

**DEGRADED HISTORICO-CULTURAL ELEMENTS
FROM THE GEOGRAPHICAL LANDSCAPE OF CHIȘINĂU**

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Rezumat

Peisajele culturale create sub impactul relațional dintre factorii naturali și cel antropic, în timp au suportat modificări cantitative și calitative a aspectului, structurii, funcțiilor etc.

Sub acțiunea necontrolată a autorităților locale, în unele cazuri, în structura peisajelor culturale ale municipiului Chișinău se evidențiază elemente aflate în declin, degradate, ruiforme și abandonate. Conform tipologiei peisajelor culturale (Cocean, David, 2014), după *criteriul gradului de atractivitate* autorii disting tipul de *peisaje degradate*. În lucrare sunt prezentate unele elemente degradate prezente în centrul istoric și cultural al municipiului Chișinău. Starea actuală degradată a acestora nu le determină excluderea din registrele și documentele cadastrale de stat. Dintre acestea menționăm: monumente istorico-culturale, elemente turistice, sacrale, vile, case particulare etc. Responsabilizarea autorităților și conștientizarea populației, pot încuraja ameliorarea peisajului urban prin reabilitarea elementelor degradate existente.

Cuvinte cheie: peisaj habitational urban, monumente istorico-culturale, elemente degradate.

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Introduction

From the human desire to develop the environmental sustainability, in some cases, the cultural landscape is also put in a damaging condition for itself. Due to many unjustified anthropic activities along time, the historico-cultural landscapes have undergone essential changes, have degraded or are endangered, and those in Chișinău are not an exception. In 1993, the present historic centre of Chișinău was declared an architectural monument, but over time it is gradually being destroyed and entire neighborhood is in a process of extinction. Monument buildings have been demolished and by this the spirit and integrity of the historic centre are being destroyed. Learning and preservation of historic and architectural heritage are important actions for the memory of a people in order to build a better future. Thus, many elements of the urban landscape and located in the historic centre of Chișinău were once the pride of the city, have now reached an advanced state of decay or are abandoned. Their today image provokes negative emotions so the fact that these objects are left to further degradation provokes dissatisfaction with the population and visitors. Most elements of the historico-cultural landscape studied and presented in the work are included in the Register of Monuments of National and Municipal Importance [3]. Some, being private, are allowed to degrade or are sold later particularly to large building companies.

In this study we present some of the degraded elements abandoned in the historic centre of Chișinău: the Hotel *Peterburg*, the Nazarovs' Mansion, the Râșcanu-Derojinschis' Urban Mansion, the house of sculptor Alexandru Plămădeală, the Synagogue, Republican Stadium, the Hotel *Inturist* - later renamed Național, the building housing the teachers of Gymnasium No.1 for boys, and private residential houses.

At present, in our country, the constituent elements of the cultural landscapes are given more and more attention at the scientific, practical and legislative level.

Methodology of the study

The main objective of the study is the selective presentation of the results regarding the estimation, type, description, analysis and interpretation of some degraded historico-cultural elements and monuments of national importance from the historic centre of Chişinău.

The study and analysis of the degraded historico-cultural elements of the historic centre of Chişinău are carried out in this paper work through the typology of cultural landscapes by Cocean P., David Nicoleta [2]. In any typology of geographic phenomena and cultural landscapes the authors point out that the genetic criterion is considered to be fundamental and indispensable. In defining the groups and sub-groups of cultural landscapes according to that criterion the authors start from the primordial human action - from the desideratum of the initiation of a landscape intervention by the anthropic factor which has generated further on the series of groups. Therefore, according to this criterion for typing cultural landscapes, we have selected the following major groups and sub-groups for our study: Historic landscapes; Habitational landscapes; Sacred landscapes, with sub-group *ritual landscape*; Cultural landscapes resulted from productive activities, with sub-group - *tourist landscape and comercial and service one*.

