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ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN FEATURES OF ODESA FILM STUDIO AS PREREQUISITES FOR ITS MODERNIZATION

Abstract. *The article discusses practical principles for possible architectural and constructional modernization of Odesa Film Studio, Odesa, Ukraine, on the basis of comparison with other film studios.*
Keywords: *cinema, film studio, pavilion (stage), modernization, urban structure.*

АРХІТЕКТУРНО-МІСТОБУДІВНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ОДЕСЬКОЇ КІНОСТУДІЇ ЯК ПЕРЕДУМОВИ ЇЇ МОДЕРНІЗАЦІЇ

Михайло Комаров

Анотація. *У статті висвітлюються практичні засади можливої архітектурно-містобудівної модернізації Одеської кіностудії на основі порівняння з іншими кіностудіями.*

Історія розвитку архітектурної структури Одеської кіностудії практично не була досліджена. Виявлені літературні джерела загалом приділяли увагу власне історії створення кінострічок та персоналії студії. Тому існує потреба в узагальненні наявної інформації, а також визначенні шляхів розвитку даної кіностудії.

Особливістю наявних українських кіностудій було те, що їхня діяльність базувалася виключно на планових державних замовленнях і бюджетному фінансуванні. Зазвичай, при проектуванні і будівництві кіностудій в СРСР не враховувались багато факторів, які на сьогодні є надзвичайно суттєвими. Наприклад, вартість землі, податок на землю, енергоносії тощо. Тому забудовники таких студій могли дозволити собі будувати 3–4 павільйони на площі 8 гектарів. Однак на сьогодні таке розміщення вважається абсолютно неекономним та неефективним.

Варто зазначити, що застарілі технології, відсутність фінансування і замовлень зменшують конкурентоздатність державних студій порівняно з приватними. І дані фактори, за відсутності модернізації та перегляду принципів роботи, дають підстави прогнозувати подальший поступовий занепад таких студій.
Ключові слова: *кіно, кіностудія, павільйон, модернізація, містобудівна структура.*

Formulation of the problem. To date, state-owned film studios in Ukraine have been failing to obtain filming orders of the volumes they had earlier and are actually unable to compete with private studios, which are currently able to do all stages of film production. Actually, neither the technologies,

currently available at state-owned studious, nor the ways the studios use their territories have changed since 1991, the time of collapse of the former Soviet Union and, as a result, evolvement of Ukraine as an independent state. For the nation's state-owned film studios to become competitive, current cinema market requires their redevelopment, both in terms of filming process and territory planning.

Relevance of the subject and progressiveness of the ideas in this paper. This article formulates the practical principles of architectural and urban modernization, possible to be used in case that Odesa Film Studio undergoes redevelopment.

Actually, the developmental history of the architectural structure of Odesa Film Studio has been still unexplored. Rather, the bibliographic sources, found by the author, generally cover creation of films at the studio and the personalia. Therefore, there is a need to summarize the available information and to determine the ways of possible development of this studio.

Presentation of the main information. Odessa is the place of birth of cinema in Ukraine. It is known for sure that the first motion picture equipment appeared in this city in 1906 (Kostromenko 16). One of the pioneers of the Odessa cinema was D. Kharitonov, who invited such outstanding cinema actors as O. Runich, V. Maksimov, I. Khudoleev and Vira Kholodna to work for his studio and created for them "such conditions of work which no one else had" (Kostromenko 18–19). For this purpose, a large pavilion with a concrete frame, glass ceiling and walls, and with the total area of premises being 750 square meters had been constructed in Odessa, on the city's 33 French boulevard (*picture 1*). No longer with glass walls, this pavilion, however, still exists today and is periodically used for filming. Nowadays it is called "The First Pavilion".

On March 13, 1922 VUFKU (The All-Ukrainian Photo and Film Administration) was founded in Odesa, a brand at the level of the international leaders at the time, such as Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, according to I. Kozlenko, who is currently Director of the Oleksandr Dovzhenko National Center (Dovzhenko Center), the largest film archive in Ukraine (Kozlenko).

VUFKU appeared on the basis of the studios created in 1918, when the great film-makers D. Kharitonov, O. Hanzhonkov, and I. Ermolyev moved their production from Russia to create their summer filming bases in Odesa and Yalta, the Crimea. The southern climate at the two locations allowed for extension of filming process to the fall period (Kozlenko).

Until 1920th, filming outdoors was not a widespread practice. Usually, all the filming was being performed in pavilions, or so-called salons.

The first studio in Odesa, *Mirograph*, was founded in 1911. Soon, one more studio was created by K. Borisov. In 1922, these two studios were consolidated into first film factory of VUFKU, *Komsomol*, which later became known as Odesa Film Studio.

After the Soviet rule was established in Odesa, small private film companies went consolidated into a single government-controlled studio. That was also the time when the practice of governmental orders for motion pictures on government-prescribed topics was launched.

