

# The Development of Primary School Architecture in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s: Historical Overview

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## Keywords

Architecture, interwar architecture, Lithuanian architecture, primary schools, school architecture.

## Abstract

The purpose of the article is to disclose the architectural development of primary school buildings in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s. Based on historical material the architecture of these buildings is analysed chronologically in several important aspects. First of all, the peculiarities of the construction of primary school buildings in the country are reviewed. Furthermore, the stylistic changes of such buildings and the factors that led to it are analysed. Lastly, attention is paid to the pursuit of functional convenience and its analysis, which also influenced the development of this type of building. This aims to reveal the essential aspects that determined the development of the architecture of primary school buildings in Lithuania at that time.

## Introduction

After Lithuania became an independent state in 1918, it was important to equip various institutions (administrative, cultural, health care, educational) with appropriate buildings. At that time, the situation of primary schools was extremely bad. After the introduction of four-year primary education in 1922 (extended to six years in 1936), only a quarter of the approximately several hundred primary schools operating at that time had their own buildings [1, 52]. Thus, majority of primary schools operated in “derelict, dilapidated houses, with sunken roofs, unpatched windows and doors”, so these buildings embodied “the image not of schools, but of abandoned haunted houses” [2, 2] with “lack of air and light” [3, 1]. In order to solve such a problem, several hundred new primary schools were built in cities, towns, and villages in Lithuania during more than 20 years of independence [4, 4]. Therefore, it was one of the most common types of public buildings in Lithuania at that time. During the period of the country’s independence, mainly in the 1920s and 1930s when new primary school buildings were being built, various peculiarities were manifested in their

construction. Also, the architecture was influenced by the stylistic trends that were spreading in Lithuania at that time, and the comfort of the buildings was determined by the aspirations of functionality.

Until now, the architectural development of primary school buildings built in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s and its aspects have been little studied. For example, in the study of Regimantas Diliūnas, only the architecture of wooden primary school buildings was analysed [5]. Grėtė Brukštutė’s article focused mainly on the development of the architecture of gymnasium buildings of that time [6, 20–26]. And Vaidas Petrulis’ research focused only on the architecture of educational buildings in the city of Kaunas, the temporary capital of Lithuania at that time [7, 186–199]. Therefore, in modern studies of Lithuanian architecture of the 1920s and 1930s, the development of the architecture of primary school buildings is largely overlooked.

In order to fill the research gap on this topic, the main object of this scientific article is the development of the architecture of primary school buildings in Lithuania in the 1920s and 1930s. The purpose of the article is to reveal and analyse the architectural development of primary school

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buildings built at that time. In order to achieve this goal, the following tasks were set:

1. To present the peculiarities of the construction of these buildings.
2. To identify and analyse the influence of various stylistic trends prevailing in Lithuania at that time on the architecture of primary school buildings.
3. To analyse the pursuit of functional convenience in the design of new primary school buildings.

This is done in the article based on archival material stored in the Lithuanian Central State Archives (LCVA), the Vilnius Regional County Archives, and the Panevėžys Branch of the Šiauliai Regional County Archives (PAA). There is also extensive reference to the periodicals of the period, while the text is supplemented by visual material of primary school buildings.

### I. Features of the Construction of Primary School Buildings in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s

Early construction of new primary school buildings in Lithuania began in the first years of independence. In 1921, after the establishment of the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat under the Ministry of Internal Affairs (in 1930 it became the Construction Inspection), the main institution which had to take care of the country's reconstruction, the development and approval of new civilian building projects [8, 2]. In order to speed up the construction of new primary school buildings, several individual and standard primary school projects were developed at the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commission at that time. The institution also assigned civil engineers and technicians to the newly established Reconstruction Departments (later – Construction Departments) attached to city and county municipalities. Thus, after the formation of civil construction personnel in cities and counties, the Reconstruction and later Construction departments of the country's municipalities gradually got involved in the design of primary school buildings. This was due to the fact that the construction of primary school buildings was mainly entrusted to municipalities [9, 9]. When

building primary schools, municipalities were sometimes financially supported by the Ministry of Education, which itself was engaged in the construction of such buildings.

Throughout the period of independence in Lithuania, primary school buildings were built based on individual and standard designs. Individual designs were usually developed by architectural specialists, i.e., municipal civil engineers, who worked in reconstruction and construction departments of the municipalities of cities and counties. Individual designs were most often developed for larger school buildings built in cities and towns. Standard designs, mostly for small 2–3 class buildings, at the request of the Ministry of Education, were developed at the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat, later at the Construction Inspection, and during several architectural competitions and were built in rural areas [1, 77].

Throughout the period of Lithuania's independence, the scale of construction of new primary school buildings varied. For example, in 1920–1929, an average of 30 new buildings were built in the country per year. The scale of construction increased more in the last decade of independence. In 1930–1939, about 41 primary school buildings were built per year (Table I). Such an intensification of construction was determined by the fact that at that time municipalities were allowed to use part of the amount of some collected taxes for the construction of primary school buildings. Construction of buildings was most often carried out in two ways – through construction contractors and through the efforts of local municipalities. Although the construction of primary school buildings was gradually intensified, even at the end of the 1930s, slightly more than half of all the several thousand primary schools in Lithuania at that time still did not have suitable buildings [1, 52]. Therefore, it was planned that with such construction rates, it would be possible to build suitable buildings for all the country's primary schools only after a few decades [10, 22].

