

**Evaldas VILKONČIUS**

Institute of Architecture and Construction, Kaunas University of Technology, Kaunas, Lithuania

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD DESIGNS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN LITHUANIA DURING THE 1920s AND 1930s

**Summary.** This article analyses the development of standard designs of primary school buildings in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s. This process aimed to create simple and comfortable standard school buildings and provide them to the primary schools operating in the country. The article presents the development of standard designs that took place at that time, explaining the circumstances of their emergence, and comparing the main designs of such buildings developed at that time. To reveal this process as best as possible, the influence of the then Ministry of Education of Lithuania, local former Lithuanian county municipalities, and various architectural specialists in the standardisation of buildings for primary schools and the development of standard designs are presented and analysed. This aims to introduce the readers to the still little-known process that took place in the architecture of Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s.

**Keywords:** school architecture, school buildings, interwar Lithuania, interwar architecture, standard designs, primary schools.

### INTRODUCTION

After Lithuania became an independent state in 1918, it was necessary to create a new structure of various buildings, especially public ones. At that time the country lacked public buildings for hospitals, schools, administrative and cultural institutions etc. Primary schools were in a particularly bad situation. In 1922, for example, when the compulsory four-year primary education law was passed (extended to six years in 1936), only about 25 per cent of all primary schools operating in the country had their own buildings.<sup>1</sup> For the rest, the premises had to be rented, most often in buildings that were not suitable for this function. Therefore, in the first years of independence it was noted that "many of our schools, especially in the villages, still do not meet the most necessary requirements for cleanliness, spaciousness, comfort, and general health. There are very few buildings built specifically for schools."<sup>2</sup> To solve this problem, it was necessary to build several hundred new, properly equipped buildings for primary schools in the country.<sup>3</sup>

Standardisation of design projects of such buildings, mainly for the smaller rural schools was

considered as one of the solutions to this problem.<sup>4</sup> The idea was not new, as standard designs of primary school buildings were drawn up in the Tsarist period as well.<sup>5</sup> This idea was also not unique to Lithuania, because at that time, in order to provide the society and various institutions with suitable buildings, and speed up their construction, the standardisation of various types of buildings took place in other countries as well.<sup>6</sup> In the case of Lithuania, the aim was to develop a few standard designs based on which construction of many new primary school buildings of similar appearance could be carried in the country, mainly in rural areas. Meanwhile, in the cities throughout the period of independence for various reasons school buildings were built based on individual designs.

Until now, the development of standard designs of the primary school buildings in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s have not been studied in more detail, despite the fact that it was a process that lasted throughout the period of the country's independence. In recent studies of the country's architecture and schools of that period, standard designs of primary schools were researched only fragmentarily. For example, in the research of Regimantas

Diliūnas,<sup>7</sup> Grêtė Vilbikienė,<sup>8</sup> and Rasa Bertašiūtė,<sup>9</sup> only a part of developed standard designs are described. Thus, no initiative has been taken to conduct more detailed research of this object as a whole. Due to such a problem, the evolution of standardisation of the designs of primary school buildings is largely overlooked in recent studies of the history of Lithuanian architecture of the 1920s and 1930s.

To fill the research gap on this topic, the main object of this publication is the development of standard designs of the primary school buildings in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s. The purpose of the article is to reveal and analyse the development of standard designs for the primary school buildings, the circumstances of their appearance, and to study the essential design projects of such buildings developed at that time. In the article this is done in chronological order by presenting and comparing the developed projects of standard designs, analysing the specifics of it, and their influence on the modernisation of primary schools in Lithuania. In the article this is done based on archival documents related to the object of research stored in the Lithuanian Central State Archives (LCVA), Vilnius Regional State Archives (VRVA), and Kaunas Regional State Archives (KRVA). There is also extensive reference to the periodicals of the period. To make the article more informative, the text is supplemented by archival design projects and photographs of standard designs of primary school buildings.

#### THE EARLIEST STANDARD DESIGNS OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS DEVELOPED IN THE 1920S

After a special order was issued in 1921, the Reconstruction Commissariat was established in Lithuania under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which was supposed to take care of “reconstruction issues in cities and villages”.<sup>10</sup> One of the functions of this institution to achieve a unified reconstruction of the country was the appointment of civil engineers and technicians to the newly established Reconstruction Departments (later became Construction

Departments) of the country’s municipalities and development of exemplary designs including the standard ones of various buildings for towns and villages.

From the beginning of Lithuania’s independence efforts were made to have suitable new primary school buildings. For example, in 1921 the Ministry of Education prepared requirements for new primary school buildings. It was emphasised that, for example, the classrooms should not be oriented to the north, but to the direction receiving more natural light. It was emphasised that the classrooms should be well lit, all housed in one building and connected by a common corridor, and the area of one classroom, which was intended for about 40–50 students, should be about 50 square metres. It was also indicated that the school buildings, especially in rural areas, should be equipped with teachers’ apartments, clothing rooms etc.<sup>11</sup>

Shortly after that the first standard designs of one, two and four-class primary school buildings were developed by the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat.<sup>12</sup> In all these designs, the school buildings were one-storey with an attic, and had classrooms of about 50 square metres. As was noted in the press of the time, these differed from previous primary school buildings, designed during the Tsarist period in that their attics provided space for teachers’ apartments, reading rooms, libraries, and special classrooms.<sup>13</sup> This was considered a kind of progress since the spaces of the buildings were used more rationally (thus, a similar interior arrangement remained similar to the majority of standard designs of such buildings throughout the period of the country’s independence). In a stylistic sense, the three standard design projects reflected the desire to create a “national style”<sup>14</sup> in the Lithuanian architecture of that time. Therefore, the design of the buildings was based on folk architecture and decoration – the construction was wooden, and the buildings had traditional forms and decor (Fig. 1). In 1921 the blueprints of such buildings were sent to the Reconstruction Departments of various Lithuanian county municipalities (Kretinga, Raseiniai, Tauragė etc.),<sup>15</sup> as the Ministry of Education

