Architectural Heritage Promoted through Interior Design

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Introduction

Of particular importance for any ethnic group or people is the national heritage with the cultural and artistic values and historical vestiges left by their ancestors. All these artifacts demonstrate the character, beauty and historical uniqueness of the nation, which must be valued in due time in order to create a lasting cultural memory for future generations. For us, the architectural heritage of Chisinau is particularly relevant in this respect, with the historical buildings of the city's main arts (Bezviconi,1996). The cityscape impresses all foreign visitors as well as our locals with the wonderful view of the "city of yesteryear", in which one can glimpse the culture of architectural constructions with specific aesthetic stylistics. The old buildings are mostly renovated, restored and involved in functional activities. The plastic appearance of the exterior and interior of historic buildings still retains the same tranquillity, warmth, stability, grace and elegance from the nation's glorious past.

Having a special interest in promoting the national architectural heritage through research, we include in the scientific circuit a series of new information, findings and demonstrations of the values of this compartment identified through the interior design segment. Often the interior part of the buildings preserves in the constructive and decorative elements a special sensitivity of historical data, apparently forgotten or overlooked by researchers. The aim of this study is to bring into the scientific view the valuable data of the historic interior design that we want to preserve, promote and appreciate properly. The results obtained contribute to the completion and enhancement of the historical heritage, which is today included in the Register of National Heritage protected by the State. At the same time, we include in the scientific viewpoint valuable data of the heritage that have not been elucidated so far.

The study becomes important in the context of solving the current problem of neglect, loss or ignorance of elements of the national architectural heritage. Historic buildings are often improperly renovated, left to decay or handed over to irresponsible owners who do not respect the historic values of the buildings. That is why we have set out to carry out a complex analysis of historic buildings, determining the content of old elements preserved to the present day, in which we focus our attention on the cultural values, stylistic character and historical features that demonstrate them. We will also determine the creative tendencies of the architecture of the historical time with the stylistic synchronizations of the interior and exterior of the buildings, the aesthetic solutions and the distinctive elements that create the character of the interior environment. At the same time, we will determine the changes in the image of

contemporary renovation works and the new stylistic combinations of contemporary designers.

In this context we mention that design as a discipline or a separate segment of study is known only since 1851, when it is defined as "the accentuated tendency to manufacture by industrial means objects of practical use - machines, tools, furniture, clothing, packaging, etc., with an aesthetically pleasing appearance not so much due to ornamental and decorative effects as to the symbiosis of form and content, simplicity and emphasis on the quality of the material" (Popa, 2021, p. 20). Derived from this compartment is also interior design, which has long been perceived as part of architecture. Of course, there is no doubt of their interconnection, interaction and interdependence, but the segment of interior design activity since sec. The 19th century has gradually become a separate sector with its own problems and strategies. Nevertheless, the analysis and synthesis of interior design must be carried out through the prism of the overall perspective of building architecture, since it is a common goal through time, space and artistic context. Thus it becomes important to research the solutions and strategies of plastic approach to the architecture of the time, the means of plastic operation of the architects and the cultural-artistic predilections of the period of elaboration of the works.

Architecture of Chisinau in the mirror of time

Focusing our attention on the historical buildings included in the area of national heritage monuments, we are deeply impressed by the old buildings on the main streets of Chisinau - a city that since 1818 has become a "centre of the county" (Colesnic,1997, p.44). The historical data testify the evolutionary process of the constructions that starts in 1813 with the first City Plan, then the General Plan in 1834 with the systematization of the constructions and then according to the plans of the Construction Commission in 1870 a new and amazingly beautiful development begins. The period describes a specific completion and structuring of the old and the new town in several suburbs (Colesnic, 2011, p. 65). The architecture of the town gradually becomes completed with white stone buildings, covered with metal tiles or zinc sheets.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, a number of buildings of remarkable beauty were erected which left their mark on the aesthetic character of the city's architecture. It was also during this period that the first implementations of modern styles appeared, which encouraged the observation of a stylistic polyphony through the inclusion of ethnic data. The aesthetics of many buildings depict neoclassical, neo-gothic and so-called "neo-Russian" stylistic implementations - recognisable through decorative details associated with Russian architecture. The given implementation is also known as the "brick style" or "rational" buildings made largely of white limestone devoid of plaster and carved decoration on the facades in favour of "ornate brickwork" (Colesnic, 2020, p. 11). At the same time, various trends inspired by "architectural Romanticism" and "Baroque" combined with "Renaissance and Gothic" motifs are included, which gradually resort to a stage of "enrichment" of the decorative approach in the aesthetics of buildings, which evolves consecutively towards implementations in the spirit of Art Nouveau (Colesnic, 2020, p.5). Through these aesthetic