At the beginning of Lithuania's independence, primary school buildings were built mainly of wood [11, 27]. The use of wooden construction was based both on the pursuit of tradition, as such construction was typical for Lithuania, and on the fact that the wooden construction was several times cheaper than the masonry. Due to the disadvantages of

TABLE I

The number of newly built (by the Ministry of Education and the Municipalities) primary school buildings in Lithuania [Sources: Vindikas, J. Pradžios mokykla Lietuvoj. *Mokykla ir gyvenimas*, No. 6–7, 1934, p. 269; Pradžios mokyklų statyba 1934 m. *Tautos mokykla*, No. 7, 1935, p. 163; Pradžios mokyklų turtas. *Lietuvos aidas*, April 30, 1937; Lietuvos švietimo kronika. *Tautos mokykla*, No. 8, 1938, p. 213; Pradžios mokyklos 1939 m. sausio mėn 1 d. *Tautos mokykla*, No. 7, 1939, p. 163; Pradžios mokyklos 1940 metų sausio mėn. 1 dienų. *Tautos mokykla*, No. 7, 1940, p. 198.]

Year	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
Buildings	3	39	27	43	51	29	40	26	14	32
Year	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Buildings	13	24	22	40	83	44	45	52	58	30

wooden construction (risk of fire, faster wear of the structure), there were calls in the press to use masonry construction in the new primary school buildings [12, 4]. Although in the 1920s several designs of masonry primary school buildings were developed, the majority of such buildings continued to be built of wood. This was fundamentally different from the practice of foreign countries at the time, such as Western Europe, where new materials such as reinforced concrete, steel or glass were used in the architecture of public buildings at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [13, 3]. Meanwhile, in the Lithuanian context, in the 1920s, although the progress of foreign countries in the modernization of building structures was known, traditional materials, such as wood, prevailed in the construction of primary school buildings, and the institutions that built primary schools, such as municipalities, made little effort to change this for reasons of economy.

Major changes in the modernisation of primary school building structures began in the 1930s. At that time, brick construction was increasingly promoted, which in Lithuania was considered one of the main ways of modernising building construction. The masonry construction was perceived as an important method of modernisation in new buildings “to achieve a healthy, economical, modern construction, in harmony with the country’s modest economic condition” [14, 260]. Therefore, in the second half of the 1930s, the construction of masonry primary school buildings, mainly with 2 to 6 classrooms, was increasingly carried out in Lithuania (buildings with 7 or more classrooms were rarely built) [15, 1]. This was due to changes of the country’s architectural policy, which in the late 1930s moved towards the universal use of more modern masonry construction in various new buildings, including schools. Thus, since 1938, the construction of newly built masonry primary school buildings in Lithuania finally had surpassed the wooden ones. In the future, all buildings of such function were planned to be built only of brick [16, 163]. In some cases, the modernity of the masonry construction was complemented by the fact that some of the primary school buildings built in this decade had reinforced concrete foundations and floors. Despite this, it can be said that the modernisation of the construction of primary school buildings in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s was moderate. However, in terms of style and the pursuit of functional convenience, these buildings underwent more rapid changes.

## II. The Influence of Stylistic Trends on the Architecture of Primary School Buildings in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s

The architecture of primary schools, like other types of buildings built in Lithuania at that time, reflected the stylistic trends prevalent in the country at that time. One of the first stylistic trends that affected such buildings

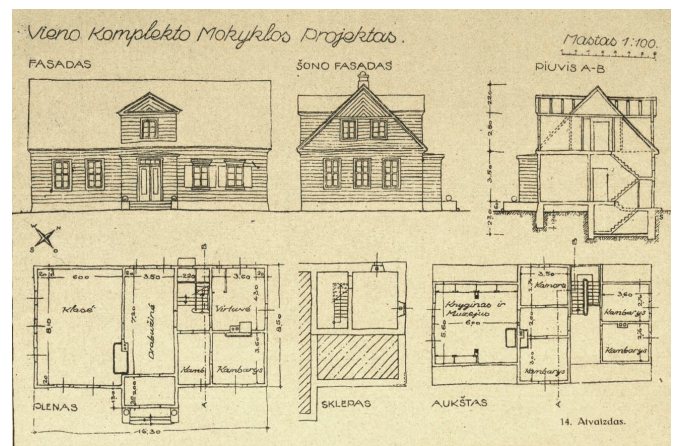


Fig. 1. Design project of standard wooden 1-class primary school building developed in the early 1920s by the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat [drawing from: *Statybos menas ir technika*, No. 1, 1922, p. 20].

designed in Lithuania in the early 1920s was the *national style*. The aspiration to create a unique *national style* of architecture was based on the desire in the appearance of new buildings to reflect the characteristics of old Lithuanian wooden folk architecture and decoration, which were considered “as guidelines showing the path we must follow when creating a national style” [17]. Therefore, the architecture of new primary school buildings was designed in vernacular decorative style, which included national décor, ornaments, and symbols. Buildings were often symmetrical, small in volume, most often one-story with attics. This kind of architecture was characteristic of the early standard design projects of 1–4 class primary school buildings developed at the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat in the 1920s, based on which it was recommended to build new buildings of such function at that time [18, 11] (Fig. 1).