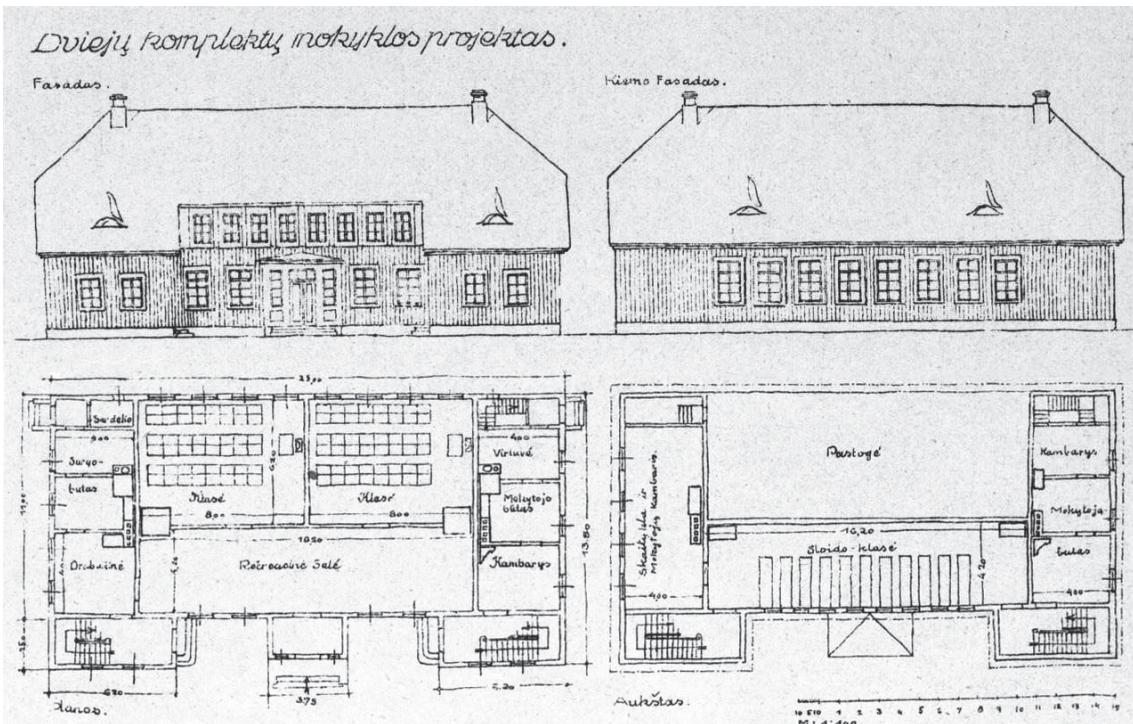


Fig. 1. Design project of standard two-class primary school wooden building developed in the early 1920s by the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat. "Statybos menas ir technika" 1 (1922), 23

recommended the use of these designs for the construction of primary school buildings, mainly in rural areas. At that time the construction of primary school buildings was mainly entrusted to municipalities,<sup>16</sup> which were sometimes financially supported by the Ministry of Education, which itself was engaged in the construction of such buildings.

When developing standard designs for the primary school buildings, efforts were made to constantly improve them. Thus, in 1925 the Ministry of Education came up with the idea of developing a new standard design of primary school buildings. Because for the entire period of Lithuanian independence the Ministry did not have its own construction department, it was decided to hold a first public architectural competition for the new standard design. The guidelines for the contestants stated that designs should meet the Ministry's requirements for school buildings published in 1921 and, most importantly, that the design must be for the masonry building.<sup>17</sup> This was determined by the fact that the masonry structure was considered more durable than the wooden.<sup>18</sup>

Seven design proposals were submitted to the competition. Two of them by civil technician Grigorijus Mazelis together with civil technician Mikas Grodzenskis, and by civil engineer Jonas Salenekas were considered the most suitable and were awarded the first and second prizes. In the same year, based on the awarded projects, a standard design of a masonry two-class (in some cases there were four classrooms inside) primary school building was developed.<sup>19</sup> The building had two floors. On the first floor there were two spacious classrooms of about 50 square metres, a dressing room, and a wide corridor. On the second floor – an office for the teachers, teachers' apartments, a guard's room. The construction cost of a building, based on this design, was about 94 thousand litas.<sup>20</sup> Stylistically, the building was designed in the neoclassical style, which was typical of the country's architecture of that time, because it was mainly practised by specialists who received professional education during the Tsarist period<sup>21</sup> (as was the case with competition winners). Two columns, between which the entrance was placed, pilasters between the windows, and a small balcony with a balustrade on the second floor were supposed to add splendour to the



*Fig. 2. Primary school building built in the early 1930s in the small town of Aukštadvaris based on the standard design developed in 1925 at the request of the Ministry of Education. "Tautos mokykla" 1 (1933), cover page*

facade of the building. This was probably due to the desire of that time to distinguish the primary school buildings from the environment in which they were to be built. Especially since in Lithuania at that time there was a prevailing opinion that new school buildings should also have "propaganda and beautification significance".<sup>22</sup> This is substantiated by the fact that the early buildings, based on this design, were built in the counties where the Lithuania-Poland border zone was located.<sup>23</sup> Primary school buildings, based on this design, were built in the country even in the early 1930s (Fig. 2).<sup>24</sup>

#### THE ASPIRATION FOR LOW-COST PRIMARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS: STANDARD DESIGNS DEVELOPED IN 1931 AND 1932

Although a standard design for the masonry two-class primary school building developed in 1925 was used for several years, it did not make a significant impact on the improvement of the condition of primary schools. Thus, at the beginning of the 1930s, there was still a lack of suitable primary school buildings, especially in the villages.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, at the beginning of the 1930s, the Ministry

of Education began to pursue the creation of new low-cost standard designs of the two and three-class primary school buildings. It was also decided to intensify the construction of primary schools by allocating larger loans to municipalities.<sup>26</sup> In that period, standardisation also began to be applied in the construction of other buildings, such as dairies,<sup>27</sup> there were plans to develop standard designs for kiosks,<sup>28</sup> Lithuanian Riflemen's Union buildings etc.<sup>29</sup> The aim was through the standardisation to unify the architecture of some functional types of buildings, which were lacking in the country at that time, to solve the lack of suitable premises for various institutions, and to make construction cheaper.<sup>30</sup>

The necessity of developing new standard designs of primary school buildings in the early 1930s was also emphasised by the civil engineers of the Construction Departments of the county municipalities. At that time the chief municipal civil engineers designed most of the various buildings in the Lithuanian counties. But the design of individual, small primary school buildings was considered an activity that unnecessarily burdened these engineers, as

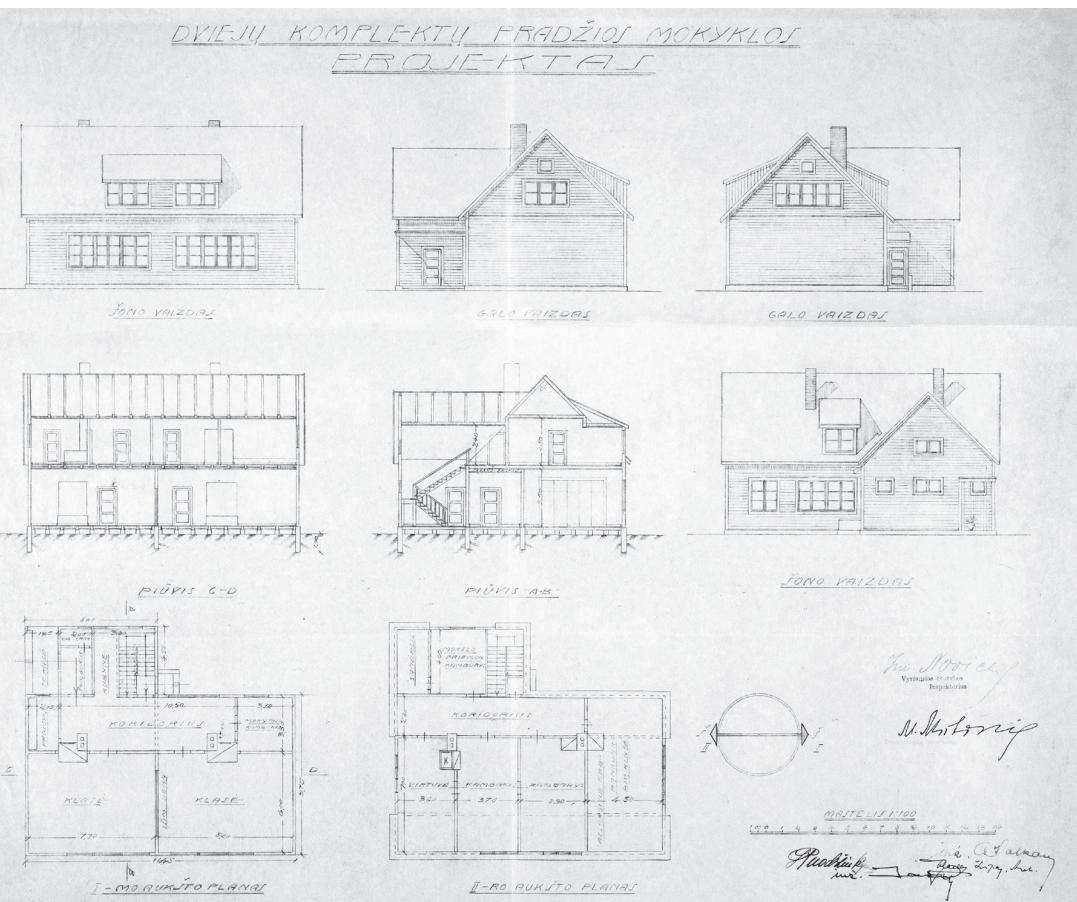


Fig. 3. Design project of standard wooden two-class primary school building developed in 1931 by a joint commission of engineers at the request of the Ministry of Education. LCVA, f. 1622, ap. 4, b. 155, l. 22