implementations, many buildings in Bessarabia stand out, including: the chapel of the Girls' Gymnasium, now the National Museum of Fine Arts of Moldova (1900-1901), built by architect A. Bernardazzi, the building of the Penitentiary (Prison Fortress) in Chisinau (1843-1863) by architect F. Frapolli, the urban mansion of Rascanu-Derojinschi by Al. Bernardazzi, Villa Mimi (1880) by A. Iacov, Boys' Gymnasium no.1 (1888), the District Court (1887) and the Assembly of the Nobility of Chisinau (1889) by the Austrian architect Heinrich von Lonsky, the Royal School (now the main block of the State University), the Girls' Gymnasium of the Zemstva (1881-1882) and the Theological School (1873) by Heinrich von Lonsky and Mihail S. Serozinsky, Water Towers or City Aqueduct (1890), The Theological Seminary (early 20th century) by V. M. Elkachev, Duma and City Public Administration (1900), etc. by Mitrofan A. Elladi and A. I. Bernardazzi, the Commercial School by Mitrofan Elladi, the Eparchial House, the Land Bank (1910-1911) after the project of the diocesan architect G. V. Cupcea, Building of the former Community of the Sisters of Charity from the Monastery of Hârbovăț (1904-1905), Palace of the Council of the Country by V. N. Țâganco and many other buildings designed by important architects of the city (Chastina, 2015, 2021; Movila, n.d.). All these wonderful architects gave Chisinau a beautiful development in a noble modern spirit becoming "one of the most beautiful in South-Eastern Europe" (Lascu, 1985, p.3).

A substantial contribution to the development of the architecture of Chisinau was made by the architect Alexander or Alexandru Bernardazzi (02.07.1831-14.08.1907), who from 1856 to 1878 was mainly responsible for urban construction (Condraticova, 2020, p.25). The architect distinguished himself by a "new and very special experience in the context of the reform of cultural diffusion" (Lascu, 1985, p.3). Through his projects and with his direct involvement more than 30 objectives were realized, most of them in the city of Chisinau (Colesnic,1997, p. 45, p.71).

The study of the historical architecture of Chisinau helps to know and understand the principles of artistic formulation approached by the architects of the time. Knowing the tendencies and creative interests in the realization of constructions, we can analyze deductively what were the principles of plastic approach to the interior. On the basis of this research we will identify the stylistic correspondence of the solutions implemented in the interior with those of the exterior. Among the objectives of the research are the stylistic identification of the decorative elements in the interior, the analysis of their origin, the combinations of styles used and of course the degree of correspondence and preservation of historical values in the current buildings.

Knowing that many historic buildings have been destroyed and others are still in a damaged condition, we will include in our research objects that are in a favourable condition, having been recently renovated or in the process of being renovated, and can provide us with more extensive data on historic interior design. On the basis of these we make certain observations, findings and finally propose recommendations necessary in the process of conservation, enhancement and protection of the national architectural heritage.

Interior design in the promotion of national heritage

Analyzing the beauty and uniqueness of historical buildings, and in the context of researching the record of heritage monuments in the municipality of Chisinau (Bezviconi,1996), a classification of their destination and function was made, from which the compartment of public buildings of cultural, artistic, scientific and educational purpose in the current environment was selected. In this context, some of the most important museums in the capital, national libraries and higher education institutions in the city were of particular interest.

Figure 1. *Entrance, interior. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 2. *Interior staircase. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 3. *Ornamental decoration. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 4. *Modern implementations. Photo L. Platon*

One of the elegant buildings of the time is the current National Museum of Art of Moldova (1989, p.115), a former girls' high school, founded by Princess Natalia Dadiani in the building erected in 1901 according to the plans of architect Alexander Bernardazzi. The "Urban Mansion" housed the first art gallery of Chisinau since 1939, then during the Soviet era it served as a museum of the Communist Party, and later became the main headquarters of the National Museum of Fine Arts of Moldova (Pecarschi, 2010). After several periodical attempts, the restoration and rehabilitation of the "Dadiani" headquarters of the museum (MNAM) was achieved. The work continued for 11 years and was successfully completed in 2016, with the support of the Romanian Government and the Moldovan Ministry of Culture, reaching the ideal formula whereby "the building acquired the original form" created in the historical period (Platon, 2021). The aesthetic principles follow elegant associations between white limestone masonry and reddish brick, the monumental design of doors and windows, the cadenced repetitions of forms, the simplicity of details and the complexity of construction, within which Italian Gothic influences are evident (Condraticova, p.35).