By the mid-1920s, however, the architecture of primary school buildings designed in Lithuania began to be influenced by historicism. Most often, such stylistics were typical in the architecture of masonry primary school buildings. The practice of this style can be linked to the fact that the majority of Lithuanian architectural specialists of that time, such as those who worked in the Reconstruction Commissariat and municipal construction departments, received their professional education at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and in early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the schools of Tsarist Russia, where such style prevailed [19, 5]. In the case of primary schools, new buildings were most often designed with symmetrical facades and often had a regular rectangular plan. The central parts were often emphasised by protruding volumes with pediments and columns or pilasters, the window openings were vertical or arched with small decorative elements. This gave representativeness to the appearance of these buildings. This was, for example, characteristic to the new primary school buildings

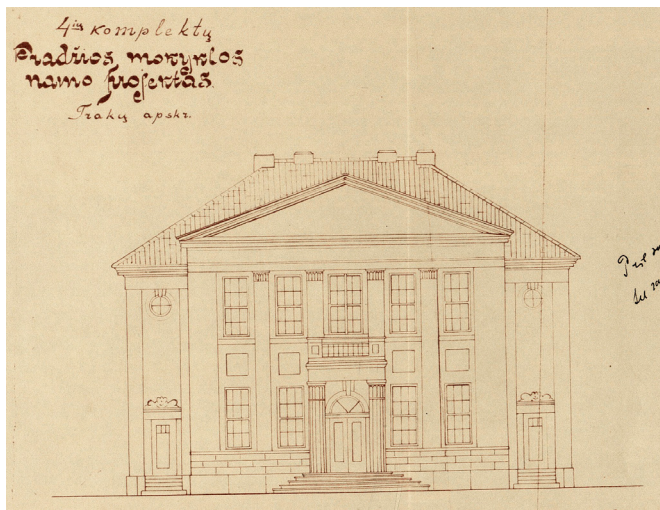


Fig. 2. Design project of standard masonry 4-class primary school building (1925) [drawing from LCVA].

designed in the second half of the 1920s by civil engineer Jonas Salenėkas and engineer-architect Karolis Reisonas, who received their professional education in Tsarist Russia, and others (Figs. 2 and 3). It can be assumed that such a conservative appearance also corresponded to the attitude towards primary school buildings at the time, as their ornate appearance was considered representing the progress of the Lithuanian education system. Thus, it was thought that these buildings “should look like churches” [20, 1].

At the beginning of the 1930s, the new Lithuanian architecture began to be influenced by modernism spreading from Western Europe. Therefore, some of the country’s architectural specialists departed from the old styles in their work. Also, at that time a new generation of specialists started working in the country at that time, the majority of which received their professional education in the 1920s and 1930s in Lithuania or Western and Central European countries [19, 4]. These individuals were less influenced by the old styles and more by the modernism with which they were familiar. Therefore, they enthusiastically adopted the new modernist-inspired aesthetics and began to work in “a modern spirit” [21, 6], aiming at the idea that buildings must be beautiful not in

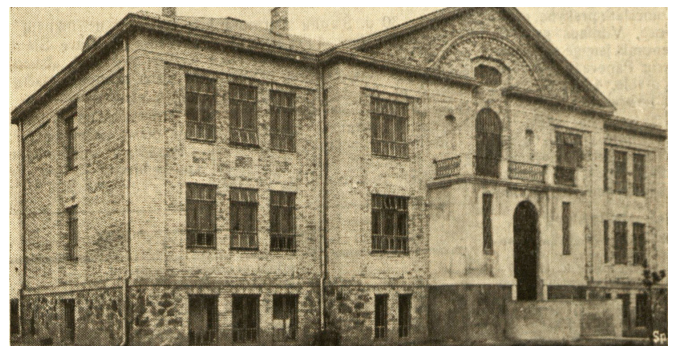


Fig. 3. Primary school building in Šiauliai (eng. archit. Karolis Reisonas, 1926) [photo from *Mūsų momentas*, October 30, 1930, p. 1].

the decoration or ornament, “but in their construction and proportions” [22, 38]. The same was aimed for in the architecture of new primary school buildings, which at that time were mainly designed by the younger generation of civil engineers and engineers-architects of the municipal construction departments.

The earliest examples of modernist inspired primary school buildings were the two buildings designed in 1930 by civil engineer Antanas Jokimas and built in Kaunas, the then temporary capital of Lithuania (Fig. 4). The buildings were designed based on foreign trends (after the engineer’s trip to Sweden), where new objects of this function had a simple, modern appearance, and the interior was properly planned [23, 23]. In the course of the 1930s, similarly looking primary school buildings, inspired by modernist aesthetics, began to be built elsewhere in Lithuania, both in larger cities and towns.