a few hundred new such buildings were needed.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the most rational solution was advocated – the development of new standard designs of the small primary school buildings.<sup>32</sup> The Ministry of Education, as before, took the initiative to develop new standard designs of such buildings. This was done in cooperation with the Construction Inspection (former Reconstruction Commissariat), which at that time was the most important institution handling civil construction matters in the country, and the Chamber of Agriculture.<sup>33</sup> In 1931 a joint commission of civil engineers from these institutions was formed, tasked with drawing up projects for new standard designs of school buildings.

In 1931 it was decided to create standard designs for the wooden school buildings again. According to civil engineer Kazys Germanas, this decision was determined by the fact that: “1. The timber could be obtained from the government free of charge, 2.

Lack of bricks or difficulties with their transportation to more remote places, 3. There were more craftsmen for wooden construction”.<sup>34</sup>

At the end of 1931 a new design of a standard two-class wooden primary school building was developed<sup>35</sup> (Fig. 3). In 1932 civil engineer Nikolajus Mačiulskis of the Construction Inspection drew up another standard design of a larger, three-class wooden primary school building (Fig. 4).<sup>36</sup> These two designs were for the one-storey wooden buildings with an attic. In both projects, the buildings had different layouts. The layout of the two-class building was L-shaped and the three-class building had an elongated rectangular layout. In both designs classrooms were concentrated in an elongated part and separated from other rooms by a wide corridor. Living rooms for teachers were in the attic and had a separate entrance, thus, the premises were used more rationally.

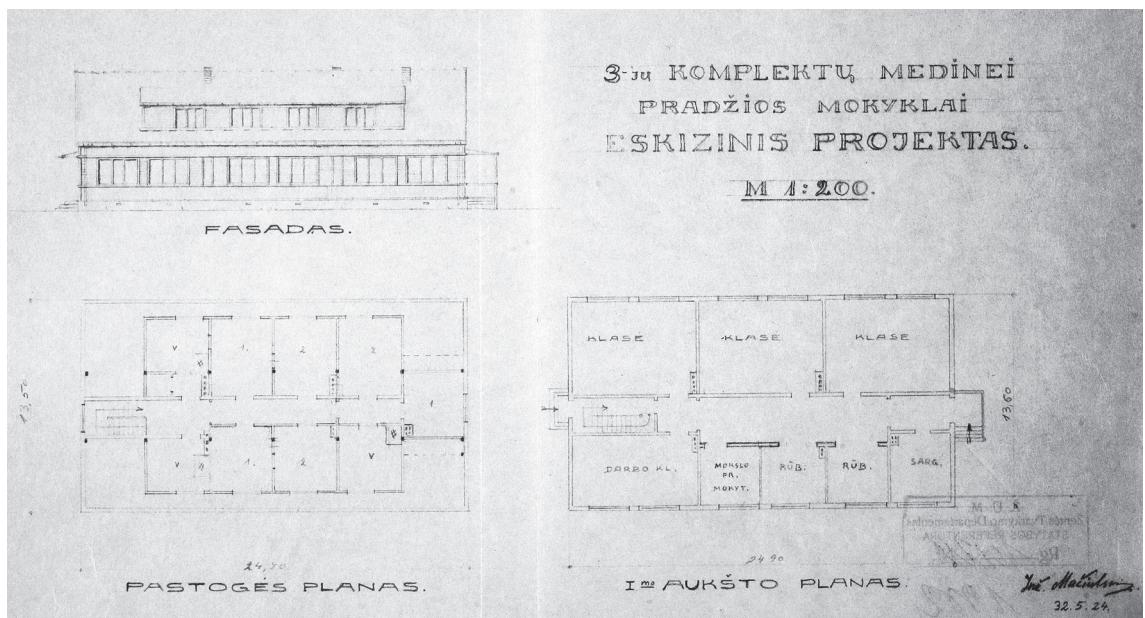


Fig. 4. Sketch design of standard wooden three-class primary school building developed by civil engineer Nikolajus Maciulskis of the Construction Inspection in 1932 at the request of the Ministry of Education. LCVA, f. 377, ap. 8, b. 181, l. 3

The exterior of these standard designs was considered "modest",<sup>37</sup> in contrast to the pompous appearance of the earlier project developed in 1925. Instead of adding the decorative elements, the main attention was paid to dividing the facades into more modern-looking simple geometric shapes. An important accent was the wide rectangular windows, through which more natural light could enter the classrooms, which was so necessary for school buildings.<sup>38</sup> The aspect of traditionality was created by pitched roofs and wooden structure. In this way, the aim was to embody the image of simple, cheap, and functional buildings. This was to ensure that most of the new primary school buildings would have a similar appearance.

At the beginning of 1932, after the approval of the Ministry of Education, the copies of blueprints of these two standard designs were sent to the Construction Departments of the county municipalities. This was done because the Ministry of Education recommended<sup>39</sup> the county municipalities to apply these designs when constructing new school buildings. It was hoped that the two new standard designs would become benchmarks for low-cost primary school buildings in the country. For example, the construction cost of the two-class school building was about 48 thousand litas – almost two

times lower than the construction of the previous design developed in 1925. In 1932 alone, based on these designs, it was planned to start constructing about 100 buildings for primary schools throughout the country, mainly in small towns and villages.<sup>40</sup>

In 1932, at the request of the Vilkaviškis County Municipality, the range of standard designs for the primary school buildings used in Lithuania was supplemented by the new design of a more contemporary looking two-class masonry building. It was designed by a younger generation engineer-architect Algirdas Šalkauskis,<sup>41</sup> who completed his studies in Germany and at that time was working in the Construction Inspection. But this design was not widely used – based on it, several school buildings were built only in Vilkaviškis<sup>42</sup> and Seinai counties.<sup>43</sup>

#### THE INITIATIVE OF THE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD DESIGNS OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN THE 1930S

The new standard designs developed in 1931–1932, although widely used, had shortcomings. For example, civil engineer Vytautas Rimšaila of the Construction Department of the Kretinga County

Municipality at the time criticised the standard design of a three-class primary school building, because “the corridor is too small and too dark, <...> there is no recreational hall, <...> classrooms, or at least two of them, should be bigger”.<sup>44</sup> Thus, when in the early 1930s Lithuanian municipalities became more involved in the construction of primary schools, their Construction Departments began to develop separate local standard designs for buildings of such function, which in practice were only applicable within the boundaries of a certain county.