Visiting the interior halls of the Museum we are deeply impressed by the aesthetic values, the skill and the artistic culture of the plastic solutions, which preserve the principles of aesthetic formulation and the cultural-artistic trends in the architecture of the late 19th and early 20th century. The interior space as well as the façade of the building, is compositionally ordered by geometrically designed constructive elements, creating a monumental, very elegant and tender appearance. The formal structure of

the windows is doubled, finished at the top by semicircular arches, adorned with Gothic decoration (Figure 1) (Colesnic, 2020, p. 21). The aesthetic formula of the design respects the balance of forms through the generalized massive dimensions and decorative plasticity that delicately complement the elegant note of the surroundings. The walls of the rooms are occasionally devoid of decorative detail to reveal the structure of the white stone masonry combined with the burnt brick, hinting at an association with the exterior of the building (Figure 2). The modelling of the decorative shapes of the balusters and the connections with the ceiling surfaces include a highly refined ornamental abundance, which leaves the eclectic stylistics evident. Assuming the responsibility of preserving historical data through eclectic ornamentation, baroque medallions, columns, Greek meanders, Art Nouveau chandeliers (figure 3) and so on, the architect George Bulat, in a very subtle way, also implies some postmodern solutions [21, p. 49]. These can be seen in the construction decisions of the staircases, the materials used, the constructivist solutions, etc., which harmoniously complement the historical values of the national heritage (Figure 4).

It is necessary to mention that the renovation and restoration works of this building were carried out in accordance with the historical data, preserving even the smallest details of the ornamental decoration, coloring and aesthetic texture of the materials. Both outside and inside we see the same plastic principles created by the architects of the time. At the same time, the modernist implementations identified on the upper level and in the side staircase do not diminish the perception of the historical stylistics, as they aim at a plastic continuity and a completion through a much lighter facture. The solution given was proposed when these spaces had considerable damage and loss that could not be recovered.

Figure 5. *Large exhibition hall. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 6. *Ceiling. Ornamental decoration. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 7. *Decorative elements. Photo L. Platon*

Next to the central building of the Museum of Art of Moldova and part of the museum stands the "urban villa" Casa Herța (bul Ștefan cel Mare cel Mare și Sfânt no. 115) - an architectural jewel different from the rest of the buildings. Its history dates back to the 1830s and in 1845 it was bought by a landowner to be donated to an orphanage, then in 1903 it was purchased by the mayor of the city Vladimir Herța, who demolished the building and rebuilt a charming villa in 1905, following the design of the Austrian architect Henrik Lonsky. In 1939, this building also housed the Pinacoteca of the Municipality of Chisinau, and during the Soviet period the Republican Museum of Fine Arts of the SSRMM and the former Museum of Art of Western European Countries (Частина,2018, p. 18). The period of World War II

conditioned the liberation of the museum from the artistic works in order to protect them from destruction (Catalogul expoziției,2022, p.9). The architecture of the Herta House was designed in an eclectic style, with distinct Viennese Baroque forms, (Бубис И, 1997, p. 122). The interior of the building was designed in an elegant style, pronounced by the Austrian architect's own Baroque ornamental solutions (Бубис И, 1997, p. 10), providing for different plastic approaches in each space, especially the organization of ceilings, walls, door frames and windows (Figure 5,7). The interior and exterior decorations of the building were made by Toma Răilean, a Basarabian celebrity concerned with fine arts (Sava, 2020, p. 80). The ornamentation was of gilded stucco, sometimes coloured in intense shades, combined with fresco painting on mythological themes. A fascinating feast of shapes and colours, highlighted in the diffused lights of the windows that created a mysterious atmosphere (Figure 6). The building is currently undergoing restoration and aesthetic renovation on the interior. The process is very laborious as there is a lot of damage and loss of informative aesthetic data. However, from the existing elements to date, a rich artistic value of the building is identified.