Thus, in the course of the 1930s, the exterior of the new primary school buildings became quite minimalistic rather than flamboyant and had a more progressive look. New primary school buildings were designed with a more original, minimalist, ascetic appearance and had a modernist character, which was not influenced by previous styles. Facades of buildings were often asymmetric (symmetrical facades were common too). The exteriors had playful compositions of volumes of elongated simple-looking geometric shapes, which were often broken up by rectangular elements – the rhythm of densely arranged



Fig. 4. Former primary school buildings in Kaunas (civ. eng. Antanas Jokimas, 1930) [photos by author, 2022].

wide horizontal or tall vertical window openings of different sizes. Through the wide windows, rooms such as classrooms were well lit with natural light, which was considered one of the most important requirements for schools of that time [23, 23]. Sometimes the window openings were connected by decorative horizontal lines on the outside, which gave the impression of ribbon windows. Facades often had smooth wall planes lacking historical decor, sometimes emphasised only by linear decor, such as horizontal strips of plinths and cornices. In some cases, the modernity of the exterior was highlighted by the tall stair towers, often incorporated in the intersections of volumes, divided by large vertical window openings, while the rectangular canopies above the doors and portals accented with decorative strips emphasised the entrances. Therefore, functional elements prevailed in the exterior of modernist-inspired new primary school buildings instead of plastic historical decor, as was in the previous decade. The modern aesthetics of such buildings was given a local character by pitched roofs covered with tiles or tin and the use of local materials in the construction, such as wood and brick.

This was, for example, characteristic of the new primary school buildings designed by the civil engineers and engineers-architects of the municipal construction departments who had received their professional education in Western European countries and Lithuania. For example, the modernist-inspired exterior was given to the buildings designed by Vadimas Lvovas in Utena county, by Vytautas Trečiokas in Alytus city, by Antanas Gargasas in Panevėžys city, by Albinas Paškevičius in Ukmergė county, and others

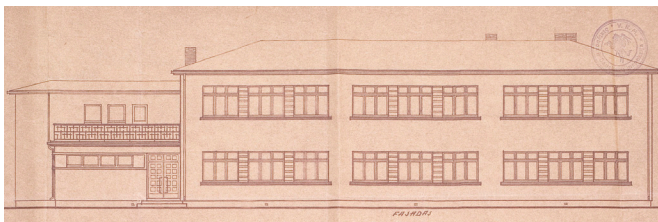


Fig. 5. Design project of masonry 6-class primary school building in Utena (eng. archit. Vadimas Lvovas, 1935) [drawing from LCVA].

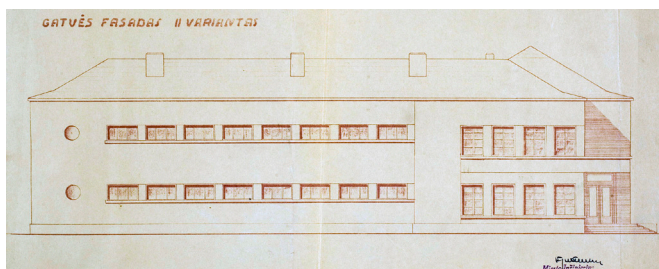


Fig. 6. Design project of masonry 6-class primary school building in Alytus (eng. archit. Vytautas Trečiokas, 1937) [drawing from LCVA].



Fig. 7. Design project of masonry 8-class primary school building in Vepriai (civ. eng. Albinas Paškevičius, 1939) [drawing from LCVA].

(Figs. 5–7). Although the modernist-inspired appearance was more common in the masonry buildings, there were some cases when the similar appearance was given to the wooden buildings (Fig. 8). Thus, these examples demonstrate that a modern stylistic trend prevailed in the architecture of newly designed primary school buildings in Lithuania in the 1930s. It should be emphasised that these buildings, due to the asceticism of the facades, simple volumes of rectangular shapes and asymmetric compositions, were moderately similar to the foreign counterparts [24] (Fig. 9).

It is worth to note that although the architecture of Lithuanian primary school buildings in the 1930s was strongly influenced by modernist aesthetics, it was not the only prevailing stylistic trend. There were still aspirations to move forward with the architectural tradition, for example, by designing standard wooden buildings of small primary schools “in the spirit of the Lithuanian folk art and construction” [25, 65], which were built in the rural areas (Fig. 10). Thus, some of the country’s architectural

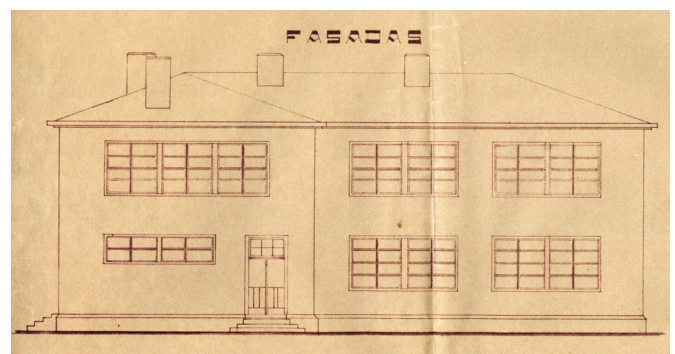


Fig. 8. Design project of wooden 4-class primary school building in Panevėžys (civ. eng. Antanas Gargasas, 1932) [drawing from PAA].