The representative elements of these groups and sub-groups of the studied cultural landscapes were assigned to the criterion of attractiveness degree according to their aesthetic quality. In this regard we observe that, due to the state they are in, these landscapes give a critical touch to the cultural landscape of the historic centre of Chişinău while some of them still inspire a state of stability and continuity in time and space. As representative and defining elements according to this criterion we highlight: *the Hotel Peterburg, the Nazarovs' Mansion, the Râşcanu-Derojinschis' Urban Mansion, the house of sculptor Alexandru Plămădeală* in the group of **historic landscapes**; *the building housing the teachers of Gymnasium No.1 for boys, and private residential houses* in that of **habitational landscape**; the Synagogue in the sub-group of the **ritual landscape**; the Republican Stadium within the sub-group of **tourist landscape**; and the Hotel Inturist-Naţional in the sub-group of **commercial and service landscape**.

Results and discussions

Elements of cultural landscapes in the historic centre of Chişinău are a valuable part of the national and municipal heritage including the reflection of some personalities on the landscape architecture of the present-day Chişinău area. Among the studied historico-cultural elements we present the following:

The Hotel Peterburg [4] is located on Alexandru cel Bun Street no. 49 and it is a monument of national architecture introduced in the Register of Monuments of History and Culture of Chişinău. This building dates back to the 1930s and it is a typical one of the historic city of Chişinău being the only one of the buildings built in neo-classical style. Architecturally, it is a two-level building with the facade adorned with semi-columns of the giant Corinthian order, which embraces both floors of the building. The first floor of the building was for commercial purpose as it is known that in 1907 the building belonged to trader *Durdufi* and later, until 1940, its owner was the

philanthropist merchant *Moise Kligman*. Since 1940 Puterman Peisah was nominated as owner. During the Second World War, the building was damaged, but in 1946 it was renovated and all the decor elements were restored. Capitals and decor elements were rebuilt from gypsum during the post-war period. In the Hotel Petersburg the intellectual elite was able to serve one of the best coffee in Chişinău. Nowadays this building is ruined and the plaque on the facade that mentions that this edifice is a state-protected monument raises only bewilderment.

The Nazarovs' Mansion [5] is an architectural monument of national significance introduced in the Register of Monuments of History and Culture of Chişinău. The villa was built in the 80s of the XIXth century in an eclectic style with rococo elements. The first documentary information on real estate dates back to 1900. At that time the owners were the brothers Ivan and Nicolai Lebedev and later the villa came into the property of merchant Jacob Nazarov. In 1940 the owner became Hana Epştein. The house suffered much after the actions during the Second World War, but until 1948 it was restored.

The architectural uniqueness of the mansion is due to the specific architectural style and elements, one being determined by the shells that cover the arch of the windows. The entrance of this building is preceded by two columns which in the Italian architecture are called "serliana", a very rare element in the buildings in Chişinău. The roof of the villa is built in four slopes, in the shape of a pyramid trunk, covered with iron scales and with an entrance to the attic from the central part.

At present, the mansion is in an advanced stage of degradation with closed doors, faded colour, demolished front steps and broken windows. The interior is also damaged. The wind blows into the rooms, the walls barely hold, and the ceiling is full of cracks. In fact, the property belongs to an individual who has already advertised it to sell.

The Râşcanu-Derojinschi's urban mansion [6] is located in Bucharest Street at the cross-roads with the Vlaicu Pârcălab Street. This historico-cultural element is qualified as an architecture monument in the national category. It was built in the 70's of the XIXth century according to the design of the well-known architect Alexandru Bernardazzi.

Over the years, the urban mansion of the Bessarabian noble family Rascanu-Derojinschi has undergone several transformations. Thus, in the 1950s, a wing was annexed to this building with an amphitheatre hall, where the meetings of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR were held. Later, the republican society *Ştiinţa* was based here, and the amphitheatre was used as a cinema hall. In the early 2000s, already in an advanced stage of ruin, the building was included in the Register of National Monuments of Architecture and transmitted to the balance of the Ministry of Culture.

Nowadays the former urban mansion of the Râşcanu-Derojinschi family, known to the inhabitants of Chişinău as a ruin in the historic centre of the capital, still has chances for a second life. Recently, the two-story building has undergone total reconstruction works and several institutions will be located there. It is doubtful that by preserving only a side wall the reconstructed building will present properly the inherited patrimony and the historic centre of Chişinău.