A critical view shows that the building has long been neglected, forgotten by the local authorities, kept closed for many years. In this context we see the need to renovate the building with the preservation and exact completion of the decorative forms of the interior, as they demonstrate a unique stylistic pronounced by the Baroque style. In a similar situation is the neighbouring building - the urban villa Kligman House (113 Stephen the Great Street), built in the middle of the 19th century. In 1896 the villa was bought by the merchant Moisei Kligman, who built in 1898 an architectural jewel that is still recognized today. The building is one of a handful of neoclassical houses that have survived to the present day. At present the building is in a neglected state, which requires attention and investment from the local authorities, as it is of particular interest for its ornamental decoration and plastic solutions, which are characterised by light forms, balanced with soft plastic passages, brackets and vine stalks organising the door and window frames (Centrul istoric al Chișinăului, n.d.).

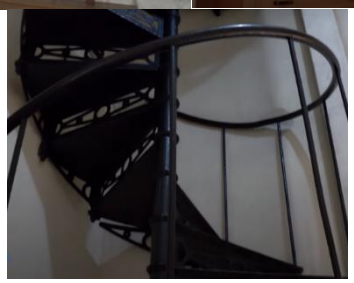

Figure 8. *Interior of the first level. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 9. *Interior of the second level. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 10. *The metal staircase. Photo L. Platon*

Figure 11. *"Fireplace". Last level. Photo L. Platon*

Relevant is the architectural structure of the Chisinau City Museum or "Water Tower" (Al. Mateevici, no. 60-A and Veronica Micle street intersection with Vasile Alecsandri street), built in 1892 after the project of architect A. Bernardazzi (Sava, 2022, p. 210, 211]. The buildings have an identical plan of a narrow rectangular shape with a height of 27 m. The history of the Tower in Al. Mateevici has been damaged by earthquakes and reconstructions in the period 1980-1983, then after further repair works it was reopened in 2011, with some technical modifications in the fire pit on the upper part of the construction. The interior of the tower includes 4 exhibition rooms organised in an eclectic style approach, which hints at the roughness of the carved stone in the construction of the walls or columns (figures 8, 9). The stonework is harmoniously combined with the texture of the wood to create a unique atmosphere, full of warmth and familiarity. In the "glass gazebo" - the last level - the solidity of the wood dominates in the construction of the surfaces and window frames, thus perfectly balancing the gap in the large window opening (figure 11). At the same time, the glossy texture of the floor and the active play of light provide the atmosphere of an open terrace, supported by the panoramic view over the windows. The concept of the interior is completed by the spiral or "snail-shaped" (figure 10) image of the central cast-iron staircase with rich decorative eclectic ornamentation (Частина,2018, p. 14). The historical dates are preserved and promoted to an appropriate extent, even if they are supplemented with new construction solutions after the 1980s. XXTH CENTURY. These are in perfect sync with the plastic solutions of the historical construction.

Figure 12. *Nature" room. Second level. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 13. *Combinations of ornaments. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 14. *Ornamentation. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 15. *Stained glass ceiling. Photo L. Platon*

An extremely beautiful piece of national architecture is the building of the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, with an area of over 2000 m2, designed by architect Vladimir N. Tiganco. Considered the oldest museum in the Republic of Moldova, it was built in 1905 and inaugurated in June 1906. During its evolution it has been reorganized several times, but always focused on two main directions: nature and traditional culture (Colesnic, 1997, p. 334). The interior of the museum has several exhibition halls on various historical and representational categories, as well as a room for temporary exhibitions. After much effort, the renovation of the central hall called "Nature" (Centrul istoric al Chișinăului, (n.d.) was completed in 2022, which brings out an ornamental splendour of an eclectic character between the national ethnic style combined with Art Nouveau, sometimes Baroque and Neoclassical elements (Figure 12, 13, 14, 15) (Colesnic, 2020). Ornamental decoration covers all the constructive surfaces of the interior architecture, in particular the upper level and the ceiling, which includes the glass structure decorated with imitation stained glass. The combination of the ornamental structure with the play of relief and colour in interaction with the multivalent lights creates a wonderful ambience, full of mystery and elegance. The decorative-ornamental solutions inside are stylistically synchronised with those outside, giving the building the character of an architectural masterpiece. The splendour of the historical solutions implemented by the architects of the time still lives on today in the urban ambience of the capital.

