

Page 6 Editorial Architectural profession as a victim of pre-presentational election environment

There is no secret that elections and what precedes them deform social practice. Culture is no exception. As a rule the political fuss - we mean pre-election promises - quietly disappers after elections. This situation is universally typical - just remember Obama's generous promises.

In the commercial election cycle the architectural profession fell victim to two strictly political initiatives from two principal competitors for the Russian political Olympus both of which ditched the country: one slower the other faster. The one, the Father of the Nation, put forward an idea to organize a not quite constitutional structure - the All-Russian Popular Front; while the other, the Guarantor of the Constitution, at St. Petersburg International Economic forum hit the wrong note announcing creation of the metropolitan federal district and relocation of several state agencies including the future International financial center beyond the boundaries of the Moscow Ring Road.

We shall note that while the first initiative could happen to be imprudent the other one can exist only on the basis of the profound interdisciplinary studies and verification.

The first initiative became a pretext of a professional clowning getting in the line light thanks to its competitive potential. In brief, the order of events looks as follows: the RF Union of architects received a letter from the design agency of the atmosphere with a notification of their possible relocation in the Popular Front. Then the Union was registered under the number 25 at the "people" internet site. Quite unexpectedly E. Asse opened the unfortunate site and found own name under the impersonal logo of the Union of architects. Certainly he made the fly. And several days before the service initiative was snatched under the penname initiative of the Union of architects in St. Petersburg. Mass media glee of the fifth splash with delight.

Another pre-election story has a longer social section. Along with the program of privatization what was not privatized before the Guarantor of Constitution got involved in the capital's problems. However he did not mention the satellite town at the Forum; this was developed by the Mayor of Moscow.

This triggered the process. There was hardly a mass media outlet that did not cover this information. There were speculations on the location of the reference point - whether in the Bolshoye Domodedovo, or near Zvenigorod or in Rublevskoye-Arkhangel'skoye. How many high-ranking citizens the new administrative capital would host - hundreds of thousands or half a million? And what sources would be used for budgeting? In accordance with

A. Kudrin all costs would be reimbursed by selling reputable vacated properties of the relocated ministries and agencies. Counterarguments followed without a delay. The near-Moscow region has been heavily developed in recent years leaving just scraps of its greenbelt. Bolshoye Domodedovo and Rublevskoye-Arkhangel'skoye were entered in the national project "Affordable and comfortable housing". So what shall be done about it? A new administration capital demands first-class transport, engineering and social infrastructure which is a good source of siphoning off.

Moscow International Business Center "Moscow City" was supposed to be a similar distracting magnet. Did it work? As for the plan of financing the mega-project with at the expense of the vacated properties it won't work without additional credit-financing and loan tricks because the money is required now and not later.

However we think the principal "WOW" is the fact that Moscow cannot be ripped off of the Russian system of population distribution that undergoes a permanent unprecedented structural crisis. Suffice it to say that when in the rest of the world population is being denuded by number of population from strict power-law dependences within national population distribution systems (they are called "rank-size" dependences) in Russia both capitals definitely fall out of this logic: that is the Auerbach Law (or The Zipf or Pareto Law). But at the same time they smoothly join another entity - a power dependence of the so-called world cities. G. Malinetsky makes a note that Moscow and St. Petersburg exist in a different socio-economic space, live in accordance with laws different from the other cities, and solve own specific problems. We think that the anomaly is a consequence of the specific Russian mentality based on the binary picture of the world, absence of the middle "happy medium" on the one hand and on the other on the unchanged dominant principle of the power centrality.

The very image of the Russian future, principal meanings, geopolitical priorities, socio-economic strategy followed by the territorial-spatial organization of the society are in need of rethinking and reformulating. To this end in accordance with V. Lepsky it is necessary to introduce such important instruments as reflection, goal-setting and gathering subjects of development.