Fig. 9. School building in Brno, Czechoslovakia (archit. Bohuslav Fuchs, Josef Polášek, 1928) [24].

specialists in their work “had to be able to effectively use both the modern style practised abroad at the time and the advanced traditions that have been established here for a long time” [19, 6]. In other cases, other architectural specialists, although aware of modernism, still followed the point of view “to use the positive experiences of architecture gained over the years in terms of aesthetics and construction” [26, 35]. Therefore, the exteriors of some other newly designed primary school buildings of that time had also features of historicism. Though the buildings lacked plastic décor, their architectural monumentality and conservative appearance was created by the strict symmetry of the facades, emphasised by protruding volumes, which resembled porticoes in their form. Also, the facades were usually divided by the rhythm of laconic vertical planes, reminiscent of columns or pilasters, and by the narrow vertical window openings. This demonstrates that in some cases classical principles of external composition were pursued, thus creating a simplified, modernised aesthetic of historicism, which looked quite



Fig. 10. Design proposal for standard wooden 3-class primary school building (civ. eng. Jurgis Okunis, 1937) [drawing from LCVA].

conservative compared to the ones inspired by modernism (Fig. 11).

However, despite the fact that several different stylistic trends emerged in the architecture of primary schools in the 1930s, contemporaries considered the stylistic changes a sign of progress, and the newly constructed buildings were regarded “a thousand times more perfect” in terms of beauty and aesthetics than those built in the 1920s [27, 11].

### III. The Pursuit of Functional Convenience in the New Primary School Buildings

In order to equip primary schools operating in Lithuania with new buildings, efforts were made to design them as comfortable and functional as possible. Already in 1921, the Ministry of Education prepared requirements for new primary school buildings. It was emphasised that classrooms should be oriented to the west or south, which receives more light and natural heat. It was suggested that the classrooms should be well lit, all housed in one building and connected by a common corridor. The area of one classroom, which was intended for about 40–50 students, should be at least 50 square metres, and the area of their windows should make up at least a fifth of the classroom area. It was recommended that new

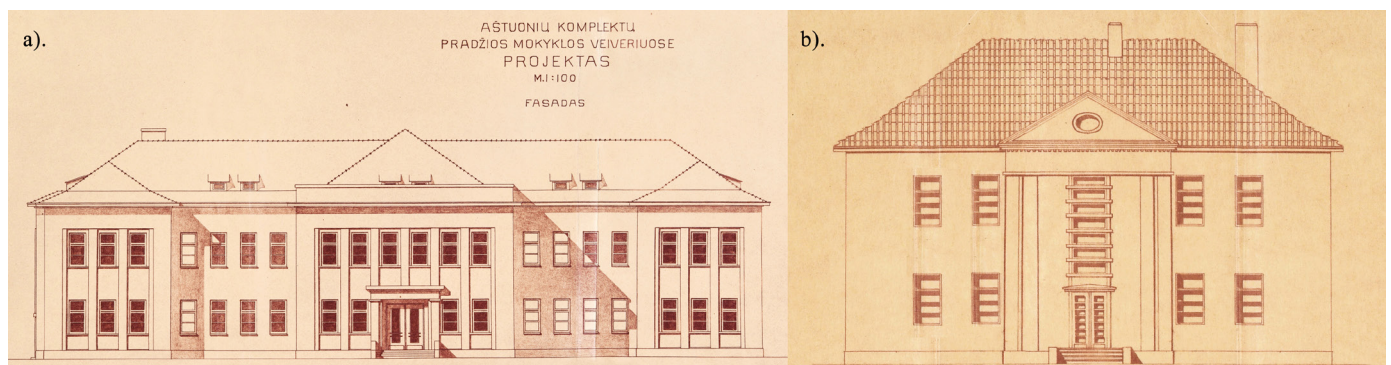


Fig. 11. A – Design project of 8-class primary school building in Veiveriai (civ. eng. Izidorius Kuodis, 1938). B – Design project of 4-class primary school building in Pandėlys (civ. eng. Petras Lelis, 1937) [drawings from LCVA].

primary school buildings, if possible, should have special classrooms, halls, teachers' rooms, and auxiliary rooms [28, 152–155]. These requirements for new primary school buildings remained the same throughout the period of the country's independence.

Efforts to design functionally convenient primary school buildings in Lithuania also corresponded to international trends. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in foreign countries there was a concern about the spaciousness of classrooms in school buildings and their lighting. Accommodating rooms of different functions in one volume of the building according to symmetry was not considered a rational solution, therefore the application of functionally separated volumes was developed. This led to a change in the volumetric-spatial composition, which in many cases became irregular. Thus, it was aimed to provide more space, light and air [29, 6] to new school buildings. Also, in pursuit of functional convenience, it was aimed to arrange the plan according to functions, and for good classroom lighting and hygiene, to design wide windows, believing that direct sunlight kills the bacteria of airborne diseases [30, 138]. An important aspect of room grouping was the idea that classrooms can only be placed on the side receiving the most natural light during the day. In this way, the aim was to have well-lit, spacious, and functional premises that corresponded to the perception of modern hygiene. Thus, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, guided by such attitudes, new school buildings were built in foreign countries with “elongated floor plans with classrooms almost invariably on one side, the side facing the sun” [31, 12] (Fig. 12).