The renovations carried out in the "Nature" hall highlight a rich ornamental heritage, associated with traditional crafts and folk arts, which show the ethnic character of the national culture. The partial renovation of the building has favourably solved the problem of conservation and preservation of the architectural heritage, which in this case has also been long overdue. Although quite well carried out, however, the interior renovation and restoration work in this building shows some exaggerations in the decorative forms and colours of the ornamental invoice. These tendencies can be seen in the interior and exterior, manifesting a highly decorative character that slightly exaggerates the stylistic tendencies of early 20th century architecture. The result is

supposedly achieved because of the qualitative differences in colour pigments in contemporary finishing materials. The old or historical ones were based on natural pigments that created a different perception of intensity. The colour palette in today's production looks identical and the differences are harder to see. In this context we see the need for a very responsible approach in the choice of materials for the restoration of historic buildings.

Impressive is also the building of the former high school No. 3 for boys at 111 Alexei Mateevici Street, today the building is a study block of the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts in Chisinau. The building was built according to the design of architect Vladimir N. Tâganco (Academia de Muzică, n.d., p. 128), in 1902-1905, and has a versatile history: originally designed to be the Lyceum no. 3 "Alexandru Donici", a boarding school for the boys of noble families, in 1914-1918 military hospital, in 1917-1918 here were held the meetings of the Council of Tatarstan, serving as the first parliament of the Republic of Moldova, from 1934 it became the seat of the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences of the University of Iasi, then being damaged during the Second World War the building was rebuilt in the 1950s, after the design of architect Etti Roza Spirer (Academia de Muzică, n.d.). In the post-war period, the administrative block of the Agricultural Institute became the seat of the Academy of Arts (Colesnic, 1997). The architecture of the building follows a symmetrical composition with a complex structure (Centrul istoric al Chișinăului, n.d.) decorated in a tender way by obvious elements of French classicism. The solutions can also be found inside the building, evident in the central hallway, which has maintained the aesthetic principles of the time during the periodic repair cycles. The order of the classrooms along the interior corridors has also been preserved, leaving the larger spaces at the corners of the building for the more important halls or function rooms. Likewise, the very wide and high hallway retains elements and decorations inspired by French classicism. At the same time, the architecture of the interior highlights unusual combinations of massive and small volumes, suggesting decorative strips that follow one another in galleries (Centrul istoric al Chișinăului, n.d.). However, the beauty of the historical data of the interior design is highlighted in a very modest or even insufficient way, due to minimal investment, economical works and low quality of the materials used. A problem is the current purpose of the building, housing a higher education institution it is subjected daily to a large flow of people, favors rapid deterioration of surfaces. Another problem is the quality of the renovation work and its frequency. In this case there is a need for more significant investment by the state authorities.

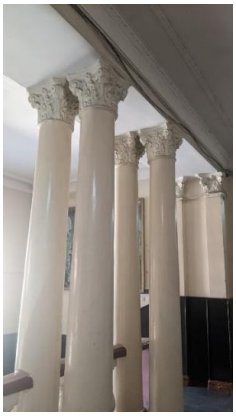
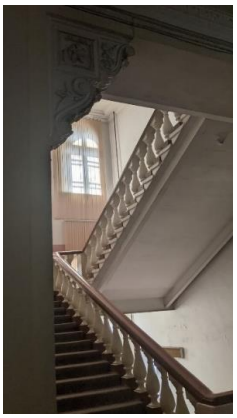

Figure 16. *Column gallery. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 17. *Central staircase. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 18. *Old side staircase. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 19. *The cassette ceiling . Photo L. Platon*
Figure 20. *Central staircase. Photo L. Platon*

Talking about the first block of theatrical art (111 Alexei Mateevici St.) we cannot overlook the second block of musical art (87 Alexei Mateevici St.), which is actually the first artistic education institution in Chisinau. Built at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries on the initiative of Princess Eufrosinia Veazemsky, the building had several functions, initially as an old people's home, a hospital, a shack, the "Mihai Eminescu" boys' high school, and in the post-war years it housed the Council of Ministers (Biblioteca Națională a Republicii Moldova, n.d.) and since 1957 the Conservatory of Music, whose history dates back to 1919 (Centrul istoric al Chișinăului,1989). Having undergone several restorations and aesthetic renovations, the building still preserves today the reminiscences of the past, with a predilection for the eclectic and especially the neoclassical style (figures 19, 20). The interior is dominated by full, ponderous forms combining soft and rough lines, connected to a well-integrated and perfectly balanced design. With the same purpose of the higher education institution, the building hardly maintains its historical appearance with the stylistic data of the time. Old architectural elements are preserved mainly in the central hallways and the main staircase of the interior.