It shall be mentioned that Russian architects using rich scientific and theoretical knowledge of the adjacent disciplines are attracted to solve those actual problems, "latent" challenges of the domestic life. One of the near-Moscow region project defined in MArkhi this year and devoted to conceptual reconfiguration of the current carcass of population distribution to achieve a linear-nodal, latitude-meridian structure-grid. It is clear that the plan is not other than a concept without any socio-political, organizational-institutional or financial-economic studies. Nevertheless this is another step towards System, Green's High-tech Transport System, of Russia or a Moscow-Peter two-headed capital model. This is a powerful strategic vision however we admit that the author could possibly be blamed for unreality - as happens in a popular anecdote about an eagle owl who advised little mice to transform into hedgehogs.

In the proposed concept outlooks Moscow as one of seven characteristic hubs redistributed in latitudinal direction in which two directions of the transport-communication system - from north to south and from west to east converge. A transport hub and a new city center are organized within 15 km away from the historic core on Trepki Stan upland. This results in cardinal changing the capital's radial-circular structure to linear logic with development of chord directions as transport-forming elements. Certainly beside the higher school the strategic vision of the geography of Russia's new development is a matter of concern for other institutions. For example, Yu. Krupnikov's concept envisages the capital's removal to the Far East closer to the novel hyper-type-focus and the world development personified by the Asian-Pacific region, a well-developed and thoroughly calculated program of suburbanization that is one of seven coming creative revolutions and hundreds of development projects among which urban planning ones are leading. Or a

super-project of S. Pereslegin that demonstrates a multi-polar or rather a multi-capital picture of the political geography that envisages the capital's removal to Vladivostok, the center of the executive power to Kazan or Samara-Togliatti agglomeration, the Supreme Court to Yekaterinburg or Tsimba, the Central Bank to St. Petersburg and also reformulating the map of territorial districts and confessional capital. Moscow will host only the legislative power represented by both chambers of the Federal Duma.

Our reader may ask: why does an op-ed piece carry those academic details? Because the new concept of the country's population distribution which is indispensable no matter whether the current authorities or the other more inclined to strategic vision would arrive will inevitably lead to reloading of the territorial scheme of Moscow and Moscow agglomeration development. Consequently the current hasty pack - within a two-week term it could - mechanically cut off and essentially kill future perspective variants of development of both the country as a whole and Moscow region as its part.

Unfortunately the authorities do not listen to the professional opinion - today this trend appears more over obvious than in the Soviet period. Architects and town planners are no exception in this regard. On 11th July Sergey Sobyanin, Moscow Mayor, and Boris Gromov, Moscow region Governor presented the program of incorporating a new territory to Moscow. The territory lies between Kevskoye and Varshavskoye highways and the Big ring of Moscow railway road. Moscow jurisdiction will extend to two new enclaves - Skolkovo innogard and Rublevskoye-Arkhangel'skoye which will host the International Finance center. As a result the area of Moscow will expand by 2.4 times or get additional 144 hectares. The program announces not only a period of performance - twenty years only for completion - but also relocation of the Presidential Administration and the White House inhabitants in a five year term along with a series of priority tasks targeted at development of transport infrastructure, including construction of three chords, the Central Ring Road, reconstruction of the Moscow Ring Road, radial and lateral directions, extension of several metro lines. New construction will hit 105 mln sq.m, including housing - 60 mln sq.m, public and business facilities - 45 mln sq.m, with an

approximate development density twice less than in the capital. Real estate agents have already calculated the responsive progress of land cost - some see a dramatic increase, other forecast a 20-30% rise. By the end of August it turned out that the announced 144 thousand hectares were not enough; another 16 thousand hectares were added. The territory of Moscow now extends as far as Kaluga region boundaries. Besides, Sherbinia was also incorporated in the capital's new territory.