Such attitudes were known in Lithuania at that time. In 1929, the Lithuanian architect Vladas Švipas, in his article “About a good arrangement of school”, highlighted the issue of functional convenience of school buildings: “In Lithuania, there is a widespread opinion that the architect can only design the exterior. <...> The entire current movement of modern architecture fights against that opinion. <...> The task of the architect is much broader and higher: to find the most convenient functional possibilities of the building and only then to think about the external appearance of the

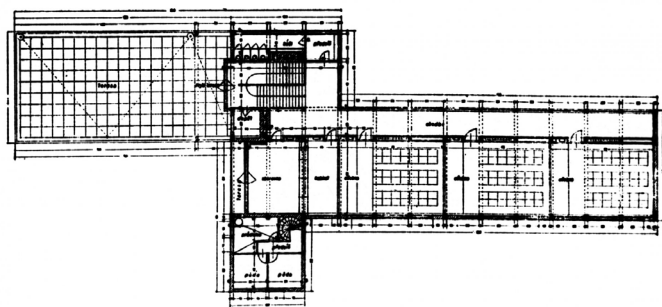


Fig. 12. First floor plan of primary school building in Brno, Czechoslovakia (archit. Bohuslav Fuchs, Josef Poláček, 1928) [24].

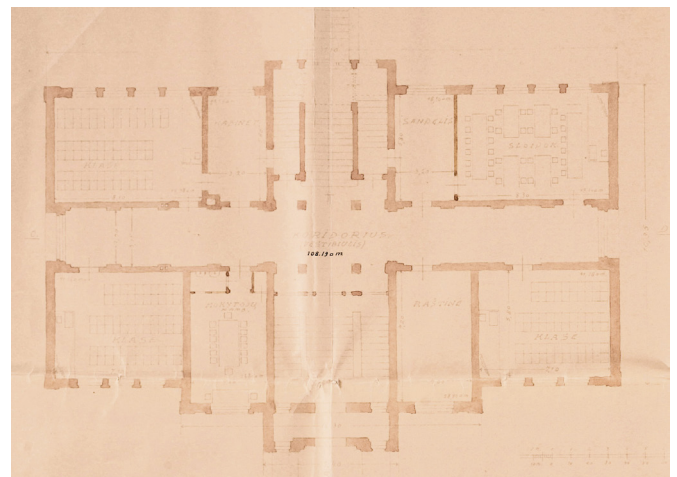


Fig. 13. First floor plan of primary school building in Šiauliai (eng. archit. Karolis Reisonas, 1926) [drawing from LCVA].

building. Only then can one take care of the artistic form. <...> Pedagogical and hygienic requirements must come first when building a new school. Those institutions or people who plan to build schools must find enough time to prepare their plan. And for that it is worth studying well-built new schools in Western Europe. <...> Space, air, light – this is the trinity that must prevail in a good school building” [32, 316–317].

This demonstrates that already in the 1920s, a viewpoint was formed in Lithuania what a modern primary school building should be in terms of functional convenience. The

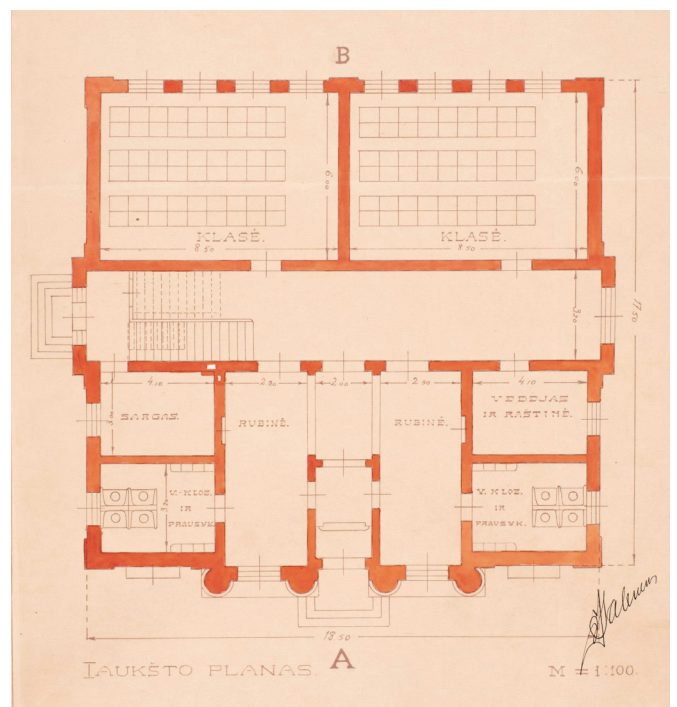


Fig. 14. First floor plan of 4-class primary school building in Kudirkos Naumištis (civ. eng. Jonas Salenėkas, 1929) [drawing from LCVA].

functional, rational layout and planning of the interior spaces of the building were considered important aspects of the modernisation of primary school buildings in Lithuania at that time, which strengthened their functionality. Therefore, when designing new buildings for primary schools, the tendency to differentiate the interior spaces according to their functions had emerged.