The building of the former Financial Administration, today the Technical University of Moldova (168 Stefan cel Mare și Sfânt Boulevard), built between 1895-1903, was partially damaged during the Second World War, then rebuilt and restored in 1946-1948 under the direction of the architect Etti Roza Spirer. In 1964, this building became the central block of the Technical University and was included in the Register of National Monuments of Architecture and History of the Municipality of Chisinau (Bezviconi,1996). Its artistic value is promoted by elegance, nobility and style. In terms of style, the exterior of the building is a combination of eclectic and Renaissance style, which offers a very sober and delicate aesthetic. The plastic structure of the forms is well balanced, in coherent rhythms, cadenced and mathematically ordered. The symmetry and divisions of the levels in horizontal registers are respected, ordered in different factual-coloristic and ornamental treatments. The decorative solutions, especially those on the central axis in the organization of the portico and upper

balconies are distinguished by elements specific to ancient Greek culture (Malanetchi, n.d.). All this confirms the imprint of Renaissance stylistics.

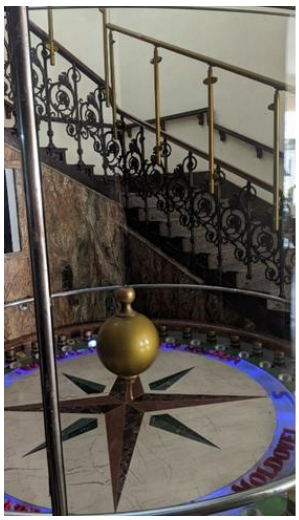

Figure 21. *The cast-iron ladder and Foucault's Pendulum. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 22. *Hallway, level one. Photo L. Platon*

Inside, the planimetric structure of the building allows for the typical layout of educational institutions. Although it was originally an elongated plan with a corridor that included on one side the offices with openings into the wide hallway, later after repairs an angular plan was obtained by adding a lateral body. The renovation of the building aimed at preserving the planimetric solution and the composition of the facades, at the same time adding the third floor and a function room. The festive staircase with cast-iron steps and grating "at the Serbov factory", located on the left side, close to the "Foucault's Pendulum (installed here in 2005)" (Частина, 2018, p. 17) (Figure 21), is striking. Impressive is also the hall wing on the left side of the entrance, which preserves the construction of the cross-arched vault on the centre of the ceiling (Figure 22). The construction solution of the ceiling creates some bridges with medieval Romanesque art, which is found in the context of the Renaissance style. The renovation works and aesthetic re-edition both outside and inside have been executed with a high level of professionalism, which does not diminish the historical values of the building but on the contrary strengthens them by creating a more monumental, sumptuous and graceful appearance. Large solid wood doors with richly ornamented fillets are preserved on all levels of the interior. Also the windows with the specific configuration for each level, according to Renaissance trends. A deviation from the stylistic context is in the material solution of the floors on the second and third levels, which must be adapted to the stylistic context.

The present building of the Faculty of Energetics of UTM and the Literature, Fine Arts and Cartography Section of the National Library of the Republic of Moldova (78, 31 August 1989), built in 1902 according to the design of the architect Vasile Elkachev from St. Petersburg (Colesnic, 1997, p. 205), is also impressive, being at the beginning the block of the Theological Seminary (Academia de Muzică, n.d., p. 96) and from 1926 to 1940 "the block of the Faculty of Theology in Chisinau" (Sava, 2022, p. 41).

After the destruction of the Second World War, several buildings in the vicinity were rebuilt, including the current central block of the National Library (78A 31 August 1989), designed by the architect Agaki Ambarțumean, 1961. The headquarters has been here since 1961 (Contrafort, 2017). As is known, the architecture of the buildings "presents an eclectic style elaboration with neoclassical reminiscences and details of Russian architecture" (Madein.md., n.d.). The plastic solutions of the facades follow symmetrical configurations, which bring out the central composition of the entrance foyers, organized with columns, arches in full cylinder and balconies-tribune. The interiors of the buildings support the style of the exterior plastic solutions. In the "plastic art and cartography" block of the BNRM, the interior design still retains the historical imprint of the time, evident right from the entrance through the square plan columns with full-cylindrical arches and the vault structure in crossed arches at the centre (Figure 23). The gallery of columns and arches harmoniously crowns the wide and high staircases that enhance the view of the linear perspective up to the building's edge wall (Figure 24). The light shades of white and pale blue in combination with the dark shades of the cast iron balusters create a very refined noble aesthetic (Figure 25). The solutions given underline the predilection for neoclassical styling with the eclectic combinations associated with Art Nouveau trends, evident in the art of ironwork. This completes the constructive structure of the staircase to the second level, but also ensures the zoning of the interior loggias on the first level, giving a unique graphic play to the interior. In general, the hall of the building preserves the stylistic imprint of the historical time, with its secluded, quiet and noble character, describing a high artistic culture. However, the interiors of the reading and music rooms have lost this character through periodic renovation works, which have included textured materials and solutions that are not in keeping with the historical style.

