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PROMOTING ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH MUSEUM EDUCATION IN ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN TRAINING

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Abstract. The paper represents a theoretical-practical study that highlights the role and necessity of museum education in the initial training of architecture and design students from the perspective of promoting national architectural heritage. The article presents basic concepts, as well as some researchers' views on architectural heritage and museum education for architecture and design students in formal and non-formal contexts, which can be integrated in various educational levels, relating to the five general contents of education. Likewise, concrete educational actions involving students in researching, restoring, valorizing, and promoting national architectural heritage are described through the example reflected in the Restoration Concept Project of Balioz Manor. This project implies an in-depth investigation of the issue and includes a set of scientific research methods (documentation, analysis of scientific sources, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT analysis) of urban areas, SWOT analysis of architectural ensembles, photography, surveys, case studies, comparison, and interpretation of results) that led to the achievement of pre-established objectives. In conclusion, focusing on students in the context of the initial training of architecture and design students by involving them in projects for revitalization, renovation, conservation, etc., of architectural heritage contributes to enhancing the performance of future specialists in their professional activities.

Keywords: *Museum education, architectural heritage, initial training, restoration, architectural project, architecture and design students.*

Rezumat. Lucrarea reprezintă un studiu teoretico-practic ce evidențiază rolul și necesitatea educației muzeale în formarea inițială a studenților-arhitecți și designeri din perspectiva promovării patrimoniului arhitectural național. În articol sunt expuse conceptele de bază; unele viziuni ale cercetătorilor cu privire la patrimoniul arhitectural și educația muzeală a studenților-arhitecți și designeri în context formal și nonformal, ce pot fi integrate la diverse niveluri educaționale raportându-se la cele cinci conținuturi generale ale educației. La fel, sunt descrise acțiuni educaționale concrete de participare a studenților în cercetarea,

restaurarea, valorificarea și promovarea patrimoniului arhitectural național prin exemplul reflectat în Proiectul-concept Restaurarea Conacului Balioz, ce presupune investigarea aprofundată a problemei și include un ansamblu de metode de cercetare științifică (documentarea, analiza surselor științifice, Puncte tari, Puncte slabe, Oportunități, Amenințări (analiza SWOT) a terenului urbanistic, analiza SWOT a ansamblului arhitectural, fotofixări, anchetarea, studiul de caz, compararea și interpretarea rezultatelor) care au condus la realizarea obiectivelor prestabilite. Concluzionând, centrarea pe student în contextul formării inițiale a studenților-arhitecți și designeri prin implicarea acestora în elaborarea proiectelor de revitalizare, renovare, conservare etc. al patrimoniului arhitectural contribuie la sporirea performanțelor în activitatea profesională a viitorilor specialiști.

Concepte cheie: *educație muzeală, patrimoniu arhitectural, formare inițială, restaurare, proiect de arhitectură, studenți-arhitecți și designeri.*

1. Introduction

In the context of global education, student-centered learning represents one of the main prerogatives outlined in the Bologna Process through the European Higher Education Reform [1]. Thus, the learner can no longer be perceived as a mere repository of accumulated knowledge but must be recognized as an individual personality, placed at the center of the learning and educational processes [2]. This approach emphasizes the direct involvement of the student in the educational process, assigning them the role of an active partner to the teaching staff in constructing and practically valorizing the knowledge acquired throughout the academic journey.

Furthermore, there is a need for redefining the educational ideal, which implies involvement in the formation and development of an integrated personality, the necessity of utilizing all the formative and educational resources of society, whether institutional or non-institutional, in a formal, non-formal, or informal context [3].

Thus, higher education institutions take responsibility in identifying new formulas for delivering education focused on pro-quality and pro-innovation, encouraging scientific research, technological transfer, and attractiveness.

Building on these aspirations, contemporary universities initiate, establish, and maintain relevant partnerships with various cultural and social institutions focused on education, research, and innovation, which would provide feasible mechanisms for optimizing the level of initial training of students. Thus, students can have the opportunity for direct involvement in practical and research activities focused on promoting architectural heritage, which represents a major objective of museum education and the professionalization of architecture and design students.

The study of the established literature on museum education [4-7], along with the analysis of various aspects regarding architectural heritage, allowed to establish that museum education represents the purpose and culmination of museum pedagogy, encompassing specific contents that can be integrated at various strategic and methodological levels in relation to the five general contents of education (moral, intellectual, technological, aesthetic, and psychological) [8].

The given vision is supported by researchers such as C. Cucoș [4], I.-D.-I. Toma [9], A. S. Ogonovskaya [10], M. E. Kozhevnikova [11], etc., stating that museum education aims to foster the development of a creative individual through the promotion and respect to moral-ethical and humanistic values/norms.