To achieve the internal modernisation, efforts were made to provide good and convenient buildings for primary schools, as they did not have such until then. However, in the 1920s it was not implemented in practice universally. Some newly built primary school buildings had been criticised for poor arrangement of classrooms, which received too little natural lighting [33, 13]. It was not rare that all the rooms on the inside were still arranged according to symmetry, by grouping them around the central axis, on both sides of the corridor. Therefore, the plans of some of the buildings of that period were not divided according to functions, and the most common layouts were square or rectangular in shape (Fig. 13). However, in isolated cases, attempts were made to achieve functional convenience in the planned structure of buildings. Such examples are the unimplemented design projects of 4-class primary school buildings in Panevėžys and Kudirkos Naumiestis, designed in 1929 by civil engineer Jonas Salenėkas. Although the plans of the buildings were to be symmetrical, due to the small number of classrooms it was possible to separate them from other rooms by a corridor placing them on the side receiving more natural light (Fig. 14).

However, greater aspirations for functional comfort in practice in the architecture of Lithuanian primary school buildings began in the 1930s. As the construction of primary schools intensified, the country's architectural specialists, mainly of the younger generation, who had completed their studies in Lithuania and European countries, increasingly adopted the aim of functional convenience when designing these buildings. Thus, in the planned composition of such objects, to achieve greater comfort and functionality, the arrangement of rooms according to the symmetry and proportion was abandoned. The plans of a significant number of primary school buildings designed and built at that time were irregular, often of asymmetric composition consisting of several volumes of different sizes that accommodated rooms of different functions (classrooms, administrative, auxiliary rooms, halls, etc.). Thus, in the plans of these buildings, rooms were logically divided according to function and convenience. Classrooms that needed quietness and good natural lighting during the day were often placed in a single volume, which, as recommended, was oriented "to the southeast, south, southwest, so that the sun can illuminate the classrooms during the day" [34, 31], while the noisier auxiliary and administrative rooms that did not have natural lighting requirements were placed in other volumes (Figs. 15 and 16). Most of the time all the rooms,

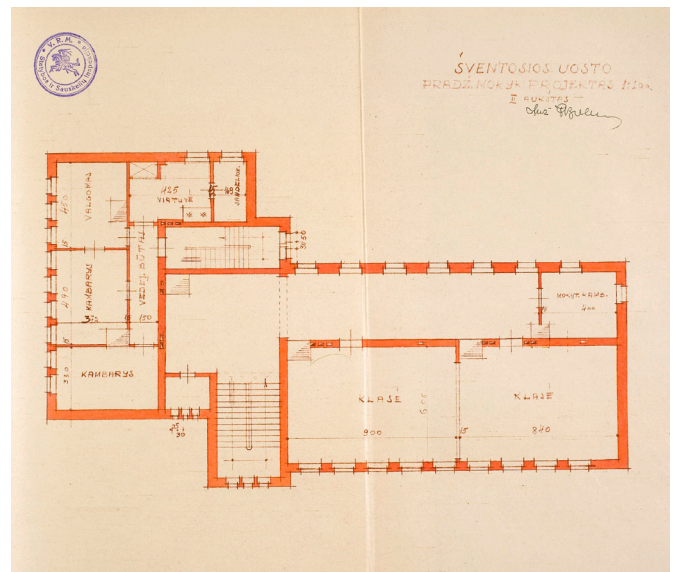


Fig. 15. Second floor plan of 2-class primary school building in Šventoji (civ. eng. Feliksas Bielinskis, 1937) [drawing from LCVA].

placed in different volumes, were connected by a one-sided corridor. When designing building plans according to functions, the aim was to arrange the rooms rationally, avoiding the mixing of different functions, thus ensuring more convenient use of the building. It was emphasised: "If the school plan is made in this way, overcrowding is avoided. Students go to the classrooms by the shortest route, without crowding and interference" [34, 31].

In other cases, the new primary school buildings had the symmetrical plans, but for the sake of convenience, they were U-shaped or T-shaped. Their long parts housed classrooms, connected by a one-sided corridor, and auxiliary and administrative rooms were placed in the perpendicularly integrated shorter parts. Therefore, even the plans of these shapes also consisted of volumes containing different functions, which were placed according to the functional convenience (Fig. 17). The modernity of some new primary school buildings at

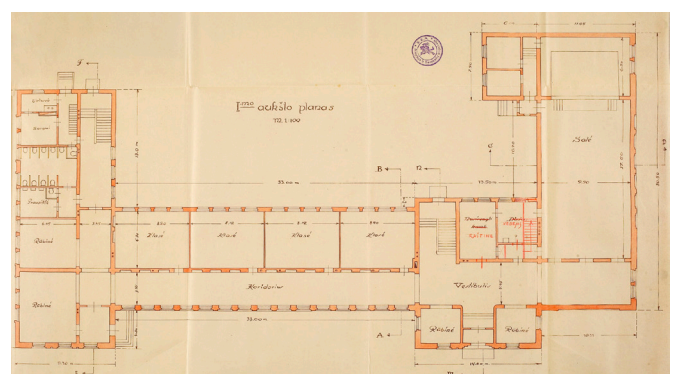


Fig. 16. First floor plan of 10-class primary school building in Pasvalys (civ. eng. Povilas Viliūnas, 1937) [drawing from LCVA].