Sherbinia had been a source of permanent conflict between the former Mayor Yuri Lushkov and the Governor of Moscow region. Bigger towns like Podolsk and Aprelevka kept their status quo evidently for the budget reasons - it is not so clear that social benefits in the capital are considerably better than those in the Moscow region. The only exception is Troitsk that is located precisely on the central axis of the new entity and it appeared impossible to cut it out. Thanks to those geometrical manipulations (E. Asse said that they reminded him of a mouse-eat-the-peg) the total number of new Moscow residents will be little 250 thousand though due to the addition of the affordable housing waiting list is unlikely to shorten (By the way, there is also a notion of dachniki (summer visitors) who are not very happy about the coming changes).

Geo-strategic life-changing national decisions are made as freestyle inventions-impromptus. At the same time they fluctuate in either way as a currency exchange rate - announced prospects are reconsidered demonstrating volatility of the state discourse. For example at the end of August there was a press leak that the International financial center is most likely to be in Moscow in its old boundaries and not in Rublevskoye-Arkhangel'skoye. Later the Moscow Mayor confirmed the initial location.

We shall make a note that critical coverage of those of offhand novelties dominates over apologetic responses. First of all the authorities are blamed for obvious unpreparedness of tomorrow life-changing managerial decisions, in other words - the state demonstrates irresponsibility or even phenomenal lightness of thoughts and the notorious secretive method of decision making. As for contentious objections N. Zubarevich notes a doubtful choice of mostly agricultural lands as a site of the new administrative capital. O. Baevsky focuses on necessity of gigantic invest-

ments in the ill-developed infrastructure of this sector of the near-Moscow region and inevitable development of the remaining green spots. V. Neklov draws attention to the utmost ugly ugliness of the new urban formation: the new lands resemble rather a sink that is paradoxically bigger than the "maternal" body than a protuberance. It is universally known that a quality architecture as well as a correctly functioning urban organism is always based on a sightly plan. They remind us of numerous dead presidents in the Russian and Soviet history from with Arkhangel'skoye military settlements, to "Disobedience" community in Dolgoprudny and Nikita Khrushchev's thing about relocating ministries from Moscow and spreading them over the territory of the country.

However there also some positive responses. Thus A. Bobkov compares the chosen direction of urban evolution from south to south-west with the well-known urban planning concepts though unrealized ones from Vitruvius's Christ the Savior Church to Stalin and post-Stalin plans of development of the South-west direction. Meanwhile we should say that it is no quite correct to speak about succession because the scopes are very different and the vectors are far from similar. M. Blinkin and V. Glazchev give a moderately optimistic evaluation of the program welcoming the long-awaited change of poles from centrifugal to centrifugal, a breakthrough from quicksand predominance. S. Choban even believes that the situation is very much in line with the world decentralized urbanism trend.

The proponents of the state-originated programs include architects-engineers and builders on the one hand and on the other real-estate agencies because the first are greedy for the work which they suddenly lost and the second are anticipating activity on the real estate market. This even victims could get their profits.

As for the discovered positive features or a rational kernel - those can be found with certain efforts in any senseless and poor project. By the way if confidential rumors that the authorities consider a project of a focal or pole distribution that envisages concentration of the Russian population in two dozens of agglomerations with adhering an "unpromising" status to hundreds and even thousands of settlements are true the recent epoch-making plan to expand Moscow obtains a missing external outline and distribution

meaning. It is a different story how poor this model is or even suicidal for the country as an entire non-confederation-political-administrative and territorial-spatial formation. We can compare that perspective in terms of monstrously only to G. Sterligov's idea to evacuate the vanishing titular nation to the center of Russia viewed as a fortress and to sell out territories - the Urals, Siberia, the Far East; the Caucasus, Bashkortostan and Tatarstan will gain independence and megapolises' population will be displaced. Let's get back to incentives of both state initiatives. With regard to the above we are quite certain to conclude that after the announced recruiting to the Popular Front a call to decentralize Moscow will soon bursts. This will happen as soon as the feverish electoral need is of use, that is in a year or two.

