*) [Disposition of the Council of Ministers dated 29 April 1938 on the peacetime preparation of the air-raid defence and gas-attack defence with regard to regulations and structures at housing estates, public edifices and private buildings].

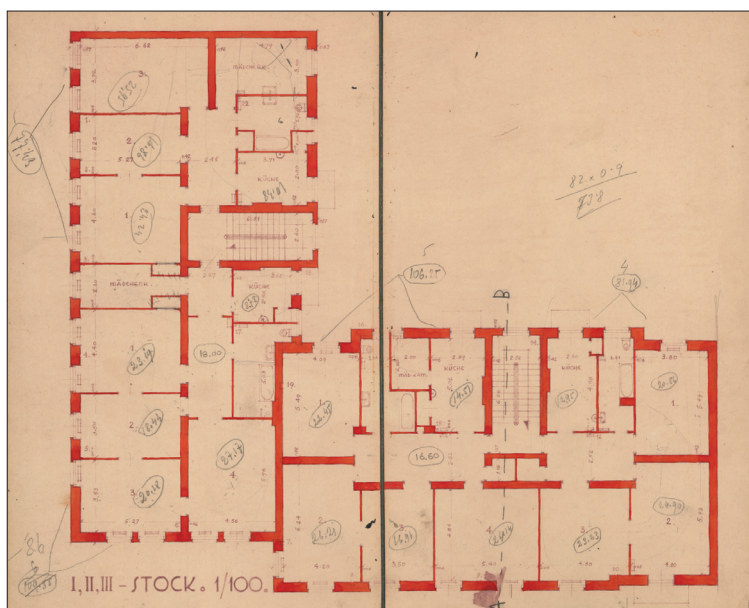
45 APR, AmR, DT, p. 3702 (38–41).

46 *Erlaß des Führers zur Vorbereitung des deutschen Wohnungsbaues nach dem Kriege*, in: A. Teut, *Architektur im Dritten Reich 1933–1945*, Frankfurt am Main–Berlin, 1967, pp. 262–267.





**Fig. 18.** Artur Haskler, Upper floors projection of the Zajdensznir house in Radom, 1938, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 3702



**Fig. 19.** Artur Haskler, Upper floors projection of the residential house for the staff of the German Postal Services East in Radom, 1941, State Archive in Radom, Municipal Records, Technical Documentation, p. 1026

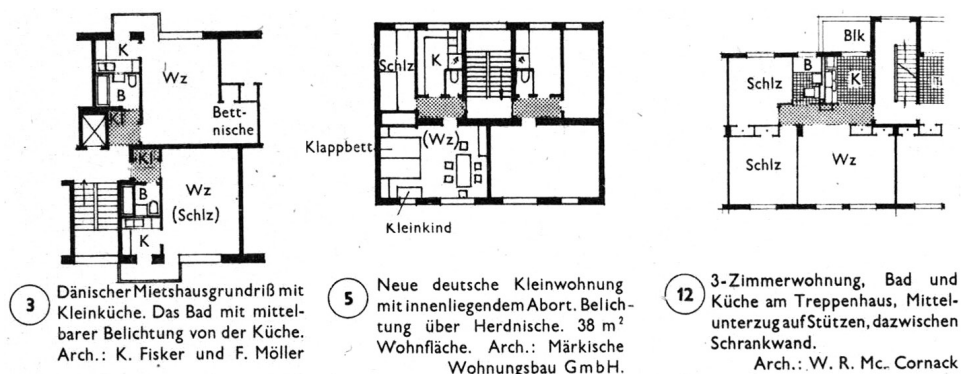


Fig. 20. Standard projections for residential quarters, Ernst Neufert, *Bauentwurfslehre*, Berlin 1940

two larger apartments. As on the ground level, the layout of the additional spaces was changed.