In 1933, for example, civil engineer Petras Lelis of the Construction Department of Raseiniai County Municipality developed a standard design of a building of the same size based on the standard two-class building design (Fig. 5). Although the function of the rooms did not change, but to simplify the construction, “the layout was made rectangular and the facade symmetrical”.<sup>45</sup> Also, a standard design of four-class building was developed.<sup>46</sup> Based on these designs, which retained a

tradition-oriented architecture close to the recommended designs, about a dozen buildings were started to be built in Raseiniai County in 1933.<sup>47</sup>

Local standard designs of the primary school buildings at that time were developed in other counties of the country as well. In 1933, civil technician Vladas Muzikevičius of the Construction Department of the Alytus County Municipality developed a simpler standard design of a two-class school building. The design was not for a one-storey building with an attic, as recommended, but only for a one-storey building. This was done so “village craftsmen could easily build those buildings”.<sup>48</sup> Similar was done in other counties as well.<sup>49</sup> All these local standard designs, which here are given as examples, differed from the recommended ones, as the latter did not always correspond, as was earlier hoped, to the local conditions. Thus, from the early 1930s it became evident that in some cases it was easier to develop new local standard designs for such buildings, than to adapt in practice the ones recommended by the Ministry of Education.

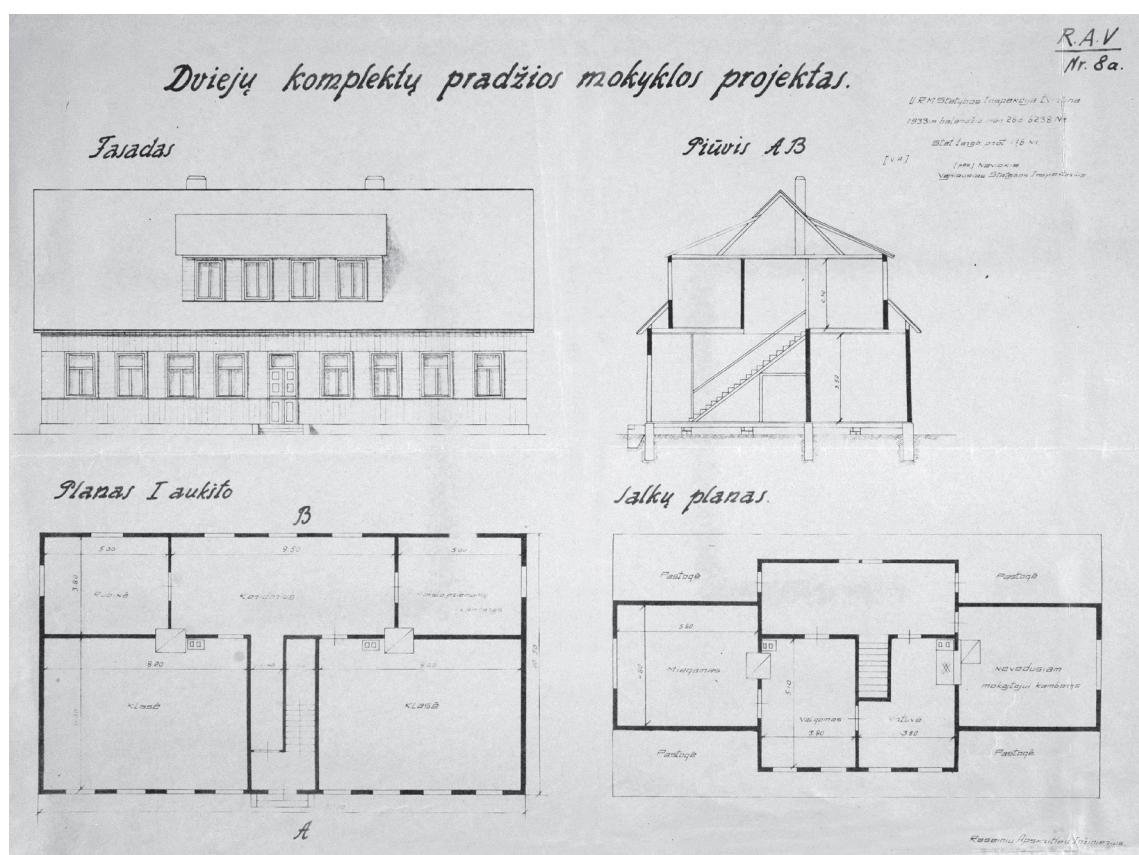


Fig. 5. Design project of standard wooden two-class primary school building developed in 1933 by civil engineer Petras Lelis of the Construction Department of the Raseiniai County Municipality. LCVA, f. 1622, ap. 4, b. 254, l. 5

During the 1930s, as before, the standardisation of primary school buildings seemed to be the most rational solution to the problem of providing schools with suitable premises in Lithuania. The press of that time emphasised the need to create new standard designs for "hygienic 2-3-4-5-class school buildings". It was noted that "it does not matter that in many places there will be school buildings of the same type and appearance; – it is important that they fulfil their purpose".<sup>50</sup> At that time, there was also a tendency to stop using wood in the construction of school buildings. Wood, even though cheaper, was not considered economical, because a wooden building "rots in 20–30 years and needs capital repairs or an entirely new building is needed"; thus, it was advocated "to build masonry school buildings wherever the conditions were more favourable".<sup>51</sup>

Since most standard designs at that time, which were developed by the initiative of the Ministry of Education, were mainly for the wooden school buildings, the Construction Departments of some county municipalities began to develop local standard designs of masonry buildings. In many cases these designs were more original and

modern in appearance. It was because traditional architecture at that time seemed outdated to some municipal civil engineering specialists, the majority of whom were of the younger generation, having received professional education in the late 1920s and early 1930s in Lithuania or Western European countries,<sup>52</sup> and strived for modernity in architecture. For example, in 1936 civil engineer Povilas Viliūnas (who at that time had recently graduated from Vytautas Magnus university in Kaunas) of Biržai County Municipality, developed an individual design for a two-storey, two-class masonry school building, which was later adopted as a standard one. Based on this design, at least three buildings<sup>53</sup> were built in the County of Biržai in 1936–1937. The construction of each one cost about 40 thousand litas. Inside the buildings there were all the facilities recommended for a school. On the first floor, there were two classrooms of about 50 square metres, a locker room, and a teacher's room. On the second floor there were living quarters for teachers.<sup>54</sup> Stylistically, the exterior of the buildings, in contrast to the other standard designs, were quite modern, because strict geometric shapes prevailed in the facades and decor was avoided.