It is even more probable that a tenth wave of the coming Global crisis will do away with the petty political trumpery and its moderators and performers. This means hardly longer than two or three years. As for the inexorably imminent X-hour the establishment doesn't seem to care about it. However the dates of the international competition for the concept of the capital region development and the master plan preparation were announced - correspondingly this November and next March. Wish we were wrong...

Page 32 Urban planning - a window of opportunities An questions Head of design bureau Ostozhenka

Alexander Skokan answers our questions
The principal difference between urban development and urban planning is that "urban development" is a new term while urban planning is more habitual, Mr. Skokan thinks. A change of names always follows a negative evaluation of the previous phase of activity (Military Police and the like).

The Urban Planning Code of RF and the Federal Law "On architectural activity in RF" do not mention urban development at all. Urban development sounds more comfortable and positive than urban planning while urbanism is very foreign for the Russian ear. Urbanism is a phenomenon and urban development is a

process or an activity and their alternative lagging is very questionable.

Mr. Skokan assumes that the window of opportunities if it opens for the domestic urban planning rather welcomes foreign urbanists than domestic urban developers. If this opportunity is lost it is a comfort to know that there will be other.

As for new deadlines for provision of urban planning documentation to RF subjects Mr. Skokan believes that the situation can be changed only on the legal basis making the development of documentation for urban planning with adopted standards an inevitable condition for any urban planning activity.

Mr. Skokan calls the public hearing a used mechanism and a small obstacle for serious projects. Making the public hearing and effective instruction of social interactivity is a major objective of building a democratic society.

Mr. Skokan believes that professional education shall to how to ask questions, evaluate a situation, hold a discussion and formulate purposes and objectives that are to be implemented through urban planning.

Page 42 We will live in a house that we will have

In Russia cities' main function is a center of concentration of authorities while in Europe they were centers of crafts and later industrial production that opposed those authorities and defended interests of professional and related associations of citizens. Thus Russia's city primarily a metropolis is a composition glorified an authority while in Europe it is a place where its inhabitants live.

An urban planner is required to create a city ensemble to glorify authorities because he possesses an image thinking capable of producing never-ending "prospects" and statue-buildings that copy the Ancient Rome art and the like equally monumentally and grandiose. While a "civil engineer" is of no use because he is interested in the comfortable living in the city rather than in the "city facade" and these two often oppose each other.

However it is not an easy task to change "an architect urban planner" for "a civil engineer". Both are integrated in a definite social structure and cannot function without it. "An architect" is integrated in the authoritarian structure while "a civil engineer" (or nowadays it is more correct

to say "an urbanist") – in the democratic structure.

For centuries Russia demonstrated its preference to order and creationism that manifested itself as general social arrangement naturally expanding to its components, primarily to the form of the society territorial organization. The situation was possibly created by the fact that during its long history the Russian state had been functioning under "mobilization" conditions due to external and internal threats which became habitual factors of forming the existing world view.

The main disadvantage of the "creative urban planning" is a total absence of adaptive capabilities to changing both on the structural-functional organization level and control systems of development.

In contrast to the above the "Evolution" urban structures possess strong adaptive capacities because their development is targeted at achieving sought after environmental qualities necessary for comfort living and not obtaining a certain form.

"It looks as if we decided to travel from the 'creative' urban planning to the 'Evolution' one. However it is impossible without a transition from the authoritarian society to the democratic society. But the latter has opposite trends. And the majority of the country's population support these trends. This is not like domestic architects-urban planners have a great future in store. The immediate testing field where they can apply the design principles of the 1935 Master plan of Moscow is an unexpectedly appeared gigantic site for expanding Moscow boundaries to develop an actually partial city with which appears the historic Moscow devoid of investments would fall into ruins", says in conclusion our contributor Mikhail Turkatenko, Mikhail professor.