The house of sculptor Alexandru Plămădeală [7] appears for the first time in the documentary information in 1868 when the owner was Simon Zaiţev. In 1889 this property was acquired by Ecaterina Plămădală, a priest's wife, who demolished

the old buildings and at the beginning of the 20th century on their place she built a new one-floor house with five rooms for only one family. Alexandru Plămădeală, the great sculptor from Bessarabia, the director of the Fine Arts School, the author of the monument of Stephen the Great in the Great National Assembly Square from Chișinău lived in this house. Even if it is a private house, the historic building looks disastrous. It has not been repaired for several decades. Moreover, the six owners of the historic building have altered its appearance despite the law. The external state of this historico-cultural element also demonstrates an active degradation process.

The building housing the teachers of Gymnasium No.1 for boys [1] is a monument of architecture and history of national importance introduced in the Register of Monuments of History and Culture of Chișinău. In 1839 Duma Urbană offered for the construction of the Military Hospital a part of the present-day neighborhood between the streets 31 August 1989, Metropolitan Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni and București.

After the main block had been built (1843) it started the construction of the secondary blocks. Between 1853 and 1854 there was built the edifice at the corner of the district, at the cross-roads of the București Street with the Metropolitan Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni one. This one is the building housing the teachers of Gymnasium No.1 for boys. The architecture is based on Classicism with Russian influence.

At present the building has become a simple private one rented to three institutions: **National Museum of History of Moldova** (with restoration laboratories for museum items and offices for various services, the **Coreography College of Chișinău** and **MOLDASIG**.

The Synagogue [8] is a monument of local architectural value included in the Register of Monuments of History and Culture of Chișinău. The edifice was built in the second decade of the XXth century in eclectic style and historic styling. The construction and operation of the synagogue is related to the name of Rabi Țirilson who was the chief rabbi of Bessarabia for several decades. It is a complex of two buildings - a synagogue and an asylum for the elderly joined by an annex. The building was abandoned after it was destroyed by a powerful earthquake. In 2010, the Jewish community redeemed it from the state in order to be reconstituted. Currently, the building complex is in an advanced degradation state.

The Republican Stadium [9] was a multifunctional sports complex in the Republic of Moldova that was opened in 1952. During that period the Football Clubs Zimbru and Dacia, both from Chișinău, as well as the national football team of the Republic of Moldova played at home on the stadium. In 2007 at the initiative of the Moldovan Government this sporting and cultural objective was closed as it no longer met the criteria for international matches being planned to build another modern and high-performance stadium instead of it. However, the reconstruction works of the new stadium have not started yet.

Meanwhile, local media reported that a dwelling district or even an embassy seat could be built on the stadium. In 2013, there were also proposals for an agricultural market with 2500 places for trade on those five hectares of land. Later, the Government of the Republic of Moldova initiated some public partnership procedures to build a republican stadium with a capacity of 25 to 30 thousand seats. However, this objective, as well as the land for buildings, with an area of 5.2 ha is messy, degraded, covered by spontaneous vegetation and waste. More alarming was the massive fire that occurred

in 2017 and which consumed much of the branches that were stored there as a result of the April 2017 weather hazard.

The Hotel Inturist, later named **Național** [10], is coming from abroad. In fact, the edifice for hotel services was commissioned in 1978. Today, however, only a concrete casing with broken windows, doors taken out and walls without plaster is left of this construction. It has come to be a haven for street people. The interior, which was once a tourist luxury, is now filled with tons of waste. This building in the city centre came to this state after the privatization process in 2006 that attributed dozens of landlords promising investments and repairs of millions lei, but these commitments remain only on paper. Probably due to the desire to hide the degrading situation, those interested in it camouflage the edifice with advertising materials.

Recently, around this building it is speculated a lot emphasizing that there are hidden interests and that the owners want the block to break down.

Conclusions

- Chișinău has inherited a rich historico-cultural heritage, which includes core elements of cultural landscapes;
- Under the uncontrolled action of the central and local public authorities there are many historico-cultural monuments like mansions, villas and private houses, some of them being in decline, ruined and abandoned, in the structure of the urban landscape in the historic centre of Chișinău. According to the attractiveness criterion they are appreciated as heavily degraded;
- National legislation on the protection of historico-cultural monuments is largely not respected and in some cases, when business interests relate to politics, it is cruelly violated;
- For the restoration of historico-cultural monuments investment is required, i.e. to be rented by businessmen for further renovate under the law and to use them as offices and to preserve them as national patrimony.

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