From the perspective of the current study, museum education represents the essence of professionalization of architecture and design students by providing valuable information about activities within various fields such as visual arts, architecture, interior design, museology, etc., as well as the specifics of architectural heritage, conservation, restoration, revitalization, and promotion. Furthermore, museum education can be approached as a theoretical and applied tool, useful and innovative, focused on developing students' professional skills through diverse educational opportunities offered by museum institutions in partnership with educational institutions. In this context, we specify the regarding the means of museum education, among which architectural heritage is included.

Architectural heritage is a component of *cultural heritage* that encompasses all constructions, buildings, and architectural monuments, valued at a national or universal level from historical, social, cultural, and artistic perspectives.

According to researcher T. Stăvilă, Moldova can undoubtedly be considered a rich source of artworks and architectural monuments, which includes the cultural and artistic treasure inherited and passed on to the present through numerous archaeological discoveries dating back to the Paleolithic age [12].

In line with the aforementioned, architectural monuments constitute one of the fundamental pillars of national and universal identity, serving as a valuable bridge connecting the past, present, and future. The conservation and restoration of these monuments implies social and professional responsibility of the specialists in the domains of architecture and interior design by discovering effective architectural solutions and adapting them to the demands of modernity without compromising the aesthetic aspect, functionality, and durability of buildings [13].

Interventions on architectural heritage involve a set of actions that encompass establishing strategies, principles, and methods for conservation, restoration, and the strengthening of inherited buildings, as well as their advantageous integration into the contemporary urban environment. In the restoration process, special attention is given to the heritage object, considered as an authentic value that corresponds to the three fundamental characteristics of an architectural monument:

- Firmness (solidity, technique, and materials used in execution);
- Utility (functionality, the purpose for which it was made);
- Grandeur (beauty and aesthetic expression) [14].

2. The praxeology of promoting architectural heritage through the development of architecture and design projects within the framework of professionalization of architecture and design students

The national heritage of architectural monuments, which constitutes objects with historical, artistic, or scientific value in the Republic of Moldova, includes an impressive number of 977 architectural monuments with individual protection status listed in the Register of Monuments and protected by the State. These monuments are located in the Central area, specifically in the historical center of the city of Chisinau. Reports from the Agency for Inspection and Restoration of Monuments indicate that almost every year, an architectural monument disappears, and over 25% of these monuments have already been demolished or are undergoing active processes of destruction and advanced degradation [15].

Today, we regretfully observe that in our country, several valuable architectural monuments have been partially or completely destroyed. One such example is the Teodosiu

Manor, built in the 19th century by the architect Alexandru Bernardazzi and demolished in 2005 under the pretext of constructing a new building.

Active involvement of state authorities through the application of the Legislation of the Republic of Moldova regarding the protection of national heritage, as well as the allocation of necessary funding for the restoration, conservation, and preservation of monuments, would contribute to improving the current situation.

Similarly, a significant part of this issue can be remedied and addressed through the involvement of future specialists, architecture and design students, in the development of projects (for coursework or dissertations) for the renovation and restoration of historical buildings. An exemplary project to follow is the Restoration Concept Project of Balioz Manor, located in the village of Ivancea, Orhei district, carried out by student Malec Judi, group ARH-173, under the supervision of project coordinator Radu Andronic, assistant professor, TUM, and donated to the museum following the signing of a partnership agreement between the Technical University of Moldova and the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History in Chișinău in 2023 [16].

Within this perspective it is necessary to specify that for achieving the proposed objectives within the framework of developing the Restoration Concept Project of Balioz Manor, was taken in consideration an extensive set of pedagogical strategies, including:

- A strategy focused on acquiring knowledge about national or universal history and traditions in the context of developing an architectural concept project, involving research of archival documents, urban studies, and regulatory frameworks related to the conservation, safeguarding, and promotion of architectural heritage.
- A strategy focused on identifying, highlighting, understanding, and disseminating information regarding the cultural, historical, artistic, and aesthetic value of architectural heritage.
- A strategy of modeling, simulation, and evaluation (3D images, models, animation) of one's own architectural solutions, reflected in projects by incorporating theoretical concepts and optimal praxiological elements that meet the methodological requirements for creating an efficient and innovative architectural project.

These pedagogical strategies have been successfully validated within the development of multiple architecture and design projects carried out by architecture and design students, including the Restoration Project of Balioz Manor, which was presented and highly appreciated at the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History in Chisinau. It is worth mentioning that the topics of the thesis projects are very diverse and relevant, aimed at addressing pressing needs in the realization of new constructions, as well as in the conversion, revitalization, or renovation of heritage buildings.