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Mikhail graduation projects and the concept of population distribution of Russia

Our contributors Mikhail professor Mikhail Shubenkov and assistant professor Boris Gandelman are sure that in the immediate future we will need:

- Reconstruction of the support carcass of population distribution that was formed during the USSR period;
- Search for alternative planning concepts of forming principal nodes of the carcass – megalopolises and their agglomerations

that spread as "an oil spot";

- Development of development and revival concept for historic cities;
- Transfer from development of vacant territories to integrated town reconstruction;
- Provision of effective development of the country on the basis of rational nature resources use.

Four variants of laying the Eurasian transcontinental transport corridor are discussed at various international forums. The fourth one which is preferable for Russia runs from the north and south Europe through Russia along the existing Transib avoiding the Central Asian countries and further via Vladivostok to China and Korea.

In 2010-2011 a group of Makhiv students headed by professor M.V. Shubenkov and assistant professor B.V. Gandelman developed a system of communications traffic of the country that is an integral part of the general Eurasian system. The program authors suggest integrating ideas of external transport corridors with already existing plans of developing inter-Russia communications network with regard to the Northern Sea Route, laying Transpolar line, Northern Transib (including the BAM) and meridian arteries connecting the northern territories with the southern ones along valleys of northern rivers. The system features a network of latitudinal and meridian channels – speed transport, energy and information channels that run through the whole country.

For detailed development the suggested system of distribution focused on 8 characteristic nodes each of which possesses certain economy important specific features and in future is chosen to play a more important and special urban planning part in accordance with the concept. The first node is located close to Moscow because two routes of the communications system (run from north to south and from west to east) run in 15 kilometers to the south-west from its historic center and form a transfer hub and a new city center in the point of their intersection. The concept proposes both channels ("St. Petersburg-Krasnodar" and "Brest-Kazan") to bypass Moscow along the relief's water divide and intersect on the Topyl'state island. The choice of this road location is based on the general concept of population distribution, studies of the Moscow agglomeration current distribution peculiarities, landscape, ecological and anthropogenic components. The existing riverine system of population distribution in Moscow region determines transport channels routes along water divides, bypassing settlements and at the same time in their immediate vicinity. With this road location existing settlement structure is preserved and provided with speed transport.

New transport channels will create smaller node-stops beside main nodes (at the intersection of two routes), which will result in dispersing Moscow's current point tension. The agglomeration will transform from one big system with a single focus into integrated system with several focuses.

A new linear center is formed at the intersection of transport-communication channels. The new city will be developed on the basis of the meridian channel "St. Petersburg – Krasnodar". The lateral channel "Brest-Kazan" will possess a transit structure with stops in the existing cities which will become local centers of attraction.

The second node point of the system (its southern branch that runs from South Europe through Kiev, Voronezh, Saratov, and Samara to Ufa, Chelyabinsk and Omsk and further on in parallel to Transib to China via Vladivostok) is situated within 20 km from Samara the biggest distribution center and a heavy-industry development between Chepevsk and Novokuzbyshevsk.

The seventh node point of the system is envisaged as north-eastern gates of Russia situated near the Cape Dzhirgatal at the south-east of Chukotka peninsula. The principal lateral channels of distribution in combination with secondary routes of meridian transport-communications which are basically formed along northern rivers' beds will provide the Government with a new national communications system capable of efficient control over territorial resources of Russia as a whole.

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From affordable housing to resorts or a centrifugal reactor for the capital

Alekey Ivanov, ASD director uses the world experience and own designs to present three possible types of Moscow suburbs development. This could help to re-target the vector of Moscow development from centrifugal to centrifugal.

Moscow faces problems that are common for all western megalopolises ranging from strict regulation of new construction to social, urban planning and infrastructure conflicts with suburban territories and shortage of administrative and financial and economic controls of the territories' development.

Mr. Ivanov says that the main difference between the Moscow region and Europe and America is available vacant territories and housing demand. "Suburban high-rise housing promoted all over the world for over half a century is currently replaced by various forms of development. Main trends of large-scale house-building include: 1) private homes with land lots and different variants of private row houses with and without lots; 2) mid-rise (4 to 6 stories) houses-blocks; 3) various types of resorts formations", the author points out.