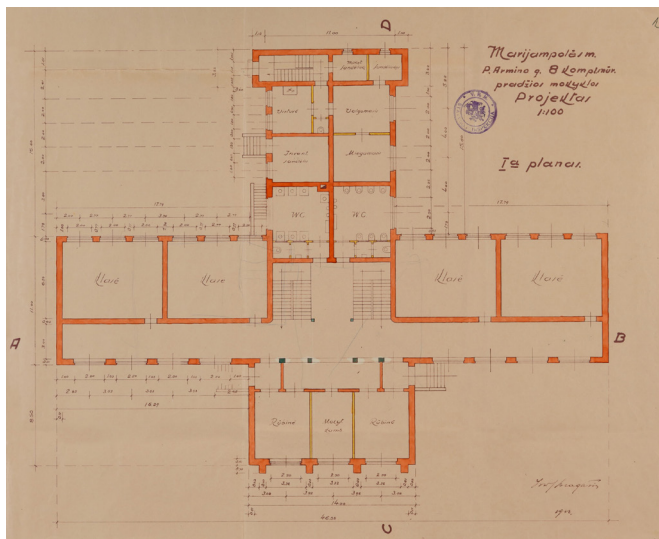


Fig. 17. First floor plan of 8-class primary school building in Marijampolė (civ. eng. Juozas Dragašius, 1933) [drawing from LCVA].

that time was strengthened by the fact that they had a modernist-inspired exterior, as it corresponded well to the goal of functionality characteristic of modernism, and the comfort of the interior was sometimes emphasised by the installation of electricity, heating, and ventilation systems. This was especially common in primary school buildings built in the 1930s in larger Lithuanian cities and towns [35, 8]. Therefore, some new buildings, because of their functional convenience, which hugely improved the situation of primary schools, were positively evaluated in the press, for being “stylish and quite convenient for educational purposes” [36, 433].

## Conclusions

The construction of new primary school buildings in Lithuania began in the first years of independence and continued for about 20 years. It was mainly carried out by local municipalities and the Ministry of Education. On average, these institutions built about 30–40 such buildings per year, which were mainly designed by the architectural specialists of the country’s cities and county municipalities. For most of the period of independence, the construction of wooden schools prevailed in the country, which was not considered durable, but was inexpensive. However, efforts were made to modernise the construction of these buildings making brick the main construction material. But this was only achieved in the late 1930s. Therefore, in terms of construction, Lithuanian primary school buildings

were modernised quite slowly, compared to other aspects analysed in the article.

Stylistically, the architecture of primary school buildings was influenced by the trends that prevailed in Lithuania at that time. In the 1920s, the buildings were designed both in vernacular decorative style and in historical styles, which were the main stylistic trends in the country. In the 1930s, when modernism began to influence the country’s architecture, primary school buildings often were designed imitating the simple modernist aesthetic that spread from Europe. Buildings with this appearance were built in many cities and towns. But modernism was not the only stylistic trend that influenced the architecture of Lithuanian primary schools in the 1930s. It was also influenced by the pursuit of tradition and modernisation of historicism. This demonstrates that there was no single stylistic approach to how these buildings should look, and their exterior expression often depended on the creative attitudes of the people who designed them. The only commonness was that the appearance of the buildings, under the influence of various stylistic trends, was constantly changing throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

In terms of functional convenience, primary school buildings built in Lithuania at that time had also undergone significant changes. In this regard, at least on a theoretical level, progress was sought earlier than in a stylistic sense – from the very beginning of independence. Already in the 1920s in theory the aim was to have a comfortable and functional arrangement of indoor spaces. This was also in line with international trends for buildings of such function. In practice, the aspect of functional convenience in the architecture of Lithuanian primary schools became the most common in the 1930s. This resulted in that the rooms inside often were not arranged according to the symmetry, as before, but according to convenience. Therefore, instead of regular rectangular plans, the buildings often had irregular, elongated plans in which rooms were divided according to functions. This was to ensure that the buildings were convenient and the various functions they housed did not interfere.

All these highlighted aspects demonstrate that in the period of 1920–1930s, the development of primary school buildings in Lithuania was carried out under conditions of constant progress. It was manifested in the efforts to speed up the construction of these buildings, modernise their construction materials, change the external appearance, and internally to achieve the greatest possible functionality. In summary, these can be considered the key aspects of the development of Lithuanian primary school architecture at that time.

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