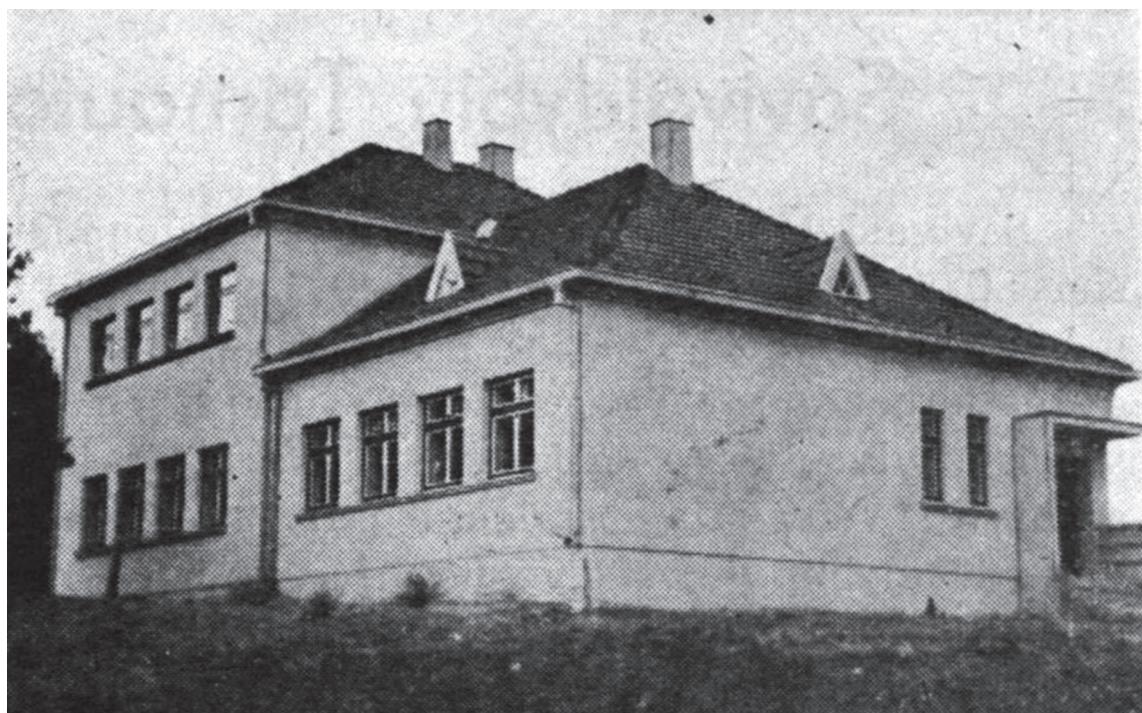


Fig. 6. Masonry two-class primary school building built in late 1930s in the village of Mindūnai based on the local standard design developed in 1936 by engineer-architect Vadimas Lvovas of the Construction Department of the Utena County Municipality. "Savivaldybė" 2 (1940), 39

In 1936–1937 the County Municipality of Utena also started to construct masonry primary school buildings. At that time architect-engineer Vadiamas Lvovas, of its Construction Department, made a design of a two-storey and two-class masonry school building, which was built in the village of Pakalniai. After that it was decided to apply this design as a standard one, and based on it to build at least three more buildings in other villages of the county. Each of the buildings cost about 65 thousand litas.<sup>55</sup> This design was based on functional convenience. As a result, the rooms in the building were functionally divided. The first floor was dedicated to learning purposes (two classrooms, a cloakroom, a corridor, and auxiliary rooms), and the second, as was typical for small rural schools, was for the teachers' living quarters.

The buildings built based on this design had a modern, ascetic appearance, whose aesthetics were created by smooth wall planes and wide rectangular windows (Fig. 6). This was probably because in the mid-1930s Lithuanian architecture in terms of style began to be strongly influenced by modernism.<sup>56</sup> As a result, even small primary school buildings were given a more modern look, as in

the case of this design created by V. Lvovas, who received his professional education in Berlin and was well acquainted with the stylistic fashions of the time.<sup>57</sup> However, this standard design of a modern-looking building was criticised by representatives of the Ministry of Education, as “the exterior was too plain”, and it “did not resemble a school building at all”.<sup>58</sup> Such criticism was probably because the building was given a modernist-inspired appearance, which some critics of this trend did not consider suitable for new school buildings in the country.<sup>59</sup> However, from the late 1930s, a modernist-inspired appearance was given to other local standard designs of the primary school buildings, developed by the younger specialists in various counties. In 1938, for example, the design of a wooden three-class primary school building with a similar modern appearance was developed by civil engineer Visvaldas Mačiūnas (a graduate of Ghent university) and civil technician Abromas Šusteris (a student at Vytautas Magnus university at that time)<sup>60</sup> of the Construction Department of the Kaunas County Municipality. School buildings, each of which cost about 54 thousand litas, based on this design were built in various small towns of Kaunas County (Fig. 7).<sup>61</sup>



Fig. 7. Wooden three-class primary school building built in the small town of Seredžius based on the standard design developed in 1938 by civil engineer Visvaldas Mačiūnas and civil technician Abromas Šusteris of the Construction Department of the Kaunas County Municipality. “Tautos mokykla” 7 (1939), 156

## STANDARD DESIGNS DEVELOPED IN THE LATE 1930s BY THE INITIATIVE OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Even though by the mid-1930s some county municipalities began to develop standard designs of masonry primary school buildings, in 1936 the Ministry of Education decided to run a second architectural competition to develop new standard designs. The idea was justified by the fact that by the mid-1930s various municipalities, when building schools, relied less on the recommended standard designs. Local standard designs were developed by the construction departments of various municipalities, which did not always meet the norms, and the appearance of the buildings often depended on the “taste of the engineer who developed the design”.<sup>62</sup> Thus, it was hoped that the new standard designs would force the municipalities to follow a similar aesthetic and practical approach when constructing such buildings.<sup>63</sup>

The competition of 1936 was for the development of standard designs of two and three-class wooden school buildings. As before, the guidelines for the contestants stated that the most important requirements for the buildings were spaciousness and convenience of the interior. It was noted that the classrooms should have an area of about 50 square metres, be well lit, and have wide windows. It was also noted that the buildings should have a changing room, a washroom, a corridor, and teachers' quarters. The guidelines also stated that buildings should be designed “in the spirit of the Lithuanian folk art and construction”.<sup>64</sup> This was probably due to the desire to reflect the features of traditional Lithuanian architecture, for such an appearance was thought more suitable to the rural areas in which school buildings were to be erected.

A total of 22 projects were submitted to the competition. The proposals by engineer-architects Vsevolodas Kopylovas and Karolis Reisonas were awarded the first and second prizes for the standard designs of two-class buildings (Fig. 8). The first and second prizes for the designs of three-class buildings were awarded to civil technician Jurgis Okunis and K. Reisonas. In addition, the design

proposal of two-class building by civil engineer Adolfas Lukošaitis was bought by the Ministry of Education (Fig. 9).<sup>65</sup> At that time, feedback about the architecture of these designs was ambivalent. For example, the design proposal by J. Okunis was positively evaluated for its “modern, original style”, while some other awarded design proposals were criticised for having too traditional architecture and looking like “farm buildings with large windows”.<sup>66</sup> But in all these designs the layout was rational, separating the classrooms and other