Therefore, the Balioz Manor is a gem of the national architectural heritage, under the custody of the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History in Chisinau, with the status of a monument listed in the Register of Museums of the Republic of Moldova [17]. Dating back to the mid-19th century, it is located in the village of Ivancea, inhabited by a Moldovan, Ukrainian ethnic population in the Orhei district.

The Balioz Manor itself is part of a complex of buildings spread over an irregular asymmetric area of 7 hectares, making it one of the oldest dendrological parks with rare and exotic plant species imported to the Republic of Moldova from various geographic regions worldwide (including boxwood from Crimea, Chinese wisteria forming a green fence, Siberian

cedar, and the ginkgo tree, popularly known as the tree of happiness). The main current issue facing the complex is the degradation of both interior and exterior structures, diminishing its appearance and historical value. The park, established in 1880, covers an area of 3.5 hectares and is a doubly protected site, safeguarded by the Laws of the Republic of Moldova [18] (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Judi Malec, geographical location of *Balioz Manor* located in Ivancea village, Orhei district (author Judi Malec).

Through its architecture, the Balioz property stands out from other 19th-century boyar mansions primarily through a Russian-influenced architectural style with the imposing appearance of classical palaces. Additionally, the central building of the Balioz complex is distinguished by a stylistic contrast of facades, featuring a blue-red-white color scheme on panoramic views with ornamental reliefs of vegetal motifs arranged in horizontal registers. The central building itself represents a true architectural masterpiece, built in the style of Western Renaissance with elements of Russian classicism, characteristic of the mansions of Russian nobility from the modern period. The rectangular layout of the building is constructed vertically in two stone-built floors, divided into functional rooms with a vast salon for hosting banquets of local nobility and a terraced central staircase.

Within the present-day grounds of the manor, some of the outbuildings have been preserved, including structures serving as storage facilities, cellars, stables, barns, a mill, a forge, a greenhouse, a carriage house, and a three-story observation tower. The construction of the complex lasted a total of 21 years, but the owner Karabet Balioz did not manage to live in this manor; he passed away shortly before the completion of the construction in 1872. For a long period, the *Balioz Estate* was forgotten, and in 2006, it was leased for rehabilitation, functional, and economic revival. Initially, the renovation of the facades and interiors was carried out, which affected the authenticity of the monument, violating restoration norms and techniques, rich interior decorations were destroyed, and following legal disputes in 2015, the manor returned to state custody.

3. Materials and Methods

The analysis of theoretical references and discussions with museum professionals, historians, architects, etc., has allowed us to establish that scientific research on the historical and socio-cultural aspects of Balioz Manor has been conducted sequentially or tangentially, with several archival documents being lost. Therefore, for the development of the proposed concept project and the resolution of the investigated problem, extensive research has been conducted, including a set of scientific research methods such as: documentation, analysis of

scientific sources, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT analysis) of the urban area, SWOT analysis of the architectural ensemble, photographic documentation, surveys, case studies, comparison, and interpretation of results, aimed at achieving predetermined objectives.

4. Restoration and optimization solutions for *Balioz Manor* reflected in the Architecture Concept Project

Based on preliminary investigations of the current state of the park and its buildings, it was found that some areas are in a deplorable condition and require urgent renovation. Research of historical photographs and archival materials regarding the original appearance and purpose of this property has established that the restoration action should aim to return to the original aesthetic appearance of the manor and introduce new functionalities to facilitate access for a larger flow of tourists and visitors (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Judi Malec, study of *Balioz Manor* estate, photographic documentation (author Judi Malec).

Thus, for the restoration and conservation of this architectural monument, the following principles have been established:

- the principle of selecting restoration objects considering their history, value, the necessity of multifactorial assessment, and their objective characteristics;
- the principle of preserving the historical conformity of the restoration object;
- the principle of constructive integrity;
- the principle of acceptable functional flexibility, of device possibilities;
- the principle of maintaining stylistic diversity, etc.

Additionally, the climate, topography, and construction materials used, such as limestone-shell, wood, and clay, characteristic of the architectural traditions of those times, were meticulously studied. It is worth mentioning that the bricklayers and architects managed to synthesize the artistic influences of previous eras while preserving the originality of local architecture.

The Restoration Project of Balioz Manor envisages the revitalization of the park according to historical drawings: completing the dendrological composition of the garden, restoring the buildings of the complex based on detailed facade plans, studying archival documents, and conducting own investigations (Figure 3). Another important element of the project is the improvement of buildings intended for various events by assigning new social functions aimed at educating and enriching the culture of the younger generations.



Figure 3. Judi Malec, museological restoration of Balioz Complex buildings (author Judi Malec).