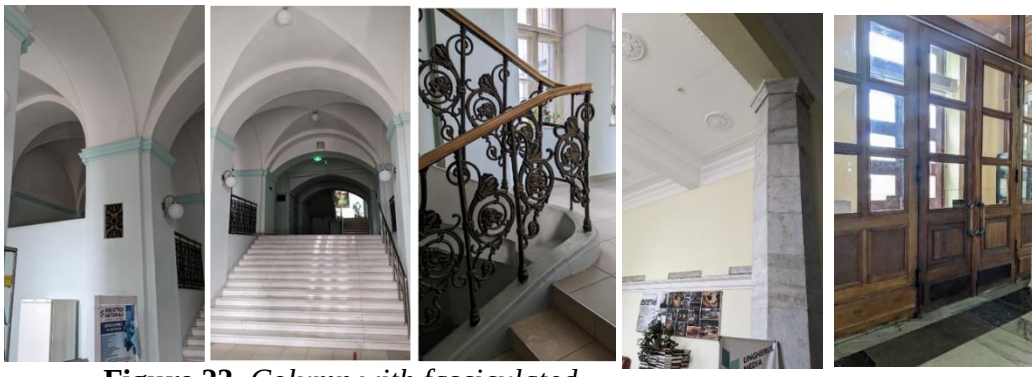

Figure 23. *Column with fasciculated grooves. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 24. *Ladder. Vault in arches. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 25. *Old staircase. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 26. *Column and ornamental decoration. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 27. *Old wooden door. Photo L. Platon*

In the central block of the BNRM we find the same eclecticism of historical styles in the entrance hall, evident in the presence of columns with hexagonal planimetry, rosettes and ornamental strips in relief on the ceilings with an extension towards the vertical surface of the walls. The ornamental decoration is quite restrained and minimalist, giving priority to the perception of spaciousness provided by the increased

height of the ceilings and the freedom of the walls (Figure 26). At the same time, in the plastic solutions of the interior, a contrast persists between light, diaphanous and elegant elements and robust, heavy and massive ones, such as the voluminous columns with sharp corners, the geometry of the capitals or the weightiness of the old solid wood doors with a sober geometric structure (figure 27). The combinations given demonstrate a unique authenticity of the plastic approach practised in the artistic past of the estate. Thus the aesthetic decisions of the historical time are pronounced in a very succinct way that only subtly indicates the imprint of stylistic predilections, focusing the major interest of interior design on functionality, comfort, nobility and freedom of spaces. The interior on the second level retains the same airy, free and luminous character by leaving large open spaces, but the furniture, floor and wall materials are of a different kind, inspired by Soviet period trends. In this case the stylistic implementations are not well timed and require some aesthetic adjustments or reworking.

Figure 28. *Gallery of columns on the right. Photo L. Platon*
Figure 29. *Column gallery on the left. Photo L. Platon*

Within the current library buildings, we cannot overlook the building of the "Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu" Municipal Library (148 Stefan cel Mare cel Sfânt Boulevard), which describes a very interesting history. Originally built in 1835 as a tenement house, in 1846 it housed the Boys' Gymnasium No. 1, in 1863 - the Theological Seminary, in 1864 - the "Suisse" Hotel, since 1946 it has been rebuilt according to the project of the architect Roza Spirer under the guidance of the architect Alexei Sciusev (Sava, 2022). "The exterior decorative aspect of the new building repeats, in broad lines, the architecture of the old building as it was constituted towards the end of the 19th century." (Primăria Municipiului Chișinău, n.d). This appearance of the building is preserved until today, known as the headquarters of the "Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu" Municipal Library, established here since 1950, occupying a significant part of the building. The architecture of the facade supports the eclectic style with neoclassical aesthetic prominences described by symmetrical compositional structure, arched windows at the first level, portico with engaged columns, triangular pediment and sober ornamentation (Colesnic, 1997, p. 203).