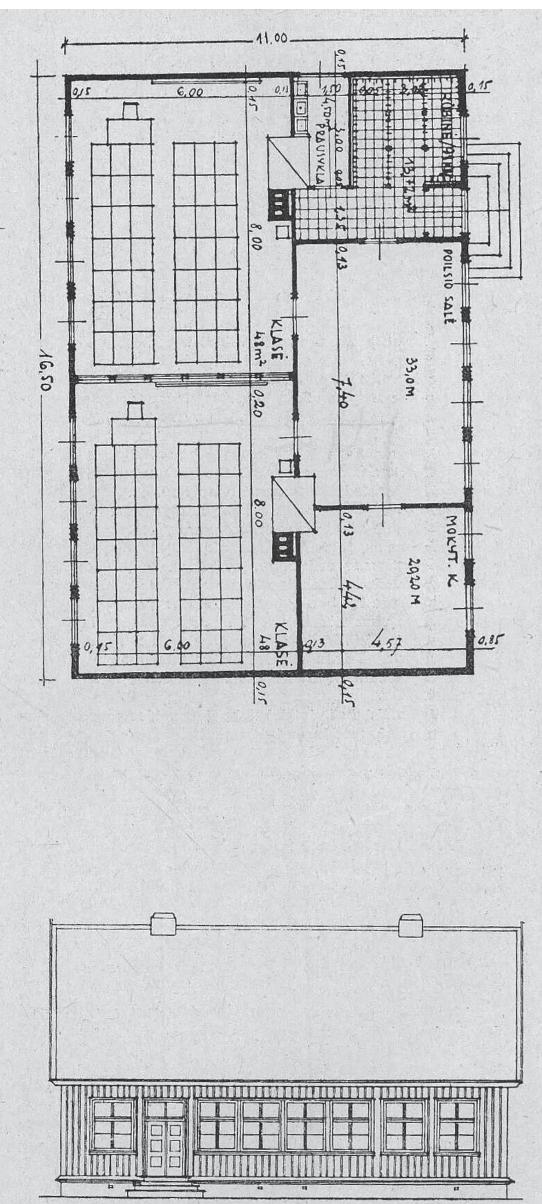


Fig. 8. Design proposal for the standard wooden two-class primary school building by engineer-architect Vsevolodas Kopylovas which was submitted to the architectural competition held in 1936 by the Ministry of Education for the development of new standard designs of primary school buildings. "Tautos mokykla" 2 (1937), 44

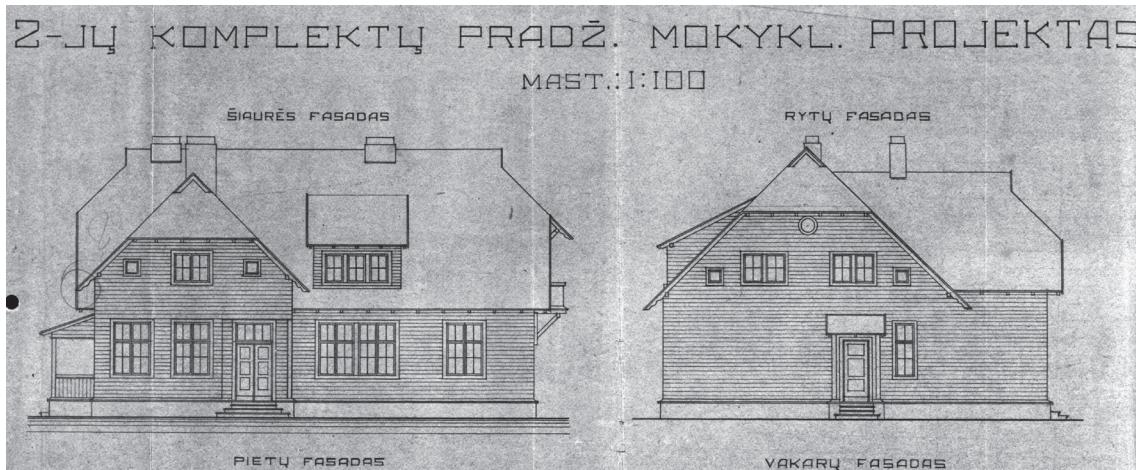


Fig. 9. Design project of standard wooden two-class building developed from the proposal by civil engineer Adolfas Lukošaitis which was submitted to the architectural competition held in 1936 and bought by the Ministry of Education. KRVA, f. 71, ap. 1, b. 66, l. 1A



Fig. 10. Masonry primary school building built in the mid-1930s in the village of Rėkliai based on the recommended standard design developed from award-winning design submitted to the architectural competition held in 1936 by the Ministry of Education. "Tautos mokykla" 24 (1938), 563

teaching-related rooms, which were on the first floors, from the teachers' living spaces, which were in the attics.

The final versions of the new standard designs, based on these award-winning proposals, were developed in 1937. After that the design blueprints were sent to various Lithuanian municipalities, based on which new school buildings were to be built. In 1937, for example, at least five buildings were built based on these designs in the small towns and villages of Zarasai County alone.<sup>67</sup> The same was done in the counties of Kaunas, Marijampolė etc.<sup>68</sup> The construction cost of the three-class

buildings was about 60 thousand litas, and two-class buildings cost about 20–30 thousand litas.<sup>69</sup> But not everywhere in Lithuania were these designs applied in practice, as in Trakai County. There, even in 1937, primary school buildings were built based on cheaper individual designs rather than to the recommended standard ones, because the latter were too expensive<sup>70</sup> for the county municipality.

Also, it became obvious that the standard designs, developed in 1936 from the architectural competition, did not meet the prevailing norms of Lithuanian architecture at that time and became outdated. This was because by the end of the 1930s

wooden architecture began to be considered to have many shortcomings, both in terms of construction quality and appearance. Thus, the country's architectural policy moved towards the universal use of more modern masonry construction in various new buildings, including schools.<sup>71</sup> As a result, since 1937 many Lithuanian counties began to build only masonry school buildings.<sup>72</sup> Since at that time there were no new standard designs of masonry school buildings recommended by the Ministry of Education, local standard designs were developed by the municipal engineers. For example, in Panevėžys County, two standard designs of masonry two and three-class buildings, based on one of the award-winning proposals of the 1936 competition, were developed by K. Germanas in 1937 (Fig. 10). Based on them, at least five buildings were built in the county in 1937–1938.<sup>73</sup> Elsewhere, as in Šiauliai County, local standard designs of masonry three, five, and even nine-class buildings were also developed.<sup>74</sup>

Although by the end of the 1930s an intensive construction of school buildings was carried out in Lithuania (for example, in Panevėžys County alone 38 school buildings, mainly based on five different standard designs were built in 1932–1938),<sup>75</sup>

but still more than half of all primary schools in the country still did not have suitable premises.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, to speed up the provision of schools with good facilities and to develop newer and more modern in terms of style standard designs, the Ministry of Education in 1938 held a third architectural competition for standard designs of two and three-class school buildings. The guidelines of the competition for contestants were identical to those of the 1936 competition. The only change was that, to adapt to the planned implementation of the universal use of masonry construction in the country, the buildings had to be masonry, and the appearance, this time not limited by any specific stylistic requirements, had to have the most convenient form possible, without complicated constructions.

Seventeen designs were submitted to the competition, mostly by young specialists who received professional education in Lithuania and Western Europe. The jury decided to award the first and second prizes to the design proposals of two-class buildings by civil technician Antanas Paškevičius and engineer architect Vsevolodas Kopylovas. None of the submitted designs of three-class building were considered suitable, so the joint prize was awarded to the proposals by civil engineer