In this regard, the author of the bachelor project, student Judi Malec, proposes the development and enhancement of the given complex with various activities of interest, including:

- Establishing a playground for children and a leisure area designed for spending time with family in Balioz Manor estate park.
- Rehabilitating the landscape architecture of the park, enhancing the variety of tree species, floral species, and seasonal chromatic compositions, including a green labyrinth, etc.
- Opening a zoo in the area of existing stables and barns.
- Designing a special trail for pony rides for children.
- Enhancing the park's pathways with architectural elements such as fountains, pergolas with climbing vegetation, and garden furniture.
- Rethinking the walking route with perforated pavement for promenades, Figure 4.

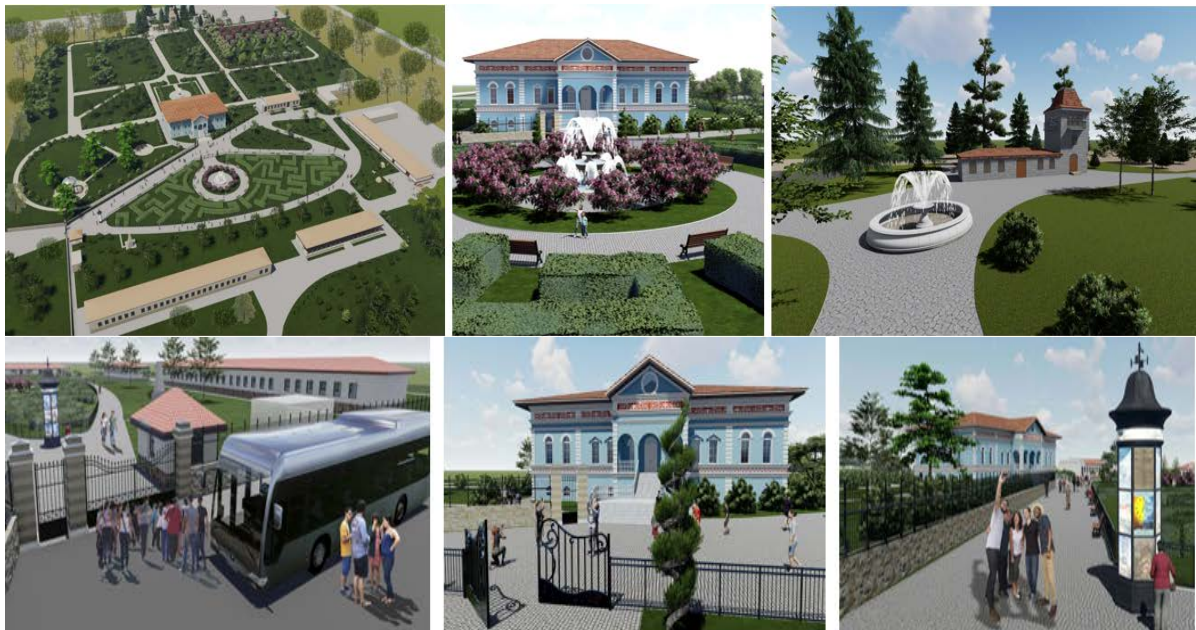


Figure 4. Judi Malec, innovative restoration proposals for Balioz Manor reflected in the project (author Judi Malec).

The central building of the complex is to be revitalized and dedicated to the Balioz Manor Museum, open to the general public with multidimensional support from the National

Museum of Ethnography and Natural History in Chișinău in collaboration with the Technical University of Moldova through the Restoration Project-site plans and model (Figure 5). Other spaces will be used as hotel rooms with a conference hall decorated by the fusion of Romanian ethnic style with Ukrainian, while the entrance area will be expanded with a pergola featuring massive columns and two terraces for visitors and guests. Similarly, the project proposes the reuse, renovation, and reorganization of spaces by opening both indoor and outdoor exhibition pavilions to operate regardless of time and season, aimed at involving individuals of all ages in creative activities. Another rehabilitation element, considered necessary by us, is the connection to the national tourist route in the Republic of Moldova.



Figure 5. Judi Malec, board and model of the bachelor's thesis project Restoration of Balioz Manor (arrangements in the museum area) (author Judi Malec).

Therefore, achieving this objective outlined in the work has contributed to aligning the original aspect of the real estate area with the historical value of the site to attract a larger number of visitors, serving as an example of academic involvement through the implementation of projects of urgent necessity by architecture and design students in the real environment.

5. Conclusions

In the given context, it was revealed that the active collaboration of the Technical University of Moldova with museum institutions became an efficient tool in addressing multiple issues related to research, safeguarding, conservation, restoration, and revitalization of architectural heritage, in conjunction with common aspirations, such as the education and the training of the younger generation through and for values. Therefore, future architects and designers can be initiated and guided by professors, architects, museologists, etc., in professional activities and promoting the national and universal architectural heritage through participation in roundtable discussions, specialized conferences, and the development of architecture and design concept projects.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest

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