In contrast to the exterior the interior of the library impresses more with a very rich decorative elaboration. Maintained in perfect condition, it depicts in many details the neoclassical style and Greco-Roman values imbued in the stylistic concept. The gallery of columns placed on the sides of the central reading room recalls the structure of the interior according to the basilica plan found in Romanesque culture, the coffered

ceiling with massive beams and the arched windows in full cylinder create connections with Renaissance solutions, and the scrolled capitals and embossed ornamentation on the walls suggest an association with French neoclassicism (figure 28, 29). The interior forms and decorations are made in a massive, sober and monumental formation, adjusted to a fine and delicate image by the single tone of white that floods the entire interior. The abundant light, the playful tone in shades of white and the perfectly shaped historical forms create a unique entourage where elegance, balance and art dominate. All these harmoniously support the interior space's purpose as a home for the promotion of science, culture and art. A negative aspect of the interior design of the central reading room is the inappropriate superimposition of various pieces of furniture, stands, information panels, etc. on the elegant and sober background of the Greek columns. This creates a radical mismatch of aesthetic values. The constructive interior architecture does not integrate aesthetically with the utilitarian forms and equipment, thus creating a dissonance that rejects and disfavours each other. The monumental forms of the Greek columns and the coffered ceiling seem suffocated by the multicoloured small elements of the added pieces. In this context there is a stylistic carelessness in the organisation and choice of the utilitarian pieces in the interior. This problem is due on the one hand to under-investment in the interior design and on the other to the unwise planning of the interior design.

Conclusion

Analysing the role and function of interior design within historic buildings we can distinguish several major responsibilities assumed. Among them a particular importance is given to the stylistic approach, which maintains a unique concept with the exterior of the building. Also important is the functional character of the space with the norms or needs of its typology. The list can be continued with issues related to the quality of materials, the plastic realisation, the coordination of all technical elements, etc. Of course, all this leads to intelligent interior design, increasing attention to the problem of preserving and promoting historical reminiscences. The interior design segment has been analysed through the history in architecture section and through the actual data of the interiors of the buildings investigated. The results show that the historical buildings (researched in this material) included in the Register of the National Heritage of the Republic of Moldova contain valuable data of the historical past. In the plastic implementations of the historical interior design, trends of neoclassical, baroque, renaissance, eclectic, Art Nouveau and other styles were identified. In the process of periodic renovations of the buildings, solutions of a postmodern stylistic nature were identified, evident in the textures of materials, colorings and utilitarian forms that complement the historical background. The preservation and promotion of historical data is not always favorabile due to technical and artistic oversights. Aesthetic renovation work on buildings is often carried out on a tight budget that does not allow for full valorizations. In this context, problems are identified with the mismatch between the architectural forms of construction and the furniture, technical equipment and plastic finishing materials. There are also some negligence in preserving and promoting the historical data of the interior aesthetics in small or closed rooms such as classrooms, reading rooms, etc. We can also mention the existence of problems of exaggeration of decorativism in color and plastic

decisions. All these problems are highlighted in order to be removed, corrected and prevented. The results introduced into the scientific circuit favor the understanding and formation of appropriate concepts about the values of the national architectural heritage.

Constructive form is decided following a stylistic concept of the building and manifests a unique aesthetic design for the exterior and interior, which confirms that it cannot be changed or neglected in renovation projects. However, elements that combine functional forms, security or utility installations necessary for the current activity of the buildings may include elements with a modern character. New solutions must harmoniously complement the historic styling without diminishing the imprint of the past. Modern construction elements, involved to a minimum extent, can harmoniously complement the interior styling, adding notes of lightness, transparency and decorativeness.

In terms of ornamental decoration, we recommend the exact preservation of historical patterns through regular aesthetic reworking. In the renovation process, modern, high-quality plastic finishing materials can be used to reproduce the texture or the identical texture of the historical one. Each ornamental form has a symbolic connotation either inspired by folk art, or by the traditions of historical styles. Each element must therefore be valued and promoted accordingly. All the representative components of the ornamental interior decoration must fit into the appropriate context of the space, both stylistically and functionally.

For both compartments it is recommended to respect the stylistic character of the historical dates, as they imprint the cultural value of the national past. The values of exterior and interior architecture must be included in school curricula in order to be studied, preserved and valued by future generations.

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