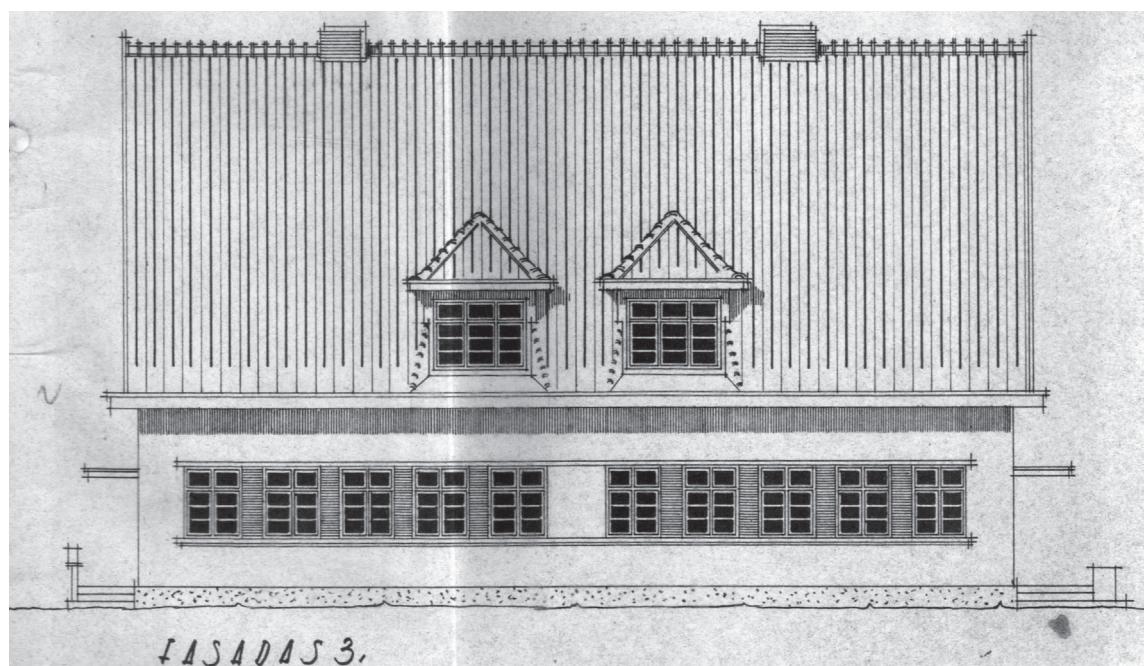


Fig. 11. Design project of standard masonry two-class primary school building developed in 1938 from the award-winning proposal by civil technician Antanas Paškevičius which was submitted to the architectural competition held in 1938 by the Ministry of Education. LCVA, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2655, l. 51

Eugenijus Manomaitis and civil technician Juozas Tulaba.<sup>77</sup> Final versions of the new standard designs were based on the award-winning proposals. The proposal by Paškevičius was chosen for the basis of the new standard of two-class school building design (Fig. 11). The design of the three-class school building based on the award-winning proposals, probably at the request of the Ministry of Education, was developed by a civil engineer Feliksas Bielinskis of the Construction Inspection (Fig. 12).<sup>78</sup>

The construction cost of the buildings, based on these designs, was a bit higher than of the previous designs. This was because the buildings were masonry. The estimated construction cost of the two-class building was 60 thousand litas, while the construction of the three-class building cost about 80 thousand litas. Like other standard designs, these two had a rational layout. On the first floor there were classrooms with an area of 48 square metres, a corridor, a washroom, a dressing room, a teacher's room, and the attic was intended for teachers' apartments. Compared to other standard designs of school buildings of the Ministry of Education, these looked quite modern, more in line with the stylistic fashions of the Lithuanian architecture of the 1930s. The shape of the two-class building

was traditional, the volume was rectangular with a pitched roof. The facades were divided by vertical, modern-looking rows of windows. The appearance of the three-class building was also modern. The symmetrical volume was marked by the central Avant-corps with the main entrance and the sides were divided by rows of modern-looking vertical windows. The upper part was emphasised by a wide cornice and a pitched roof.

At the end of 1938, the blueprints of these two new standard designs were "sent to Municipalities and other institutions, which built schools, with the request that when building new schools, these designs would be applied in practice as far as conditions allow".<sup>79</sup> Thus, since 1939 new school buildings based on these designs for the primary schools, which still did not have adequate facilities, began to be built in various small towns and villages in Lithuania (for example, in the counties of Alytus, Tauragė etc.).<sup>80,81</sup>

In addition to the new standard designs, in 1938 on the initiative of the Ministry of Education, F. Bielinskis, a graduate of Vytautas Magnus university and one of the most distinguished school designers in Lithuania at that time, developed two standard

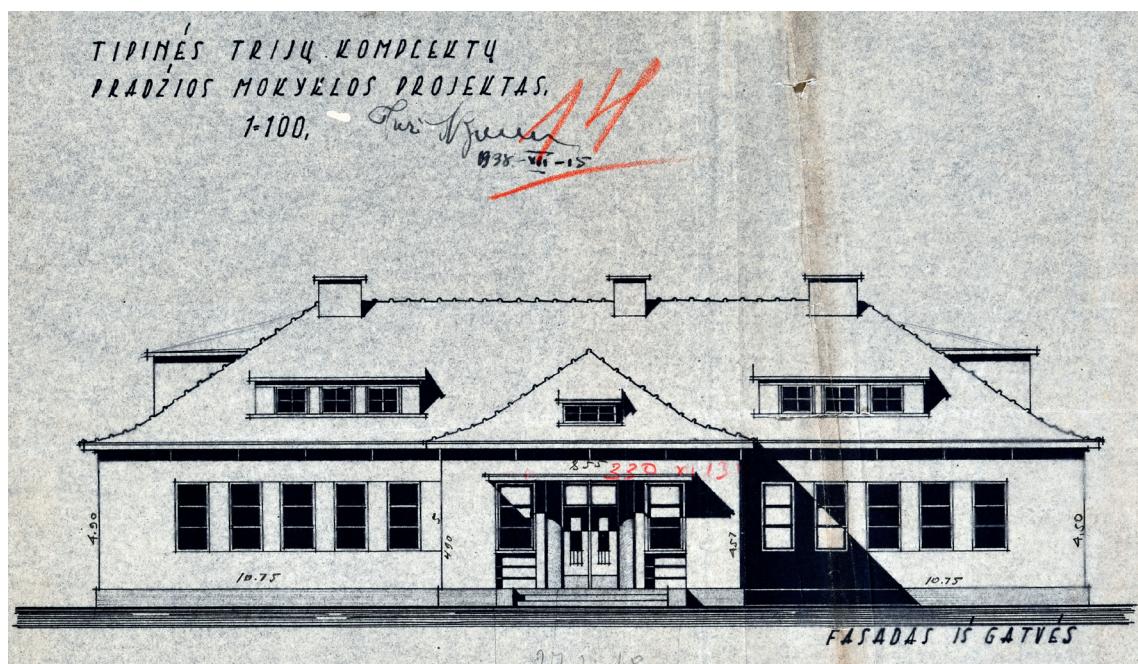


Fig. 12. Design project of standard masonry three-class primary school building developed in 1938 by civil engineer Feliksas Bielinskis from the award-winning proposals which were submitted to the architectural competition held in 1938 by the Ministry of Education. LCVA, f. 1567, ap. 3, b. 1099, l. 14

designs of four and six-class two-storey masonry buildings, which could probably become standard designs for the construction of larger school buildings. For example, in the last years of the country's independence, based on the four-class building design, the construction of new school buildings began in Viešvilė and Užuguostis.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, based on the six-class building design, the construction of primary school buildings began in small towns of Onuškis, Vievis and the city of Palanga<sup>83</sup> (the latter building was expanded to eight classrooms). However, the successful application of these standard school designs in practice was prevented by the loss of Lithuania's independence in the summer of 1940. Around that time only less than half of the primary schools operating in the country, mostly in rural areas, were equipped with their own buildings.<sup>84</sup> Thus, after the loss of independence, the standardisation of primary school buildings was then continued by the occupying power, which developed another standard designs.<sup>85</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The Ministry of Education of Lithuania at that time showed the most initiative in the standardisation of such buildings. In carrying out such a process the Ministry cooperated with the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat, and later with the Construction Inspection, and various civil engineers of the country. Despite the fact that standard designs were developed from the early 1920s on the initiative of the Ministry of Education, this process took place most widely from the early 1930s. This was due to the fact that it was in this decade that most of the standard designs were developed, mainly by the specialists of the Construction Inspection and during the competitions that took place. Thus, from the early 1930s, a common type of cheap and easy-to-build buildings (as was thought) was formed, which had the necessary facilities inside, and the exterior of which, in some cases, was inspired by traditional Lithuanian architecture, while in other cases by modernism. There were also plans by the Ministry of Education to standardise the designs

of larger four and six-class primary school buildings, as began to be done in the late 1930s. During the entire period of Lithuania's independence, the standard designs developed by the initiative of the Ministry of Education were not mandatory, but considered only as recommended. Thus, various institutions that built schools in the country were only encouraged to rely on the standard designs proposed by the Ministry. This partly made it difficult for municipalities to rely solely on the recommended designs.