It is certain that development of small towns' centers, new workplaces and construction of housing around them could be an alternative to development of Moscow suburbs with its centrifugal vector. The basic principles of development megalopolises' suburban territories feature:

- demand for dispersal organization of workplaces, service and leisure in settlements – new centers of activity, detached from megalopolises;
- development of transport infrastructure;
- observation of ecological priorities, organization of preserves.

Our contributor compares four and domestic realities from areas of communism which started as a riot of heroic individuals against the economic establishment has turned into direct contrary: internal mainstream that lost the internal energy and legitimation but reproducing itself through the system of education and dominant type of professional consciousness. On the other hand the situation of the neoclassic supporters gathered in a kind of professional ghetto and ignored by the modern majority resembles the marginal condition of the first avant-garde proponents. The strict commercialism substituted the social responsibility of the 1920s modernist avant-garde and the social and technological messiahship was replaced by a modest service role in the structure of developer business.

It is evident that searches for novelties on a way of formal inventiveness have been exhausted thus making architects recall other relentlessly rejected development trends: work based on traditional formal language and classicist composition logic.

Page 66
An apology of the neoclassic or presentation of the Near-Moscow Estate

Moscow architects Petr Zavadovsky uses the genre of apology for presentation of his new work. The party accused is the so-called "modern architecture" also known as modernism. The indictment coined almost a century ago has not undergone almost any principal changes: the neoclassic is anachronous, socially retrograde, structurally false, and remains a ballast to be "dropped off from the Vesel of modernity on its way to 'clear future'".

The severity of accusation presented forces to choose an aggressive tactic of defense, our contributor writes. The modernism which started as a riot of heroic individuals against the economic establishment has turned into direct contrary: internal mainstream that lost the internal energy and legitimation but reproducing itself through the system of education and dominant type of professional consciousness. On the other hand the situation of the neoclassic supporters gathered in a kind of professional ghetto and ignored by the modern majority resembles the marginal condition of the first avant-garde proponents. The strict commercialism substituted the social responsibility of the 1920s modernist avant-garde and the social and technological messiahship was replaced by a modest service role in the structure of developer business.

It is evident that searches for novelties on a way of formal inventiveness have been exhausted thus making architects recall other relentlessly rejected development trends: work based on traditional formal language and classicist composition logic.

All architectural phenomena aimed at searches of order, structural connectivity and clarity, are either genetically related to the classical tradition or evolve towards it in the course of their natural development. Having liberated itself from the tails of academic conventionalism the classic now appears an interesting alternative to the flabby slugged modernism. In the world of the realized modernist utopia which looks threatening even to its creators the classic has all reasons to play the role of a "rearguard avant-garde" showing the way out of the deadlock of degradation and dehumanization that the cyber-punk future has in store.

The reference-point of the author's reflection is an estate situated in the Rublevskoye highway area in the near-Moscow. The 3.2 hectare lot hosts the Bolshoi (Big) Dom (House) that has a double use: a reception house and a private residence with a total area of 4.5 thousand sq.m., the "bath-house" (guest house) made of wood with an area of 550 sq.m.,

and corps de garde featuring two parking houses with dome pavilions flanking the main entrance. The author developed the planning and spatial structure of the building using the logic of the program and the functional scheme ignoring any certain prototype. Nevertheless a multi-axis centripetal plan composition was developed under direct influence of Piranesi's engraving "Collegia Magnifica". The prototype of the building's central attraction – the stairs designed as a double spiral is borrowed from Leonardo's sketches. The customer rejected a baroque variant sketch and chose a variant featuring the forms of Russian Ekaterina-period classicism.

Mr. Zavadovsky finishes his "Evaluating the almost complete project I dare to assume that the Estate is in line with the tradition of amusement hunter castles characteristic of the Europe's late exhausted phase".

Translated by Natalia Chekanova



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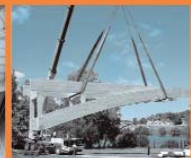
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