This was the practice lasting until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and Ukrainian indepen-

Picture 1. The First Pavilion at Haritonov studio (now Odesa film studio) (*Гарин 7*)

Picture 2. Art Center named after Vera Kholodna (*http://www.odesafilmstudio.com.ua/*)

Picture 3. Third pavilion at Odesa film studio (*http://www.odesafilmstudio.com.ua/*)

Picture 4. Fifth pavilion at Odesa film studio (*images by the author*)

dence as a result. Through the first two decades of the independence, governmental orders for film production had not been actually practiced in Ukraine, while the studios themselves proved to be unsuitable for commercial film production, the situation which led to a partial decline of the industry. Currently, the situation is getting better, but there is still a lot of room for improvement. Over time, studios began to adjust themselves to market realities, activating affordable methods of earning money. To date, their content has partially changed.

In November 2017, the author conducted a field survey of architectural objects at Odesa Film Studio. Today, it has three filming pavilions, the First, the Third, and the Fifth ones.

The First pavilion has currently been the location for Vira Kholodna Art Center (750 square meters) (*picture 2*), where cinema-related exhibitions, lectures, seminars, and symposiums of the Odesa International Film Festival are held.

Despite such a reorientation of the pavilion has been rather interesting solution, the author of this paper believes, it would be more appropriate to at least partially restore the historic exterior of the pavilion, which could significantly increase it's tourist value. After all, such pavilions are practically not preserved today despite their extremal historic importance.

The Third pavilion (*picture 3*), as well the Fifth pavilion (*picture 4*) (of 426 sq. M and 600.3 square meters, respectively) are still being used as classic shooting stages.

The main administrative building (*picture 5*) has been the location not only for administrative office, but also for a museum, the sound editing unit of the

Picture 5. The main administrative building at Odesa film studio (*images by the author*)

Picture 6. Cinema hall at Odesa film studio (*images by the author*)

studio, a room for rehearsals, a camera room, and a cinema hall with 320 seats (*picture 6*). While the current arrangement of the administrative block in the building corresponds with modern trends, this is not true about the equipment for filming itself; e.g. one can see insufficient capacities for lighting and automation in pavilions. However, as this kind of problems have been non-architectural by nature, they will not be considered in detail in this article.

Odesa Film Studio has had a separate filming area, which is currently not used: the zone for water scenes (*picture 7*). This kind of objects were especially characteristic to studios located not far from the sea. Often, such studios specialized in filming of water scenes, and their special pools allowed to avoid the negative effects of weather.

The main advantage of the pool at Odesa Film Studio was that it coincided with the horizontal level of the sea, located just beyond the boundary of the studio. So, we can conclude that creation of street scenery had been quite developed skills at Ukrainian film studios.

Picture 7. Zone for water scenes at Odesa film studio (*images by the author*)

Picture 8. Unfinished new administrative building at Odesa film studio (*images by the author*)

In 1980th, construction of a new administrative building began (*picture 8*) as a part of a new project. The project, ultimately suspended in 1990th, also provided for construction of an additional filming pavilion.

Today, this suspended construction has been in disrepair and beyond salvation. As the author of this paper believes, the only solution here is demolition and construction of a new, up-to-date filming pavilion instead. This goal looks extremely urgent

in the context that the old, the Third and the Fifth pavilions are currently outdated, while cinema investors are often looking for facilities with the capacities and equipment being completely modern.

As to the studio planning, the structure of the internal zone of the studio is rather concise. It includes two entrances and a circular road inside of it. Each pavilion has a convenient entrance.

A significant drawback has been the small number of pavilions within the relatively large area of Odesa Film Studio. For comparison, *Film.ua*, a private Kyiv studio, located on the territory of a very similar size, has as many as 7 pavilions there, as well as a sufficiently larger full-size mock village for filming purposes.

In addition to production pavilions and the administrative building, Demidov Manor, a historic architectural monument is also found on the territory of the studio; the building that had been used as the place for the studio administration prior to construction of the new administrative facility.

In general, despite Odesa Film Studio has huge potentialities to resumption of its active work, it also has a number of disadvantages that prevent doing so; the disadvantages that become obvious when Odesa Film Studio is compared with modern private studios.

Main conclusions. The characteristic feature of the film studios in Ukraine, founded in the times of the Soviet Union, has been that their filming activities were based completely on governmental orders being made as a part of centrally planned economy, and government funding. Due to this kind of environment, many factors that proved to be extremely important nowadays e.g. cost of land, land tax, and energy — generally were not taken into consideration in the process of construction planning for film studios in the Soviet Union. For example, construction designers of such studios could afford construction of only 3 or 4 pavilions within the area of 8 hectares, the placement currently considered to be absolutely uneconomical and inefficient.

Finally, it should be noted that outdated technologies and facilities, coupled with lack of funding and orders, result in farther reduction of competitiveness of government-owned studios as compared to private ones in Ukraine. These are the factors that give a reason to predict the subsequent gradual decline of such studios, unless their modernization and revision of principles of their work actually take place.

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