Comparing the layout of the implemented design with the regulations compiled in Ernst Neufert's guidebook for architectural design yields interesting conclusions.<sup>47</sup> One should bear in mind that the norms described by Neufert could not be directly applied in the design under analysis, mainly due to the adaptive nature of the revised design. Nevertheless, it may be argued that Haskler's design for the extended wing copies one of the layout plans included in Neufert's classification presented in the chapter on tenement houses, the one featuring a kitchen adjacent to the circulation path. The spacious hall replaced the originally planned hallways, while the toilet and bathroom were merged into a single space (Fig. 20).<sup>48</sup>

The implemented version of Artur Haskler's design of the residential building for the staff of the German Postal Services East not only constitutes an example of modifications in the cultural landscape of occupied Poland effected through the use of forms then alien to Polish architectural practice. It also demonstrates the consistency with which the German occupiers imposed their own regulations in the conquered territories, in this case with regard to architecture. As regards the cityscape of Radom's centre, the residential buildings erected by the Germans (the one under analysis being one of them) were stylistically divergent and contrasted starkly with the remaining structures in that part of the district. For this reason, as well as due to its stylistic appurtenance to one of the trends in 20<sup>th</sup>-century totalitarian architecture and its unique history, the building may be regarded as a valuable and interesting example of the implementation of oppressive Nazi architectural policies in occupied Poland. As a clear testimony of its times, similarly to other structures built during the Second World War and the German occupation, it constitutes an important element of one of the phases in the development of the historical centre

47 E. Neufert, *Bauentwurfslehre*, Berlin, 1940.

48 Ibid., p. 141. Cf. projections nos. 3, 5 and esp. 12.

of Radom, adding to its value as an original urban structure with successive morphogenetic units discernible with remarkable clarity.<sup>49</sup>

*Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz*

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49 Cf. e.g. W. Kalinowski, *Zarys historii budowy miast w Polsce do połowy XIX wieku* [Outline of the history of urban construction in Poland until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century], Toruń, 1966; *Zabytki urbanistyki i architektury w Polsce. Odbudowa i konserwacja* [Monuments of urban planning and architecture in Poland. Rebuilding and conservation], ed. W. Zin, vol. I: *Miasta historyczne* [Historical cities], ed. W. Kalinowski, Warsaw, 1986; E. Egli, *Geschichte des Städtebaues*, vol. I–III, Zürich–Stuttgart, 1959–1965; E. Gutkind, *International History of City Development*, vol. VII: *Urban Development in East-Central Europe: Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary*, New York, 1972.

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## Abstract

The issue of construction projects conducted by the Germans in occupied Poland is researched with increasing frequency by both historians and historians of architecture. One of the reasons for this is certainly the exceptional role of the works of architecture as historical documents that constitute a tangible reflection of the historical moment in which they were constructed. When viewed from this perspective, the case of one of Radom tenements acquires an almost symbolic significance. The Functionalist building was designed by the Lvov engineer Artur Haskler for Mr Hersz Zajdensznir and his wife, Róża; its construction began shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. It was intended to compete one quarter of the most prestigious sections of Radom's city centre. The works were interrupted after the Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Both the architect and the owners of the tenement were Jews, which radically altered their position. The fate of Mr and Mrs Zajdensznir remains unknown. Haskler, who had been involved in the construction of the telecommunication network, which had begun in 1939 and was still unfinished, was allowed to stay outside the ghetto until the completion of the relevant works. In addition, he was ordered to alter the design of the Zajdensznir house, which was already under construction, so that it could be used as quarters for the staff of the German Postal Services East. The architect entirely changed the concept for his design. The original Functionalist form, representing a type of architecture not condoned by the Nazi authorities, was altered in keeping with the principles of *Heimatschutzarchitektur*; the building acquired a much more conservative form inspired by traditional architecture. The arrangement of the interiors was altered as well, attesting to the fact that Haskler had familiarised himself with the German norms regarding residential construction. The residence of the staff of the German Postal Services East, together with other edifices built in Radom by the Germans during the Second World War, as well as the very history of its construction, constitute a telling testimony to the history of the era. In the context of the urban design of Radom's city centre, these edifices are valuable as historical monuments and they certainly enhance it as an original urban structure with successive morphogenetic units discernible with remarkable clarity.

**Keywords:** architecture, General Government, Lviv (Lvov), Radom