From the beginning of the 1930s, following the example of the Ministry of Education, various Lithuanian counties also became involved in the standardisation of small primary school buildings. Construction Departments of the counties developed several local standard designs of primary school buildings which in practice were used within the boundaries of various counties. This was done because of the shortcomings of the standard designs recommended by the Ministry of Education. The main shortcomings were: the construction cost of the standard designs developed by the initiative of the Ministry was suitable for not all counties of the country; the inconvenience of the layout of the interior spaces; and the conservative appearance of such designs, for which inspiration even up until the late 1930s was still sought in traditional Lithuanian architecture. Meanwhile, the younger generation of architectural specialists who worked in county municipalities sought to design buildings with a more stylistically modern appearance. Also, the fact that most of the designs developed by the initiative of the Ministry up until the late 1930s were intended for wooden buildings, when by that time various municipalities sought to build only masonry buildings.

Standardisation of primary school buildings was a common process in Lithuanian architecture during the 1920s and 1930s. The result of this process was many standard designs of various appearances and peculiarities, based on which dozens of buildings were built for schools in various counties of Lithuania, mostly in rural areas. The aim of such a process was to equip the small primary schools with new

buildings that met pedagogic and hygienic requirements, as it was done in many cases. Therefore, the standardisation of primary school buildings can be considered an advanced effort to modernise the material situation of the country's educational institutions at that time. Thus, this process, due to the fact that it took place for almost two decades, can be considered one of the most important examples of standardisation in the context of Lithuanian architecture of that time. However, this process, before the loss of Lithuania's independence, had not yet managed to equip most of the country's schools with suitable new buildings.

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<sup>3</sup> „Apskritių savivaldybių biudžetai 1923 metams.“ *Savivaldybė* 1 (1923), 4–5.

<sup>4</sup> „Neatidėliotini darbai.“ 5.

<sup>5</sup> Algė Jankevičienė, „Pradžios mokyklos“, in *Lietuvių liaudies architektūra II* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1968), 37.

<sup>6</sup> Dorothea Deschermeier, “The Housing Construction Programme,” in *New Human, New Housing. Architecture of the New Frankfurt 1925–1933* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2019), 83.

<sup>7</sup> Regimantas Diliūnas, *Medinių mokyklų architektūra: vertė ir išsaugojimo galimybės* (magistro darbas, Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, 2010), 40.

<sup>8</sup> Gretė Vilbikienė, „Mokyklų architektūra kaip ugdymo(si) nuostatų erdinė išraiška“ (daktaro disertacija, Vilniaus Gedimino technikos universitetas, 2022), 27.

<sup>9</sup> Rasa Bertašiūtė, „Tarpukario gyvenviečių (miestelio, bažnytkaimio, kaimo) kraštovaizdžio ir architektūros paveldo vertės“, in *Lietuvos tarpukario architektūrinis palikimas: materialumo ir nematerialumo dermė* (Kaunas: Technologija, 2015), 159–160.

- <sup>10</sup> „Lietuvos Atstatymo Komisariato įsakymas,“ *Vyriausybės žinios* 56 (1921), 2–3.
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- <sup>16</sup> J. Savukynas, „Savivaldybės ir mokyklos,“ *Savivaldybė* 12 (1933), 9.
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- <sup>18</sup> „Dėl kaimų nedegamos medžiagos,“ *Lietuva* (September 29, 1923), 4.
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- <sup>25</sup> „Mokykloms patalpų klausimu,“ *Savivaldybė* 7 (1930), 16.
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- <sup>27</sup> „Pastatyta pirmoji Lietuvoje štandartinė pieninė,“ *Lietuvos aidas* (May 30, 1933), 5.
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- <sup>30</sup> Telesforas Prijalgauskas, „Pieninių statyba ir įrengimas,“ *Prekyba* 7 (1936), 141.
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- <sup>34</sup> Kazys Germanas, „Apskrities savivaldybės darbai,“ in Panevėžys. *Geografinės ir istorinės žinios apie apylinkes ir miestą* (Čikaga: Draugo spaustuvė, 1963), 223.
- <sup>35</sup> „2 komplektų pradžios mokyklos Tarpžinybinės komisijos patvirtintas projektas,“ *Lithuanian Central State Archive*, f. 1622, ap. 4, b. 155, l. 22.
- <sup>36</sup> „3-jų komplektų pradžios mokyklos projektas,“ *Lithuanian Central State Archive*, f. 377, ap. 8, p. 181, l. 3.
- <sup>37</sup> Germanas, „Apskrities savivaldybės darbai,“ 223.
- <sup>38</sup> Vladas Švipas, „Apie gerą mokyklos įrengimą,“ *Švietimo darbas* 4 (1929), 320.
- <sup>39</sup> „Pradžios mokyklų namų statyba,“ *Lietuvos aidas* (January 23, 1932), 5.
- <sup>40</sup> „Nori išdirbtį pradžios mokyklos trobesio planą,“ *Lietuvos žinios* (October 27, 1931), 5.
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**Evaldas VILKONČIUS**  
KTU Architektūros ir statybos institutas, Kaunas, Lietuva

## TIPINIŲ PROJEKTŲ KŪRIMAS PRADINIŲ MOKYKLŲ PASTATAMS LIETUVOJE XX A. TREČIAJĮ-KETVIRTĄJĮ DEŠIMTMEČIAIS

### Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje analizuojamas tipinių projektų kūrimas pradinėms mokykloms Lietuvoje XX amžiaus trečiąjį–ketvirtąjį dešimtmečiais. Šiuo procesu buvo siekiama sukurti paprastus ir patogius tipinius mokyklų pastatus ir jais aprūpinti šalyje veikusias pradines mokyklas. Straipsnyje pristatoma tuo metu vykusi tipinių pastatų projektų raida, aiškinamasi jų atsiradimo aplinkybes ir analizuojami pagrindiniai tuo metu parengti tokiių pastatų projektais. Siekiant kuo geriau atskleisti šį procesą, gilinamasi į tuometinės Lietuvos švietimo ministerijos, vietinių buvusių Lietuvos savivaldybių, įvairių architektūros specialistų įtaką vykdant pradinėms pastatų mokykloms standartizavimą ir tipinių projektų rengimą. Taip siekiama supažindinti skaitytojus su dar mažai žinomu XX a. trečiąjį–ketvirtąjį dešimtmečiais Lietuvos architektūroje vykusiu procesu.

**Reikšmingi žodžiai:** mokyklų architektūra, mokyklų pastatai tarpukario Lietuvoje, tarpukario architektūra, tipiniai projektais, pradinės mokyklos.

Gauta 2023-02-29

Parengta spaudai 2023-08-24

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Evaldas VILKONČIUS

PhD Evaldas Vilkončius is a researcher in the Institute of Architecture and Construction

at the Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania.

E-mail: evaldas.vilkoncius@ktu.lt